CHANGING SOCIETY



Aimee Samara Krouskop, Ben Cushing, Kimberly Puttman, and Avery Temple
Open Oregon

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Changing Society

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Open Oregon

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Licensing

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About the Authors

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Avery Temple, Contributing Author





Avery Temple (they/she/he) is a queer, Indigenous community organizer. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Globalization, Environment, & Policy, where she researched Indigenous resistance and the ongoing effects of colonization on our climate. He also has over four years of experience in public speaking and event planning, and a lifetime of love for exploring the natural world. As an abolitionist and anti-capitalist, Avery firmly believes that moving with militant joyfulness and a deep reverence for life is vital in all pursuits.

Ben Cushing, Contributing Author





Ben Cushing holds a Masters degree in sociology from the University of British Columbia. He teaches sociology at Portland Community College, where his classes examine multiple and interlocking systems of power. He is particularly interested in resistance and people's capacity to create change. In addition to his contributions in chapters, this textbook hosts segments from Ben's podcast series, "Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis." There, he invites listeners to explore how societal systems, history, and beliefs all contribute to the root causes of climate change. He also encourages listeners to more deeply examine and imagine ways we may transform society as a whole.

Kimberly Puttman, Contributing Author





Kimberly Puttman (she/her/ella) is a teacher, writer, activist, and interfaith minister. She identifies as White, queer, and on some days, disabled. She received her BA in sociology from the University of Oregon, her MA from the University of Texas, and her ordination as an interfaith minister from One Spirit Learning Alliance. In her non-school life, she has been an advocate in a domestic violence shelter, a project manager in healthcare information technology, and a youth case worker. She currently teaches at Oregon Coast Community College, a small but mighty community college on the beautiful Oregon coast. When not lead authoring this book she is exploring questions of community and connection and spending as much time as she can in the waters of the Siletz Bay.

Aimee Samara Krouskop, Lead Author





Aimee Samara Krouskop instructs courses that incorporate her twenty years with international social change projects. Her early research focused on human rights at the U.S.-Mexico border and the impacts of fair trade among Indigenous communities in Guatemala. She earned her MA in sociology at the University of Houston. Then, her roles included human rights protection in conflict zones of Colombia, cross-agency collaboration for emergency relief with the United Nations, and serving as a Human Rights Commissioner for the City of Portland. Aimee now provides consultation and organizational design to leaders advancing social and environmental change. She also explores how to best amplify Indigenous Knowledge, protect Indigenous rights, and the value of both in defending and restoring our most vulnerable ecosystems.

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About this Book

Accessibility Statement

This book was created in good faith to ensure that it will meet accessibility standards wherever possible, and to highlight areas where we know there is work to do. It is our hope that by being transparent in this way, we can begin the process of making sure accessibility is top of mind for all authors, adopters, students and contributors of all kinds on open textbook projects.

If you encounter an accessibility issue, please let your instructor know right away.

Equity Lens

The Open Oregon Educational Resources Targeted Pathways Project seeks to dismantle structures of power and oppression entrenched in barriers to course material access. We provide tools and resources to make diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) primary considerations when faculty choose, adapt, and create course materials. In promoting DEI, our project is committed to:

1. Ensuring diversity of representation within our team and the materials we distribute
2. Publishing materials that use accessible, clear language for our target audience
3. Sharing course materials that directly address and interrogate systems of oppression, equipping students and educators with the knowledge to do the same

Designing and piloting openly licensed, intersectional, and antiracist course materials is one starting point among many when addressing inequities in higher education. Our project invites students and educators to engage with us in this work, and we value spaces where learning communities can grow and engage together.

We welcome being held accountable to this statement and will respond to feedback submitted via our contact page.

Course Learning Outcomes

Educators, students, and future employers all benefit when course-level learning outcomes guide our shared work. When course-level learning outcomes are public, institutions demonstrate a commitment to equitable student success through the potential for increased collaboration and inclusive course design. This project analyzed learning outcomes across the state of Oregon to identify themes and commonalities. Authors used this analysis as a basis for developing course outcomes that could match the curriculum of multiple institutions in Oregon while still considering their local needs and context.

This book addresses the following course-level learning outcomes:

1. Compare and contrast social change across cultures to discuss the significance of social change to you and your community.
2. Describe patterned ways that social institutions shape behavior and opportunity for groups and individuals, inhibiting or contributing to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
3. Apply social imagination and a critical sociological lens to examine how systems create and sustain social, environmental, and cultural injustice across social locations.
4. Compare and contrast theoretical approaches to social change, applying them to social, cultural, political, and economic issues.
5. Identify how civil society and professionals apply research, observation, worldview, imagination, and action to understand and engage with systems and institutions contributing to social change.
6. Discuss how global social movements respond to and create power dynamics, globalization, and crises, revealing possibilities for positive social change.

Oregon adopted a statewide course name, number, description, and learning outcomes in 2024 (below). The learning outcomes developed in this textbook align with the new statewide learning outcomes, with a focus on change across cultures and diversity within group memberships. For more information, please visit the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission's Educator Resources – Common Course Numbering [Website].

SOC/SOAN 205: Social Change and Institutions

Course Description:

Sociological analysis of social institutions, such as family, education, health care, the economy, and the state. Includes an examination of connections among institutions and their impact on patterns of inequality and individual outcomes. Examines the forces and dynamics behind social change, such as social movements, culture, economic forces, technologies, and the environment.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Discuss the history of key social institutions.
2. Analyze major social institutions and change using sociological concepts, theory, and research.
3. Describe how the structure of institutions shapes patterns of social inequality.
4. Discuss the diversity of experiences that individuals have with institutions based on group membership, such as race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social class.
5. Describe how and why societies change over time.

Teaching and Learning Approach

The authors of this book embraced an equity-minded design for structure, scope, and sequence of chapters and chapter content. They sought to honor the needs and experiences of students who are often underserved in higher education in Oregon. Authors considered Transparency in Teaching and Learning (TILT), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and culturally responsive teaching to design meaningful learning pathways for you. You will find rich images and multimedia in addition to written content. You will also find provocative discussion questions that align with learning outcomes and objectives.

Instructors, please see the Instructor Resources section in the Back Matter for an overview of curriculum design as well as openly licensed course packs and teaching tools.

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Instructor Resources

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Author Message to Instructors

In writing this textbook, five concentrations guided our work. First, as encouraged by Diné and Lakota educator Kara Bobroff, we focused on holistic learning. We sought to present a tool that supports students in their overall well-being, development, and connection to the world. The material is framed for engagement, to allow students to apply learning to their lives, within their home communities, and in their full identities.

Second, we focused on career application. By incorporating professional contexts into the material, we aimed to demystify and provide more access to systems that directly apply sociological knowledge. For example, our focus on the international humanitarian systems in Chapter 5 is informed by that sector's tendency to acknowledge sociological skills and employ professional sociologists.

Third, we applied universal design. We sought to provide an environment that presents information in multiple ways, challenges and motivates learners, and connects to their prior knowledge or experience. The content is created to bolster students' skills in thinking thoroughly and independently about our social systems. Open Oregon Educational Resources has included interactive question tools that are intended to support engagement with the material. We've also provided links in the chapters that allow students to jump back to previous content that relates to the material at hand. Instead of reading for memorization, we encourage students to make connections between concepts, their lived experiences, and what they observe in the world.

Fourth, we aspired to be as creative and vigilant as possible in centering the content from a diversity of cultures, identities, and social locations. This included presenting the sociological canon, but not with prominence. This also included providing material that highlights the work of both academics and applied professionals while illuminating life stories, case studies, and examples from a diversity of experiences. To best share those ideas and contributions, we prioritized primary sources, liberally extended direct quotes, and applied a multi-media format (in subtitled video stories, personal accounts, audio, and rich images).

Fifth, we focused on delivering material that is decolonizing in its approach and sources. We interrogated aspects of cultures and social systems that are manifestations of past and current colonialism (settler and exploitation). With this interrogation, we hope to contribute to dismantling ubiquitous and often inconspicuous deference to whiteness and preference for cultural expressions and contributions of the "West." Simultaneously, we acknowledge the significant roles that current dominant systems and cultures play in shaping society and how they can serve as vehicles for social change.

Ultimately, these five goals reflect our interest and sense of responsibility in creating a balance between the published and acknowledged contributions of Black, Asian, and Indigenous thinkers and Western thinkers. We are certain that there are areas where the application of these ideals can be improved. We welcome your feedback if you find any misunderstandings or gaps in our knowledge.

Crosswalk with Sociology in Everyday Life

We are aware of two main tracks that colleges use to present their introduction to sociology courses: Introduction to Sociology and Social Change*. One, where each course is presented as a foundational sociology course with common content. The other, where content is mainly divided between the two courses, and presented sequentially. That is, at some colleges, students are not expected to have prior knowledge of sociology before being introduced to social change material. In other colleges, students are expected to have taken Intro to Sociology.

With that in mind, below is a crosswalk guide to prepare your students with foundational material that may not have been introduced to them. This textbook is offered in conjunction with Sociology in Everyday Life. There, the authors present foundational material that aligns with the Introduction to Sociology course.

** Introduction to Sociology is often named Sociology in Everyday Life. Social Change is listed with comparable names. In 2024, Oregon adopted the name Social Change and Institutions.*

Concepts First Introduced in Chapter	Suggested Introductory Material Found in *Sociology in Everyday Life*
Chapter 1	
nonbinary (also in chapter 3)	Chapter 9, “Gender: Identities, Interactions, and Institutions.” For a specific discussion of binary, see Chapter 9, section: “Beyond the Binary.”
stereotypes	Chapter 11, “Race and Ethnicity.” For a specific discussion of stereotypes, see Chapter 11, section: “Prejudice, Discrimination and Racism.”
culture: customs, rituals, cultural rules, norms	Chapter 6, “Sociology of Culture.”
Chapter 3	
Social locations: race, ethnicity, religion, ability, immigration, language, marginalized groups, binary and non-binary categories of gender and sexual expression. Note: “The Social Construction of Identity” section has two glossaries in the “Going Deeper” section.	Chapter 1, “Examining Diversity,” Chapter 9, “Identities, Interactions, and Institutions,” Chapter 10, “Sexuality,” and Chapter 11, “Race and Ethnicity.”
Interactions of bias and oppression: prejudice, discrimination, segregation, racism, and other isms.	Chapter 1, “Examining Diversity,” Chapter 9, “Identities, Interactions, and Institutions,” Chapter 10, “Sexuality,” and Chapter 11, “Race and Ethnicity.”
social class. (Caste is introduced in Chapter 4.)	Chapter 8, “Social Stratification and Class.” For a specific discussion on caste, see Chapter 8, section: “Stratification Systems.”
socialization	Chapter 4, “Socialization and Interaction.”
sanctions	Chapter 7, “Deviance and Social Control.” For a specific discussion on sanctions, see Chapter 7, section: “Sanctions and Social Control.”
(field) research. (More research methods terminology is introduced in Chapter 4.)	For a full introduction to research methodology: Chapter 3, “Research Methods.”
theoretical perspectives	For a full introduction to sociological theory: Chapter 2, “History of Sociology and Social Theory.”
Chapter 4	
caste	Chapter 8, “Social Stratification and Class.” For a specific discussion on caste, see Chapter 8, section: “Stratification Systems.”
Research methodology: qualitative, quantitative, measures, indicators	For a full introduction to research methodology: Chapter 3, “Research Methods.”
Chapter 6	
correlated	For a full introduction to research methodology: Chapter 3, “Research Methods.” For a specific discussion on causation and correlation, see Chapter 3, section: “Quantitative Research Methods.”
Chapters 8 & 9	

Concepts First Introduced in Chapter	Suggested Introductory Material Found in *Sociology in Everyday Life*
social control	Chapter 7, “Deviance and Social Control.”

Integrated Openly Licensed Course Materials

This book includes openly licensed course materials that fully integrate with the open textbook. Anyone can retain, revise, remix, reuse, and redistribute them. Best of all, future instructors can build on existing learning pathways that are aligned with the textbook and chapter learning outcomes.

You can access openly licensed course materials in two ways:

- Instructor Course Packs for Social Change in Societies: A collection of aligned and accessible course materials shared by pilot instructors teaching at multiple Oregon institutions. Instructors designed each course pack with an equity lens in consultation with an instructional designer. In most cases, each course pack was revised with feedback from Oregon students and an advisory board of workforce members. Each course pack includes a complete course map, an instructor guide, and ancillary materials including weekly assignment prompts, rubrics, and suggested activities.
- OERCommons Group for Social Change in Societies: An ongoing repository of instructor-created course materials that integrate with the open textbook. Materials may include syllabi, assessments and assignments, lesson plans, activities, and entire course shells. Please note: not all OERC resources are reviewed for digital accessibility.

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Publisher's Message to Instructors

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This book is published by Open Oregon Educational Resources. It is part of our Targeted Pathways project, which used statewide data to target disciplines and courses in which to develop high-quality, openly licensed materials with an equity lens.

Targeted Pathways textbooks were developed in partnership with Chemeketa Press, which offers training in textbook development best practices and coaching to faculty authors. Chemeketa Press is the academic publishing arm of Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Oregon.

The contents of this book were partially developed under a grant from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief fund and a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. It is also supported by funding from Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

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Message to Students

This book is written by educators committed to providing inventive, useful material that invites you to think about society in unconventional ways. The chapter Learning Outcomes are important. They point to sociological concepts that will help you think critically and purposefully as you navigate the complex systems of our global society. They amplify our understanding of the causes, impacts, and responses to inequity and injustice in the world today. They'll guide you on an exploration of systems of power and privilege while highlighting the tremendous work of people resisting and working to transform those systems.

Equally important, this book is intended to support you in your overall well-being. As inspired by Kara Bobroff, Diné and Lakota educator and leader, we wish you a strong sense of your unique gifts, how to contribute those meaningfully, and the freedom to do so with all aspects of your identity. Our hope is that as you explore the topics presented, you will be motivated to confidently and holistically engage in the communities you are a part of and beyond.

We relied on a global wealth of wisdom and experiences to convey ideas of social change. To that end, you'll read some terms of non-English languages and worldviews of many perspectives. We invite you to dive into the cross-cultural experience this offers by listening to the experiences and concepts of others who might live and believe in dramatically different ways than you. To best share those ideas first-hand, they are presented in extended quotes and multimedia format (in subtitled video stories, personal accounts, audio, and rich images).

Finally, this content is created to bolster your ability to think thoroughly and independently about our social systems. Open Oregon Educational Resources has included interactive question tools that are intended to support your engagement with the material. You'll also find links in the chapters that allow you to jump back to previous content that relates to the material at hand. Instead of reading for memorization, we encourage you to make connections between concepts, to your lived experiences, and to what you observe in the world.

Now click the button in the lower right corner labeled "Next →" to turn the page!

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References

Education Reimagined. 2021. "Bringing Forth the Wisdom and Practices of Indigenous Communities." July 22.

Manuscript Development Process

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This book went through an extensive pre-production process before it was launched in order to be accountable to the project's equity lens; revise drafts for quality; and incorporate feedback from scholars, practitioners, and students in the discipline.

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Additional Resources

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Google Doc Version of This Book

Link to view-only Google Doc version of this book – make a copy to start editing!

Note: minor post-production changes might not be reflected in the Google Doc. Check the web book for the most current version of this textbook.

Detailed Outline

The following detailed outline lists the sequence of topics and sub-topics covered in each chapter. We hope that reviewing this sequence will help future educators who may wish to adapt parts of the textbook for a specific course or project. Please note that the Pressbooks Table of Contents offers a high-level outline of this sequence, whereas this detailed outline shows each subtopic. Content can also be located by keyword by searching this book (upper right).

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 1: How Does Social Change Matter to You?

Learning Objectives

This chapter offers you the opportunity to:

- Explain how experiences of social change are based on diverse environmental circumstances, historical realities, and cultural perspectives.
- Describe how to apply an equity lens to the study of social change.
- Discuss what social change means to you and your community according to the history, cultural perspectives, and environmental circumstances you have experienced.

1.1: Chapter Story

1.2: The Art of Sociology

1.3: Diverse Experiences of Social Change

1.4: Conclusion

1.5: References

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1.1: Chapter Story

SNOWBALL FIGHTS IN FRANCE AND BAGHDAD: THE STUDY OF OUR LIVES

In 2020, a video emerged on social media depicting a curious scene from 1897 in Lyons, France (figure 1.1). Joyous adults are engaged in a snowball fight in the street. Women join in their work aprons. One man in coattails seems especially enthralled with the game. A bicyclist attempts to pedal through the scene but is pelted as well, causing him to fall heels-up in the snow.



Figure 1.1. "Snowball Fight (Lyon, France in 1896)" [Streaming Video] (time: 52 seconds) was filmed by the Lumière brothers. They developed the first motion picture, marking a major achievement in communications technology. This video has music but no words. Video description.

The original version was shot by Auguste and Louis Lumière. The Lumière brothers are considered the fathers of cinematography, having filmed the first motion picture two years previously, marking a major achievement in communications technology. "Snowball Fight" went viral in 2020 after amateur Russian photographer Joaquim Campa applied artificial intelligence (AI) software to colorize it and smooth out the motion (Anderson 2020). Take a look at the 52-second film. As you do, can you imagine why the scene was so enthralling that it went viral?

Below the video, one commenter exclaimed: "It's surreal to watch people from more than a hundred years ago having fun in much the same way we would today." *New York Times* writer Sam Anderson (2020) wrote about his fascination this way:

> *On an intellectual level, we all understand that historical people were basically just like us.…The ancestors who laid down our roads and built our houses and planted the trees whose leaves still clog our gutters.…*
>
> *They lived, as we do, in the throbbing nerve pocket of the now. They were anxious and unsure, bored and silly. Nothing that would happen in their lifetimes had happened yet. The ocean of time was crashing fresh waves, nonstop, against the rocks of their days. And like us they stood there, gasping in the cold spray, wondering what people of the past were like.*

Our Fascinating Lives

You've likely wondered what life was like 100 years ago or so. Was it harder? Was it more enjoyable in some ways? How did people love? What was it like to raise children? "Snowball Fight" may be fascinating to us because it allows us a peek into these mysteries. We wonder about these individuals, called away from their day to play in the snow.

“Snowball Fight” may also be intriguing because, as observers from a different era, we sense that those individuals’ lives were shaped by societal realities of the time. Various social, cultural, and political circumstances—of the past and present—shaped the life experiences of each snowball fighter that winter in 1897. Equally important were the environmental circumstances that impacted their lives and how all of those variables interacted.

These kinds of images also inspire us to compare the experiences of groups living at the same time. Consider figure 1.2, which is a photograph taken at Princeton University in 1893, snapped just after a snowball fight between freshmen and sophomores. It seems this group had a much different encounter than those in the Lumière film four years later. What social dynamics can you imagine were at play with the Princeton University students before this photograph was taken? Did snowball fights have a different meaning to them than to residents of Lyons?



Figure 1.2. Photograph of bruised Princeton students looking disgruntled after a snowball fight between freshmen and sophomores, 1893. Historical images can give us insights into the meaning people have associated with events in their lives.

Images can also inspire us to make comparisons between societies across time. Take a look at some images of snowball fights around the world (figures 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5). What social circumstances can you imagine existed during those scenes? What different meanings can you imagine were associated with the snowball fight across the centuries and locations represented?



Figure 1.3. An 1882 multipanel work by Taiso Yoshitoshi (1839–1892) shows three women on a platform in Japan observing a raucous snowball fight among people below.



Figure 1.4. U.S. Army first lieutenants at an outpost in Afghanistan during a snowball fight on February 20, 2012.



Figure 1.5. This circa-1400 image of two people having a snowball fight was found in a Latin translation of *Tacuinum Sanitatis*, an 11th-century Arab medical treatise authored by Ibn Butlan of Baghdad.

For example, the circa-1400 picture of a snowball fight in figure 1.5 is found in a Latin edition of *Tacuinum Sanitatis*. Philosopher Ibn Butlan of Baghdad wrote the Arab medical handbook in the 11th century. It contains illustrations and writing on physical and mental well-being, including topics such as the benefits of fresh air and alternating activity and rest. The handbook was popular into the 16th century and demonstrates the strong influence of Arab culture on people living in early modern Europe (Loudon 2002). The edition was printed in Lombardy, Italy, so we might assume that 13th-century residents of Lombardy found the snowball fight integral to good health.

This collection of images also confirms that snowball fights have been common across societies for some time. Said another way, snowball fights are part of culturally universal expressions. **Culture** is the shared beliefs, values, and practices in a group or society. In the social sciences, a **cultural universal** refers to concepts, ideas, or patterns of behavior that are common to all human cultures. Snow is not available in all parts of the world, but play-fighting and humor do exist universally. While social circumstances change over time, impacting peoples' lives differently, much also stays the same across centuries and continents.

Social Change, Your Community, and You

When we are inspired to imagine how social realities shape people's lives, we are beginning to practice the art of sociology. As we wonder about the meaning that members of society place on activities like snowball fights, then make comparisons to find differences or universal experiences, we are also practicing sociology. Similarly, when we look at societal changes over time that influence those experiences, we practice the study of social change.

This textbook will focus on how sociology views and studies social change. We'll define sociology and social change in the next pages. We'll then explore how sociologists apply data and diverse perspectives to understand the interactions between individuals and the society around them. We'll explore the causes, impacts, and dynamics of social change, focusing on how societies are organized, current and historical events, and unequal power relations. We'll also explore ways of better understanding how to contribute to social change in a variety of settings: within civil society, government, or private agencies; as volunteer activists; or working in your chosen professions.

Before we dive far into the discipline of sociology, we want to encourage you to look further into how social change matters to you and your community in your everyday lives. By **community**, we mean a group of people with whom you share relationships, experiences, and a sense of meaning and belonging. In this chapter, we'll focus on the meaning of sociology and the importance of acknowledging diverse experiences as we practice sociology.

We'll look broadly at the era during which "Snowball Fight" was filmed to show how we can make more connections. Then, to support your exploration of how social change matters to you, we'll introduce some societies that we hope have different cultural expressions than what you are familiar with. We'll highlight perspectives from three societies less entrenched in colonized and European influences: Sámi people living near the Arctic Circle, war resisters of northern Colombia, and Quechua and Aymara communities of the Andes in South America. This chapter will encourage you to ask questions about how experiences of social change differ based on diverse environmental circumstances, historical realities, and cultural perspectives.

- How do environmental changes affect communities' experience with social change?
- How does war affect communities' experience with social change?
- How does culture affect communities' experience with social change?

It's a powerful exercise to frame social change in the context of your own experience and that of your community. This chapter also prompts you to explore:

- What does social change mean to you and your community according to the history, cultural perspectives, and environmental circumstances you have experienced?

Going Deeper

See more photos of snowball fighting in this collection of "Snowball Fights in Art" [Website] from 1400 to 1946.

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Figure 1.2. "Princeton students after a snowball fight between freshman and sophomores, 1893," (cropped) is on Wikimedia Commons and in the public domain.

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1.2: The Art of Sociology

Sociology is a science guided by the understanding that "the social matters: our lives are affected not only by our individual characteristics but by our place in the social world, not only by natural forces but by their social dimension" (The Health of Sociology 2007).

Sociologists study the culture of societies as we did in the Chapter Story. They explore how social groups shape our identities and behaviors. They also study how society is organized. They focus on the structures of society, such as how **institutions**—large-scale social arrangements that are stable and predictable, are created and maintained to serve the needs of society. We'll introduce more of the structure of society in Chapter 2.

Lived Experiences of Social Change

In the previous section, we laughed along with the revelers in Lumière's "Snowball Fight [Streaming Video]," and you may have been inspired to learn about the social realities that were present during its filming. With some research and some sociology, the setting and story expand, allowing us to ask more questions.

Late 1800s France was the center of the Belle Époque, or "Beautiful Era," of Europe. It was a time of optimism; regional peace; economic prosperity; and technological, scientific, and cultural innovations. The life expectancy of children rose. Mass transit was new, and education was more available to many people. Literature, music, theater, and the visual arts flourished, especially in Paris. Daily news publications and advertising were expanding immensely. Running water, gas, electricity, and sanitary plumbing were more available to the middle class.

Disposable incomes were plentiful enough to enjoy luxurious items such as fashionable clothing and travel. The quality and quantity of food had improved, with the purchase of spirits increasing by 300 percent and sugar and coffee by 400 percent. Historians think of this era as full of hedonism, sexual liberation, and the fading of social barriers.

At the same time, tension and trouble existed in France, as in all places exploding with change. The French feminist newspaper *La Fronde* (The Slingshot) was first published in Paris in 1897, the same year that "Snowball Fight" was filmed. The struggles of female workers in match factories inspired Fronde's founder, who was disheartened by how they were portrayed in the mainstream or "masculine" press. *La Fronde* publications covered issues of working conditions and equal pay for women. Its articles presented women as knowledgeable and opinionated on topics traditionally only assigned to men (Faiers 2021; Roberts 2002).

Politics became more divided, with the extremes of the left and right gaining support. Some groups viewed cultural changes afoot as decadent and immoral. While some members of the lower classes experienced improved living conditions, most urban poor still lived in cramped homes, received low wages, and faced terrible working conditions and poor health. The government still delivered capital punishment publicly with the guillotine. Society, including politicians, challenged the status of the Catholic Church at this time, and anti-Catholic laws were passed restricting religious instruction in all schools. There was a push to require civil (rather than church) marriages. Divorce emerged in the mainstream consciousness as an option for unhappy unions.

Tuberculosis was a dreaded disease, causing 100,000 deaths annually (Mitchell 1988) and changing society in many ways. Citizens battled over laws regarding health services, the registration of people who had the disease, and the mandate of quarantines. Tuberculosis was still a concern in the early 1900s, when the newspaper, *La Voix du Peuple* (The Voice of the People) published the two cartoons in figure 1.6. One image shows a sickly worker underneath the words "10 hours" with the caption: "Long days breed the seed of tuberculosis." The other image shows a much healthier individual underneath the words, "8 hours." This image clearly identified the dual sentiment of fear of tuberculosis and the campaign for workers's rights at the time (Barnes 1995).



Figure 1.6. Cartoons printed on page 3 of *La Voix du Peuple*, May 1, 1906 (Barnes 1995). Translated, the caption on the left reads, "Long days breed the seed of tuberculosis." This illustration is a snapshot of a society at the time that feared tuberculosis and campaigned for workers' rights.

How might these social circumstances have shaped the lives of the rowdy crew of Lyons? For example, considering the progressive representations of women in the media, was it liberating for them to ice-brawl with men in the street? Cinematography had just been made possible. How might this brand-new recording format have shaped their experience that day? Most medical professionals at the time agreed that one was vulnerable to tuberculosis if deprived of air, sunlight, and exercise (Mitchell 1988). Was fear of tuberculosis a partial driver of their participation? How might other social circumstances have shaped the experiences of these snowball fighters?

We can also see patterns between the Belle Époque in France and other social realities across time and place. For example, the United States is currently experiencing political polarization as well. In 2022, U.S. employees of Starbucks organized the company's first unions, demonstrating that workers' struggles are an ongoing social issue. We are reminded that U.S. and European societies have often struggled with how to deal with pandemics, as we have struggled with COVID-19. It may be universal that during each pandemic, some groups rebuke the mandates of social leaders (such as masks and quarantine) designed to curb the spread of disease.

These social realities of the late 1800s in France are snapshots of how society shifted in the country, Europe, and the world. These are examples of **social change**, or the transformations in human interactions and relationships that happen over time and transform cultural and social institutions. In this way, sociology also asks:

- How do societies change and why?
- In what ways do human interactions, behavior patterns, and cultural norms change over time?

Imagine yourself as an adult in France in 1897. How would the social attitudes, circumstances, and social changes have influenced your life at the time? How would they have influenced your life if you were a working-class Catholic man? An upper-class teenager? How would your family have been affected? How would the diverse communities of Lyons be influenced?

The Study of Social Change with an Equity Lens

Sociology also goes further to examine connections that may not be as easy to see, particularly not as easy to see by the white, upper-middle-class professionals who still make up the majority of sociologists today. A good sociological study of social change is done with an **equity lens**. An equity lens acknowledges that race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality are related to **social inequality**, the unequal distribution of power, resources, rewards, and positions in societies. Some examples of social inequality include a lack of representation of people of color in government, unequal access to safe homes, uneven access to quality health care, and income gaps between women and men.

Sociology done with an equity lens pays attention to how changing human interactions, behavior patterns, and cultural norms affect groups who live with less access to opportunities and services, experience discrimination, or are the targets of violence and oppression. Further, this lens informs action to identify and address systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

For example, the study of social change with an equity lens devotes attention to the impact of social change among Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). It inquires about the impact of social change among people who identify outside of the gender binary (the notion that gender is exclusive to being a man or woman). It examines how people living with disability, veterans, new immigrants, or those who practice a religion prone to discrimination experience social change. Social change can create improved circumstances for members of those groups, or it can exacerbate inequity and violations of civil and human rights.

At the same time, studying social change with an equity lens means being vigilant about identifying the (often hidden) role that members who identify within these groups play in influencing social change. Let’s see how we might expand our study of the Belle Époque with an equity lens.

Eurocentrism and the Belle Époque

We often read about the Belle Époque described through a Western and white lens. For example, an internet search of art from the Belle Époque reveals the gaiety, artistry, and playfulness of this time. One good example is the painting in figure 1.7 by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *At the Moulin Rouge: The Dance*.



Figure 1.7. *At the Moulin Rouge: The Dance* by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1890).

However, it is not as easy to find images of people of color from this era in France. That's because the work of white French artists has been elevated in museums and used to depict this time period. There is a noticeable absence of artistic representation by people of color in our accounts. This is one of many examples of **Eurocentrism**—a worldview, mindset, or communication that centers white European ways of knowing as sole, central, or superior to all others.

Painter Kehinde Wiley makes a statement about this Eurocentrism in his series *A New Republic*. He portrays contemporary African Americans using the conventions of traditional European portraiture, drawing attention to the absence of African Americans from historical and cultural narratives (figure 1.8).



Figure 1.8. Painter Kehinde Wiley (right) has created a series called *A New Republic* (left). It is a commentary on the Eurocentrism that exists in art, as it represents society in the 1800s.

We have to study deeper to learn how immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean, and North America lived in European cities at the time. For example, we know that many Black U.S. immigrants had come to France following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803,

when the United States acquired a large piece of land from the French. Suddenly, Black people went from living free in a French territory to living in a state with a policy of segregation and political, social, and economic discrimination against non-whites. Instead of enduring life under those circumstances, an estimated 50,000 free Black people chose to emigrate to France (Beardsley 2013).

By the Belle Époque, Black people were working in domestic service or as laborers, seamen, musicians, dancers, and other entertainers (Childs and Libby 2017). There were also high-profile Black individuals of this era in France. While their presence is limited, some have been acknowledged in print. For example, Severiano de Heredia, a Cuban-born biracial politician, served in what was the equivalent of the mayoral post in Paris from 1879 to 1880 (figure 1.9). He was the first mayor of African descent of a Western world capital (Audureau 2020; Triay 2015a).



Figure 1.9. Severiano de Heredia, the first mayor of African descent of a Western world capital. He served in Paris from 1879 to 1880.

Heredia's contributions to the progressiveness of the Belle Époque included initiatives to support universal and continuing education, libraries, and the environment. He favored the separation of church and state, a free press, women's rights, and child labor reforms. He is noted for his response to a severe winter during his term, finding shelter for the unhoused and employment for 12,000 Parisians (Mayeur and Arlette 2001). Heredia also dedicated his work to the building and improvement of electric cars (Atisu 2019). However, he did not receive public recognition for his work until 2013, when a walkway was named in his honor in Paris (Triay 2015b).

The Belle Époque as an Algerian

What else can we learn about the experiences of people of color during the Belle Époque? We know that colonialism played a major role. **Colonialism** is the military, economic, and ideological conquest of one society by another. It results in one society settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area.

France has been a colonizing state since the 1600s. But by the Belle Époque France had recently taken over territories in Vietnam, Cambodia, China, Tunisia, and Gabon, adding to its colonial expansion (Chafer 2002). Immigrants fled from these countries due to the violence and destruction of their ways of survival, which is part of the colonization process. So by 1897, and the filming of "Snowball Fight," immigrant groups from these countries also existed in France (House n.d.).



Figure 1.10. Map of France in green and Algeria in orange (left). A portrait by Felix Philippoteaux (1866) of Chérif Boubaghla and Lalla Fatma n'Soumer leading the resistance against French colonization (right).

The French military invaded Algeria in 1830. Because Algeria had many more settlers than other colonies and was close geographically, the French government invested great effort in maintaining its power and resources there. After France conquered Algeria's military, they spent 40 years squashing Tribal rebellions with campaigns and scorched-earth colonization operations, a tactic that destroys or steals all resources and assets (figure 1.10).

As a result, Algeria suffered land grabs, wealth extraction, massacres, deportations, famines, and epidemics for 40 more years. Eventually, 825,000 Indigenous Muslims were killed (Phipps 2021). This level of death and oppression is considered **genocide**, the systematic and widespread extermination of a cultural, ethnic, political, racial, or religious group.

The colonization and genocide of Algeria was supported by ideas spread by the Catholic Church that cast Algerians as racially inferior and socially undeveloped. Muslim practices such as women wearing veils and the separation of genders were touted as backwards and in need of intervention, particularly to "save" the Muslim women. The idea was that a morally and benevolent French rule could modernize and improve their lives. With this rationalization, tens of thousands of Algerians were sold as enslaved people or brought to France to work in mines (Phipps 2021).

Knowing these bits of history, it is possible to find images of Islamic Algerians under French rule. Many, taken later in the Belle Époque, are photographs that had been taken for postcards in occupied Algeria and sent back to France for sale. Frequently, women were depicted in a way that catered to the romanticized notions that French citizens held of Algerian habits and culture. As author and critical theorist Sarah Sentilles writes, "…they imagined them: lounging in harems, smoking hookahs, trapped in the prison of their own homes, topless, sexually available" (Sentilles 2017).

While this was far from reality, and most Algerian Muslim women wore veils in public, the photographers capitalized on the opportunity to provide images suited to these stereotypes. Sentilles writes:

> *They hired models, often from the margins of society, and paid them to pose and to wear costumes. In their studios, the photographers used props and backdrops to create bedroom interiors, decorated spaces with hookahs and coffee pots and rugs to look like harems, and placed bars on windows to produce a sense of imprisonment. If Algerian women would not take off their veils voluntarily, the photographers would pay them to do so (Sentilles 2017).*

Figure 1.11 is a good example of hundreds of staged photographs taken of Algerian women under French occupation during the 19th century.



Figure 1.11. Staged image of an Algerian woman with a hookah. It's a good representation of the romanticized notions that French citizens held of Algerian habits and culture.

With this background, it's easier to shape an informed idea of what living in Algeria would have been like after France invaded. It's also easier to understand what living in France as an Algerian might have been like. Most likely, we would have emigrated by force or economic need. In all cases, our lives and the lives of our families and community would have been dramatically affected by the social changes that developed due to the occupation.

Tracing History's Impact on the Present

Another task crucial to the art of sociology with an equity lens is understanding how social circumstances and social changes in the past influence social dynamics of the present. For example, in France today, full facial veils are banned in public spaces. Likewise, religious head coverings are illegal in schools and government buildings. Proponents say these laws are intended to dampen religious "extremism," while critics say they unfairly target the country's minority Muslim population.

In 2021, the French Senate voted to ban girls under 18 from wearing the hijab in public spaces. The vote also gave administrators of public swimming pools the right to ask women not to wear burkinis, the whole-body swimwear worn by some Muslim women. The amendment sparked a social media campaign, including the Instagram image in figure 1.12 posted by model Rawdah Mohamed. Her hashtag #HandsOffMyHijab trended widely.



Figure 1.12. Image of Rawdah Mohamed from her Instagram profile with “Hands off my Hijab” written on her hand. Full facial veils are banned in public spaces in France, a law many criticize as rooted in centuries of beliefs of racial superiority.

In 2021, Catherine Phipps wrote an article that relates France’s colonial past to the country’s increased restrictions on Muslim women wearing veils. She refers to **imperialism**, the practice of a nation forcefully imposing its rule or authority over other nations, and makes these connections:

> *These efforts to “liberate” Muslim women reiterate attitudes about women’s bodies and religious symbols that are rooted in the history of French imperialism. They echo French justifications for imperialism abroad, which was framed as a “civilizing mission” that masked widespread colonial violence. Such attitudes are rooted in centuries of beliefs of racial superiority and a need to “protect” Muslim women. By recognizing this historical tie, we can see how the overt violence inherent in imperialism is still influencing the daily lives of many Muslim women in France today (Phipps 2021).*

In many ways, the attitudes, power structures, and discrimination known during Colonial France continue today. Applying an equity lens, what other historical social circumstances and changes can you imagine may have influenced the lives of people in France during the “Snowball Fight” of 1897?

Going Deeper

- For more connections between French colonialism and current life in France, watch this 13:59-minute video: “France’s Colonial Past and Race Relations Today” [Streaming Video].

- To learn more about the staged images of women in Algeria, see Zara Choudhary's article "Unveiling the Algérienne: French Colonial Photography" [Website].
- To read more on how the visual arts imagined Black Europeans during the 19th century, read about an exhibition titled "The Black Figure in the European Imaginary" in the article "The Black Figure in European Art" [Website].
- To hear more about Kehinde Wiley and his work, watch "Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic" [Streaming Video].
- For more on Rawdah Mohamed's story, see her Instagram page.
- To learn about the resistance efforts of Algerians during the Algerian War (1954 – 1962), which led to Algeria's independence, watch *"The Battle of Algiers"* [Streaming Video].

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Figure 1.7. "Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, French – At the Moulin Rouge-The Dance," on Wikimedia Commons, is in the public domain. Courtesy of the Google Art Project.

Figure 1.8. Painting by Kehinde Wiley, in the series: "A New Republic" on Flickr by Garrett Ziegler is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 (left).

Figure 1.9. Screenshot of Severiano de Heredia is from the video, "Memoria de la Habana 167 Severiano de Heredia" by Ramon Fernandez Larreacanal, and licensed under the Standard YouTube License.

Figure 1.10. "Map indicating locations of Algeria and France," on Wikipedia, is in the public domain. "Chérif Boubaghla and Lalla Fatma n'Soumer, by Félix Philippoteaux," Kiddle encyclopedia is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

Figure 1.11. "Unveiling the Algérienne: French Colonial Photography" is in the public domain.

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Figure 1.8. Screenshot of Kehinde Wiley is from the video, "Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic" by the Brooklyn Museum and licensed under the Standard YouTube License (right).

Figure 1.12. "Hands off my Hijab" is found on Instagram and is included under fair use.

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1.3: Diverse Experiences of Social Change

How can we best identify the social changes that influence us and our communities? And how can we best see the social changes that we help create? Because we live enmeshed within the culture of our residence, it can be difficult to see some aspects of our own society. You might be more aware of some social changes better than others. Some changes are severe, receiving plenty of news and social media attention. Other changes tend to need more study to be able to see.

For example, some social changes that erupted during the emergency stage of COVID-19 were undoubtedly very evident to you. Nearly our entire globe experienced dramatic lifestyle changes. Many of us endured lengthy and isolating stretches of quarantine, stress about our health and the health of our loved ones, changes to work (whether working remotely or working more), and a shift to school at home.

Other changes sparked by COVID-19 may have been less visible. Lifestyle changes forced by a global pandemic shifted relationships. Extended families were isolated from each other, breaking links to emotional support. For example, some families were unable to gather for funerals. Through the work of research, we know that an increase in domestic violence in the United States coincided with lockdowns (Cannon et al. 2021).

Researchers point to relational silver linings of the pandemic, sharing that some people have found new positive meaning related to family, opportunities for strengthening relationships, improved appreciation, gratitude, and tolerance (Evans, Mikocka-Walus, Klas et al. 2020). Other research shows that for some, digital tools have taken on new relevance, as the pandemic prompted them to use unfamiliar technology or the internet in new ways. Many of these changes are difficult to see because we are living them in the moment.

It's often easier to see the role of social change in our own lives when we first examine societies and cultures different from our own. We introduced this chapter with stories from France for that reason. Let's look at a few more societies whose specific circumstances frame unique ways of experiencing social change.

Social Change and the Environment: The Sámi People



Figure 1.13. A map showing Sápmi (the Sámi people's name for their traditional territory), the approximate distribution of the various Sámi territories, and Sámi language groups.

One way to look at how different societies experience social change is by looking at the circumstances that impact them the most. As our global warming crisis advances, environmental changes dramatically impact societies. The Sámi people are the Indigenous people of the northern part of the Scandinavian Peninsula and large parts of the Kola Peninsula, which is almost completely inside the Arctic Circle.

The compilation of these areas in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Russia is called Sápmi, the Sámi people's name for their traditional territory. There, they number between 80,000 and 100,000 (IWGIA, n.d.). Figure 1.13 shows the approximate distribution of the various Sámi territories and language groups.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=669#oembed-1

www.flickr.com/photos/karlongchan/51856385033/

Figure 1.14. "Reindeer Standing in the Snow" [Streaming Video] This is a silent movie.

Sámi identity, culture, and survival are based on the ancient practice of reindeer herding. You can meet some especially charming reindeer in the 12-second video in figure 1.14. Each year, Sámi families follow the seasonal reindeer migration patterns, moving between winter and summer grazing territories. Sámi people use all parts of the reindeer for their sustenance. Rebecca Harris, a writer for the Indigenous rights organization Cultural Survival, explains:

> *Bone marrow fortifies soups. Iron-rich pancakes made from reindeer blood are traditionally fed to pregnant women. The animals' bones, sinews, skin, and fur are vital ingredients in the traditional Sami craft called duodji. Men traditionally use antlers, bones, and wood to make dishes and sleds. Leg bones are used as stoppers in Sami reindeer lassos. Women use reindeer fur and skin to make outdoor clothing—shoes, hats, gloves, and jackets (Harris 2007).*

Herders earn a living by selling reindeer for meat and their hides, which are both sold across Scandinavia and exported (Cohen 2018). They harvest seasonal food resources such as berries and herbs, living in considerable balance with nature and avoiding resource depletion. Sámi people also pay close attention to different reindeer behaviors and how they respond to changes in their environment (The Environmental Justice Foundation 2019).

The 3:23-minute video in figure 1.15, "People Under the Northern Lights" [Streaming Video], highlights the life of 83-year-old Karen Anna, a Sámi reindeer herder. As you watch, what do you notice is Anna's focus when she shares how life was different as a child? What do you notice is her focus when she talks of life before the 1960s?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=669#oembed-2

https://vimeo.com/356841119

Figure 1.15. "People Under the Northern Lights | Sami Reindeer Herder Karen Anna" [Streaming Video]. Please note: subtitles in multiple languages can be accessed for this video via closed captioning (CC). Transcript.

Karen Anna refers to life before the 1960s by referencing the snowmobile, which dramatically changed Sámi herding practices. She shares how important it is to check the quality of the land for reindeers' winter grazing. She digs in the snow to see if there is ice preventing them from accessing lichen to eat. Anna also speaks of a deep connection with her environment: the stars, the moon, and the northern lights as they "dance above the trees."

Indigenous Peoples the world over tend to be the first to feel the effects of climate change. Because the Sámi people live with such direct dependence on the natural world, they are dramatically affected by environmental changes. As the Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world, they face increased challenges to their reindeer husbandry, survival, and way of life (The Environmental Justice Foundation 2019). A report by the Environmental Justice Foundation explains Arctic warming's threat to the reindeer:

> *Unusually high temperatures above freezing are causing more frequent rain, which freezes on the ground into ice. Reindeer, trying to break through this ice layer to access the lichen, expend large amounts of energy, which they can ill afford at this harsh time of year. Often, they fail entirely to break the ice and starve to death. In 2013 alone, a total of 61,000 died as a result of these conditions in Arctic Russia (The Environmental Justice Foundation 2019:7).*

The report also shares some accounts by Sámi reindeer herders about how these environmental changes directly impact their lives. Aslat Simma is one herder who shares the following:

> *What is different nowadays is that in short periods of time, you get very cold weather, and then within two hours you have very warm weather, and when it goes so fast—for the animals, the plants, nature—it's very difficult to adapt to that…*
>
> *If I can't live like this, then what do I do? I have to change my way of life. And if I change my way of life, the culture and the way of doing things is going to change. It's my job, but also my life (The Environmental Justice Foundation 2019:4).*

As you can imagine, the stress of these changes is taking a toll on the mental health of Sámi people. In Sweden, suicide rates in Sweden among the Sámi people can be up to four times higher than the national average. Sámi youth contemplate or attempt suicide at twice the rate as their Swedish peers (Schreiber 2016).

We can go further to understand the Sámi people's experience with social change by listening to how they have been affected by natural resource exploitation in Sápmi. For decades, the Sámi people have fought against encroachment by industries on their lands. Many herding districts have lost grazing land to industrial projects, roads, power grids, and housing.

Watch this 2:05-minute video, "Indigenous Activism in Sweden" [Streaming Video], produced by Amnesty International, a human rights organization (figure 1.16). Maxida Märak, musician and activist, tells that part of the Sámi experience.



Figure 1.16. "Indigenous Activism in Sweden" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

The story of the Sámi and their deep connection to and reliance on nature is a powerful show of how some communities experience social change acutely through the lens of environmental shifts. Looking further, we can see how their experiences are exacerbated by the larger global society and demands on their territory. In the case of the Sámi people, the environmental challenges combined with the loss of land they face directly threaten their way of life.



Figure 1.17. In this video screenshot, the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó hangs two signs: One reads, “Neutral Zone; Private Property” to indicate they have declared neutrality in Colombia’s civil war. The second reads: “To remember is a commitment to the future.” (Optional: Watch “Protecting the Peace Pioneers” [Streaming Video] to hear more about the Peace Community from community leaders.)

Another way to look at how different societies experience social change is by looking at the major historical events that impact them the most. For example, armed conflict impacts communities deeply. The Peace Community of San José de Apartadó in Colombia is a good example of how a history of war can shape a community’s experience with social change.

The Peace Community of San José de Apartadó is in a very remote region in the far north of Colombia. Its original members (and in many cases their ancestors) have experienced displacement all their lives due to Colombia’s 50 years of violence and civil war. The conflict has endured between three armed group categories: members of guerrilla movements that organized to represent the rural poor against Colombia’s wealthy and oppose the privatization of natural resources; paramilitary forces organized to protect wealthy landowners; and the Colombian government fighting to regain control of territory.

Four hundred community members have been killed since the community was founded in 1997 (Patterson 2024). As farmers in remote regions of Colombia, they have been particularly at risk as revolutionaries. We’ll discuss the conflict in more detail in Chapter 3.

In 1997, this group of small-scale farmers from different villages signed a declaration to identify themselves as neutral among the armed actors of the conflict. They rejected the presence of all armed groups in their territory, began refusing the groups’ demands to support or join them, and formed tight-knit working groups to work more safely in their fields. This was a brave and inspired pioneering initiative in a violently contested region of Colombia (figure 1.17).

After declaring neutrality, the key to the Peace Community members’ safety was inviting international human rights protectors to support their endeavor. In 2004, they began to receive nearly round-the-clock accompaniment from human rights protectors who lived and traveled with them and provided support through diplomatic advocacy. Although displacement from some regions; killings by state police, military, and paramilitary groups; stigmatization; and ongoing threats continue to this day, the Peace Community has managed to establish a certain deterrence against armed actors due to international recognition of their project. On March 23, 2022, the community celebrated 25 years of peaceful resistance, and it continues to be an inspiring alternative model of community life.

Imagine a lived experience like this—one in which it is necessary to apply all of your resources of resilience, and one in which you need to include international supporters so integrally into your community’s existence. How would that shape your lens of social change?

Chris Courtheyn, a former human rights accompanier who lived and worked with the Peace Community, describes how the community integrates memories of their experiences into their social movement efforts. They devote considerable attention to

commemorating the massacres they've suffered and the members they've lost, mostly to military and paramilitary action. They install stones painted with victims' names in a memorial area and organize yearly pilgrimages to massacre sites (Courtheyn 2016). See images of a stone installation and a pilgrimage in figures 1.18 and 1.19.



Figure 1.18. Memorial stones built by the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó.



Figure 1.19. Memorial pilgrimage of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó.

For this community, the history of severe violence and armed conflict dramatically shapes their experiences of social change. One common saying during community gatherings is: "We shape our future by recalling our past" (Krouskop 2006). They look to the past and to their memories of the people they lost during the war to imagine and organize for their future.

Courtheyn further discusses how the Peace Community demonstrates an alternative way of responding to the violence perpetrated against their community. They avoid repeating the cycle of violence by setting aside vindictive action and replacing it with their commitment to their peace project by building "alternative, transformative and emancipatory politics through internal and external solidarity" (Courtheyn 2016:1).

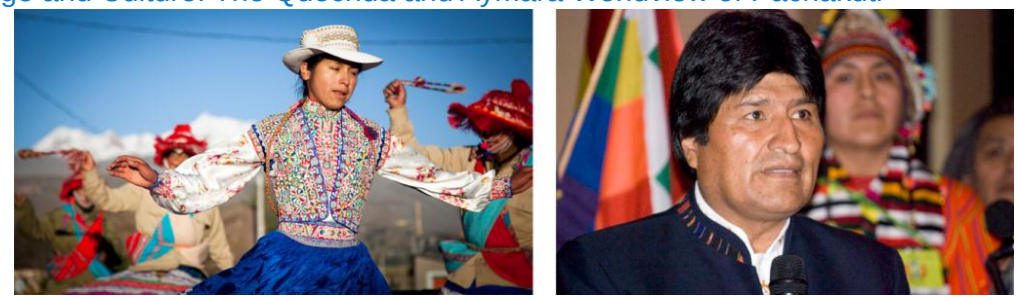


Figure 1.20. Photo of a Quechua dancer in Peru (left). Photo of Evo Morales (Aymara), the first Indigenous President of South America (right).

Our final focus will explore how communities' cultural worldviews shape their experience with social change. **Worldview** is a particular philosophy of life or conception of the world held by an individual or group.

The Aymara and Quechua Indigenous Peoples have a unique perspective that combines their experience of social and environmental change. Quechua people primarily reside in Peru and parts of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador (figure 1.20 [left]). The Aymara people primarily live in the central Andes in Peru and Bolivia; some also live in Argentina and Chile (figure 1.20 [right]).

While there exist many differences between the two cultures, they share a worldview called *pachakuti*. It's a term that is difficult to translate into Western thought. Literally, it's considered "the turning over of space-time" (Swinehart 2019). But loosely, we can think of it as when social and environmental circumstances undergo a major change. Power and authority of established systems are undermined, dramatically transforming social relations and social order (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2014). Pachakuti can also be understood as a moment in which the world dies and is reborn anew (MacCormack 1988:961; MacCormack 1993:961 in Bria and Walter 2019).

Perhaps the closest term in the English language is "revolution" (Swinehart 2019). But imagine that revolution as both social and environmental. Another way to understand this concept is through the origins of *pachakutis*:

> *…[They] exist as myth (such as in creation stories about the formation of the Andean landscape when giants roamed and turned into mountains), but they also exemplify a deeply rooted social memory of the various epochs and ages of Andean history (separating the pre-Inka from Inka times, or the Inka from the Spanish colonial period) (Bria and Walter 2019).*

While *pachakuti* describes the era during the Spanish invasion and the demise of the Inca Empire, it has also been used to illustrate times marked by rebellions, both during colonial times and afterward (Swinehart 2019).

Pachakuti also marks moments of environmental catastrophes and their aftermaths. Quechua communities are witnessing the disappearance of one of their most cherished elements of nature: the Andean glacial caps from which they receive essential water. From the perspective of *pachakuti*, the glaciers are seen as aging, heading toward a death and transformation, "existing much like any other living thing in the world" (Roncoli et al. 2001).

During this era of profound social and environmental transformation, Aymara and Quechua communities see the earth, as well as her inhabitants, as transitioning from one cycle of time and order to another. We are in the part of the cycle that creates destruction and chaos for a new world to begin.

Acknowledging Diverse Experiences with Social Change

The Sámi people of Sápmi, the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, and members of the Quechua and Aymara communities each experience social change through a unique set of circumstances and worldviews. Some of those realities influence how communities experience social change more profoundly than others. For the Sámi people, we can see how shifting environmental realities threaten their way of life. For Peace Community members, their recent history of war encourages them to intimately incorporate memories of those they've lost. For Quechua and Aymara communities, their understanding of how the world changes

in cycles and with transformation is inherent in their experience of social change. These are just some examples of the many ways communities are affected by social change or act to create social change. In the following chapters, we'll introduce many examples of what social change means to people in the United States and throughout the world.

Going Deeper

To learn more about the life of the Sámi people:

- Watch the 7:35-minute video, "My Day with a Sami Reindeer Herder [Streaming Video]" or this visually stunning 3:17-minute video: "The Adrenaline Rush of Herding Reindeer [Website]."
- You can also read the full 2019 report on Arctic climate change and its impact on the Sámi people by The Environmental Justice Foundation [Website].

For more information on the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, watch the 12-minute film "Protecting the Peace Pioneers" [Streaming Video].

To hear more about *pachakuti*, watch this 1.5-hour documentary: "PACHAKUTIQ – Time of Change – Documentary film – Naupany Puma" [Streaming Video].

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Figure 1.13. "A Map of the Traditional Sami Territories" by Taru Spiegel, in Will the Sami Languages Disappear? at the Library of Congress, is in the public domain.

Figure 1.14. "Reindeer Standing in the Snow" on Flickr by Kari Chan is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Figure 1.15. "People Under the Northern Lights" by Visit Norway is licensed under the Vimeo Terms of Service.

Figure 1.16. "Indigenous Activism in Sweden" by Amnesty International Sverige is licensed under the Standard YouTube License.

Figure 1.20. "Quechua Dancer in Peru" on Flickr by Alphis Tay is licensed under CC-BY-ND 2.0 (left). "Evo Morales" on Flickr by Sebastian Baryli is licensed under CC-BY2.0 (right).

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Figure 1.17. Screenshot taken from the 25 Aniversario Comunidad de Paz San José de Apartadó: Dignidad, memoria y resistencia video, on the colombiapbi YouTube channel, and included under fair use.

Figure 1.18. "Memorial Stones by the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó" from the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó is included under fair use.

Figure 1.19. "Memorial Pilgrimage of the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó" from the Peace Brigades International website is included under fair use.

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1.4: Conclusion

In this chapter, we've introduced the art of sociology by peeking into a specific place (Lyons, France) during a historical period of time (the Belle Époque) and imagining the experiences of those who lived there and then. We also examined the importance of applying an equity lens to sociology to acknowledge the diversity of experiences in the world and related to race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Often that means searching deeper to understand the lived experiences of members who are less likely to be acknowledged or have the chance to relay their own stories in print. We dug deeper into the colonial past of France and inquired about the lives of Algerians at that time.

Then we introduced the study of social change by exploring the experiences of three contemporary communities less entrenched in colonized and European influences. While their perspectives only offer a snapshot of the myriad of experiences with social change in the world, they are shaped by their diverse historical realities, cultural perspectives, and environmental circumstances.

As you read this book, consider the social changes that matter to you and one of the communities you belong to in a meaningful way. This might be your city, county, or region. It may also be your spiritual community, activist group, or town where you spent your childhood. What social changes have influenced you and that community the most? You might find them to be environmental, historical, or cultural, as we've discussed here. If so, you might ask:

- How are environmental changes shaping the life experiences of you and your community?
- How have historical social changes shaped the lived experiences of your community today?
- What cultural perspectives or worldviews shape how you and your community see social change?

Or you might find that other circumstances are more influential. What are those and how do you see them influencing lives in your community?

In the next chapter we'll introduce how sociology explores and understands social changes focusing on the frameworks that sociologists apply to study social change, then introduce the structure and organization of society and the process and patterns of social change. We'll continue to focus on how social changes are experienced with diversity, based on our place in the social world.

Review of Learning Outcomes

This chapter has offered you the opportunity to:

- Explain how experiences of social change are based on diverse environmental circumstances, historical realities, and cultural perspectives.
- Describe how to apply an equity lens to sociology and the study of social change.
- Discuss what social change means to you and your community according to the history, cultural perspectives, and environmental circumstances you have experienced.

Key Terms

- **colonialism:** the military, economic, and ideological conquest of one society by another. It results in one society settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area.
- **community:** a group of people that share relationships, experiences, and a sense of meaning and belonging.
- **culture:** the shared beliefs, values, and practices in a group or society. It includes symbols, language, and artifacts.
- **cultural universal:** concepts, ideas, or patterns of behavior that are common to all human cultures.
- **equity lens:** recognition that we do not all receive the same power and resources in society. This informs action to identify and dismantle systems of power, privilege, and oppression.
- **genocide:** the systematic and widespread extermination of a cultural, ethnic, political, racial, or religious group.
- **Eurocentrism:** a worldview, mindset, or communication that centers white European ways of knowing as sole, central, or superior to all others.
- **imperialism**: the practice of a nation forcefully imposing its rule or authority over other nations.
- **institutions:** large-scale social arrangements that are stable and predictable, created and maintained to serve the needs of society.
- **social inequality:** the unequal distribution of power, resources, rewards, and positions in societies.

- **social change:** transformations in human interactions and relationships that happen over time and transform cultural and social institutions.
- **sociology:** "a science guided by the understanding that "the social matters: our lives are affected not only by our individual characteristics but by our place in the social world, not only by natural forces but by their social dimension" (The Health of Sociology 2007).
- **worldview:** a particular philosophy of life or conception of the world or universe held by an individual or group.

Comprehension Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=671#h5p-1

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 2: The Study of Social Change

Learning Objectives

This chapter offers you the opportunity to:

- Explain how the sociological perspective is applied to social change.
- Describe the structure and organization of society as it relates to social change.
- Discuss the patterns and process of social change.
- Explain how sociology views environmental change and issues as social topics.

2.1: Chapter Story
2.2: Social Change and the Sociological Framework
2.3: The Structure and Organization of Society
2.4: Patterns and Process of Social Change
2.5: Society and the Natural Environment
2.6: Conclusion
2.7: References

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2.1: Chapter Story

“LIVING A PLENTIFUL LIFE”: THE REACH OF SOCIAL CHANGE

For members of Indigenous Aymara and Quechua communities, time and events are experienced as cyclical and rhythmic: continuous, uncertain, and fluid. Everything that happens is connected, regardless of when the event occurs. This is a worldview that is common to Indigenous Peoples (Cross 1997). *Pachakuti*, introduced in Chapter 1, is an important expression of this Aymara and Quechua worldview. *Pachakuti* (along with other meanings) marks periods of time when social and environmental circumstances undergo major change.



Figure 2.1. A photograph depicting Buen Vivir by a communications student at the University of Antioquia in Colombia.

Applied to current times, especially in the face of our environmental crisis, *pachakuti* reflects a call for the return of earth-based cultures that care for the earth and for the liberation of traditionally Indigenous lands (Arnez 2021). While the concept of *pachakuti* may be more limited to Aymara and Quechua communities, a related idea has been spreading into larger societies. *Buen Vivir* is a Spanish phrase that directly translates as “good living” or “living well.” The story of Buen Vivir and how it is growing as a globally recognized philosophy can tell us a lot about the reach of social change.

Buen Vivir

Buen Vivir interprets the Quechua and Aymara phrase *sumak kawsay. Sumak kawsay* is a call to envision an ideal and beautiful life: a life in harmony. It’s also an encouragement to apply our memories from the past to create meaning and hope for a dignified life in the present. These two ideas combined, it is a summons to live a “Plentiful Life” (Lechón 2017) (figure 2.1).

Crucial to this “Plentiful Life” is that our focus on well-being is not aimed at the individual. Instead, it promotes “collective well-being,” or care for our one great family (Arnez 2021). It calls for us to live a Plentiful Life in relation to our specific cultural-natural environment.

In order to live a Plentiful Life, **Buen Vivir** encourages a set of ethics that balances quality of life and democracy. Another idea crucial to a Plentiful Life is the rejection of segments of Western thinking that place humans as the most important entities on earth. Instead, Buen Vivir calls for humans to give inherent value to and have a reciprocal relationship with all living beings (Arnez 2021).

The concept of *sumak kawsay* has existed since before colonial times. However, as environmental degradation has advanced, it has moved into larger mainstream conversations in Latin America and beyond. Indigenous organizations have played a significant role in spreading the ideals of the Plentiful Life. These organizations included the Confederations of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru, as well as larger coalitions of the Andean world, such as the Andean Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations (Hidalgo-Capitán and Cubillo-Guevara 2017).

The way of life that Buen Vivir upholds was incorporated into the constitutions of Ecuador (in 2008) and Bolivia (in 2009) (Zimmerer 2021). Ecuador’s new constitution outlined that the government will uphold *sumak kawsay* by:

- *Guaranteeing Ecuadorians have a right to live in an ecologically balanced environment;*
- *Acknowledging the Amazon rainforest is important for ecological balance on Earth and providing it protection;*
- *Developing economic, political, sociocultural, and environmental systems that support sumak kawsay ideals;*
- *And promoting the use of scientific research, technological research, and ancestral wisdom to achieve sumak kawsay (Pachamama Alliance n.d.).*

Bolivia's constitutional changes drew from Buen Vivir for guiding actions of the state. They include ensuring dignity, social and gender equity, and social justice for everyone in Bolivian society. Bolivia's 2011 Law of Mother Nature was the first legislation at the national level to bestow rights to the natural world (Mercado 2017; Rapid Transition Alliance 2018).



Figure 2.2. The first meeting of Andean peoples and nationalities for the Sumak Kawsay Plurinationality and Interculturality gathering, September 2011, in Quito, Ecuador. As a social movement, the principles of Buen Vivir have moved into mainstream conversations.

In 2011, in Quito, Ecuador, delegations from Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, and Chile joined their Ecuadoran hosts to attend the first gathering of Andean peoples focused on *sumak kawsay* (figure 2.2). Through keynotes and lectures, dances, and discussions, they shared principles and ambitions related to *sumak kawsay.*

Buen Vivir has become the way to communicate the ideas and ideals of *sumak kawsay* in Spanish, reaching a larger audience. Today, Buen Vivir influences academic and activist circles in North America, Europe, and Asia (Hernández and Laats 2020). In 2017, an international conference on Buen Vivir was held in Munich, Germany, to explore the question of "what is it that makes a good life?" The conference was supported by the European Commission (the governing body of the European Union), which promotes lifestyle choices and policies for positive effects on the environment and communities (Simpson 2017). Figure 2.3 shows a silent parade during the Buen Vivir conference in Munich.



Figure 2.3. Screenshot of a video taken of a silent parade during the “Buen Vivir” conference in Munich, 2017. Ideas related to Buen Vivir are reaching a larger global interest.

Social Change and Buen Vivir

How did the concept of Buen Vivir spread so rapidly and become part of an international consciousness? Why is it becoming increasingly important to people? Applying sociology to those questions, we can point to a mix of social interactions at the global level between nations or at the regional level, such as in ecological zones. We can also examine interactions at the community level among villages and cities, and at the smaller group level, such as between members of government or within families.

The concept of Buen Vivir has also spread due to a series of social processes. These include changes in our culture, institutions, systems, and ways that we learn to relate to each other. Buen Vivir’s influence is related to how, as individuals, we create and regularly reshape our social identities and the differences we experience based on our place in the social world. It is also a response to environmental changes, recognizing that our lived experiences are integrally linked to the natural world.

In this chapter, we’ll explore how sociology explores and understands social changes like the shift toward Buen Vivir. We’ll begin with the frameworks that sociologists apply to study social change, then introduce the structure and organization of society and the process and patterns of social change. We’ll weave in examples from the institution of family to illustrate some concepts. Finally, we’ll explore ways of viewing the connection between society and environmental shifts.

This chapter will encourage you to ask questions about how society influences our individual decisions and how decisions made collectively shape social change.

- How do we give meaning and value to behavior, ideas, or objects?
- What are the processes and patterns of social change?
- What are the connections between our environmental crisis and society?
- What do we need to know to make effective decisions to improve the environment as a society?

Going Deeper

To learn more about Ecuador’s support of Buen Vivir, browse through their 2008 constitution [Website].

To learn more about Bolivia’s support of Buen Vivir, browse through their 2009 constitution [Website].

To learn more about Buen Vivir, read the report “Buen Vivir: Latin America’s New Concepts for the Good Life and the Rights of Nature” [Website with linked PDF].

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Figure 2.1. “Alli Kausay: el buen vivir” on Flickr by Altaír is licensed under CC-BY-NC 2.0.

Figure 2.2. “The First Meeting of Andean Peoples and Nationalities for the Sumak Kawsay” on Flickr by Cancillería del Ecuador is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

Figure 2.3. Screenshot taken from the “Buen Vivir: el futuro que queremos” video on the EU DEAR Programme YouTube channel, and included under fair use.

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2.2: Social Change and the Sociological Framework

All sociologists are interested in individuals' experiences and how interactions with social groups and society shape those experiences. To a sociologist, an individual's personal decisions do not exist in a vacuum. Cultural patterns, social forces, and influences pressure people to select one choice over another. Sociologists try to identify these general patterns by examining the behavior of groups of people living in the same society and experiencing the same societal pressures.

For example, most United States residents probably agree that we enjoy a great deal of freedom. Yet perhaps we have less freedom than we think because society influences many of our choices in ways we do not even realize. Perhaps we are not as distinctively individualistic as we believe we are.



Figure 2.4. As members of society, we are influenced to learn rules and expectations, such as holding the elevator door open for another passenger.

Think back to the last time you rode in an elevator. Why did you not face the back? Why did you not sit on the floor? Why did you not start singing? Children can do these things and "get away with it," because they look cute doing so, but adults risk looking odd. Because of that, even though we are "allowed" to act strangely in an elevator, we do not (figure 2.4).

We also know that, even though we learned how to ride an elevator a certain way, we are susceptible to the actions of others. Watch the 2:14-minute video, "Elevator Psychology – Social Influence" (figure 2.5). It's a clip from the 1960s television program *Candid Camera*. As you watch, imagine why the *Candid Camera* "stars" (the ones not aware of the experiment) follow the actions of the other elevator passengers.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=679#oembed-1

https://vimeo.com/402639401

Figure 2.5. "Elevator Psychology – Social Influence" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

There are many ways to approach sociology and understand our fascinating social behaviors, whether we are in an elevator or on the soccer field. However, understanding how social influences affect human behavior is the basis for understanding how society changes. This section will explore a few frameworks that shape sociology: sociological imagination, the social construction of reality, and the debunking motif.

Sociological Imagination

C. Wright Mills (figure 2.6) coined the term sociological imagination, an awareness of the relationship between a person's behavior and experience and the wider culture that shaped the person's choices and perceptions. In other words, sociological imagination is "the ability to look beyond the individual as the cause for success and failure and see the society in which one lives as the cause" (Mills 1959).

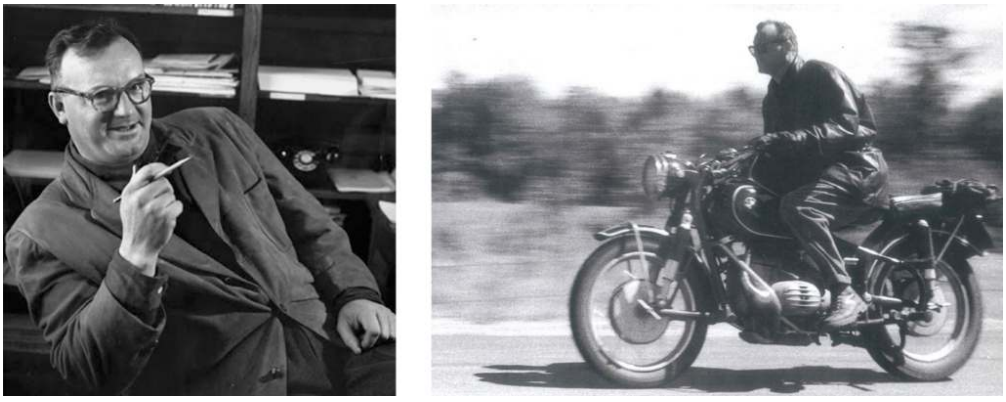


Figure 2.6. Photo of C. Wright Mills by Gambar Fritz Goro (left). Photo of C. Wright Mills by Yaroslava Mills and Nik Mills (right). C. Wright Mills coined the term "sociological imagination."

This framework helps us examine how people's experiences differ according to their place in society and the limitations and opportunities they experience as a result. The sociological imagination allows us to make connections between our personal experiences and the broader forces that impact us. Those forces may be economic, political, cultural, familial, educational, or environmental. They each influence the world we see, the opportunities available to us, and the challenges we face. Watch the 2:28-minute film "The Sociological Imagination

" (figure 2.7). As you do, consider the following: In what ways are you already using your sociological imagination?



Figure 2.7 "The Sociological Imagination" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Social Construction of Reality

The social construction of reality is another common framework for understanding society. When sociologists explain that something is socially constructed, they mean that as members of society, we decide the meaning and value of behaviors, ideas, or objects. This process is ongoing and happens through our everyday social interactions.

By creating meaning and value for ideas, objects, or actions, we make sense of the world, convey this understanding to others, and find ways of sharing those understandings. In turn, we can observe the consequences of that social construction (positive, negative, or neutral). Consider the various meanings people attach to the U.S. flag. For some, the flag represents hope, freedom, and life earned through courage and bravery. For others, the flag creates a sense of conflict because it is sometimes flown by white

supremacist groups that call for racial exclusion. Interactions with others created each of those meanings associated with the U.S. flag.



Figure 2.8. Screenshots of the City of Portland, Oregon's website list regulations related to pedestrian rules at crosswalks. Crimes, like failing to cross a street at right angles, are socially constructed.

Another good way to see social construction is through the lens of crimes. How many of us stop to think about how the crimes we commit every day have come into being? What's that—you say you don't commit crimes every day? A look at the "Charter, Code and Policies" page of the City of Portland, Oregon's website might reveal a different story (figure 2.8). Among other regulations, it is a crime to jaywalk. Specifically, it is a crime to cross a street other than within a crosswalk "if within 150 feet of a crosswalk." It is also a criminal act if you don't cross a street at a right angle unless crossing within a crosswalk.

Portland is not unique in its pedestrian regulations. Many cities have similar laws that residents are not immediately aware of. Some are very curious. For example, in Las Cruces, New Mexico, you may not carry a lunchbox down Main Street (Davison 2023). In Maryland, it is a violation to be in a public park with a sleeveless shirt (Stephenson 2011). And in Asheville, North Carolina, it is illegal to sneeze on city streets (Byrd 2015). Granted, many of these are from many years ago, when practices were very different, and most of these laws are not enforced. However, at one tim,e some members of societies attached meaning to these behaviors that deemed them criminal acts.

When we look at crime through the idea of social construction, we see that society has given certain meanings to our actions. This helps us step back, think about how society works, and ask the following questions:

- *Who distinguishes what behavior is a criminal act?*
- *Who determines which laws will be enforced, and how?*
- *Who decides which members of society violating those laws are pursued and punished?*

These kinds of questions help us wrestle with our society's inequities and begin to imagine ways to change them.



Figure 2.9. A 1937 U.S. government-sponsored poster emphasizing jaywalking dangers as part of a campaign with the automobile industry to make city streets more welcoming to drivers (left). The social construction of jaywalking has shifted over the years, and today, jaywalking is illegal in most states but criticized as a justification for police to stop Black and brown people (right).

In the case of jaywalking, the U.S. government began to discourage the behavior in the early 1900s. As more people were buying motor vehicles, officials wanted to prevent pedestrians from crossing wherever convenient for safety reasons. Later, the auto industry joined the campaign to make city streets more welcoming to drivers as part of their promotion of the automobile. Communications included shaming and ostracizing people who did not follow the rules (figure 2.9 [left]).

Today, some criticize jaywalking laws as justification for police to stop pedestrians, especially in Black and brown communities (figure 2.9 [right]). We know that police in many areas disproportionately stop people of color (Carvalho et al. 2021). For example, in Washington state, Black pedestrians are stopped by police for jaywalking 4.7 times more frequently than their share of the population (Campbell 2024).

While many of our laws related to criminal activity were implemented decades ago, they still reflect how we interact. Laws about how we punish people for crimes also reflect historical and current inequities. In 2022, Oregon only narrowly voted to strip language from its constitution that allows for slavery and involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime. Four states had similar initiatives on the ballot that year.

The language goes back to the adoption of the U.S. Constitution's 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery. Some states made exceptions to allow slavery as a punishment for a crime. As a result, Black United States residents continued to be arrested under false pretenses after the Civil War, allowing slavery to continue (Bogel-Burroughs 2022; Wilson 2022). Today, because the law allows for prisoners to be forced into labor for little or no pay, it's worth asking if this law means our system of slavery still exists.

The Debunking Motif

Another key tool used to understand the foundations of society is the debunking motif. As Peter L. Berger noted in his classic book *Invitation to Sociology*, "The first wisdom of sociology is this—things are not what they seem" (Berger 1963:23–24). Social reality, he said, has "many layers of meaning," and sociology aims to help us discover these multiple meanings. He continued, "People who like to avoid shocking discoveries…should stay away from sociology."

As Berger emphasized, sociology helps us see through conventional understandings of how society works. By "looking for levels of reality other than those given in the official interpretations of society" (Berger 1963:38), Berger said, sociology looks beyond surface understandings of social reality. It helps us recognize the value of alternative understandings. In this manner, sociology often challenges conventional understandings of social reality and social institutions.

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2.3: The Structure and Organization of Society

Studying social change with sociology requires focusing on how societies are structured and organized. Social structure is the building blocks or social patterns in which a society operates. It includes social institutions, status, and roles. Other elements of society that are foundational to the organization of social life are systems, cultural patterns, social facts, and socialization. Sociologists present these components differently. However, what matters is that we are influenced by them as we interact with others.

Structure of Society

To sociology lecturer Christopher Till, "Social structures are to sociologists what physical forces (such as gravity) are to physicists or what chemical elements (such as hydrogen or carbon) are to chemists" (Till 2015). They are sets of long-lasting social relationships, practices, and institutions that can be difficult to see at work in our daily lives. They are intangible social relations, but they work much like structures we can see: buildings and skeletal systems are two examples. Bones structure the human body; that is, the rest of our bodies' organs and vessels are where they are because bones provide the structure upon which these other things can reside.

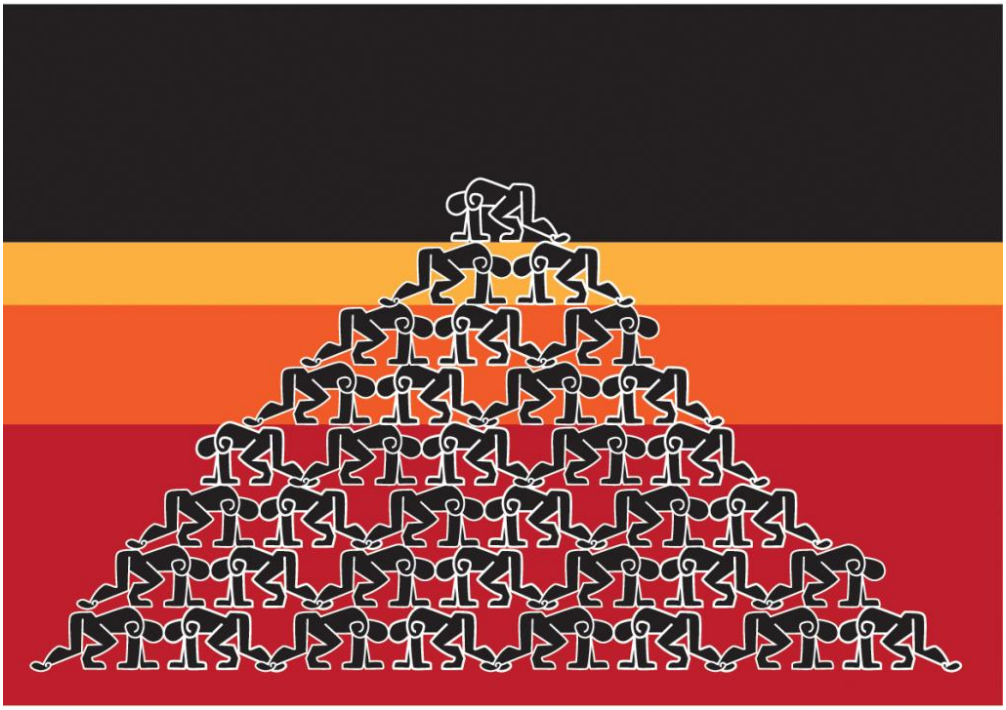


Figure 2.10. Graphic designer Shane depicts "Social Structure."

Social structure is society's complex and stable framework that influences all individuals or groups through the relationship between institutions (e.g., economy, politics, religion) and social practices (e.g., behaviors, norms, and values). Structures limit possibility, but they are not fundamentally unchangeable. For instance, our bones may deteriorate over time, suffer acute injuries, or be affected by disease, but they never spontaneously change location or disappear into thin air.

Social structure almost always involves a hierarchy among people, as society's patterned arrangements both limit and create opportunities for individuals. Typically, more opportunities are available for people who share similarities with those in positions of power (figure 2.10).

Institutions

Social structure is made up of many institutions. In Chapter 1, we defined institutions as "large-scale social arrangements that are stable and predictable, created and maintained to serve the needs of society." Examples of those institutions and related needs include the following:

- *Government* serves the need of society to establish laws.

- *Media* serves the need of society to establish methods of communication.
- *Family* serves the need of members of society to reproduce, raise children, and care for elders.

These arrangements reproduce themselves and show patterns across time and geography. Our institutions are often interconnected. For example, the economy, family, and education are separate social institutions that regularly intersect. Available work opportunities depend on the state of the economy and access to education. The arrangements of our families, including their economic status, may create or limit opportunities to pursue higher education.

Click through the Prezi presentation made by Elizabeth Berrios (figure 2.11) to learn more about some main institutions sociologists study: family, health and welfare, politics, economy, education, and religion. Clicking through each institution will also allow you to explore its functions.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=681

https://prezi.com/p/embed/v_ib6shcpyar/

Figure 2.11 Prezi illustration of "Social institutions" by Elizabeth Berrios. Each institution has unique functions. Transcript.

It's important to distinguish sociology's use of the term "social institution" from the more common use of "institutes." Institutes refer to organizations, establishments, or foundations devoted to promoting a particular cause or program. Specific colleges and research centers are often called institutes.

Social institutions are the elements of a social structure, the parts of social life that direct possible actions. To say these institutions direct possible social action means that within the confines of these spaces, there are rules, norms, and procedures that limit what actions are possible.

Roles and Status

People employ many types of behaviors in day-to-day life. Roles are patterns of behavior that we recognize in each other that are representative of a person's social status. Currently, while reading this text, you are playing the role of a student. However, you also play other roles in your life, such as "daughter," "neighbor," or "employee."

These various roles are each associated with a different social status, the rank or position that one holds in a group. Social status is also the prestige, responsibilities, and benefits attached to one's position in society. Some statuses are assigned—ones you don't choose, like being a son, an elderly person, or a female. Others, called achieved statuses, are obtained by choice, such as becoming a criminal, a self-made millionaire, or a nurse.

Watch either of the two 2.5-minute videos, published by Storycorps, an organization dedicated to "helping us believe in each other by illuminating the humanity and possibility in us all": "The Family Equation" [Streaming Video] (figure 2.12) or "My Aunties: Father Figures" [Streaming Video] (figure 2.13). As you do, how many statuses and roles can you see portrayed in the stories? How did those roles change when the parents and children faced challenges?



Figure 2.12. "The Family Equation" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.



Figure 2.13. "My Aunties: Father Figures" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

As a daughter or son, you have a different status than as a neighbor or employee. One person can be associated with a multitude of roles and statuses. Even a single status, such as "student," has multiple roles. As such, a role is expected of you as a student (at least by your professors); this role includes coming to class regularly, doing all the assigned readings, and studying the best you can for exams. Status refers to the rank in social hierarchy, while the role is the behavior expected of a person holding a certain status. Our roles in life have a great effect on our decisions and who we become.

Social Organization

In addition to structures, all societies have elements that are foundational to social life. Systems, culture, social facts, social networks, and socialization are important organizers of society.

Systems

Social systems are closely related to structure. Structure is the way in which parts of society are arranged. A **system** is a group of related parts that interact over time to form a whole that has a purpose, function, or behavior. We can conceive of systems as physical entities that we can observe and examine (like a tree or a subway system) or as abstract constructs we can use to understand our world (like worldviews or relationships).

A system includes both individual parts and the relationships that hold the parts together—these can be physical flows (for example, the neural signals that allow us to sense our environment) or simply flows of information in a social system. Many parts can form a whole, but unless they depend on and interact with each other, they are simply a collection rather than a system.

Your body is a system composed of different, interacting, and interdependent organs or nested subsystems. A set of parts, arranged and connected, is essential for you to survive. These components can function together in ways that would not be possible for each part on its own. Just as your body's connected organs work together to turn the food you eat into nutrients, all systems exhibit properties that emerge only when parts interact with a broader whole.

William Huitt presents a clear way to think about the systems model as it applies to human beings:

> *…consider the individual person as embedded first in the family then in the school and a circle of friends, and then in work or career. These are all embedded in one or more neighborhoods and a community which is, in turn, embedded in a region. These are, in turn, embedded in an international region and the world. The earth and solar system are part of the cosmos.*
>
> *This conceptualization highlights the multiple relationships an individual has and the need to consider the specific relationships that might be important for a specific individual. What is common to all people, at least at this point in time, is that all are part of the cosmos and living on planet earth (Huitt 2012).*

Many institutions are systems of organizations built from economic, political, and other spheres of activity (Walzer 1983). The economy is an institution, and capitalism is one kind of economic system that is made up of many forms of organizations, one of which is the multinational corporation.

Physicist and educator Fritjof Capra, PhD, is a forerunner in systems thinking and has dedicated his life to applying it to the development of sustainable communities. Watch the 1:43-minute video "Fritjof Capra Speaks to the Heart of the Matter" [Streaming Video] (figure 2.14) to learn about the systems perspective as a means for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. As you do, consider: What does Fritjof Capra say is crucial for building sustainable communities and solving global problems?



Figure 2.14. "Fritjof Capra Speaks to the Heart of the Matter" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

In an increasingly complex world, thinking about sets of institutions as systems can help us understand how they are connected. For example, poverty, houselessness, unemployment, economic shifts, and climate change are all interrelated. Applying systems helps us to identify actions for some of our most challenging problems, such as overpopulation of the planet, terrorism, and global climate change (Saran 2020).

Culture

Culture, as we defined in Chapter 1, is the shared beliefs, values, and practices in a society or group. Over the past century, American and European sociologists have developed various definitions of culture (Sewell 1999). At the broadest level, you could think of culture as "different ways of seeing and doing things" (Wray 2014:xix). Cultural sociology, a specific subfield within sociology, focuses on meaning-making, particularly with symbols, categories, and interpretation.

We introduced cultural universals with snowball fights in Chapter 1. They are patterns or traits that are globally common to all societies. Gift-giving, bodily adornment, language, humor, and religion are all cultural universals. They also include customs like funeral rites, weddings, and celebrations of births. However, each culture has its own ways of practicing traits differently.

For example, every human society recognizes a kind of 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 cultures, family members from all generations commonly live together in one household (figure 2.15). In these cultures, young adults live in the extended family structure until they marry and join their spouse's household. Alternatively, they may remain and raise their family within the extended family's homestead. In contrast, among many communities in the United States, individuals are expected to leave home and live independently for a period before forming a family unit that consists of parents and their offspring.



Figure 2.15. A Mongolian family in front of their ger (yurt) home. In many parts of the world, it is common for family members from all generations to live together in one household.

Cultural universals can also shift. For example, in some areas of the world, we are currently seeing a recognition of families that does not include reproduction or the care of children. They may be nonbinary couples, more than two adults living together as heads of a family, or cisgender couples who have decided not to have children.

Social Facts

Some sociologists study **social facts**—the laws, morals, values, religious beliefs, customs, fashions, rituals, and cultural rules that govern social life. These practices exist outside of us as individuals, and they act to define our behavior. Social facts make it possible to move beyond studying individuals to learn about the behavior of entire societies. Social theorist Émile Durkheim asserted that social facts are concrete ideas that influence the daily life of individuals.

Durkheim discussed social facts within the context of kinship and marriage, language, and religion. One well-known example of Durkheim's study of social facts is his examination of suicide rates. Using police suicide statistics from different districts, he found patterns in suicide rates that suggest suicide is not solely something that occurs at the level of the individual. He found that there is a very strong link between people taking their own lives and how they exist within social structures.



Figure 2.16. Image of a vase, circa 530 BC, depicting the Greek hero Ajax preparing for his suicide. Ajax took his own life in an act of humiliation after being passed over for promotion to lead the army by his fellow Greeks. Suicide has been a fact of life for societies throughout history, and Durkheim believed suicide to be related to a sense of belonging.

Durkheim proposed that suicide is related to our social integration: how well we know our place in society and how well we experience a sense of belonging. The mythical Greek story of Ajax can serve as a reminder that suicide has been a fact of life for societies at least as long as history can tell. Ajax took his own life during a deep period of humiliation after being passed over for promotion to lead the army by his fellow Greeks (figure 2.16).

Social Networks

A **social network** is the totality of relationships that link us to other people and groups and through them to still other people and groups. As Facebook and other social media sites show so clearly, social networks can be incredibly extensive. Social networks can be so large that an individual in a network may know little or nothing of another individual in the network (e.g., a friend of a friend of a friend of a friend). But these friends of friends can sometimes be an important source of practical advice and other kinds of help. They can open doors in the job market, introduce you to a potential romantic partner, or pass through some tickets to the next big basketball game.

Socialization

In addition to social facts and social networks, sociologists look at socialization as a foundational element of society. Let's return for a moment to the elevator example that we discussed earlier in this chapter. We can say that through our interactions with others, we have been socialized to act in an elevator a certain way.

Socialization is the lifelong process of an individual or group learning the expected norms and customs of a group or society through social interaction. We are socialized through interactions with our parents, friends, and other members of our social environment. Without socialization, we would not learn our culture, and without culture, we could not have a society. Socialization is an essential process for any society to be possible.

Socialization also affects how we identify. Think of the social influences that have informed how you identify, be it Latino or Hispanic, Filipino American or Central Asian, African, African American or Black, cisgender, transgender, male, female, queer, or heterosexual.

The Institution of Family

Let's look closer at some of these parts of society through the institution of family. To better understand family in society, sociologists might ask: How do employment and economic conditions play a role in families' experiences? How do people in the United States view marriage and family differently from those in other societies? With a social change lens, how do they view them differently over the years?

Consider the changes in U.S. families. The "typical" family in past decades consisted of married parents living in a home with their unmarried children. Today, the percentages of unmarried couples, same-sex couples, single-parent, and single-adult households are increasing, as well as the number of expanded households in which extended family members such as grandparents, cousins, or adult children live together in the family home. While 15 million mothers still make up the majority of single parents, 3.5 million fathers are also raising their children alone (U.S. Census Bureau 2020). Increasingly, single people and cohabiting couples are also choosing to raise children outside of marriage through surrogacy or adoption.

How do sociologists make sense of these changes? First, the pattern of humans' family formation in most societies is considered a social fact. The expectations we have to form families are created by society, and this tends to govern our social lives. Even if we decide not to marry or have children, we are influenced by this pattern. Second, family is considered the most important of the **agents of socialization**, the significant individuals, groups, or institutions that influence our sense of self and the behaviors, norms, and values that help us function in society. That has prompted sociologists to devote significant attention to the study of the family as an institution. Third, as culture shapes all of society, it also shapes the practices, values, beliefs, symbols, language, and artifacts associated with family. Culture affects the way people behave in families, while families shape the larger culture of their communities.

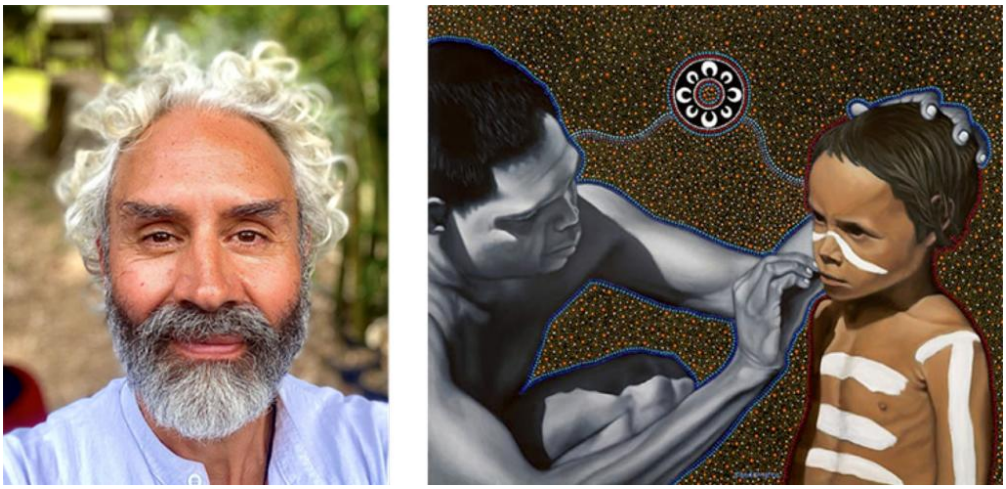


Figure 2.17. Artist Jandamarra Cad launched an exhibit in 2016 titled *Kinship* that explores the complex understandings of family in his culture (left). Jandamarra is of Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung descent. (Optional: Read more about the Yorta Yorta nation [Website] and the Djaara or Dja Dja Wurrung People [Website]). His work, *Nourish and Uncle*, shows how connections are an integral component of wholeness to his community (right).

Let's examine these concepts through a peek into Australian Aboriginal culture. For our inspiration, the artist Jandamarra Cad launched an exhibit in 2016 titled *Kinship* that explores the complex understandings of family in his culture. The exhibit included a painting titled *Nourish and Uncle*, which shows how connections are an integral component of wholeness to Aboriginals (figure 2.17).

Watch this 2:25-minute video, "What Is Meant by Kinship?" [Streaming Video] (figure 2.18), which describes how culture shapes the very complex structure of Aboriginal families in Australia. Do you see any difference between the kin structure that Colin Jones describes and the family structure that is familiar to you? What cultural practices, values, and beliefs do you see expressed in the kinship structure he describes?



Figure 2.18. "What Is Meant by Kinship?" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

For Australian Aboriginals, kinship refers to a system that determines how people relate to one another, responsibilities towards others, and marriage, ceremony, funeral roles, and behavior patterns. It also expresses a relationship to the natural world. Members are asked to adhere to kinship principles through their actions to create a cohesive and harmonious community.

Going Deeper

In 2018, the Scottish government applied a systems approach to determine how much progress had been made over the previous 10 years with their goals to serve the public. The goals of government officials were to:

- Create a more successful country.
- Give opportunities to all people living in Scotland.
- Increase the well-being of people living in Scotland.
- Create sustainable and inclusive growth.
- Reduce inequalities and give equal importance to economic, environmental, and social progress. (Scottish Government n.d.; OECD et al. 2020)

Find a visualization of their National Performance Framework on this page [Website]. How do you see systems thinking in the National Performance Framework?

To better understand Australian Aboriginal kinship, watch these videos: "Aboriginal Kinship Presentation: Nations, Clans and Family Groups" [Streaming Video], "Aboriginal Kinship Presentation: Skin Names" [Streaming Video], and "Aboriginal Kinship Presentation: Moiety" [Streaming Video].

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Figure 2.17. Image of Artist Jandamarra Cad is found on Instagram (left). *Nourish and Uncle* is found at "Jandamarra Cadd – Master Artist – Bridging the Divide" (right). Both images are used with permission of the artist.

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2.4: Patterns and Process of Social Change

In Chapter 1, we referred to social change as the ways that human interactions, behavior patterns, and cultural norms change over time. In other words, social change is the change in society created through social movements and external factors. Essentially, any disruptive shift in the status quo, be it intentional or random, human-caused or natural, can lead to social change.

Here, we'll focus on institutions, culture, technology, modernization, population, and social conflict as drivers of social change. Alone or in combination, these drivers can disturb, improve, disrupt, or otherwise influence society. When we look at social change through the lens of society's components, we can see reciprocal relationships. That is, each of these drivers of social change is also affected by social change in society.

Institutions as Drivers of Social Change

As we introduced previously, a main framework developed by functionalists is the concept of institutions. Researcher and author, Jim Woodhill, describes social change as "a complex dynamic of social structure and individual action." He adds, "Institutions essentially create incentives, both positive and negative, for individuals and groups to act in particular ways. People behave either to reinforce or undermine an institution" (Woodhill 2008). When members of society determine that an institution no longer serves them well, they will undermine or create shifts in that institution.

Each change in a single social institution leads to changes in all social institutions. For example, once the U.S. economy became industrialized, there was no longer the same need for large families to produce enough manual labor to run a farm. Further, new job opportunities were in close proximity to urban centers where living space was at a premium. The result is that the average family size shrank significantly (figure 2.19).



Figure 2.19. A painting by Théophile Deyrolle entitled *The Haymakers* depicts a pre-industrial family harvesting wheat (left). An untitled painting by an unknown artist, circa 1933–1943, depicts a postindustrial family (right). While farming did not cease, the U.S. economy changed dramatically during the Industrial Revolution, prompting changes in family routines and structure.

This same shift toward industrial corporate entities also changed the way we view government involvement in the private sector, provided new political platforms, and even spurred new religions and new forms of worship. It has also informed the way we educate our children, as originally schools were set up to accommodate an agricultural calendar so children could be home to work in the fields in the summer. A shift in one area, such as industrialization, means an interconnected impact across social institutions.

Culture and Technology

Culture and technology are other sources of social change. Changes in culture can change technology. Changes in technology can transform culture. Changes in both can alter other aspects of society (Crowley and Heyer 2011). The car and the computer are two good examples, from either end of the 20th century, that illustrate the complex relationship among culture, technology, and society.

The car was still a new invention at the beginning of the 20th century. Automobiles slowly but surely grew in number, diversity, speed, and power. People built roads and highways. Pollution increased. Families began living farther from each other and from their workplaces. Tens of thousands of people started dying annually in car accidents. These are just a few of the effects of the invention of the car. The car altered the social and physical landscape of the United States and other industrial nations as few other inventions have.

The development of the personal computer has also had an enormous impact. Anyone old enough will remember having to type long manuscripts on a manual typewriter. They will easily say how computers have changed many aspects of our work lives.



Figure 2.20. An early personal computer, the Commodore PET (left). Now, personal computers can weigh as little as two pounds and travel with us around the world (right). As computer technologies shift, so do our lives and societies.

E-mail, the internet, and smartphones have enabled instant communication and made the world a very small place. Tens of millions of people now use Facebook and other social media. A generation ago, students studying abroad or people working in the Peace Corps overseas would send a letter back home, and it would take up to two weeks or more to arrive. It would take another week or two to hear back from their parents. Now, even in low-income parts of the world, access to computers and smartphones lets us communicate instantly with people across the planet (figure 2.20).

As the world becomes a smaller place, it becomes possible for different cultures to have more contact with each other. This contact, too, leads to social change. Sometimes, one culture adopts some of the norms, values, and other aspects of another culture. For example, the rise of newspapers, the development of trains and railroads, and the invention of the telegraph, telephone, and later the radio and television allowed cultures in different parts of the world to communicate in ways not previously possible. Affordable jet transportation, cell phones, the internet, and other modern technology have taken such communication a gigantic step further.

Cultural lag is an important aspect of social change, a term popularized by sociologist William F. Ogburn (1922–1966). When one aspect of society or culture changes, this change often leads to or even forces a change in another aspect of society or culture. However, some time lapses before the latter change occurs. **Cultural lag** is the period of time between the introduction of new technological developments into a culture or society and the acceptance of the developments by institutions.

Discussions of examples of cultural lag often feature a technological change as the initial change. An example of cultural lag involves changes in child custody laws brought about by new reproductive technology. Developments in reproductive technology have allowed same-sex couples to have children conceived from a donated egg and/or donated sperm (figure 2.21).



Figure 2.21. A couple in Thailand who used intravenous fertilization (IVF) to conceive their baby. Sometimes culture lags occur when society does not immediately respond to new technologies such as IVF.

If a same-sex couple later breaks up, it is not yet clear to all courts who should win custody of the couple's child or children. Traditional custody law is based on the premise of a divorce of a married heterosexual couple who are both the biological parents of their children. Yet custody law is slowly evolving to recognize the parental rights of same-sex couples. Some cases from California illustrate this.

In 2005, the California Supreme Court issued rulings in several cases involving lesbian parents who ended their relationship. Generally, the court granted same-sex parents all the legal rights and responsibilities of heterosexual parents. The change in marital law that is slowly occurring because of changes in reproductive technology is another example of cultural lag. As the legal director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights said of the California cases, "Same-sex couples are now able to procreate and have children, and the law has to catch up with that reality" (Paulson and Wood 2005:1).

Modernization

Modernization is a complex set of changes taking place in societies that move from traditional to modern practices as their economies become industrialized. During this process, societies create a greater variety of more specialized institutions. For example, due to the creation of other specialized institutions, the family has lost some of its functions. Education and health systems, for example, now serve purposes that families used to provide. The modernization process also involves an increase in a society's specialization of labor.

Sociologists debate about whether the modernization process is positive or negative for a society. Proponents of modernization claim that modern states are wealthier and more powerful and that their citizens are freer to enjoy a higher standard of living. They have produced scientific discoveries that have saved lives, extended lifespans, and made human existence much easier than imaginable in the distant and even recent past.

But the development of modern societies has also required the destruction of Indigenous cultures, polluted the environment, engaged in wars that have killed tens of millions, and built up nuclear arsenals that still threaten the planet. Modernization, then, is a double-edged sword. It has given us benefits, but it has also made human existence very precarious. We'll discuss the modernization debate more in Chapter 4.

Population Growth and Composition

Populations are changing at every level of society. Births increase in one nation and decrease in another. Some families delay childbirth while others start bringing children into their folds early. Population changes can be due to random external forces, like

an epidemic, or shifts in other social institutions. But regardless of why and how it happens, population trends have a tremendously interrelated impact on all other aspects of society.

In the United States, we are experiencing an increase in our senior population as Baby Boomers (people born from 1946 to 1964 during the postwar “baby boom”) retire, which will change how many of our social institutions are organized. For example, there is a massive shift in the need for elder care and assisted living facilities, and growing incidences of elder abuse. Retiring Boomers may also lead to labor or expertise shortages, and healthcare costs will become a larger portion of our economy.

Social Conflict: War and Protest

Social change also results from social conflict, including wars. The immediate impact that wars have on societies is obvious. For example, the deaths of countless numbers of soldiers and civilians over the ages have affected not only the lives of their loved ones but also the course of whole nations. The defeat of Germany in World War I led to a worsening economy during the next decade, which in turn helped fuel the rise of Hitler.

One of the many sad truisms of war is that its impact on society is greatest when a war between states takes place within the society’s boundaries. For example, the Iraq war that began in 2003 involved two countries more than any others: the United States and Iraq. Because it took place in Iraq, many more Iraqis than United States residents died or were wounded. The war affected Iraqi society, including its infrastructure, economy, natural resources, and so forth—far more than it affected the society of the United States. Most U.S. residents continued to live normal lives, whereas most Iraqis had to struggle to survive the many ravages of war.

War can change a nation’s political and economic structures. One example occurred during the American Civil War, when the deaths of so many soldiers left many wives and mothers without their family’s major breadwinner. Their poverty forced many of these women to turn to prostitution to earn an income, resulting in a rise in prostitution after the war (Marks 1990). Another example is when a winning nation forces a new political system and leadership on the losing nation.

War can also shift racial and ethnic interactions. For example, the involvement of many African Americans in the U.S. armed forces during World War II helped begin racial desegregation of the military (figure 2.22). This change is widely credited with helping spur the hopes of African Americans in the South that racial desegregation would someday occur in their hometowns (McKeeby 2008).



Figure 2.22. The all-African American 100th Pursuit Squadron, later designated a fighter squadron, was activated at Tuskegee Institute. The squadron served honorably in England and in other regions of the European continent during World War II. The many African Americans in the U.S. armed forces during World War II helped begin the racial desegregation of the military.

Social Movements

Social movements mobilize large numbers of people to work together to achieve a social goal or address a social problem. These groups might be attempting to create change (such as Occupy Wall Street or the Arab Spring), resist change (such as the anti-globalization movement), or provide a political voice to those otherwise disenfranchised (such as civil rights movements). Social movements create social change.

While most of us learned about social movements in history classes, we tend to take for granted the fundamental changes they caused—and we may be completely unfamiliar with the trend toward global social movements. But from the anti-tobacco movement, which has worked to outlaw smoking in public buildings and raise the cost of cigarettes, to uprisings throughout the Arab world, contemporary movements create social change on a global scale. We'll discuss more about social movements in Chapter 10.

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2.5: Society and the Natural Environment

At first glance, the environment does not seem to be a sociological topic. The natural and physical environment is something that meteorologists, oceanographers, and other scientists should study, not sociologists. However, the environment is very much a topic for the sociological study of social change for at least five reasons:

1. Human activity is the cause of our worst environmental problems. Like many human behaviors, this activity is a proper topic for sociological study.
2. Environmental problems significantly impact people, as do the many other social problems that sociologists study.
3. Solutions to our environmental problems require changes in economic and environmental policies, and the potential impact of these changes depends heavily on social and political factors.
4. Many environmental problems reflect inequality based on social class, race, and ethnicity. As is the case with many issues in our society, low income people and people of color often fare worse when it comes to the environment.
5. Efforts to improve the environment, often called the environmental movement, constitute a social movement and are worthy of sociological study.

Human-made impacts on the environment have been discussed for many decades. Social and scientific leaders from all walks of life have also discussed ways to lessen humans' effects on the environment and worked to understand how our changing environment impacts humans and societies.

Fifty years ago, in 1972, the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment took place in Stockholm, Sweden. It resulted in what is often seen as the first step toward a global understanding of the importance of a healthy environment for people and the development of international environmental law. In 2021, the United Nations held the conference Stockholm+50: A Healthy Planet for the Prosperity of All—Our Responsibility, Our Opportunity to provide leaders with an opportunity to draw on the 50 years of multilateral environmental action to do what is needed to secure a better future on a healthy planet (figure 2.23).

Optional: Watch this 3:10-minute video, "Stockholm, 1972 – When Environmental Protection Was Born" [Streaming Video] (figure 2.23) for a history of those discussions, as well as a look at the efforts being implemented at the global level to support human existence in our changing environmental world. As you do, what initiatives do you see have been put in place to serve society facing environmental risks?



Figure 2.23. In 2021, the UN held the conference Stockholm+50, which provided leaders with an opportunity to plan the action needed to secure a better future on a healthy planet. (Optional video: "Stockholm, 1972 – When Environmental Protection Was Born" [Streaming Video]). Transcript.

Environmental Sociology

So many sociologists study the environment that their collective study makes up a subfield in sociology. **Environmental sociology** is the study of the interaction between human behavior and the natural and physical environment. Environmental sociology assumes "that humans are part of the environment and that the environment and society can only be fully understood in relation to

each other" (McCarthy and King 2009:1). An underlying tenet in the field of environmental sociology is that people are responsible for the world's environmental problems. Therefore, we have both the ability and the responsibility to address them.

Environmental sociologists further our understanding of how society interacts with and impacts the environment in a number of arenas. For example, their research might focus on how people's opinions and values shape their relationship to the environment and their environmental behaviors. Or research might be related to how human behavior drives climate change. Environmental sociologists might also study how social structure affects climate change (such as how politics in the corporate sector relates to emissions.) As we'll cover well in this text, studying the environment through a sociological lens also includes making inquiries about climate justice across diverse experiences, and the effects of climate change on our relationship to nonhuman species (Nagel, Dietz, and Broadbent 2010).

Global Climate Change and Disasters

One of the most pressing issues we face is the rate of global **climate change,** the long-term shifts in temperatures due to human activity and, in particular, the release of greenhouse gases into the environment. Climate change is especially affecting the ecology of the Earth's polar regions and ocean levels throughout the planet. Take a look at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) webpage on global sea levels [Website] (figure 2.24). You can also find animated data on other climate-related topics there. What have NASA's sea level satellites revealed about global sea level changes over the last 30 years?

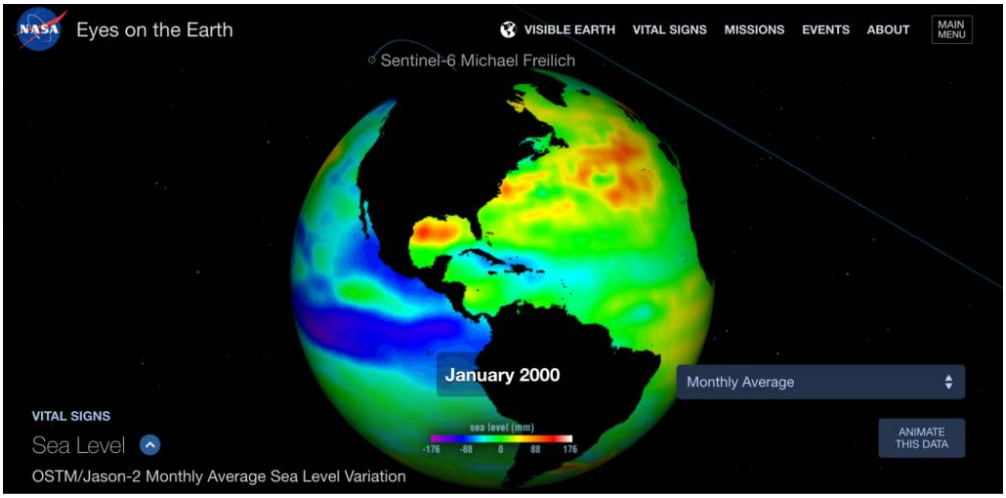


Figure 2.24. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA's) webpage on global sea levels shows changes over the last 30 years.

NASA provides some interpretation of these data:

> *…scientists estimate that every …1 inch of sea level rise translates into …8.5 feet of lost beachfront lost along the average coast. It also means that high tides and storm surges can rise even higher, bringing more coastal flooding ("Tracking 30 Years of Sea Level Rise" n.d.).*

Over the past 50 years, climate change has prompted an increase in extreme weather and caused a surge in natural disasters. There are an increasing number of record-breaking weather phenomena, from the number of Category 4 hurricanes to the amount of snowfall in a given winter. In addition to the lives lost and people displaced, these extremes can cause immeasurable damage to crops and property.

Climate change threatens to produce a host of other problems, including increased disease transmitted via food and water, and malnutrition resulting from decreased agricultural production and drought. All these problems have been producing, and will continue to produce, higher mortality rates across the planet.

Climate change is a deeply controversial subject despite decades of scientific research and a high degree of scientific consensus that supports its existence. Until relatively recently, the United States was very divided on the existence of climate change as an

immediate threat, as well as whether or not human activity causes or contributes to it. Now it appears that the United States has joined the ranks of many countries where citizens are concerned about climate change.

Research conducted in 2020 and 2021 indicated that at least 60 percent of United States residents believe climate change is a real and immediate threat (Flynn and Yamasumi 2021; Bell and Baaumann 2023). Citizens are also more supportive of clean energy and participating in international efforts, such as the Paris Climate Accord and the United Nations Climate Change Conferences.



Figure 2.25. Women test a solar cooker in India in 2009 (left). Nigg Energy Park with wind turbine "jackets" (foundations) for the Seagreen Offshore Wind Farm in Scotland (right). Green and renewable energy sources have become more visible around the world.

What has changed these opinions? It may be that younger people are more represented in these polls, and they tend to support climate change initiatives. It may be that the continued severity of weather and the costly and widespread impact have become more difficult to ignore. It also may be that green and renewable energy sources are more prevalent, available, and visible to the public (figure 2.25).



Figure 2.26. Aerial view of oil being burned from the BP Deepwater Horizon spill that occurred after a drilling unit explosion in the Gulf of Mexico in May 2010 (left). Burns were started to prevent the spread of oil in the water. An oiled gannet is cleaned at the Theodore Oiled Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Theodore, Alabama, in June 2010 (right). It was one of four wildlife rehabilitation centers established in support of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill response.

We know that changes in the natural environment lead to changes in society itself. We see the clearest evidence of this when a major accident or natural disaster strikes. The Deepwater Horizon disaster illustrates this phenomenon well. In April 2010, an oil rig operated by BP, an international oil and energy company, exploded in the Gulf of Mexico, creating what many observers called the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history. Its effects on the ocean, marine and animals will be felt for decades to come, as will the economies of states and cities affected by the oil spill (figure 2.26). As climate change is related to the extraction of resources, opinions may also be changing due to the effects of man-made disasters associated with extraction projects.

Environmental Health

Environmental sociology intersects with the study of environmental health. Environmental health is concerned with preventing disease, death, and disability by reducing exposure to adverse environmental conditions and promoting behavioral change. It focuses on the direct and indirect causes of diseases and injuries. Figure 2.27 gives a snapshot of health and safety issues and their environmental determinants, or the environmental factors that contribute to them.

Figure 2.27. This table outlines some possible health and safety problems and reasons they might occur. For example, ozone depletion from industrial and commercial activity can contribute to skin cancer.

Underlying Determinants	Possible Adverse Health and Safety Consequences
Inadequate water (quantity and quality), sanitation (wastewater and etcetera removal), and solid waste disposal, improper hygiene (hand washing)	Diarrheas and vector-related diseases (e.g., malaria, schistosomiasis, dengue fever)
Improper water resource management (urban and rural), including poor drainage	Vector-related diseases (e.g., malaria, schistosomiasis)
Crowded housing and poor ventilation of smoke	Acute and chronic respiratory diseases, including lung cancer (from coal and tobacco smoke inhalation)
Exposures to vehicular and industrial air pollution	Respiratory diseases, some cancers, and loss of IQ in children
Population movement and encroachment, and construction, which affect the feeding and breeding grounds of vectors, such as mosquitos	Vector-related diseases (e.g., malaria, schistosomiasis, and dengue fever); may also help spread other infectious diseases (e.g., HIV/AIDS, Ebola fever)
Exposure to naturally occurring toxic substances	Poisoning (e.g., from arsenic, manganese, and fluorides)
Natural resource degradation (e.g., mudslides, poor drainage, erosion)	Injury and death from mudslides and flooding
Climate change, partly from combustion of greenhouse gases in transportation, industry, and poor energy conservation in housing, fuel, commerce, industry	Injury/death from extreme heat/cold, storms, floods, and fires. Indirect effects: spread of vector-borne diseases, aggravation of respiratory diseases, population dislocation, water pollution from sea level rise, etc.
Ozone depletion from industrial and commercial activity	Skin cancer, cataracts. Indirect effects: compromised food production, etc.

As climate change advances, environmental sociologists generally expect the underlying determinants in the table to become more prevalent. Many work to tap resources inside and outside the healthcare system to help improve health outcomes.

Emerging Diseases

Emerging and re-emerging diseases are infectious human diseases whose occurrence has substantially increased or threatens to increase in the near future. COVID-19 is our era's most globally devastating example. Other examples of emerging and re-emerging diseases include the Ebola virus, West Nile virus, Zika virus, sudden acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), H1N1 influenza, swine and avian influenza, and HIV. The 2014 Ebola epidemic was the largest Ebola outbreak in history, with over 28,000 cases and 11,302 deaths. The outbreak affected the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Liberia, the Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Uganda. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has spread with ferocious speed and has infected more than 60 million people worldwide.

A variety of environmental factors may contribute to the re-emergence of diseases, including temperature, moisture, and human food or animal feed sources. It seems likely that a wide variety of infectious diseases have affected human populations for thousands of years, emerging when the environmental conditions were favorable.

Expanding human populations have increased the potential for transmission of infectious diseases due to the increased likelihood of humans being in "the wrong place at the right time." Natural disasters or political conflicts can add to the potential for transmission. Global travel also increases the potential for a disease carrier to transmit infection thousands of miles away in just a few hours.

There's a wealth of discussion regarding how COVID-19 has affected us socially. But have you considered if the transmission of COVID-19 is related to how we interact with the environment? *Scientific American* outlines how human encroachment into natural areas and wildlife habitats brings us into closer contact with animals and plants that may harbor diseases, increasing the likelihood of transmission to humans:

> *…a number of researchers today think that it is actually humanity's destruction of biodiversity that creates the conditions for new viruses and diseases like COVID-19.…In fact, a new discipline, planetary health, is emerging that focuses on the increasingly visible connections among the well-being of humans, other living things, and entire ecosystems.*
>
> *We cut the trees; we kill the animals or cage them and send them to markets. We disrupt ecosystems, and we shake viruses loose from their natural hosts. When that happens, they need a new host. Often, we are it (Vidal 2020).*

Watch this 2-minute video, "It's Time to Bail Out the Planet" [Streaming Video], that describes the encroachment of human activity into the natural world as a cause of the COVID-19 pandemic (figure 2.28). As you do, consider: What does the narrator call us to do to prevent pandemics?



Figure 2.28. "It's Time to Bail Out the Planet" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

The producers of the video in figure 2.28 suggest that COVID-19 is not a random event. It is a symptom of a global economic system that is destroying the living planet and destroying wildlife. Through the lens of sociology, we can view our environmental challenges in relation to public opinion, values, behavior, carrying capacity, and inequality. As prompted by COVID-19, we can also see how environmental issues are related to humanity's relationship with the planet.

Civil Society and Environmental Movements

Social movements are proving very important in addressing environmental challenges due to climate change and biodiversity loss. In addition to global efforts by large organizations like the United Nations, much has been accomplished by smaller organizations around the world. Environmental movements have emerged as one of the most successful forms of sociopolitical mobilization to influence how as humans we respond to environmental changes (Anderson 2016).

Crucial to this, and to all movements, is **civil society**, the communities, groups, and organizations that function outside of government to support and advocate for certain people or societal issues. They include non-governmental labor unions, Indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations.

Civil society often serves society by "filling in the gaps" where government and the private sector do not serve the needs of communities. Members working in civil society might advocate for policies at the governmental or in the private sector and hold institutions like the government accountable. Because civil society is distinct from government and business, it is an "intermediary institution." They might be professional associations, religious groups, labor unions, or citizen advocacy organizations that give voice to various sectors of society and enrich public participation.

One powerful civil society organization is the Sunrise Movement [Website] (figure 2.29). Their website states that they are:

> *…building a movement of young people across race and class to stop the climate crisis and win a Green New Deal. We will force the government to end the reign of fossil fuel elites, invest in Black, brown and working class communities, and create millions of good union jobs. We're on a mission to put everyday people back in charge and build a world that works for all of us, now and for generations to come ("We Are the Climate Revolution." n.d.).*



Figure 2.29. Chicago Sunrise Movement members rally for a Green New Deal in Chicago, Illinois, on February 27, 2019.

The Sunrise Movement's efforts have significantly impacted policy in recent years. In 2020, they forced Democrats running for president to outline their plans for cutting U.S. fossil fuel emissions. They have also moved forward with the Green New Deal, a set of policies to address climate change.

Climate change and the ecological crises we face have prompted sociologists to include the environment in their questions, conversations, and research. We know that our environmental challenges are human-made; they impact people, and solutions require changes to multiple social institutions. The worldview that we introduced in the Chapter Story can be described as an environmental social movement. It is one of many initiatives, built by determined people, that are introducing ways for society to shift and address the environmental challenges we face. In Chapter 10, we'll introduce other grassroots initiatives as we discuss environmental social movements in more depth. Also in Chapter 10, we'll explore how sociology can help us track and address environmentally related social inequities based on social class, race, and ethnicity.

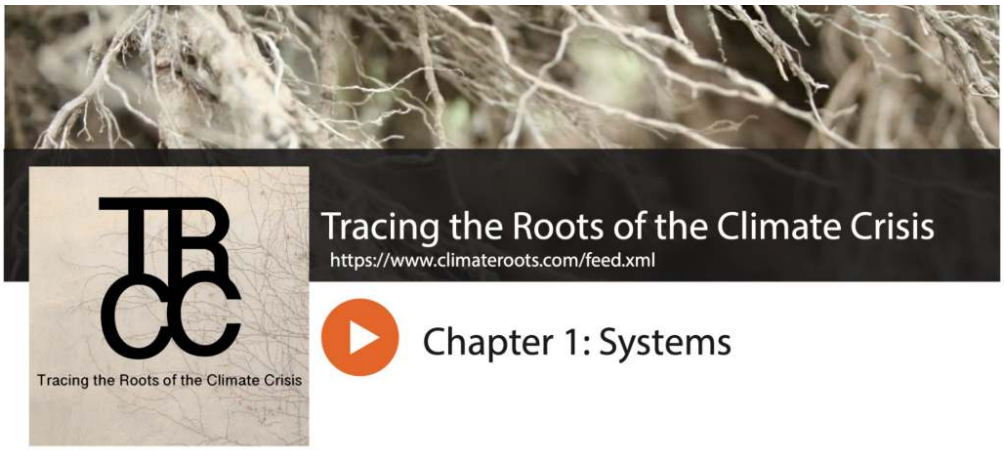


Figure 2.30. *Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis*, "Chapter 1: Systems" [Podcast]. Transcript.

Sociology instructor Ben Cushing has created a series of podcasts called *Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis* (figure 2.30). Within each recording, Ben applies some ideas we introduce in this text to the social roots of the environmental challenges we face. The podcasts can help you make connections between the intersecting themes we introduce in this textbook.In this first, 11-minute podcast, "Chapter 1: Systems," Ben makes connections between social systems we introduced in this chapter and the roots of our climate crisis. He asks, "How do certain systems produce certain outcomes for people *and* the land?"

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2.6: Conclusion

The sociological study of social change is multifaceted, allowing sociologists to study it from many angles. We can apply the frameworks of sociology: sociological imagination, social constructionism, and the debunking motif. We can examine social change through the organization of society, focusing generally on social structures, institutions, or systems. We can analyze change through elements of social life: systems, culture, social facts, social networks, and socialization. We can also explore change by identifying its patterns and processes driven by influences such as culture, technology, population growth, conflict, and social movements.

Like the social movement and ideals of Buen Vivir, introduced at the beginning of this chapter, social change often reflects radical transformations in how we shape society and interact within it. Buen Vivir is a human response to find new ways of relating to each other and the natural world. It is also a good example of how we are better realizing our experiences are integrally linked to environmental changes. This realization will undoubtedly shape much of the social change we experience in the future. With that in mind, we'll continue to explore how society and the environment intersect alongside other themes of social change in the following chapters.

Review of Learning Outcomes

This chapter has offered you the opportunity to:

- Explain how the sociological perspective is applied to social change.
- Describe the structure and organization of society as it relates to social change.
- Discuss the patterns and process of social change.
- Explain how sociology views environmental change and issues as social topics.

Key Terms

agents of socialization: the significant individuals, groups, or institutions that influence our sense of self and the behaviors, norms, and values that help us function in society.

Buen Vivir: a set of ethics that balance quality of life, democracy, giving inherent value to all living things, and collective well-being.

civil society: the communities, groups, and organizations that function outside of government to provide support and advocacy for certain people or issues in society.

cultural lag: the period of time between the introduction of new technological developments into a culture or society and the acceptance of the developments by institutions.

environmental sociology: the study of the interaction between human behavior and the natural and physical environment.

equilibrium model of social change: the observation that society is always in a natural state of equilibrium, defined as a state of equal balance among opposing forces.

modernization: a complex set of changes that take place in societies that move from traditional to modern practices as their economies become industrialized.

roles: patterns of behavior that we recognize in each other that are representative of a person's social status.

social movements: the mobilization of large numbers of people to work together to achieve a social goal or address a social problem.

social facts: the laws, morals, values, religious beliefs, customs, fashions, rituals, and cultural rules that govern social life.

socialization: the lifelong process of an individual or group learning the expected norms and customs of a group or society through social interaction.

social structure: the complex and stable framework of society that influences all individuals. This influence occurs through the relationship between institutions and social practices.

system: a group of related parts that interact over time to form a whole that has a purpose, function, or behavior.

Comprehension Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=687#h5p-2

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 3: Social Location and Social Theories

Learning Objectives

This chapter offers you the opportunity to:

1. Explain how social location is studied, how it is constructed, and its consequences.
2. Discuss how systems of oppression exist in society and impact people across multiple categories of social identity.
3. Illustrate how structural inequity is experienced by individuals and groups.
4. Apply classical theory to explain how the structure of institutions shape patterns of social inequity.
5. Apply newer theory to explain how the structure of institutions shape patterns of social inequity.

3.1: Chapter Story
3.2: The Study of Social Location
3.3: Systems of Oppression
3.4: Lived Experiences in Stratified Society
3.5: Classical Sociological Perspectives
3.6: Newer Sociological Perspectives
3.7: Conclusion
3.8: References

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3.1: Chapter Story

COLOMBIA: LAND, CONFLICT, AND INEQUALITY

In 2016 the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP) signed a peace agreement that marked an official end to the oldest ongoing armed conflict in the Americas. The 50-year civil war generated the world's second-largest population of internally displaced persons (people forced to leave their homes but who remain within their country's borders). More than 220,000 died, most of them civilians. It's hard to imagine how a country could sustain such a lengthy conflict. But looking closely, the story of Colombia's civil war points to profound inequality as playing a major role. A central theme of that inequality is related to how land is unequally distributed.



Figure 3.1. Colombia on the globe (left). Mountainside in Cocora, Salento, Quindío, Colombia, by Julian-Florez (right).

Conflict in Colombia: A Brief History

Resting at the gateway north to Central America, Colombia boasts the second-highest biodiversity in the world, with 35 percent of its territory in the Amazon region (figure 3.1). Despite and in great part due to this richness, Colombia has long been wracked with division and violence.

During Colombia's colonial period, the king of Spain assigned immense plots of land to the colonists. They forced Indigenous People and later Africans to work in mines, ranches, and agricultural projects that sent goods back to Spain. This social structure created a society based on widespread subordination and exploitation. Spaniards and their descendants in urban areas received economic and political advantages (Bossio 2018). The country's economic and political society became a hierarchy based on racial distinctions.

This structure continued until 1928, when social inequalities came to a head. More than 1,000 banana plantation workers and their family members were massacred by the Colombian military while striking (White 2002). The workers, protesting the United Fruit Company (UFC, now Chiquita), were demanding better working conditions and payment in real dollars instead of credit from company stores.



Figure 3.2. *Masacre en Colombia* by Fernando Botero (2000) depicts the Banana Massacre, one of the pivotal moments leading to an established civil war in Colombia.

The UFC used its influence to pressure the Colombian government to suppress the strike. After weeks of unrest, workers gathered in the town square of Ciénaga, expecting to talk with company owners. Instead, the Colombian military was called in. They issued a five-minute warning for people to evacuate, by some accounts, closed off access streets (Carrigan 1993), and then opened fire into the dense crowd (figure 3.2). Later, it was revealed that the U.S. government played a role in events that day. The United States threatened to invade if Colombia's government did not restore order, which was a strategy to protect its economic, political, and military interests in the region (Ramirez Cabal 2023).

The massacre contributed to divisions in Colombia that would ultimately lead to a decade of extreme political violence referred to as "La Violencia." La Violencia was sparked by the assassination of presidential candidate Eliécer Gaitán in 1948. He was campaigning for political, social, and economic equality, including land reforms to diminish the concentration of land ownership among the elite (Sharpless 1978). These priorities were considerably controversial among the rich in Colombia, and many believed his death was organized by his opponents.

During the 1960s, poor farmers organized uprisings to call for many of the changes Gaitán promised. Armed insurgent groups emerged, hoping to establish more influence. In 1964, the FARC-EP formed a revolutionary armed movement. They organized to fight against the staggering levels of inequality in Colombia; for the rights of the poor, especially in the countryside, and for protection from state-sponsored violence aimed at driving them off their land. They promoted education and healthcare and fought against multinational corporations' monopolization of Colombia's natural resources. They became the conflict's largest rebel group (and later, at some points, controlled 40 percent of the Colombian territory).

In response, the Colombian government authorized the arming of civilians to fight FARC-EP and other guerrillas. This provided more opportunity for paramilitary groups that had been originally organized to provide protection for wealthy landowners and business leaders. The FARC-EP (and other guerrilla groups), the Colombian military, and paramilitary groups fought for control over rural territory.



Figure 3.3. Small-plot farmers in Antioquia, Colombia, building terraces for planting. Rural residents lived under constant threat during Colombia's 50-year conflict. Many communities organized to work in their fields collectively for protection from armed actors. Photo by Aimee Samara Krouskop.

Residents suffered violence from all armed actors (figure 3.3). With a strong presence in the countryside, the FARC-EP wielded significant and often violent control over communities. In some regions, they deposited land mines. They often issued fees, or a "war tax," on all commercial enterprises within their controlled territories.

Observers and researchers attribute the majority of human rights violations, such as executions, disappearances, and torture, to paramilitary groups. They often conducted these acts in conjunction with Colombia's police and military. The police would either participate in paramilitary abuses and massacres directly or deliberately fail to take action (Rochlin 2011).

Social Class and Land Inequality

Since the 2016 signing of the peace agreement, the peace process has continued to move forward. Soldiers have been returning to civilian life, and opportunities are expanding for civilians who previously struggled to survive during the war. However, despite efforts at reconciliation between groups and programs to integrate former armed actors into civilian life, conflict in Colombia continues. Some communities report that they've experienced more violence or coercion since the peace agreement was signed (Tackling Colombia's Next Generation in Arms, 2022). Since 2016, members of the Peace Community of José de Apartadó, introduced in Chapter 1, reported an increase in paramilitary activity in their area. They continue to be targeted, threatened, and killed.

Why do peace and safety remain so elusive in Colombia? Some guerrilla groups have yet to establish peace agreements with the government and remain active. Political leadership didn't fulfill all the agreements made in the peace accords, leading some FARC-EP fighters to decide not to demobilize. Also, the protections promised by the government have proven to be unreliable.

But more significantly, demobilizing can mean loss of vocation. The most likely reason members join paramilitary groups is that they simply want a job to survive, and the paramilitaries pay better than other groups. Similarly, the FARC-EP recruited or sometimes forced members from poor rural families to join. They often recruited youth with little life experience outside of the war. For members of both groups, giving up their means of income is precarious. The government has targeted both FARC-EP and paramilitaries to receive funds for creating income-generating projects. However, there are delays in the process (United Nations Refugee Agency 2005).

Watch the 7:27 minute video, "A Deadly Peace in Colombia as FARC Disarms" [Streaming Video] (figure 3.4) for a better understanding from FARC-EP members themselves about what demobilization has been like for them. As you listen, apply your sociological imagination to consider: What influenced these former FARC-EP combatants to spend years fighting against the state of Colombia? Why are the men and women in the video concerned about returning to civilian life?



Figure 3.4. "A Deadly Peace in Colombia as FARC Disarms" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

There are clear connections between inequality and conflict around the world (Bahgat et al. 2017). In Colombia's case, severe inequalities contributed to the civil war. The most obvious inequality is related to **social class,** the set of people who share similar social circumstances based on factors like wealth, income, education, family background, and occupation. Social class divisions in Colombia are particularly about land ownership. As political scientist Charles D. Brockett exclaims, "The most explosive situations arise when peasants believe that they have been 'unjustly' dispossessed of land" (Brockett 1992 as cited in Gillin 2015).

During the war, the theft of land and extreme violence displaced many rural Colombians. According to Oxfam, as a whole, small landholders eventually lost up to 8 million hectares, leaving 80 percent of the land in the hands of just 14 percent of Colombians (Oxfam 2013). Much of the land theft that has occurred in the country is connected to landowners and multinationals seeking to acquire and/or expand their landholdings.

Today, most Colombians live politically and economically marginalized, especially in rural areas (Bossio 2018). It is this unequal land distribution that shapes rural poverty and extreme class inequality. And it is this inequality that, in large part, perpetuates violence in Colombia today, despite the massive efforts toward peace.

In this chapter, we'll examine how the social construction of identity and our social place, (also defined as social locations), contribute to inequality, inequity, and the lived consequences that result. Colombia's story focused on divisions and consequences related to social class, but the lived impacts of social inequality across race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation can be equally severe. We'll also look at how social location and power contribute to systems of oppression. This chapter will encourage you to ask questions about ways that our interactions create inequity and the consequences of that inequity.

- How do our lived experiences differ based on our race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, social class, and colonized history?
- How do multiple social characteristics intersect to produce privilege?
- How do multiple social characteristics intersect to produce disadvantage?

Going Deeper

To learn more about the role of land in Colombia's conflict, read the illustrated booklet "What's Land Got to Do With It?" [Website].

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Figure 3.3. “Small-plot farmers in Antioquia, Colombia” by Aimee Samara Krouskop is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

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3.2: The Study of Social Location

The story of Colombia's class inequality and how it influences conflict is one that plays out all over the world. Class inequalities played a major role in the conflict there, and they still exist today. Social class is one of the main characteristics that sociologists pay attention to when they examine humans' place in the social world.

Another way to explain our place in the social world is with the term, **social location:** the social position an individual holds within their society based upon their social characteristics. Other than social class, these characteristics include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, immigration, language, employment, and other characteristics that society deems important.

Sociologists work to understand these kinds of interactions and patterns related to inequality and how they affect life experiences. This section will look deeper into a few ideas that frame their study of social location: levels of analysis, the social construction of identity, and the consequences of social locations.

Levels of Analysis

Sociologists study at multiple levels of society—that is, they focus on various sizes or scales of the population or social phenomenon. Generally, they examine the effects of our social locations, as well as all other inquiries about society with either a macro or a micro lens. This is also referred to as microsociology and macrosociology (figure 3.5).

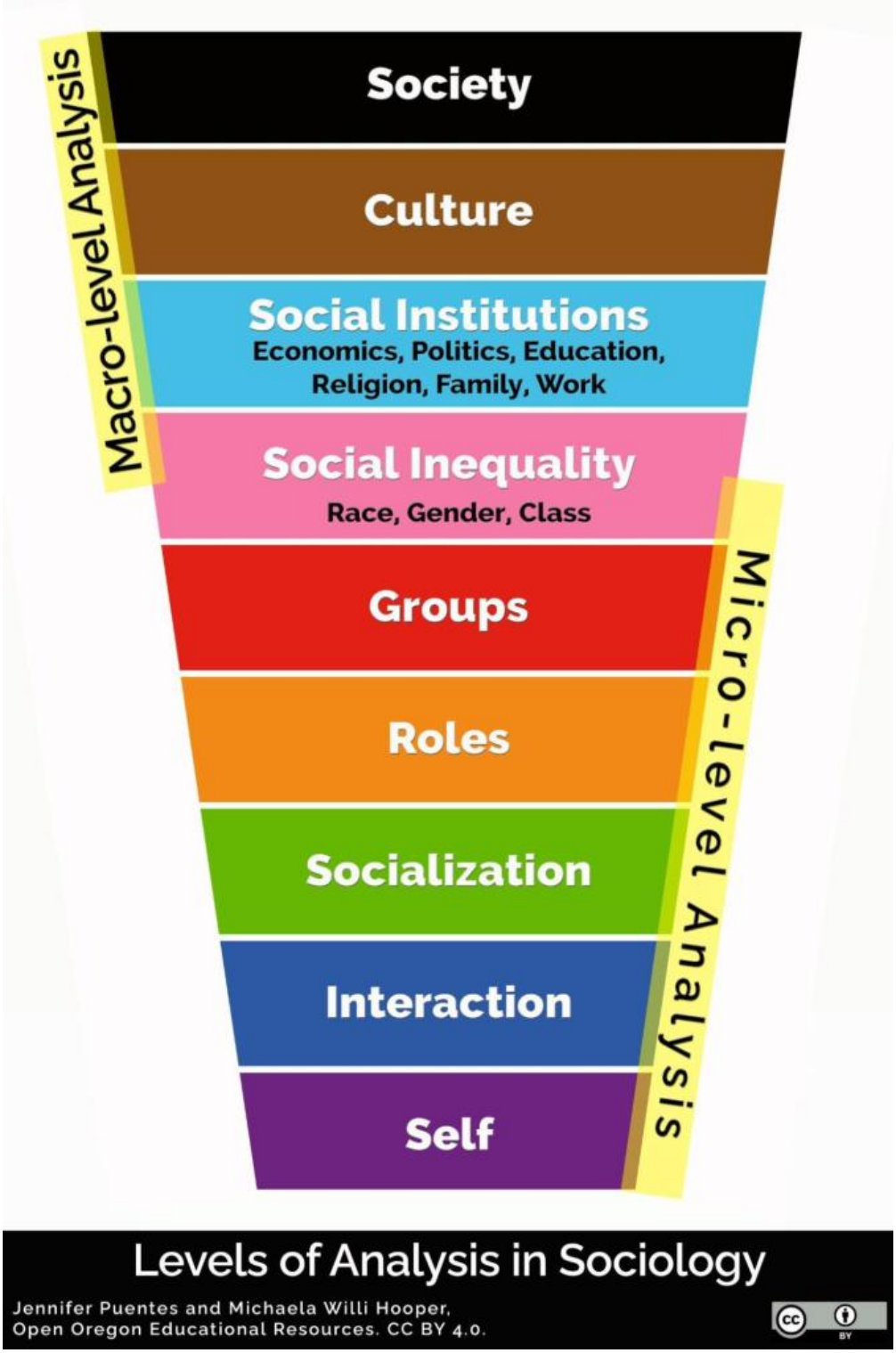


Figure 3.5. Sociologists generally study phenomena at two levels of analysis: micro and macro. Within each micro and macro category, they study different realms, from "self" to "society." Image description.

Micro-level analysis examines how individuals respond to society around them and the interaction of small groups. According to sociologist Randall Collins, the micro level involves analyzing "what people do, say, and think in the actual flow of momentary experience" (Collins 1981:984).

Microsociology focuses on socialization, the lifelong process of learning what is expected behavior in society. Through social interaction, socialization teaches customs and **norms,** the informal rules that govern behavior in groups and societies. It also

focuses on roles, or our positions in society that contain socially defined expectations based on our place in society. The micro level allows us to examine how and why individuals interact and how they interpret the meanings of their interactions. Examining society at the micro level, we know that through our interactions with others, society shapes our attitudes and behavior. We still have freedom, but that freedom is limited by society's expectations.

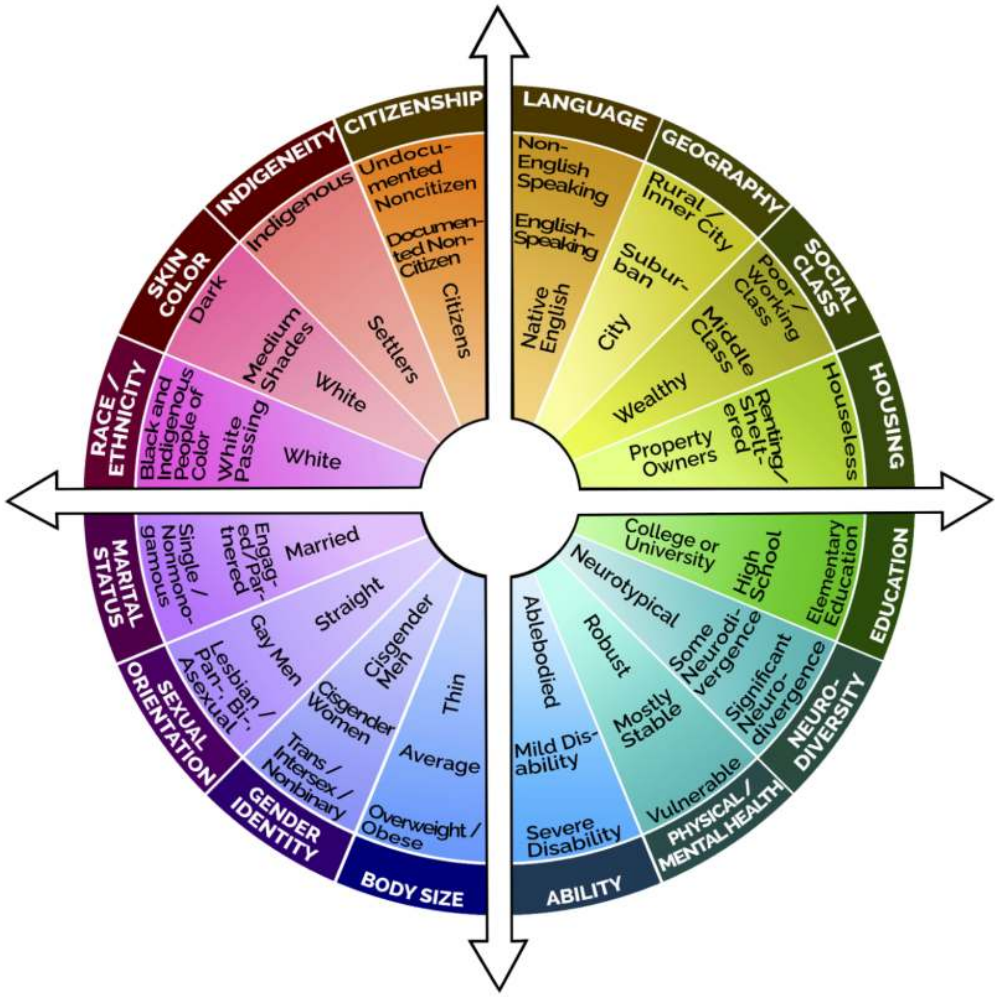
When sociologists use a macro-level analysis, they focus on the big picture. They study large-scale social structures. The aspects of society that exist over extended periods, such as changes in economies, changes in populations, and the longer course of human societies (Collins 1981). Studying at the macro level often includes looking at trends among and between societies, institutions, and systems. Research could focus on culture shared by larger groups or how one institution impacts another.

Often macro and micro sociologists look at the same phenomena, and they both examine how inequality exists, but in different ways. Microsociology examines how inequality lives within closer interactions, while macrosociology examines inequality at the level of institutions, culture, and among whole societies. Both types of approaches give us a valuable understanding, but together they offer an even richer understanding.

The Social Construction of Identity

The basis for social locations is the social construction of our identities. In Chapter 2, we introduced the social construction of reality. It explains that as a society, we decide the meaning and value of behaviors, ideas, or objects. This process is ongoing and happens through our everyday social interactions.

Through this same process, we are all assigned to multiple social categories. Sociologists call these categories **social identities**, the set of characteristics by which a person is recognizable or known by the society in which they live. Society shapes both the categories through the process of social construction, as well as how individuals are assigned to those groups. We define ourselves, and others define us in terms and categories that we share with other people. Take a look at figure 3.6, which shows some (not all) of the many components that may make up an individual's or group's social identity. How many can you identify for yourself?



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Figure 3.6. This wheel shows some (not all) of the many components that may make up an individual's or group's social identity. They are each socially constructed. Please keep in mind that as we try to describe identities, the categories we use can be imprecise, overlapping, and in flux. Image description.

Our identities are always in flux. That is because the way we think of ourselves and present ourselves to others is created and constantly changes based on our interactions with others. Sociologist Charles Horton Cooley believed our sense of self is based on this idea: we imagine how we look to others, interpret their reactions, and then develop our personal sense of self (Cooley 1902). In other words, people's reactions to us are like a mirror that reflects who we are.

(Optional: Watch Jason Silva's passionate discussion about the social construction of our identities in the 2-minute video, "Are We Who We Think We Are?" [Streaming Video] (figure 3.7). In what ways are you constructing your identity based on what you think others think of you?)



Figure 3.7. Optional video, "Are We Who We Think We Are?" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

We build our social identities through a fluid, constantly changing internal process that is influenced by others. Our social identities are also built externally, as society is constantly creating categories and assigning membership to those categories. The degree to which society ascribes our identities to us versus how much we have self-claimed our identities can depend on how aware we are of social expectations. Let's look at a few categories of identity that hold particular importance in the United States today.

Gender and Sexual Orientation

Many sociologists view gender and sexual orientation identity from a constructionist approach. Through the constructionist lens, we shape our gender and gender expressions socially. Gender identity is a person's deeply held internal perception of their gender. This includes the roles and behaviors of girls, women, boys, men, and gender-diverse people. Gender expressions are the behaviors, mannerisms, interests, and appearance associated with gender identities. Neither gender identities nor expressions are confined to a gender binary, the notion that someone is either male or female. Gender identity and expressions exist along continuums.

There is considerable diversity in how individuals and groups understand, experience, and express gender and sexual orientation. This is based on the roles they take on, the expectations placed on them, relations with others, and the complex ways that gender is institutionalized in society.



Figure 3.8. This mural was painted by Sam Kirk (@iamsamkirk) in Chicago's South Side to celebrate Pride, a term that represents solidarity, collectivity, and identity as well as resistance to discrimination and violence for the LGBTQIA+ community.

The abbreviation LGBTQIA+ currently represents lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (and questioning), intersex, asexual, and other identities. However, the language and symbolism of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation are continually changing. They adapt to meet the needs of the members they represent. For example, for Owen Keehnen, co-founder of the advocacy initiative Legacy Project, the grouping together of "LGBTQIA+" serves to create solidarity and political power, as illustrated in figure 3.8.

> *If I consider myself part of the gay community I look at my core group one way…but if I consider myself part of the LGBTQ community, my group is suddenly much larger, much stronger.…Presenting a unified front adds protection, power and, at the same time, an expanded view of what it means to be a part of this movement (Daley 2017).*

Abbreviations and other symbols change in order for the identities of members of LGBTQIA+ communities to be made more visible. They also change as communities work out ways of being inclusive, and so they serve as better tools for making political change (figure 3.9). See the Going Deeper section for a resource list of some of the most commonly used terms in these communities.



Figure 3.9. Symbols develop and popularize to support advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights. This is a logo of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), which encompasses several gay liberation groups, the first of which was formed in New York City in 1969 when LGBTQIA+ activities and fraternization were still largely illegal. GLF emerged as a movement after the Stonewall Inn riots at a popular gay bar that had been continually raided by police.

The binary view of gender is specific to certain cultures and is not universal. In some cultures, gender is viewed as fluid. For example, Samoan culture accepts what Samoans refer to as a "third gender." *Fa'afafine*, which translates as "the way of the woman," is a term used to describe individuals who are born biologically male but embody both masculine and feminine traits (Poasa 1992).

Those who identify with the sex they were assigned at birth are often referred to as "cisgender," utilizing the Latin prefix *cis*, which means "on the same side." For example, a child is assigned female at birth and later self-identifies as a woman.

"Transgender" refers to a person whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity are not necessarily the same. A transgender woman is a person who was assigned male at birth but who identifies and/or lives as a woman; a transgender man was assigned female at birth but identifies and/or lives as a man. While determining the size of the transgender population is difficult, it is estimated that 1.4 million adults (Flores 2016) and 2 percent of high school students in the United States identify as transgender (Johns 2019).

In much the same way that sociologists study gender, they study sexual orientation—the enduring patterns of romantic or sexual attraction (or combination of these) to persons of the opposite sex or gender, the same sex or gender, or to both sexes or more than one gender. They study sexual orientation as a social construct and identify that the categories of our sexual orientations also live outside of the binary (the notion that someone is either attracted to men or women).

"Queer" is a term used to describe gender and sexual identities other than cisgender and heterosexual. The term queer has been used in different ways and has many different meanings. Originally, in the 19th century, the term came to be used in a derogatory way toward those with same-sex desires or relations. Starting in the late 1980s, queer activists began to reclaim the word and embraced it as a politically radical alternative to other LGBTQIA+ identity terms (Sycamore 2008).

The social construction of gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation can change over time. For example, behaviors that are associated with femininity and masculinity reflect culture and patterns of interaction that are considered acceptable during certain historical time periods. Characteristics of gender may also vary greatly between different societies. For example, in U.S. culture, it is considered feminine (or a trait of the female gender) to wear a dress or skirt. However, in many Middle Eastern, Asian, and African cultures, sarongs, robes, or gowns are considered masculine.

Ethnic and Racial Identity

Often, the terms race and ethnicity are used interchangeably, but there are differences between them. Ethnicity refers to categories of social difference organized around shared cultural factors such as nationality, language, history, faith, or tradition. Race is a socially defined classification based on perceived biological differences between various people and groups. Race assigns social, cultural, and political meaning and consequences to physical characteristics.

Race is a social construction created to classify people on the arbitrary basis of skin color and other physical features. On a biological level, there is no real concept of race. The Human Genome Project was an international research project completed between 1990 and 2003 that determined all human beings, despite perceived racial group categories, are 99.9 percent genetically identical (Collins et al. 2003). This is consistent with the sociological argument of race being a social construct (figure 3.10).

Sociologists examine the social, economic, and political forces that result in ethnic and racial identities. Every culture places a different importance on specific physical characteristics. For example, in the United States, race is identified by broad categories of skin color, but hair color is considered unimportant. In South America, there are more specific categories of skin color. (Optional: Watch this 3-minute VOX video, "The Myth of Race, Debunked in 3 Minutes" [Streaming Video], to hear more about race as a social construct. Does anything surprise you?)



Figure 3.10. Race is a social construction created to classify people on the arbitrary basis of skin color and other physical features. (Optional: Watch this 3-minute video, "The Myth of Race, Debunked in 3 Minutes" [Streaming Video] to hear more about race as a social construct.)

Understanding the social construction of identity and levels of analysis can help us understand the consequences of the categories society creates. First, each component of our identity carries power, benefits, or disadvantages. In other words, each category is associated with a hierarchy of dominant and non-dominant groups. Dominant members, because they hold more power, can limit opportunities to members that fall into "other" categories. Or they can bestow benefits to members they deem "normal" or who follow their standards of acceptable behavior and presentation. This is one way that social location is assigned. Second, we can observe and study the consequences of our social locations at any level of analysis to gather a whole picture of our interactions.

The Consequence of Social Location

Another way of seeing social location is through the layers of society. Sociologists identify nearly every society as having some form of **social stratification**, or categorization of its people into rankings based on factors of power, access and resources, (such as wealth, income, education, or occupation) as well as social identities (like, race, ethnicity, or gender) (figure 3.11). Typically,

society's layers, made of people, represent the uneven distribution of society's benefits. The people with more power, resources, and access sit at the top layer of the social structure of stratification. Other groups of people, with fewer power, resources, and access, represent the lower layers.



Figure 3.11. As an example of stratification, ancient Egypt had a very strict class system that determined the kind of life a person could have, including their vocation.

The macro lens allows us to see societies as a whole as stratified. A micro lens allows us to see individuals' place within this stratification. This place is called **social status**—the rank, honor, or prestige attached to one's position in society or a group. Your social location influences your status in society.

Sociologists look to see if individuals with similar backgrounds, group memberships, identities, and location share the same place in the social stratification system. One common way to evaluate social standing is with **socioeconomic status**, a combination of a person's or family's economic and social position in comparison to others, based on income, education, and occupation.

No individual, rich or poor, can be blamed for social inequalities. Instead, everyone participates in a system where some rise and others fall. Many people in the United States believe this rising and falling is based on individual choices. But sociologists see how the structure of society affects a person's social standing and, therefore, is created and supported by society.

Social location affects how others perceive and treat us, how we perceive and act in the world, and how we build relationships. For example, core to the study of social location in the United States is understanding normalization. Introduced by sociologist Michel Foucault, **normalization** in this sense is a process that constructs specific ideas and behaviors as the idealized norms. These idealized norms are created through sanctions or corrections. Some identities are more highly valued, or more normalized, than others—typically because they are contrasted to identities thought to be less valuable or less "normal." Thus, identities are not only descriptors of individuals but also grant a certain amount of collective access to the institutions of social life.

For example, among many people in the United States, wealth is associated with an idealized norm—that is, the behaviors and ideas of those with more income or wealth are considered more valuable. This contributes to classism, a prejudice or discrimination on the basis of social class. However, that normalization may be changing. The Pew Research Center found in 2020 that more U.S. residents believe that having personal fortunes of a billion dollars or more is a bad thing for the country (Daniller 2021).

With microsociology, sociologists can study the consequences of social location at the "self" level of analysis (figure 3.5) by asking specific questions about how individuals in specific groups experience society. Or, with macrosociology, they can study experiences at the "institutions" level (figure 3.5) by asking how our larger social systems serve people in different groups. We'll introduce more of these ideas in the context of white identity in the next section, White Culture and Institutional Racism.

To better understand connections between microsociology, macrosociology, and the classical perspectives, watch this 3:37-minute video, "Microsociology vs. Macrosociology" [Streaming Video] by Khan Academy.

For a good glossary of words related to identity of all sorts, see the Race Equity Tools Glossary [Website].

For an overview of some of the most commonly used terms of the LGBTQIA+ communities, explore the Trans Student Educational Resources Online Glossary [Website].

For more information on advocacy for transgender and gender-nonconforming students (and others), see the graphics page of the Trans Student Educational Resources website.

To understand more about race as a social construct in the United States, read the AAPA statement on race and racism [Website].

Learn more about race as it relates to human genetics in the Teaching Tolerance report "Race Does Not Equal DNA" [Website].

For insights on how we develop our racial identities, see this Racial Identity Development page [PDF].

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3.3: Systems of Oppression

Social location profoundly affects the opportunities of groups and individuals because of inequality. However, the concept "systems of oppression" can help us to identify harmful historical, current, and organized patterns of interactions across social locations.

Oppression refers to the systemic, extensive nature of social inequity and harm woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. It is a combination of discrimination, personal bias, bigotry, and social prejudice that leads to burdensome, cruel, unjust, or unfair treatment of groups. This includes the denial of rights, opportunities, and resources. Oppression includes overt acts of force and violence, as well as subtle and systemic forms of limitations, disadvantages, or disapproval.

The "Talking About Race" project with the National Museum of African American History and Culture explains that:

> *In the United States, systems of oppression are woven into the very foundation of American culture, society, and laws. Institutions, such as government or education, and larger social systems such as culture all contribute or reinforce the oppression of some social groups while elevating others. Examples of systems of oppression are sexism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, and ageism (National Museum of African American History and Culture n.d.).*

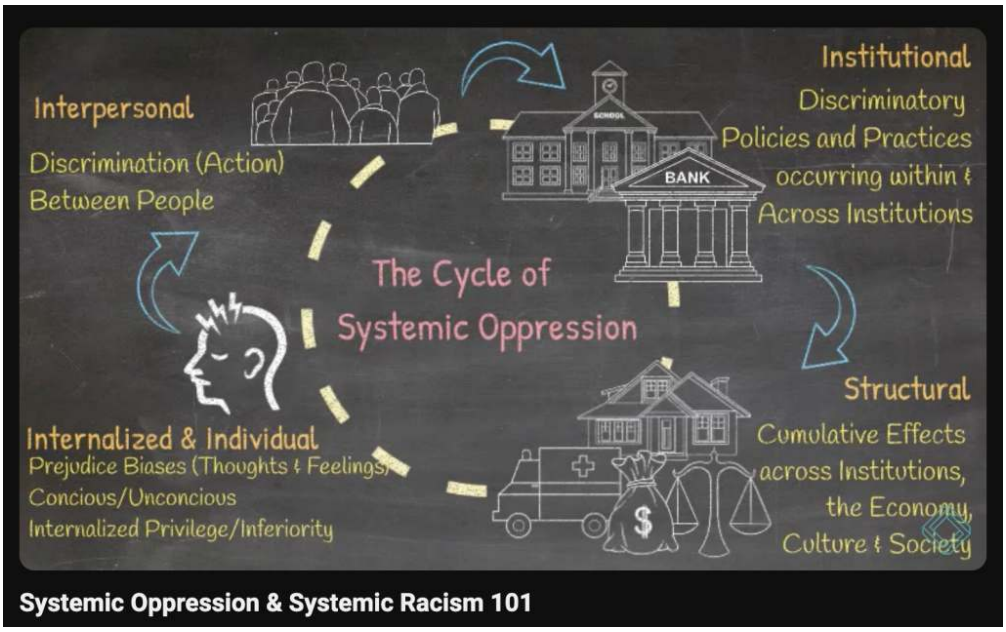


Figure 3.12. Systemic oppression can be seen as a continuous cycle that includes Internalized and Individual, Interpersonal, Institutional, and Structural oppression.

We can examine oppression at all levels of analysis. The image in figure 3.12 offers another way to look at those levels in the context of oppression: Internalized and Individual, Interpersonal, Institutional, and Structural. This section will explore some ways that oppression shows up in the United States at these various levels. We'll explore how power creates inequity; how to consider intersectionality; how white culture contributes to institutional racism; and the role of normalization in oppressing gender identity, sexual orientation, and their expressions.

Power, Inequality, and Inequity

In navigating our social locations and the systems of oppression in society, we are also navigating the historical and contemporary relationships of power and privilege between groups. By "power," we mean two things: 1) access to and through various social institutions; and 2) processes of privileging, normalizing, and valuing certain identities over others. This definition of power highlights the structural, institutional nature of power, while also highlighting the ways in which culture works in the creation and

privileging of certain categories of people. Power is organized along the axes of gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, age, nation, and religious identities.

Take a look at the image in figure 3.13. It adds to the image of social identities in figure 3.6 and depicts how our social identities intersect to shape the power and privilege we hold in society. Imagine each concentric piece as a movable wheel, creating a variety of experiences for individuals based on their combined social characteristics. Where can you find yourself and your experiences on the wheel?

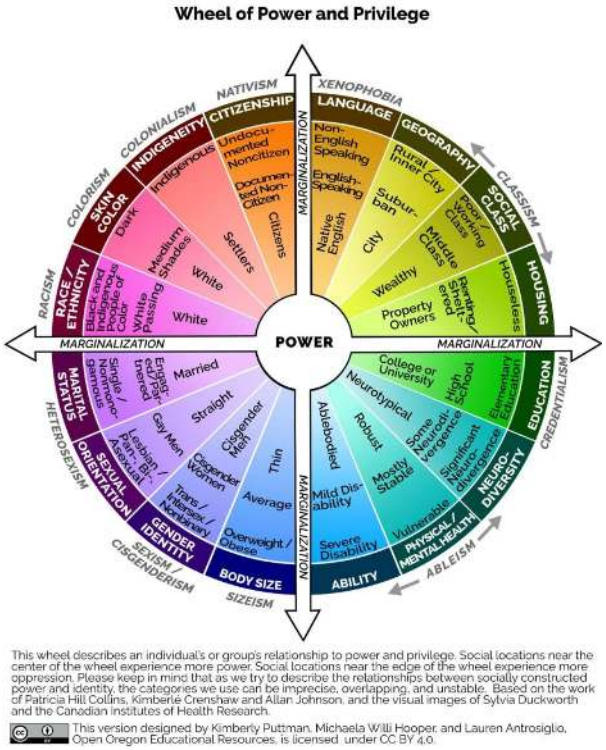


Figure 3.13. A wheel depicting the intersectional ways our identities relate to the power and privilege we hold in society. Image description.

All individuals have multiple aspects of identity. Their social place and associated power are shaped by the privileges and advantages attached to those identities. Thus, a white, heterosexual, middle-class woman may be disadvantaged compared to a white, middle-class man, but she may experience advantages in different contexts in relation to a black, heterosexual, middle-class woman or a white, heterosexual, working-class man or a white, lesbian, upper-class woman.

Those with identities and life experiences listed toward the outer edges of the wheel will generally experience less power and privilege than those who identify with experiences in the center. At the far edges of the wheel are the kinds of discriminations and prejudices; the oppressions experienced by people with those identities and life experiences.

With this understanding of power and privilege, we can distinguish between inequality and inequity. Inequality refers to differences in access to resources, treatment, or opportunity between individuals or groups. **Inequity** refers to differences in access to resources or opportunity, but those differences are the result of treatment by a more powerful group. This creates circumstances that are unnecessary, avoidable, and unfair. In instances of inequity, there is a social group with power that is acting (or failing to act) in a way that denies the needs of another group and creates unfairness for them.

Intersectionality

Many people experience oppression based on multiple social identities, causing compounding hardship. This overlapping of oppressed groups was the focus of Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, a U.S. civil rights advocate and law professor. She coined the term “intersectionality” in the 1980s to present a framework for noticing the ways that gender and race have been historically separated into separate fields of study. It also served to describe how Black women faced heightened struggles and suffering in U.S. society because they belonged to multiple oppressed social groups.

Intersectionality is the observation that inequalities produced by multiple and interconnected social characteristics influence the life of an individual or group. Intersectionality, then, suggests that we should view gender, race, class, and sexuality not as individual characteristics but as interconnected social situations.

Intersectionality studies have their origins in the Combahee River Collective. The collective was founded in 1974 by a group of Black feminist women in the United States who challenged how white feminist and civil rights movements did not address the needs of Black women. Much of the research in this field has its roots not just in academic discourse but also in attempts to initiate social change. The theory of intersectionality reflects multiple perspectives, places emphasis on lived experiences, and creates visibility around perspectives of marginalized groups. In this way, issues of discrimination, ageism, classism, and others can be seen in the multilayered circumstances where they exist.

Watch this 5:47-minute video, "Kimberlé Crenshaw at Ted + Animation" [Streaming Video] (figure 3.14), for her explanation of the importance of seeing our interactions with intersectionality. Can you think of an instance like Emma's in the video that is best seen through the lens of intersectionality?



Figure 3.14. "Kimberlé Crenshaw at Ted + Animation" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Examining the intersection of gender, sexuality, and race provides us with an opportunity to better understand inequalities within social institutions.

White Culture and Institutional Racism

Although race has no genetic or scientific basis, the concept of race is profoundly consequential. Statistically, education, income, birth rates, and life expectancies all vary between racial and ethnic groups. People of color tend to have shorter lifespans because of limited access to health care and lower-income jobs that can have greater dangers in the workplace. Specific racial groups are more likely to be targeted for violent events, such as when members of law enforcement disproportionally apply force, when corporations or governments cause displacement, or in cases of genocide. Let's narrow our focus to white culture and institutional racism in the United States.

White people in the United States hold most of the political, institutional, and economic power, and they receive advantages that nonwhite groups do not. These benefits and advantages are known as white privilege. Scholar Peggy McIntosh writes, "White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, code books, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks" (McIntosh 2003). White people can experience hardship related to other parts of their identity, but their race is not one of these.

White privilege in the United States has its foundations in **white supremacy,** the ideology that white people are inherently superior to people from all other racial and ethnic groups. This false notion is rooted in pseudo-science that has been used to justify slavery, colonialism, and genocide at various times throughout history. White superiority has been part of the United States since its inception as a country.

These beliefs justified both the atrocities of the genocide of Native Americans and nearly 250 years of African slavery. In later chapters of this book, we'll discuss how white supremacist ideologies continued after slavery into laws that limited the freedom of

African Americans. We'll also explore how white supremacy can still be found in our legal system and other institutions through coded language and targeted practices.

Explicit expressions of white supremacy are evident today in organized groups such as the white nationalist hate group Patriot Front. In those groups, followers continue to perpetuate the myth of white racial superiority. Direct and violent forms of racism that promote white supremacy have been on the rise in recent years. These acts are more directly linked to white nationalism, the belief that one's country is only for the white race. They also believe that the diversity of people in the United States will lead to the destruction of whiteness and white culture. Take a brief look at the map at the Southern Poverty Law [Website] center, which tracks the 104 hate groups in the United States (you can filter by ideology) (figure 3.15). Does anything surprise you about groups in your state?

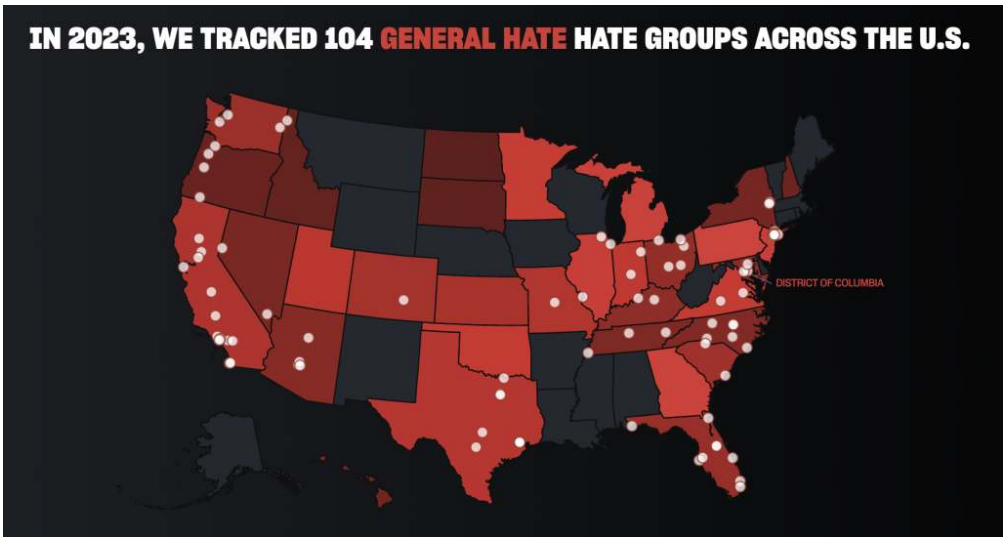


Figure 3.15, The Southern Poverty Law Center [Website] tracks and maps hate groups in the United States. In 2023, they tracked 104 "General Hate" groups across the United States.

Extremist groups are what most people think of when they consider white supremacy. However, the ideology of white supremacy permeates beyond extremist groups in more subtle and widespread ways. As residents in the United States, we exist in a white dominant culture. White people and their practices, beliefs, and culture are normalized and the standard by which all other groups are compared. This white dominant culture automatically centers (gives central focus to) the experiences and priorities of white lives.

The impacts of such a dominant culture of whiteness exist in various ways. Let's look back at figure 3.12 to make some connections. At the *Internalized* & *Individual* levels, dominant white culture provides advantages to white people, since they can navigate society both by feeling normal and being viewed as normal. The pages of the National Museum of African American History and Culture explain that:

> *Persons who identify as white rarely have to think about their racial identity and their cultural expressions because they live within a culture where whiteness has been normalized. Thinking about race is very different for nonwhite persons living in America. People of color must always consider their racial identity, whatever the situation (National Museum of African American History and Culture n.d.).*

Or, in the words of Toni Morrison, "In this country, American means white. Everybody else has to hyphenate" (Morrison 2000) (figure 3.16).




Figure 3.16. Toni Morrison (left and in mural at right) was the first African-American woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. In her first published novel, *The Bluest Eye*, she wrote, "In this country, American means white. Everybody else has to hyphenate."

At the *Interpersonal* level, people of color experience microaggressions when others reveal their biases against them. Microaggressions include verbal or nonverbal slights, snubs, or insults. At a *Structural* level, societies use race to establish and justify systems of power, privilege, and disenfranchisement through *Institutional* bodies such as health care, education, and housing. This results in nonwhite persons having less access and opportunity in society.

Three other impacts of white supremacy that are important to distinguish are racism, institutional racism, and structural racism. Racism begins when someone is prejudiced in thought or action, then accompanies that thought or action with their power to discriminate against, oppress, or limit the rights of others. **Institutional racism** occurs within institutions and systems of power. It refers to the unfair policies and discriminatory practices of particular institutions (e.g., schools, workplaces) that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Individuals can practice racism within institutions.

Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton introduced the idea of institutional racism in their book *Black Power: Politics of Liberation in America* after they sought to explain the prevalence of Black families in slums and the high rates of Black infant mortality in Birmingham, Alabama. In 1967, the year the book was published, Hamilton discussed institutional racism with broadcaster Studs Terkel. He explained:

> *We went to school. It was called a school of slavery and a school of segregation. And the lessons were very clear.…You hate yourself. You are supposed to hate yourself because you are a quote "minority," you are different. You are lazy, apathetic, and so forth. And you pass out of this school and pass those lessons to the extent that you believe this, you see.*
>
> *Now a lot of people in this country, white and Black, really don't believe that. They don't believe that the system deliberately did this to us. Because they individually have never insisted that a Black man hate himself, you know. And they personally have never really hanged or lynched a Black man recently, you know. But that is not the point.…The point we are trying to make in this book is that one's individual stance in relationship to the Black man is irrelevant. It's what the system does, and that's why we use the term "institutional racism" (Terkel 1967).*

Structural racism is the system of racial bias that exists in institutions and society. During a roundtable meeting in 2000 the Aspen Institute developed this explanation:

> *….public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. (Structural racism) identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated*

> *with "whiteness" and disadvantages associated with "color" to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist (Aspen Institute n.d).*

Understanding the framework of institutional and structural racism is essential for understanding how racism is organized in the United States, as racism amounts to more than individual acts of discrimination. However, more importantly, as Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton shared in their interview, institutional and structural racism impact individuals profoundly.

Ta-Nehisi Coates is an author, journalist, and activist. He has gained a wide readership as he writes about cultural, social, and political issues, particularly regarding African Americans, white supremacy, and racism (figure 3.17). Coates's book *Between the World and Me* is a letter to his then-teenage son about the feelings, symbolism, and realities associated with being Black in the United States. There, he shares an important reminder:

> *But all our phrasing—race relations, racial chasm, racial justice, racial profiling, white privilege, even white supremacy—serves to obscure that racism is a visceral experience, that it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth. You must never look away from this. You must always remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land, with great violence, upon the body (Coates 2015).*

(Optional: Watch the 2:21-minute trailer to the film *Between the World and Me* [Streaming Video] to hear more quotes from that letter.)

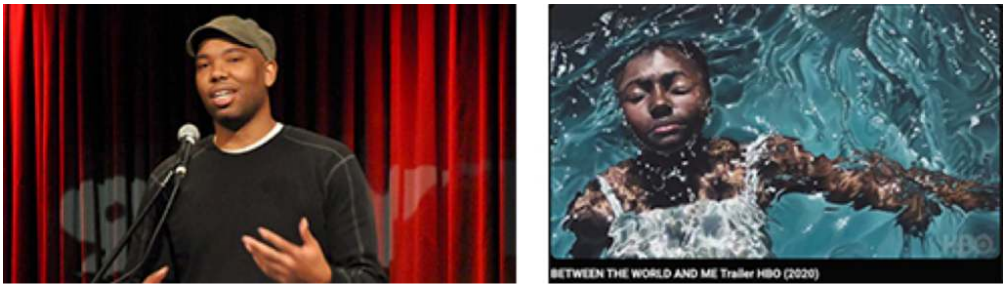


Figure 3.17. Ta-Nehisi Coates has gained a wide readership as he writes about white supremacy (left). In Coates's book *Between the World and Me*, he shares a letter to his then-teenage son about being Black in the United States (right). (Optional: Watch the 2:21-minute trailer to the film *Between the World and Me* [Streaming Video].)

A devastating example of violence upon the body is the disproportionate use of force that police officers use against young Black males in the United States. An individual police officer may have prejudicial beliefs that Black people are more likely to be violent than white people. Based on this prejudice, the officer may be more likely to racially discriminate against Black people and more likely to use more physical force against Black people than against white people. What do we call it, though, when this kind of discrimination happens repeatedly?

The Mapping Police Violence organization reports that year after year, police continue to disproportionately kill Black people in the United States. In 2023, Black people were more likely to be killed by police, more likely to be unarmed, and less likely to be threatening someone when killed. These disparities cannot be explained by individual acts of discrimination alone. Instead, it makes sense to argue that racial discrimination has become institutionalized in our law enforcement systems.

Looking beyond the institutionalization of law enforcement, we can see that laws are written in ways that discriminate against Black people. The disparities in sentences for possession of crack and possession of cocaine are one example (Crow and Johnson 2008). Black people are more likely to receive harsher sentences for crimes they have been accused of committing (Gottschalk 2015). When we look at these systems together, we can see that racial discrimination is consistent and systematic and crosses institutions. Because it is woven into the fabric of our history, culture, and ideology through white supremacy, we can say that this racism is structural.

Norms, Gender, and Sexual Orientation

Oppression around gender and sexual orientation can be as devastating as racism. One in three women over the age of 15 worldwide has faced a form of physical and sexual violence from their intimate partners, from their non-partner, or both, at least once in their life. And because much violence against women goes unreported, the actual figures are believed to be much higher. The stigma and shame associated with reporting and the lack of investigation and convictions discourage victims from reporting (World Health Organization 2024).

In addition to violence, women and girls are faced with multiple and intersecting discriminations and restrictions by people in power (of all genders). These are often fueled by pervasive and damaging gender stereotypes. Women and girls experience limited access to education and the ability to earn income. All this limits their economic power and puts restrictions on their ability to participate in debates and political processes (figure 3.18). These discriminations and restrictions deny them their full enjoyment of fundamental human rights (ARTICLE 19 n.d.).



Figure 3.18. German artist Akut [Website] painted this mural in Amman, Jordan, in 2016 to highlight the question of gender equality.

LGBTQIA+ people worldwide, like women and girls, experience multiple intersecting forms of discrimination and harm by people in more powerful roles. Discriminations might be made by lawmakers and lobbyists who create structural barriers to equal participation in civil and political life. These discriminations are often based on harmful gender norms, the collectively held expectations and beliefs about how women, men, girls, and boys should behave and interact. One example of a gender norm is the expectation that there are only two genders, man and woman, and that we all should belong to one or the other. Harmful norms might be created and perpetuated by leaders in institutions such as education and religion.

Some transgender people may feel pressure to conform to gender norms. Due to societal pressure, many transgender individuals may feel compelled to suppress or hide their identity. Most children have a limited understanding of the social and societal implications of being transgender, but they can strongly feel misaligned with their assigned sex. Given that many transgender people do not come out or begin transitioning until their 20s or later, they may live with this distress for a long time.

In addition to potential conformity pressures, queer youth experience bullying and harassment in school that threaten their sense of safety and potential for success. This lack of safety is particularly pronounced when we take an intersectional lens. Nationwide, schools are hostile environments for LGBTQIA+ and gender-nonconforming students. But the impact is amplified for LGBTQIA+ youth of color, as they may be bullied based on their race, sexual orientation, and gender identity at once (The 2021 National School Climate Survey 2022).

These youth may have limited social supports to help them navigate the hostile environments they encounter regularly. In a study of queer youth who identified as Hispanic/Latinx and African American/Black, researchers found a disproportionately higher experience of suicidal ideation (Lardier 2020). In this study, the combination of limited social support and school bullying amplified the effect of suicidal ideation for queer youth of color. The intersectional nature of gender identity and ethnic/racial identity plays a role in creating such devastating experiences for youth.

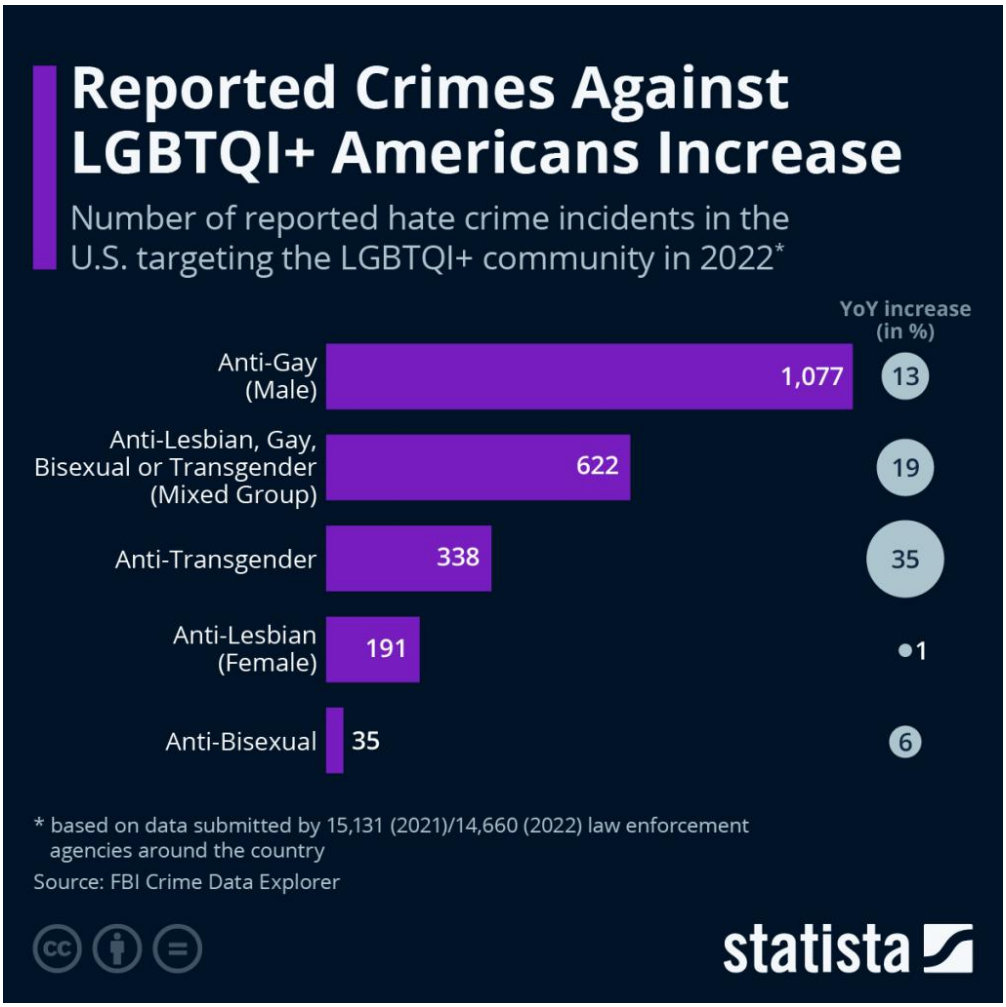


Figure 3.19. This data report from a 2022 survey reveals that hate crimes against LGBTQIA+ individuals have increased.

Harm can go beyond bullying and harassment for LGBTQIA+ people. In the United States between 2017 and 2019, the odds of being a victim of a violent hate crime for LGBTQIA+ people were nine times greater than it was for cisgender and straight people (Truman and Morgan 2022). While the acceptance of equal rights for queer people seems to be at an all-time high (GLAAD 2023), hate crimes against LGBTQIA+ people have increased across the board (figure 3.19). An increase in crimes relating to transgender bias was especially pronounced (Zandt 2024). Since these numbers only cover the incidents where the victim reported the crime, the real number of cases is likely significantly higher.

This section has only introduced a few examples of how systems of oppression impact groups in society. What is common to all is that power creates inequity, and intersectionality compounds experiences of oppression and privilege. For people of color, white dominant culture and white supremacy contribute to institutional and structural racism. For members of the various LGBTQIA+ communities, the process of normalization plays a powerful role.

Going Deeper

To learn more about white supremacy, see the handout “White Supremacy Culture” [PDF].

To see more about hate groups in the United States, view the Southern Poverty Law Center's map section [Website]. You can filter by "Ideology."

For more information on how power and whiteness play a role in our interactions, see the PBS site *Race: The Power of an Illusion* [Website]. Go to the "Themes" tab and find the articles "Racial Classification: Who Decides?" and "Making Whiteness" (figure 3.20).

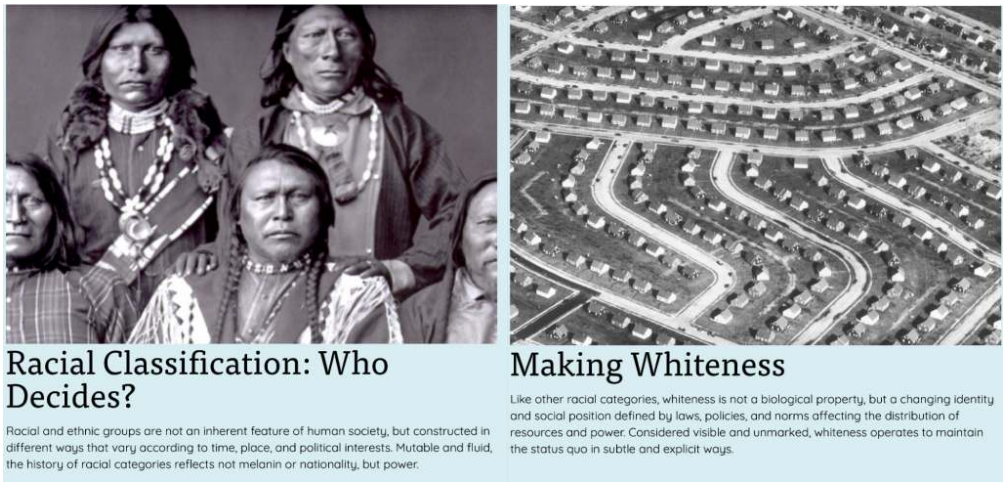


Figure 3.20. Find these articles on *Race: The Power of an Illusion* [Website].

To read more about bullying and harassment experienced by LGBTQIA+ people, read the report "Bullying and Suicide Risk among LGBTQ Youth" [Website].For more information via infographics on safety and rights for members of LGBTQIA+ communities, see the bottom of this *Statista* page [Website].The 3:41-minute video "Power Privilege and Oppression" [Streaming Video] brings together most of the concepts we've explored here.

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Figure 3.17. Screenshot from video trailer to Ta-Nehisi Coates's film, "Between the World and Me" by Stream Source Trailers (right) is licensed under the Standard YouTube License.

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3.4: Lived Experiences in Stratified Society

During her bid for vice presidency of Colombia, Francia Márquez campaigned for changes to structural racism in the country (figure 3.21). She has firsthand knowledge of racial violence and discrimination. Márquez is from a poor community that suffered the effects of illegal gold mining that tainted an important waterway for fishing and drinking water. She organized a 22-day protest on the streets, after which the Colombian government agreed to stem illegal mining. After this work, Márquez became a target of organized crime, with at least one serious attempt at her life.



Figure 3.21. Francia Márquez was elected the first Afro-Colombian vice president of Colombia in 2022.

During her campaign, Márquez made a couple of announcements relevant to our study of social location:

> *The Colombian state does not invest in social projects. Their idea of economic development is to extract ore and territories from ethnic communities. This move is a sheer example of structural racism, and every time a social leader's voice or mine is lifted up to demand rights enshrined in the Constitution, then we end up being military targets by armed groups in our territory, particularly right-wing paramilitaries (Valencia 2024).*

> *There is a challenge in the face of structural racism: the full guarantee of the political participation of ethnic, Indigenous, and Black people (Szalkowicz 2022).*

Márquez's story, and her proclamations as a candidate, describe the significant hurdles that Indigenous Peoples, people of color, and their supporters overcome to address oppression, such as structural racism. It's also a story of how social identity can be a powerful unifier against oppression. Let's turn back to the United States and look closer at the ways structural inequity exists in the institutions that provide housing and schools, along with a creative response.

The Segregation of Housing and Education

For decades, people in power in the United States have limited both housing and educational access for people of color. For example, during the postwar housing boom of the 1940s and 1950s, the GI Bill provided low-interest home loans to support returning veterans. However, as veterans of color applied to participate, they found they were widely denied.

Because lenders discriminated against Black families in a pattern, and within government and economic systems, it was a very damaging example of structural racism. Their discrimination resulted in perpetuating housing **segregation,** the physical separation

of two groups, in residences, the workplace, and social functions.

Another form of structural racism that perpetuates housing segregation is **redlining,** the discriminatory practice of refusing loans to creditworthy applicants in neighborhoods that banks deem undesirable. In the 1930s, the lending industry and the federal government worked to segregate whites from other groups to preserve their property values. They did this by creating maps that marked the residences of people of color and/or immigrants in red. Then those areas were designated to be "dangerous" or "risky" in terms of loaning practices (figure 3.22).

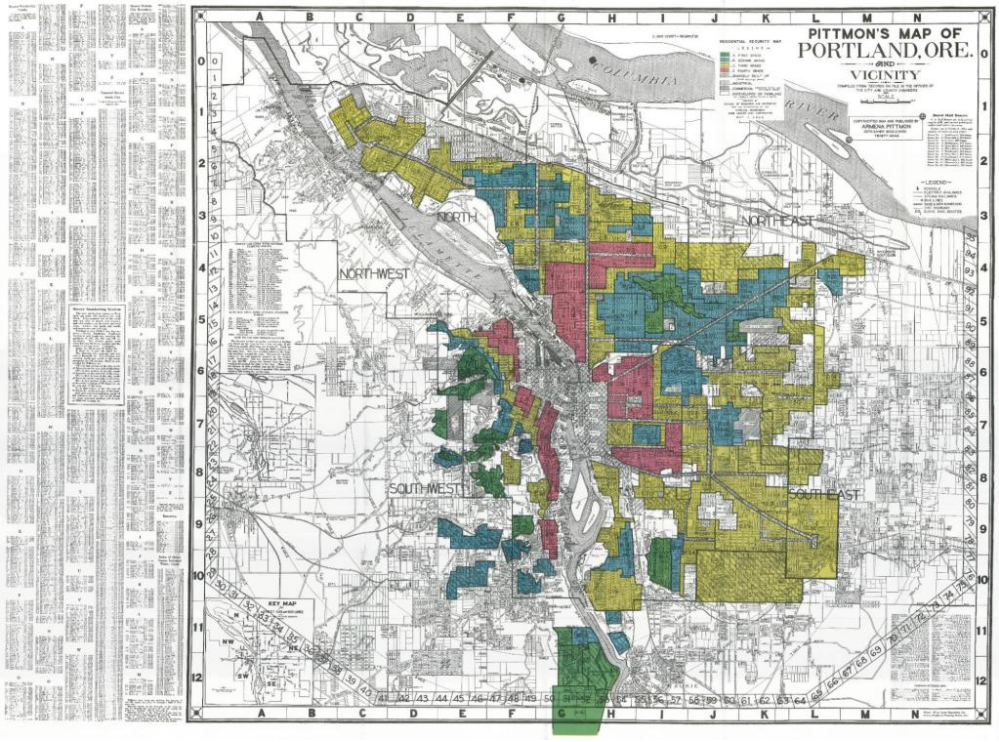


Figure 3.22. This map of Portland, Oregon, in 1940 [Website] shows an example of redlining. Lending institutions and the federal government created maps in which the places where people of color and/or foreign-born residents lived were marked in red and designated to be "dangerous" or "risky."

Between 1910 and 1960, racial restrictions became common in the form of contracts woven into property deeds. These clauses prevented owners from renting or selling their properties to people of color. If they violated such a clause, they would risk forfeiting the property (figure 3.23).

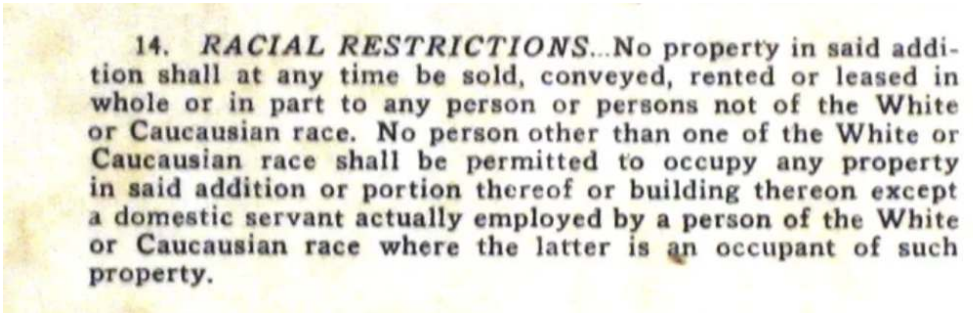

14. *RACIAL RESTRICTIONS*...No property in said addition shall at any time be sold, conveyed, rented or leased in whole or in part to any person or persons not of the White or Caucausian race. No person other than one of the White or Caucausian race shall be permitted to occupy any property in said addition or portion thereof or building thereon except a domestic servant actually employed by a person of the White or Caucausian race where the latter is an occupant of such property.

Figure 3.23 An example of a racially restrictive covenant included in a property deed in a neighborhood in Seattle, Washington: "No person or persons of Asiatic, African or Negro blood, lineage, or extraction shall be permitted to occupy a portion of said property."

In 1968, the Fair Housing Act, part of the Civil Rights Act, outlawed these discriminatory practices, but much damage was done prior to its passage. A study published in 2021 by University of Berkeley's Othering and Belonging Institute notes that "[Eighty-three] percent of neighborhoods that were given poor ratings (or 'redlined') in the 1930s by a federal mortgage policy were as of 2010 highly segregated communities of color" and "more than 80 percent of major metropolitan areas in the United States were actually more segregated in 2019 than they were in 1990" (Menendian, Gambhir, and Gailes 2021).

Once the Fair Housing Act was passed, some local governments began using other legal methods to justify racist real estate practices. For example, zoning laws required more expensive single-family houses on larger lots in richer neighborhoods or restricted cheaper multifamily housing in other locations to continue segregation (Rouse et al. 2021). Black families were forced to buy houses in older, more urban communities.

These practices of creating housing segregation affected access to education as well. This is because in the United States, a good part of funding for school districts comes from the area's property taxes. When homes were assessed at low value, the amount of taxes that were allotted for schools was limited. This compound of housing and education inequity continues today.

Educator Jonathan Kozol examines the consequences of the funding differences in education in his book *Savage Inequalities*. He documents classroom differences in the public school systems of several East Coast cities, illustrating that in poor schools, students face overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and understaffed buildings where even basic tools and textbooks might be missing. Kozol concludes that "equal funding for unequal needs is not equality" and that disparities in school quality constitute a specific form of de facto racial segregation (Kozol 1991:54).

We know that education access matters because increased educational attainment *can affect* an individual's wealth and income. However, educational attainment does not automatically level the playing field. Looking more closely, we can see that when race and ethnicity are considered, educational attainment *can't* promise to improve an individual's wealth and income. Why is this?

First, white people have more wealth than Black, Hispanic, or families registering as Other, or Multiple Races (figure 3.24). The playing field of higher education begins unequally.

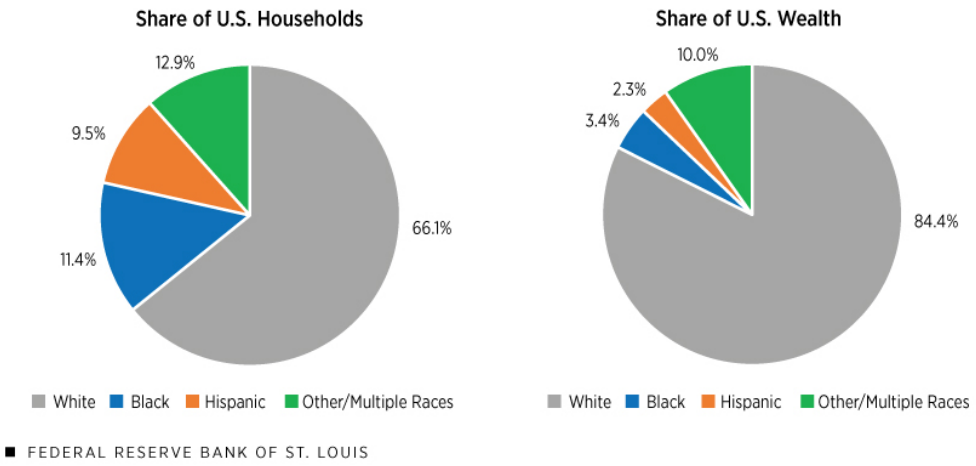


Figure 3.24. These pie charts compare the percentage of U.S. households by race with the percentage of U.S. wealth shared by race. White people own a disproportionately greater share of wealth. Image description.

Second, while the federal financial aid system is making it easier for low-income people to get into college and succeed there, gaps still exist. A higher percentage of white students go to college and are more likely to go to more selective colleges. Black and Hispanic students are more likely to enroll in colleges that grant certificates or associate's degrees rather than bachelor's degrees (Baker et al. 2018).

Students of color also take on more student loan debt to pay for college. The United Negro College Fund found that in 2022, 72 percent of Black students accrued debt to go to school, compared to only 56 percent of white students. Long-term debt also decreases opportunities to create wealth (United Negro College Fund n.d.).

Even the degrees students pursue differ by race and ethnicity. More than half of all white students earn bachelor's degrees, compared to just under 40 percent of Black and Hispanic students. But getting into college, paying for it, and choosing a degree or certificate are only the start. Students still have to graduate in order to begin to realize higher earnings.

Completing college can make an economic difference. Black men have the lowest overall completion rates when gender and race are concerned (Shapiro et al. 2017). After graduation, white graduates tend to earn more than Black and Hispanic graduates with a bachelor's degree. Part of the gap is due to the kinds of degrees that people get. White men are overrepresented in computer

science, engineering, and business fields, which often results in high incomes. Hispanic women are overrepresented in education, psychology, and health professions.

Research on first-generation, low-income college students demonstrates the intersectional nature of social locations. It also points to how social location is related to **social mobility**, an individual's or group's (e.g., family) movement through the class hierarchy due to changes in income, occupation, or wealth. Educational administration professor Kristen A. Renn explains:

> *A Black woman with a college degree is likely to earn less than a Black man or a white woman with the same degree; Hispanic women with undergraduate degrees earn even less. So even with a college degree, equal opportunities for social mobility are not guaranteed for all LIFG [low-income first-generation] students. Earning a college degree is an important element of social mobility for LIFG students, but it does not in itself level the playing field of intergenerational wealth (Renn 2022).*

So will getting a college degree advance your access to income and wealth? Detailed research demonstrates that you are likely to earn more in your lifetime, but how much more depends on your race, ethnicity, class, and gender.

The Digital Divide and #YesWeCode

One of the key disparities related to education is access to technology. Each time you use your phone to find a restaurant, get directions, or look up the actors in your favorite movie, you are using technology to solve problems. However, access to technology is unequal. The **digital divide** refers to the uneven access to technology between groups across social and geographic locations.

The digital divide has become widely used to describe not only internet use but also access to computers and smartphones, access to free or low-cost stable internet, and digital literacy. These three components of access to devices, access to the internet, and effective skills are referred to as the three-pronged strategy needed to close the digital divide (figure 3.25). Individuals need a computer that they know how to use effectively and a sufficient-quality internet service to participate effectively.

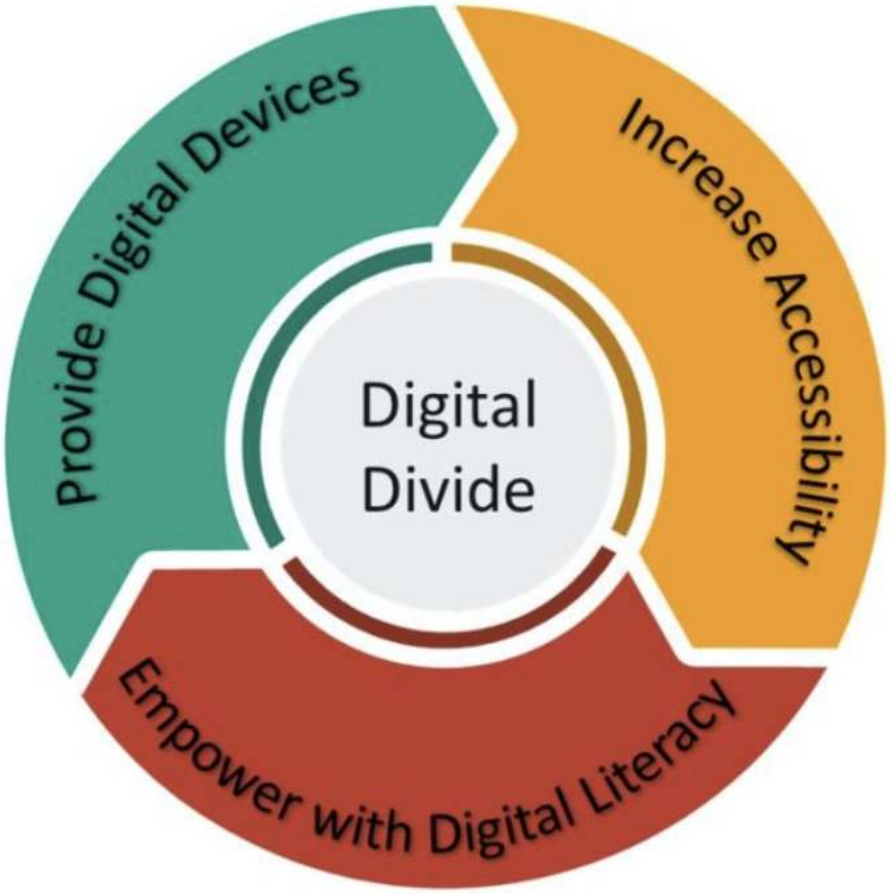


Figure 3.25. A visualization from the Los Angeles County website that shows their three-pronged strategy for addressing the digital divide in their area.

Since the first known usage of “digital divide” in 1994, researchers have continued to examine who is divided. For example, in 2018, Pew Research reported that nearly one in five students couldn’t finish their homework because they did not have access to the internet (Anderson and Perrin 2018). As you might expect, social location is a strong predictor of who has access to technology and who doesn’t. For example, people in rural areas still own less technology than those living in cities or suburbs. Figure 3.26 shows the percentage of device ownership in urban, suburban, and rural areas. How does your experience with device ownership fit within these percentages?

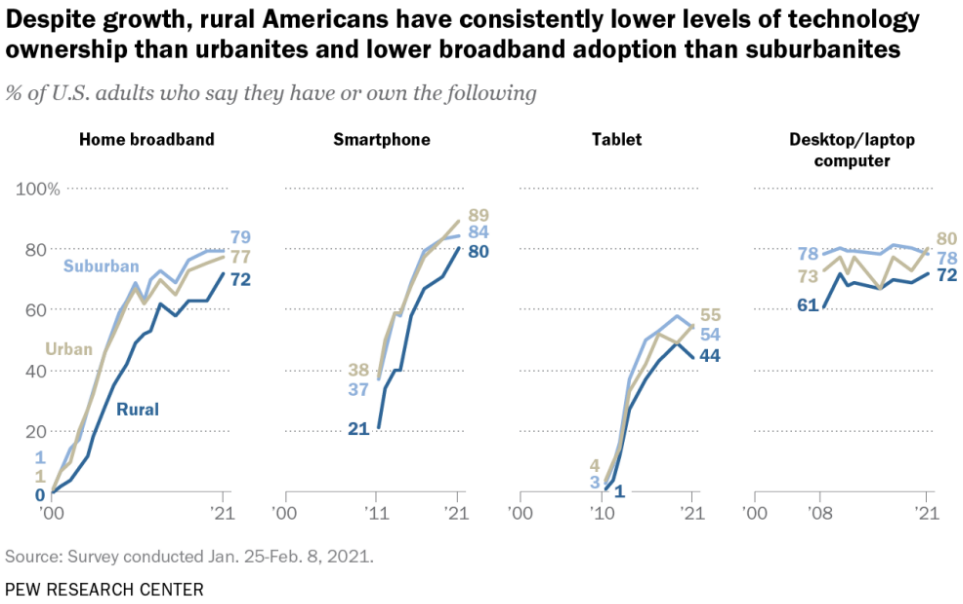


Figure 3.26. Despite growth, rural United States residents have consistently lower levels of technology. This graph shows home broadband, smartphone, tablet, and computer ownership in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Image description.

Because school was shifted online during the COVID-19 pandemic, closing the digital divide became urgent. Organizations and individuals promoted social justice through their collective action and **agency:** the capacity to actively and independently affect change. For example, the federal government implemented broadband programs allowing families to get internet services at free or low cost (Federal Communications Commission. n.d.). State governments funded internet access for schools and libraries. Local schools purchased computers and hotspots.

We know that access to technology is only part of the solution to bridging the digital divide. For example, nonprofit social service providers highlight the importance of digital skills as crucial for stabilizing families. Goodwill, for example, hosts a digital learning platform called GFC Globalt that helps people learn to use their computers.

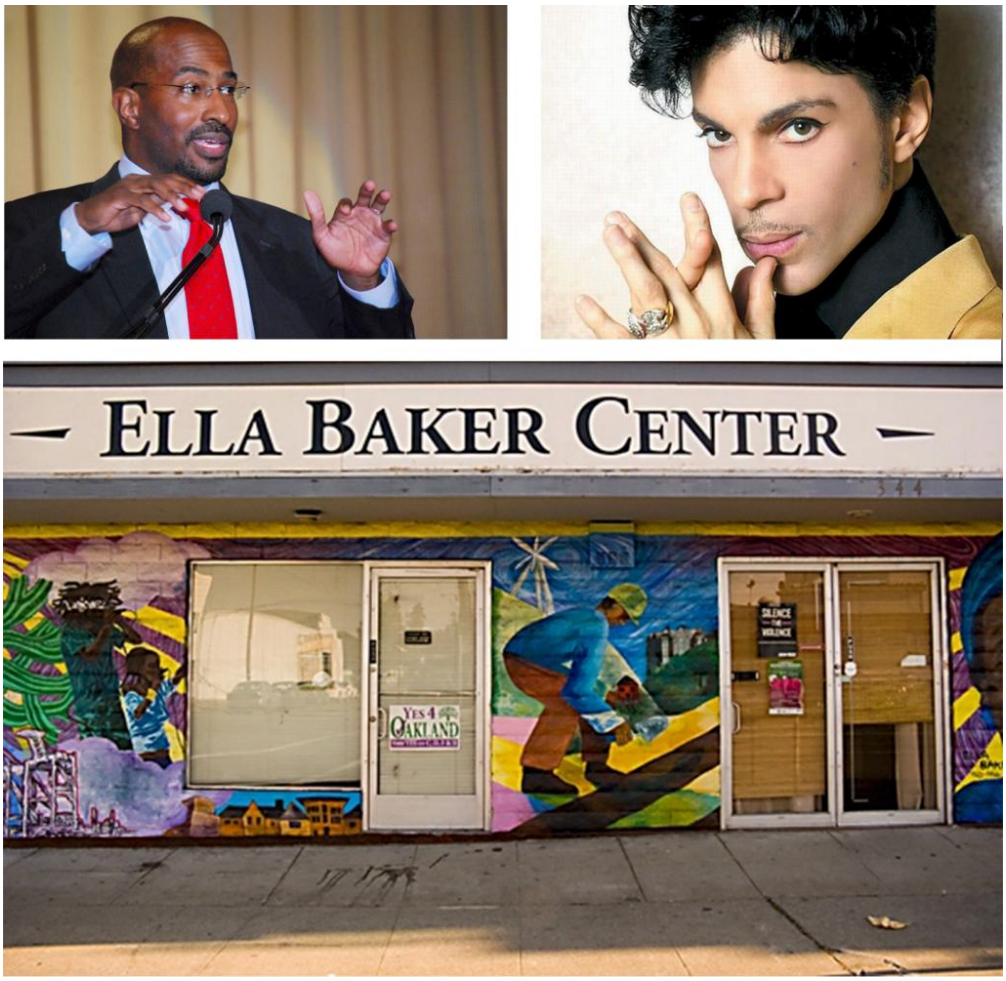


Figure 3.27. Political analyst, lawyer, and civil rights advocate Van Jones (left) launched the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights in Oakland, California (bottom). Then, as the digital divide became evident, he collaborated with Prince (right) to create #YesWeCode.

Some nonprofits are taking a much more integrated approach. #YesWeCode, now woven into the project Dream.Org, is a creative initiative to address the digital divide. It was launched by political analyst, lawyer, and civil rights advocate Van Jones and the musician Prince. Jones spent years running the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights in Oakland, California. The organization lobbied for funds to be dedicated to education versus juvenile prisons in an initiative called "Books Not Bars."

Later, as the digital divide became evident, he and Prince developed #YesWeCode as a national initiative to "help 100,000 young women and men from underrepresented backgrounds find success in the tech sector." Their strategy was to reduce the financial barriers to entering the tech sector by providing scholarships to technical training programs such as coding bootcamps. They also connected their graduates to jobs in tech. Watch the one-minute video "Van Jones on Education and Equity; Global Citizen Festival: NYC [Streaming Video]" (figure 3.28) to understand more about Jones's and Prince's vision.



Figure 3.28. "Van Jones on Education and Equity; Global Citizen Festival: NYC" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Housing segregation, education segregation, and the digital divide, are just a few examples of how stratification is revealed in lived experiences. #YesWeCode is an example of an organization that identified digital access as a key inequity experienced by Black youth. Then it found a way to circumvent the structural barriers that underpin that oppression.

Going Deeper

To learn more about redlining, watch the video, "The House We Live In: Redlining" [Streaming Video] at the website, *Race: The Power of an Illusion.* You can also find articles there regarding "Segregated Housing and the Racial Wealth Gap," "A Long History of Racial Preferences: For Whites," and "Racial Preferences for Whites: The Houses That Racism Built."

You can also see more about the #YesWeCode strategy in the Dream Tech section at Dream.org [Website].

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3.5: Classical Sociological Perspectives

As we have explored with earlier sections on social location and systems of oppression, we are not just individuals but also social beings deeply enmeshed in society. At the heart of sociology is the sociological perspective: the view that our social backgrounds influence our attitudes, behavior, and opportunities in life. While all sociologists would probably accept this basic premise, their views as sociologists differ in many other ways. Three early and foundational perspectives in sociology are structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. This section will examine how sociologists view society through those specific perspectives.

Structural Functionalism

Structural functionalism was the dominant theoretical framework in U.S. sociology from the 1940s into the 1960s and 1970s. This perspective tends to focus on macro-level phenomena and framed sociology's understanding of the relationship between institutions. Functionalists proposed that because institutions work as interrelated parts of society, they create a stable social system. For example, common rituals and shared values help people feel connected to each other and create social cohesion (figure 3.29).



Figure 3.29. A man in prayer at the Masjid (Mosque) Al-Haram. Each year, about two million Muslims attend Hajj, an annual pilgrimage here to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the holiest city for Muslims. It is a ritual that functionalists would likely point to as creating social cohesion.

Talcott Parsons (1966) presented an equilibrium model of social change. He said that society is always in a natural state of equilibrium, defined as a state of equal balance among opposing forces. Gradual change is both necessary and desirable, typically stemming from factors such as population growth, technological advances, and interactions with other societies that introduce new ways of thinking and acting. However, any sudden social change disrupts this equilibrium. To prevent this from happening, other parts of society must make appropriate adjustments if one part of society sees too sudden a change.

Structural functionalism has been heavily criticized within more recent sociology. Some critics argue that functionalists present a static view of society that fails to account for the realities of social change. Others argue that there is a problem in assuming that everything that persists in society has a function for that society. For example, does poverty or discrimination really provide a function for society? The suggestion that institutions support stability is challenged because conflict can emerge when different institutions tell us to do different things.

Especially problematic is the way early structural functionalists likened change in society to change in biological organisms. They said that societies evolved just as organisms do, from tiny, simple forms to much larger and more complex structures. This framework has a limited understanding of earlier societies and their deep complexities.

Functionalism also struggles to explain inequality and, at its worst, may even help justify existing inequalities. For example, functionalist theory assumes that sudden social change is highly undesirable, when such change may in fact be needed to correct inequality and other deficiencies in the status quo. Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci claimed that the functionalist perspective justifies the status quo in society and the underlying power dynamics that maintain that status quo. Finally, other critics argue that functionalism discourages people from taking an active role in changing their social environment, even when doing so may benefit them.

Conflict Theory

First developed by Karl Marx in the 19th century, conflict theory also tends to focus on macro-level analysis of society. Conflict theory claims that society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources. Social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than by consensus and conformity. However, tensions and conflicts arise under two conditions.

The first condition is when resources, status, and power are unevenly distributed between groups in society. The second is when members of a society with fewer resources, status, and power acknowledge that uneven distribution. Alongside that uneven distribution, they identify their social place in a stratified society. Because they focused on social class, early conflict theorists identified this as “class consciousness” (figure 3.30). But this awareness of social place also includes other social characteristics, such as race, gender, or religion. These two sources of conflict become the engine for social change.



Figure 3.30. We don’t know the true identity of the guerrilla street artist, Bansky [Website], who painted this work, *Rickshaw*. Nor do we know their social class. But it’s safe to say they have a strong class consciousness.

Conflict theorists argue that the institutions of a society promote the interests of the powerful while subverting the interests of the powerless. Therefore, the status quo generally results in unequal societies. The conflict perspective thus views sudden social change in the form of protest or revolution as both desirable and necessary to reduce or eliminate inequality and to address other social ills. Throughout this chapter, we have presented ways that institutions create inequality and ways that institutions can help shift those realities. We’ll present many more examples throughout this textbook.

Conflict theory arose in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s against the backdrop of the rise of various social movements. Informed by these events, conflict theorists recognize that social change often stems from the agency of members of society. That is, change emerges from people organizing and mobilizing together to pressure the institutions of society. When efforts are

combined by individuals, they create social movements to bring about fundamental changes in the social, economic, and political systems.

Critics of conflict theory argue that it exaggerates the extent of inequality and overemphasizes social change. It is also seen as centering social class in the analysis of the social world, rather than other sources of oppression and privilege, such as race and gender. We'll explore more about conflict theory in the context of economy in Chapter 6 and of religion in Chapter 9.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism grew out of the Chicago School of sociology, which is considered an epicenter of sociological thought between 1915 and 1935. Work at the Chicago School included field research and the first major studies of urban society. The sociologists at the Chicago School during this era influenced many of today's well-known sociologists.

Unlike functionalism and conflict theory, symbolic interactionism provides a micro-level lens to understand society. It is the study of smaller-scale social interactions and actions and includes the social construction of reality perspective that we introduced in Chapter 2. Herbert Blumer, who coined the term "symbolic interactionism" in 1937, was a student of several sociologists at the Chicago School. He relayed that symbolic interactionism is concerned with how meanings are constructed through interactions with others. We attach meanings to situations, roles, relationships, and things whenever we encounter them. For a symbolic interaction to occur, these meanings have to be shared and agreed upon by the people you are interacting with.

For example, if we attach the meaning of "family member" to someone, we will treat them as a family member (or act on the basis of the meaning of family member). What we define as family originates from our interactions with others. We share common rituals such as holiday celebrations. We share common values such as kindness and loyalty. Through our interactions with our family, as well as with people outside our family (such as teachers, neighbors, or the media), we may come to modify our interpretations of what it means to be family.



Figure 3.31. "Hands up, don't shoot" is a slogan and gesture that originated after the August 2014 police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and was then adopted at protests against police brutality elsewhere in the United States. It implies one has their hands in the air and is therefore not a threat to an approaching police officer. Both are symbols that symbolic interactionists might focus on as they study the Ferguson unrest.

From the symbolic interactionist perspective, social change is related to the shared meaning of symbols. For example, a symbolic interactionist studying the Black Lives Matter movement might try to understand what motivated individuals to join the protest or what meanings signs, chants, or hand signals have to participants (figure 3.31).

Symbols are also crucial in the formation of our social identities. In every waking moment, we are taking new impressions of the world around us. This means that symbols can take on different meanings to different individuals and that the meanings we attach to the world may change over time. Hence, there is no such thing as a static understanding of our shared meanings, or one's identity and one's place in the world. This is part of the social change process. When shared meanings decrease, groups of people become alienated and disconnected, which also leads to social change.

The meanings we assign to actions and people have real consequences for our lived experiences. For example, stereotypes and prejudice are socially constructed through interactions and shared meanings. When, as members of society, we act on our stereotypes and prejudices in the form of discrimination, we perpetuate inequalities by limiting opportunities and access to resources.

Symbolic interactionism also examines **stigmatization:** the labeling or spoiling of an identity, which leads to ostracism, marginalization, discrimination, and abuse. Returning to our Black Lives Matter example, it may be fair to say that anarchist

symbols (clothes, slogans, icons) became more stigmatized during Black Lives Matter protests as people mistakenly associated all anarchists with protestors who were destroying property. We'll mention more about anarchism in Chapter 6.

Critics argue that symbolic interactionism struggles to explain macro-level phenomena. Other critics argue that it tends to downplay power, privilege, and oppression. Some present-day interactionists have tried to correct these problems by showing how symbolic interactionism can be used to explain power (Athens 2010) and organizational patterns (Hallett and Ventresca 2006).

Instead of viewing common rituals and shared values as integrating people into the society, conflict theorists argue these values and rituals are actually ideologies that deceive people to make them comfortable with their position in society. One dominant ideology that is heavily criticized by conflict theorists is the idea of the "American Dream," where you work hard and get ahead. Conflict theorists argue that the opportunities to get ahead for most people are severely curtailed due to barriers in most institutions. The American Dream ideology, according to conflict theorists, justifies the position of those already at the top of the power structure (Colomy 2010).

Erving Goffman (1922–1982), Howard Becker (1928–), Sheldon Stryker (1924–2016), Patricia (1952–), Peter Adler (1952–), and Gary Alan Fine (1950–) are some well-known interactionists.

Comparing and Applying Classical Sociological Perspectives

The classical theories in sociology present different perspectives and assumptions related to social change. Figures 3.32 and 3.33 summarize and compare the major assumptions of the functionalist and conflict approaches. Figure 3.32 shows the macrosociological perspective, and figure 3.33 shows the microsociological perspective.

Figure 3.32. Macrosociological perspectives: Focus is placed on the big picture, which usually means such things as social structure; social institutions; and social, political, and economic change. Macrosociologists look at the large-scale social forces that change the course of human society and the lives of individuals.

Theoretical Perspective	Major Assumptions
Structural functionalism	Society is in a natural state of equilibrium. Gradual change is necessary and desirable and typically stems from such things as population growth, technological advances, and interaction with other societies that brings new ways of thinking and acting. However, sudden social change is undesirable because it disrupts this equilibrium. To prevent this from happening, other parts of society must make appropriate adjustments if one part of society sees too sudden a change.
Conflict theory	Because the status quo is characterized by inequality and other problems, sudden social change in the form of protest or revolution is both desirable and necessary to reduce or eliminate inequality and to address other social ills.

Figure 3.33 Microsociological perspective: Focus on social interaction, action, and social construction of meaning. Microsociologists look at how families, coworkers, and other small groups of people interact; why they interact the way they do; and how they interpret the meaning of their own interactions and of the social settings in which they find themselves.

Theoretical Perspective	Major Assumptions
Symbolic interactionism	Social organization emerges from shared meanings created and communicated via symbols and interactions. Social identities are shaped by social processes. Any significant change in the situation, environment, or activity prompts a re-evaluation of the meanings that people entertain. Ideas about the world change as we see how others see them and are affected by ideas others believe. In social reality, the truth of an assertion changes with the times.

Let's look at these sociological theories through an example. *RACE TALKS: Uniting to Break the Chains of Racism* is an organization based in Portland, Oregon. Its organizers envision "a world beyond superficial connections where race, ethnicity, gender, and religion are no longer barriers to connecting with others, but a means to enhance cross-cultural connections through deep and shared experiences" ("Our Story" n.d.).

Since 2011, the organization has hosted monthly events at a popular venue, engaging a total of over 30,000 participants. The events begin with providing a platform for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) to present their work or current issues. Then all participants discuss the topics of the evening in facilitated conversations (figure 3.34).



Figure 3.34. Ground rules for the facilitated conversations at *RACE TALKS: Uniting to Break the Chains of Racism* [Website] events.

Donna Maxey is the founder of RACE TALKS. She's a former teacher and activist who was motivated to address social divisions that are due to systemic oppression, inequity, privilege, and violence. She's a Black woman whose parents fled East Texas in the early 1940s due to the Jim Crow laws—state and local legal codes that enforced racial segregation. Their new state of Oregon, however, escaped Jim Crow laws merely because Oregon was a whites-only state that already had exclusionary laws against Black people (laws not removed from the books until 2002). Oregon remains one of the whitest states in the United States, and as in the rest of the country, organized white supremacist groups are on the rise (Southern Poverty Law Center n.d.).

Take a look at Donna Maxey, founder of Race Talks [Streaming Video] (figure 3.35). There, Donna describes her inspiration and strategy for making social change. As you watch, consider the RACE TALKS project through the lens of both symbolic interactionism and conflict theory. That is, how can you apply social interactionism to explain the role and success of RACE TALKS? How can you explain the changes RACE TALKS aims to make through the lens of conflict theory?



Figure 3.35. Donna Maxey, founder of Race Talks in Portland, Oregon, shares her vision and strategy for making social change. Transcript.

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Figure 3.29. Pilgrim in supplication at the Masjid Al-Haram in Mecca is on Wikipedia and licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5.

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Figure 3.30. Bristol Museum vs. Banksy / *Rickshaw* on Flickr by JasonBlait is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

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Figure 3.31. Standing Up For Ferguson on Flickr by Joe Brusky is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0 (left). "Hands up gloves" on Flickr by Justin Norman is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 (right).

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Figure 3.35. Donna Maxey, founder of Race Talks by Aimee Samara Krouskop is licensed CC BY 4.0.

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Figure 3.34. Image of ground rules for the facilitated conversations is found on the *RACE TALKS: Uniting to Break the Chains of Racism* website and included under fair use.

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3.6: Newer Sociological Perspectives

Since the 1970s sociologists have used a large number of theoretical frameworks that cannot be reduced to functionalism, conflict theory, or symbolic interactionism. Here we'll discuss four of those perspectives: feminist theory, critical theories of race, postcolonial theory, and decolonization. They each serve to widen our understanding of social interaction in the context of equity.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory examines inequalities in gender-related issues. It emerges from a context where society is viewed as a patriarchy with uneven distributions of power that fall along sex and gender lines. **Patriarchy** refers to a society, system, or group in which men dominate women and have the power and authority.

In patriarchal societies, men's contributions are seen as more valuable than those of women. Patriarchal perspectives and arrangements are widespread and taken for granted. As a result, women's viewpoints tend to be silenced or marginalized to the point of being discredited or considered invalid.

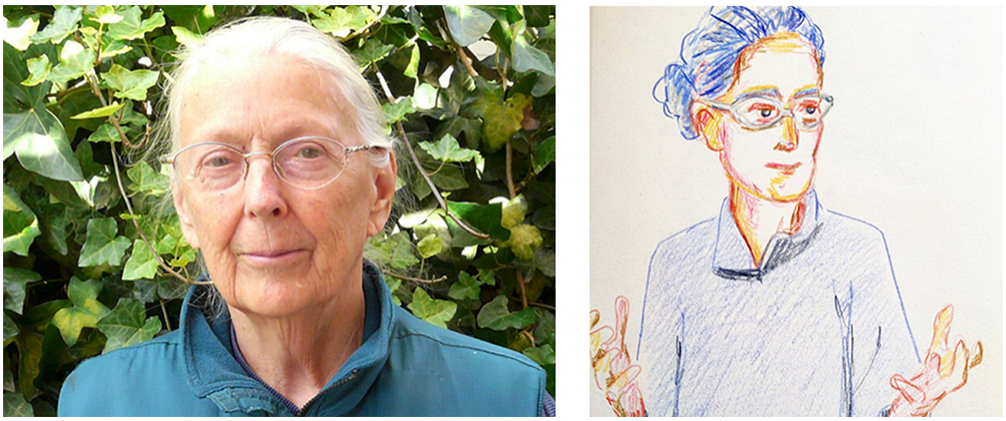


Figure 3.36. Sociologist Dorothy Smith (left, and drawing of her likeness at right) helped develop the ideas of feminist standpoint theory.

We can think of feminism as a position that advocates for the equal rights of women and men. There are many different types of feminisms with perspectives that often overlap, but there are three basic commonalities to most feminist theories:

1. Gender matters. In other words, gender is one of the most important parts of society; gender is a basis of the structure and organization of the social world.
2. Society is arranged so that women are given less status or value (patriarchy).
3. Regardless of the causes of these differences, they can and should be reduced or eliminated.

One type of feminism, referred to as standpoint feminism, centers the viewpoint of oppressed individuals or groups. Dorothy Smith helped develop the ideas of feminist standpoint theory (figure 3.36). She saw standpoint theory as a way to examine society from the perspectives of women and as a way to help women understand their worlds (Lorber 2010).

This lens identifies viewpoints as having a partial "truth" and states knowledge itself as situational. From the perspective of this theory, since women's lives and roles are often different from men's, women have a different type of knowledge. As a subordinated group in a patriarchal society, women can understand the world in ways that may challenge conventional beliefs.

Some well known feminist theorists include Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1935), Betty Friedan (1921–2006), Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986), Nancy Hartsock (1943–2015), Judith Butler (1956–), Donna Haraway (1944–), Sandra Harding (1935–), and Joan Acker (1924–2016). We'll discuss more about feminist theory in the context of religion in Chapter 9.

Critical Theories of Racial Interaction

Stark racial disparities that have persisted in the United States despite decades of civil rights reforms raise structural questions about how racist hierarchies are enforced, even among people with good intentions. Racial formation theory is one perspective that grapples with those questions. It understands race as a construction of society, not a biological reality, as discussed earlier in this chapter. This perspective views society as continually creating and transforming racial categories (Omi and Winant 1994). For

example, groups that were once self-defined by their ethnic backgrounds (Mexican Americans, Japanese Americans) are now racialized as “Hispanics” and “Asian Americans.”

The notion of racial formation points to how what we define as race varies and changes as political, economic, and historical contexts. In other words, different race classifications arise at particular places and at particular points in time. And many say it is important to elevate the voices and stories of people who experience racism.

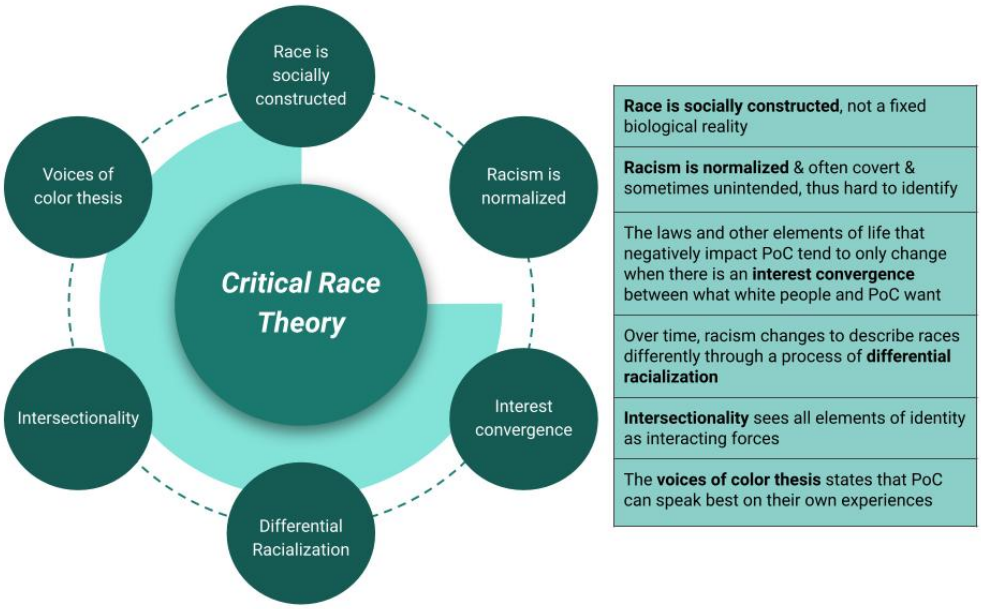


Figure 3.37. The principles of critical race theory include several components: the social construction of race, the normalization of race, interest convergence, differential racialization, intersectionality, and the voices of color thesis. Image description.

Critical race theory is an intellectual and social framework that examines how racism is embedded in U.S. social life through its systems and institutions (figure 3.37). This perspective emerged from the intellectual and social movements of civil-rights scholars and activists who wanted to examine the intersection of race, society, and law. It agrees with racial formation theory that race is not rooted in biology. Race is a social construct, as we discussed earlier in this chapter. It is something that changes depending on the social and political conditions of the society at a particular point in time.

Critical race theorists would say there are few incentives for those who benefit from the current status quo to eradicate racism. This perspective centers the knowledge and experiences of people of color and relies on an understanding of intersectionality to note how those knowledges and experiences intersect with other identities, such as gender and sexuality. Within sociology, this involves critiquing how sociology has privileged white ideals, culture, and interpretations (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008; Omi and Winant 2015).



Figure 3.38. Sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois (left) and a mural in Philadelphia (2008) by artist Carl Willis Humphrey depicting Du Bois observing a city scene with a census in his hand (right). The work of Du Bois helped form the foundations of critical race theory.

Critical race theory draws from intersectionality and the work of W. E. B. Du Bois (1868 –1963) (figure 3.38). Du Bois was the first African American to earn a doctorate from Harvard and was a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He was invited by the University of Pennsylvania Department of Sociology in 1896 to conduct a survey of Black people living in Philadelphia's Seventh Ward, the first scientific study of race.

The work of sociologists Michael Omi (1951–), Howard Winant (1946–), Eduardo Bonilla Silva (1962–), and Joe Feagin (1938–) also aligns with this framework. We'll discuss more about critical race theory in the context of religion in Chapter 9.

Postcolonial Theory

In Chapter 1, we introduced the longstanding French occupation of Algeria. If we fast forward to 1954 to 1962, the story evolves with the Algerian War of Independence—one of the most monumental wars of the anti-colonial period. It was led by the Front de Libération Nationale (Hagemann n.d.). After World War II, people in many European colonies in Africa and Asia began rising up and challenging their colonizers. This led to the dismantling of European empires. Against this backdrop, postcolonial theory emerged. Generally, postcolonial theory explores colonial relations and their aftermath, and how those relations have been created.

Postcolonial theory challenges the theoretical frameworks of mainstream U.S. sociology. Most classical and modern theorists assumed that their frameworks are universal and could be applied to all societies (Connell 2007). However, these theorists, who have specific backgrounds and positions within their own societies, developed their theories in very specific societies at particular points in time.



Figure 3.39. Sociologist Julian Go explores the forms and impact of colonialism and postcolonial/decolonial thought.

Most of what is considered sociological theory is derived from the ideas of white, upper-middle-class men living in the United States and Europe. Typically, they were from societies engaging in colonial projects. This has contributed to a "grande erasure": an "erasure of the experience of the majority of humankind from the foundations of social thought" (Connell 2007:46). Postcolonial thought critiques empires and their legacies. As noted by sociologist Julian Go (figure 3.39), "…if social theory was born from and for empire, postcolonial thought was born *against* it" (Go 2016:1).

While there is a wide diversity of theorists and thought included in postcolonial theory, there are a couple of points that hold the framework together. One is that empire, colonialism, and imperialism matter. These processes shaped and continue to shape societies across the globe. The second is that empire, colonialism, and imperialism should be critiqued. This includes critiquing the ways colonialism and imperialism influence how people understand the social world. The critique is paired with seeking out alternative ways of knowing and thinking (Go 2016).

Postcolonial theory starts from a very different place than most classical theory. Go argues that it should start from the standpoint of the subaltern. **Subaltern groups** are groups that are made subordinate by powerful groups because of their class, caste, gender, nationality, or any other dimension of difference. This means that postcolonial theory "instead of starting from atop or from afar, instead of starting with theories and concepts cultivated from the standpoint of power, the subaltern standpoint starts on the ground. It starts from the standpoint of the subjugated" (Go 2016:143).

Some well known postcolonial theorists include W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963), Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), Aimé Césaire (1913–2008), Amilcar Cabral (1924–1973), and C. L. R. James (1901–1989). More recent thinkers include Edward Said (1935–2003), Homi Bhabha (1949–), Gayatri Spivak (1942–), and Dipesh Chakrabarty (1948–).

Decolonization

Postcolonial theory works in tandem with decolonization. On one hand, decolonization refers to the process by which colonies become politically and economically independent of the colonizing country. In another context, decolonization refers to both a perspective and a set of practices that intend to undo the social results of colonization (Asma-na-hi et. al 2018). Author Megan Korchak summarizes decolonization as "the mechanism that will allow for restoration and conciliation of colonized groups who have had their power stolen.". We'll rely on this definition in most of this textbook (Asadullah et al. 2022).

As a perspective, the decolonization lens identifies the harm of colonial history, how that history has paralyzed Indigenous Peoples, and how it continues to subjugate them. It also identifies the systems of colonization as harmful to everyone and the Earth.



Figure 3.40. A mural by Jaque Fragua [Website] in Indian Alley in the Skid Row area of downtown Los Angeles. Indian Alley sits beside the United American Indian Involvement, Inc., an outreach center for American Indians that became an important locus for social, spiritual, political, and rehabilitative activities. Fragua launched a project to turn into a series of interlaced murals focusing on human rights and issues of Indigenous Peoples.

As a practice, decolonization means different things for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. As a practice for Indigenous Peoples, decolonizing refers to regaining cultural, psychological, and economic freedom for their communities and to achieve *sovereignty*, the right and ability to practice self-determination over their land, cultures, and political and economic systems. This kind of decolonization plays out as Indigenous Peoples reclaim their family structures, cohesive communities, culture, language, and traditions—all of which government policies designed for assimilation and genocide had dismantled. It also plays out as Indigenous Peoples establish recognition of their self-governance in agreements or treaties (figure 3.40).

As a practice, decolonization for non-Indigenous people means creating space and support for Indigenous Peoples to reclaim what was taken from them. This involves changing how non-Indigenous people think about Indigenous Peoples' knowledge; understanding how they acquired it; and addressing any misconceptions, prejudice, and assumptions about Indigenous Peoples. For both Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people, decolonizing means deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches. In one way, this means challenging communications that come from the dominant culture and addressing unbalanced power dynamics. In another way, this involves valuing and revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and approaches.

Two Aymaran thinkers from Bolivia have contributed to a more in-depth understanding of decolonization from their cultural perspectives. Philosopher Rafael Bautista makes connections between colonial domination and two key foundations of colonialism: capitalism and white supremacy. He relays that every time we purchase or consume an item from a capitalist system, we are "consuming" the values of that system. They become part of our existence. As we drink Coca-Cola, for example, we are consuming the unhealthy quality of the sugary drink, as well as the values of the system that produced and delivered it to us (personal communication with the author, Krouskop 2018).

Part of the values associated with Coca-Cola are poor social and environmental ethics. The company has been scrutinized for environmental destruction in several countries, and in Colombia, their bottling partners were charged in 2001 for collaborating with paramilitaries to threaten and assassinate union organizers (Harris and Lapan 2006).

Bautista points to the myth of white supremacy that devalues Indigenous cultures, religions, languages, and ways of life. He sees that for Bolivian society to decolonize, it requires the removal of its culture of white supremacy. It also requires the rebuilding of

Indigenous pride, forms of knowledge, and practices (Kennemore and Postero 2020).



Figure 3.41. Scholar, activist, and documentary filmmaker Ismael Saavedra (?–2019) coined the term "autodecolonization" to refer to a decolonization of one's mind. Photo by Aimee Samara Krouskop (left). The banner image on Ismael's Facebook page "Autodecolonization and Climate Crisis" (translated from Spanish) shows a fiery earth surrounded by the Wiphala flag (right). The Wiphala represents Indigenous Peoples of the Andes as well as their longstanding resistance against colonial forces.

Ismael Saavedra was a Bolivian philosopher, activist, and ethnographic documentary filmmaker (?–2019) who dedicated his later years to the study and encouragement of "autodecolonization" (figure 3.41). In the same way that Indigenous Peoples are reclaiming political and cultural autonomy, Ismael expressed the importance of taking it upon oneself to undo the values and systems of colonialism that have found their way into our consciousness. This practice, he insisted, is important for both Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people (communication with the author, Krouskop 2019).

Bautista and Saavedra both refer to the principles of ("living well") we introduced in Chapter 2. From their perspective, decolonization allows for the values and practices of Buen Vivir to better exist, making room for healthier humans and the protection of Mother Earth. We'll discuss more on decolonization in the context of education in Chapter 8.

Going Deeper



Figure 3.42. Transcript.

In this 24-minute podcast from Ben Cushing, Autodescolonización" [Streaming Video] from Bolivian scholar Ismael Saavedra. This video sits on Bolivia's Ministry of Education website and has English subtitles. It includes an appearance from Rafael Bautista, also mentioned in this section.

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Definition of patriarchy is adapted from Open Education Sociology Dictionary, licensed under CC BY 4.0.

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Figure 3.37. Infographic of the principles of critical race theory is in Wikimedia Commons and licensed under CC 1.0.

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Figure 3.40. Decolonize and chill mural by Jaque Fragua is on Flickr by wiredforlego and licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.

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Figure 3.42. *, "Chapter 3: The Walls Built in Our Minds" [Podcast] is produced by Ben Cushing, published by Podbean, and licensed under CC BY 4.0.*

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3.7: Conclusion

Does society totally determine our beliefs, behavior, life choices, and opportunities? No—individual differences still matter, and disciplines such as psychology are needed in tandem with sociology to gain the most complete understanding of human action and beliefs. But if individual differences matter, so do our identities and our social locations, even if they are socially constructed. Even the most individual attitudes and behaviors, such as voting decisions, are influenced to some degree by our identities and social locations and, more generally, by the society to which we belong.

Our social locations also affect the life choices available to us, which are important decisions one makes about our lives according to our interests, opinions, and actions. They determine whether we have a good chance or little chance of being healthy, wealthy, and well educated and, more generally, of living a good, happy life. Our intersecting identities compound our privilege and life restrictions. Because U.S. society is stratified, white supremacy, normalization, and power all contribute to systems of oppression and inequity. Sociology makes sense of these dynamics through the lens of differing classical perspectives as well as newer and constantly emerging perspectives.

Review of Learning Outcomes

This chapter has offered you the opportunity to:

1. Explain how social location is studied, how it is constructed, and its consequences.
2. Discuss how systems of oppression exist in society and impact people across multiple categories of social identity.
3. Illustrate how structural inequity is experienced by individuals and groups.
4. Apply classical theory to explain how the structure of institutions shape patterns of social inequity.
5. Apply newer theory to explain how the structure of institutions shape patterns of social inequity.

Key Terms

agency: The capacity to actively and independently choose and to effect change.

decolonization: "the mechanism that will allow for restoration and conciliation of colonized groups who have had their power stolen" (Korchak 2022).

digital divide: uneven access to technology due to inequalities between different social, cultural, and economic groups; often separated by social and physical location.

inequity: differences in access to resources or opportunity between groups that are the result of treatment by a more powerful group; this creates circumstances that are unnecessary, avoidable, and unfair.

intersectionality: the idea that inequalities produced by multiple social characteristics influence the lives of individuals and groups. This suggests we view race, ethnicity, class, gender, or sexuality not as individual characteristics but as interconnected social situations.

norms: the informal rules that govern behavior in groups and societies.

normalization: a process that constructs specific behaviors, presentations, and ideas as the idealized norm through correction.

oppression: the systemic and extensive nature of social inequity and harm woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness.

patriarchy: a society, system, or group in which men dominate women and have the power and authority.

redlining: the discriminatory practice of refusing loans to creditworthy applicants in neighborhoods that banks deem undesirable.

segregation: the physical separation of two groups in residence, the workplace, and social functions.

social class: the set of people who share similar social circumstances based on factors like wealth, income, education, family background, and occupation.

social identity: the set of characteristics by which a person is recognizable or known by the society in which they live.

social location: the social position an individual holds within their society based upon social class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, religion, and other characteristics that society deems important.

social mobility: an individual's or group's (e.g., family) movement through the class hierarchy due to changes in income, occupation, or wealth.

social stratification: the categorization of its people into rankings based on factors of power, access, and resources (such as wealth, income, education, or occupation) as well as social identities (like race, ethnicity, or gender).

socioeconomic status: a combination of a person's or family's economic and social position in comparison to others.

social status: the rank, honor, or prestige attached to one's position in society or a group.

stigmatization: the labeling or spoiling of an identity, which leads to ostracism, marginalization, discrimination, and abuse.

structural racism: the system of racial bias that exists across institutions and society.

subaltern groups: groups that are made subordinate by powerful groups because of their class, caste, gender, nationality, or any other dimension of difference.

white supremacy: the belief, theory, or doctrine that white people are inherently superior to people from all other racial and ethnic groups.

Comprehension Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=705#h5p-3

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 4: Globalization and Inequality

Learning Objectives

This chapter offers you the opportunity to:

- Compare views about the relationship between global stratification and globalization.
- Identify the measures that social scientists use to study economic global stratification.
- Summarize, with a critical lens, how countries are categorized.
- Discuss theories that explain why inequality exists between countries.
- Explain how social inequality within countries is evaluated based on social locations.
- Illustrate how quality of life is identified and measured globally.
- Discuss how globalization affects inequality between and within countries.
- Summarize trends related to global inequality.

4.1: Chapter Story
4.2: The Study of Global Stratification and Globalization
4.3: Measuring Global Stratification
4.4: The Classification of Countries
4.5: Theories of Inequality Between Countries
4.6: Measuring Social Inequality Within Countries
4.7: Measuring Quality of Life
4.8: Globalization and Inequality
4.9: Trends in Global Inequality
4.10: Conclusion
4.11: References

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4.1: Chapter Story

FORMER INSURGENTS LEAD ECO-TOURS: THE REACH OF GLOBALIZATION

Something extraordinary is happening in remote regions of Colombia. Former members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) are offering eco-tours to internationals in former conflict zones where they've lived and fought for decades. Many have spent most of their lives fighting the Colombian army and paramilitary groups to maintain geographic and social control of rural regions throughout the country. Where once they launched down cliffs with tree vines during combat, they now guide tourists to cavern floors equipped with rope and safety harnesses (Otis 2021).



Figure 4.1. National Public Radio hosted a podcast on the tour operations of former members of the FARC: "Tourists in Colombia Can Now Take Jungle Hikes with Ex-FARC Guerrilla Guides" [Podcast] (left). Tours include rappelling down cliffs as militants did to escape the Colombian army (right). For a fuller introduction to the activities of armed actors during the war, see the Chapter Story in Chapter 3. Transcript.

Chapter 3 introduced the civil war of Colombia, fueled by deep class inequalities. During a good part of the 50-year conflict, the Andean mountain, plains, and rainforest regions that former FARC members controlled were considered dangerous areas for travelers. During that era, the FARC took hostages to fund their campaign and pressure the government to release imprisoned rebels.

After peace accords were signed in 2016 between the FARC and the Colombian government, former combatants began to offer rappelling, trekking, rafting, and educational programs to share their lives and experiences during the war. Because they know the land and its resources so well, former FARC soldiers make for exceptional tour guides.

Listen to the 5-minute story of one group's new business: "Tourists in Colombia Can Now Take Jungle Hikes with Ex-FARC Guerrilla Guides" [Website] (figure 4.1). As you do, consider what you have learned about social change in the first three chapters:

- What national changes do you imagine have transpired to allow FARC soldiers to find such a different place in society?
- What global changes can you imagine have paved their way?
- What social changes are they contributing to as they build their tour operations?

These inquiries and this story exemplify well how globalization plays a role in social change. **Globalization** is the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations due to cross-national exchanges of goods and services, technology, investments, people, ideas, and information.

In this chapter, we'll explore how social change dynamics play a role in scenarios like these. Through the lens of globalization, we'll examine how global inequality exists, how it is measured, and how countries are categorized or ranked according to that inequality. We'll focus on the two dimensions of inequality seen globally: inequality between countries and inequality within countries. This chapter will encourage you to ask questions about global relationships.

- How can we see global inequality from a perspective that puts people at the center?
- What role does power play in creating global inequality?
- How is inequality and inequity experienced by people around the world?
- How is global inequality influenced by social location?

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Figure 4.1. Screenshot image of podcast from National Public Radio website is included under fair use (left).

Figure 4.1. "Tourists in Colombia Can Now Take Jungle Hikes with Ex-FARC Guerrilla Guides" by National Public Radio (NPR) is included under fair use.

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4.2: The Study of Global Stratification and Globalization

In Chapter 3, you learned that stratification within the United States is the unequal distribution of economic and social resources among individuals and groups in the United States. This unequal distribution is based on one's position in the social hierarchy, or strata of society.

The same principles apply in the study of **global stratification**, the unequal distribution of economic and social resources among the world's countries. Sociologists study global stratification using three main lenses:

1. The unequal distribution of economic and social resources *between* countries.
2. The unequal distribution of economic and social resources *within* countries (internal inequality).
3. Measures within countries as compared with other countries.

These global views of inequality are studied and debated at length by sociologists, economists, and humanitarian aid and development professionals, among others. Each examines the concentration of resources within certain countries and among certain people and groups.

Let's warm up to global stratification with an introduction. This 2:27-minute video, "If The World Were 100 People" [Streaming Video], is an animation that describes what society would look like if the population of the world were only 100 people. Pay attention to the global inequalities illustrated here (figure 4.2).



Figure 4.2. "If The World Were 100 People" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

You likely noticed some extreme disparities in the concentration of wealth and other resources. This is the source of stratification.

Next, let's look at how stratification is related to globalization. Watch this 3:14-minute video, "What Is Globalization? Understand Our Interconnected World" [Streaming Video]" (figure 4.3). Pay attention to the causes and effects of globalization that the film describes.



Figure 4.3. "What Is Globalization? Understand Our Interconnected World" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Global inequality and globalization have a complex and often disputed relationship. One way to look at the debate is through the views of what Ray Maghroori terms the "optimist globalists" and the "pessimist globalists" (Maghroori 1982). Proponents of globalization, the optimist globalists, argue that globalization increases average income within countries as factory workers in poor countries are making much better wages than they would at other jobs available to them.

They see free trade as a tool to lower prices in wealthier countries and improve the economy of poorer countries. They point to the fact that globalization has allowed international aid agencies to respond more quickly to natural disasters, made advanced medicines more available to people, and provided more international educational opportunities to people around the world. They see that countries can better work together to find solutions to climate change and respond better to crimes, including wartime atrocities, with international law systems.

Other thinkers, the **pessimist globalists**, point to globalization as the root cause of many of our global ills. They see that economic globalization, the global expansion of international capitalism, free markets, and the increase in international trade have created greater inequality and poverty. They say it has also increased the rate of climate change, influenced the breakdown of democracies, and even caused higher rates of worldwide psychological depression.

They blame free trade and economic globalization for the unfair working conditions and loss of jobs within wealthy countries due to outsourcing. *Cultural globalization*, the cross-border exchange of ideas, attitudes, meanings, values, and cultural products, is also seen as destructive to local cultures because the expansion of Western culture reduces cultural diversity and creates one global culture. Pessimist globalists would also disagree with the video in figure 4.3, which posits that globalization can promote peace and security. They would point out ways that globalization fosters war and insecurity.

These debates reveal important questions about what we value. For example, we know that globalization has increased average income in all countries, but is average income our best evaluation of inequality? Standing alone, is income our best way to identify well-being?

The study of globalization, global stratification, and inequality encompasses all these questions, and thinkers continually evaluate new alternatives. For example, the economics of happiness is one alternative way of studying well-being. It is both a qualitative and quantitative study that elevates happiness and quality of life as an important identifier of well-being. That is, it has applied qualitative research, which works with non-numerical data and attempts to understand the experiences of individuals and groups from their own perspectives. It also applies quantitative research, which refers to research that uses numerical data.

In the following sections, we'll examine global inequality in the context of globalization. To do so, we'll focus on the increased interactions between countries economically, politically, and culturally.

Going Deeper

- See the World Happiness Report [Website] for global survey data that reveal how people evaluate their own lives in more than 150 countries.

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Figure 4.3. “What Is Globalization? Understand Our Interconnected World” by CFR Education is licensed under the Standard YouTube License.

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4.3: Measuring Global Stratification

What does global inequality look like? Today, despite the many initiatives to address it, there is an extreme difference between the wealthiest and poorest countries. There are a number of ways that social scientists *measure* this stratification. In social science, **measures** are figures, extents, or amounts of phenomena that we are investigating. We identify appropriate measures to study society by describing and ascribing meaning to the key facts or concepts. The study of stratification, or the distribution of economic and social resources across populations, is a vast topic. So we can describe and ascribe meaning in many ways to evaluate that distribution.

Some measurements are straightforward and easy to count, such as residents' income. Other measurements, like the quality of residents' health, are more ambiguous. In the case of ambiguous measurements, sociologists will use *indicators* to stand in for those concepts. These indicators will allow the level of "health" (or other levels) to be measured based on our chosen concept. For example, we might choose to study the health of residents by how long they live. "Life expectancy" would be our indicator of health. We'll discuss life expectancy further in this chapter.

It's important to distinguish the three ways we can study global stratification: *between* countries, *within* countries, and *within countries as compared to others*. For example, a between-country analysis might compare overall wealth between China and its neighbor Mongolia. A within-country analysis might compare the wealth of Mongolian nomads versus Mongolian urban dwellers. We can also compare the level of inequality within countries to others. That is, we'd compare the level of inequality within Mongolia with the level of inequality in China.

Economic Measures Between Countries

In order to determine the stratification or ranking of a country, economists created various models of global stratification. All of these models have one thing in common: they rank countries according to their economic status. First, we can measure global stratification between countries by wealth. **Wealth** refers to assets or physical possessions which can be converted into a form that can be used for transactions, minus their debts. Often this is calculated by household. Figure 4.4 shows the world's regions by their total household wealth in 2021.

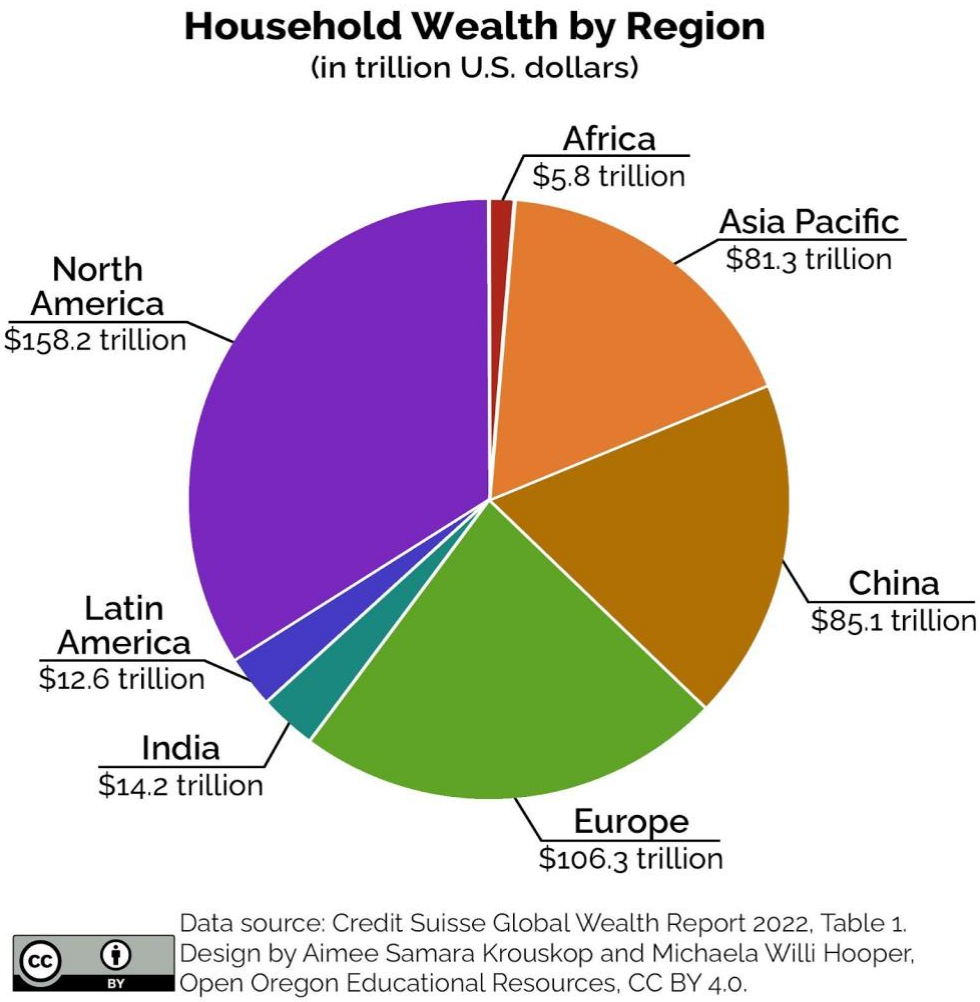


Figure 4.4. World regions by total wealth (in trillions USD), 2021. Wealth is one way of measuring global stratification between countries. Image description.

Finally, gross **domestic product (GDP)** is usually calculated annually and measures the monetary value of final goods and services produced in a country in a given period of time. It considers goods and services produced by residents, both domestically and abroad. This is a calculation of the value of items and services bought by the final user. Because the GDP indicates a country's productivity and performance, comparing GDP rates helps establish a country's economic health in relation to other countries. Some countries rise to the top, and others fall to the bottom.

Gross national income (GNI) measures the total income earned by residents of a country, including earnings from foreign sources. GNI is presented as *per capita*, or per person. It is calculated by tallying the dollar value of a country's final income in a year, divided by its population. GNI is mostly used to compare economies according to their purchasing power.

Both GNI and GDP are used to gain insight into global stratification based on a country's standard of living. Since their conception, GDP and GNI have been criticized for their limitations in three general ways. First, they are blind to environmental degradation; second, they poorly capture variations in human well-being; and third, they ignore inequality.

Economic Measures Within Countries and as Compared with Other Countries

One straightforward method of comparing economic inequality *within* countries is to use the **90/10 income inequality ratio**: the wage or salary income earned by individuals at the 90th percentile (those earning more than 90 percent of other workers) compared to the earnings of workers at the 10th percentile (those earning higher than the bottom 10 percent). This method does not always provide a full picture of income inequality (it literally leaves out the middle). But it can provide insight. For example, a 90/10 ratio

of five means that the richest 10 percent of the population earn five times more than the poorest 10 percent. We'll look further into inequality within countries based on social location later in this chapter.

Researchers also compare the levels of internal inequality between countries. Take a look at figure 4.5. It's a regional map that shows the top 10 and the bottom 50 income gaps across the world in 2021. Mexico, Central America, most of South America, much of middle and southern Africa, India, several West Asian countries (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Libya), experience some of the greatest income gaps. The United States is in the second tier, experiencing the second greatest income inequality, along with Egypt, Kenya, New Guinea, and other countries in dark orange. Algeria, Cuba, Ecuador, Afghanistan, and Australia, along with Western and Northern Europe, have the least internal inequality.

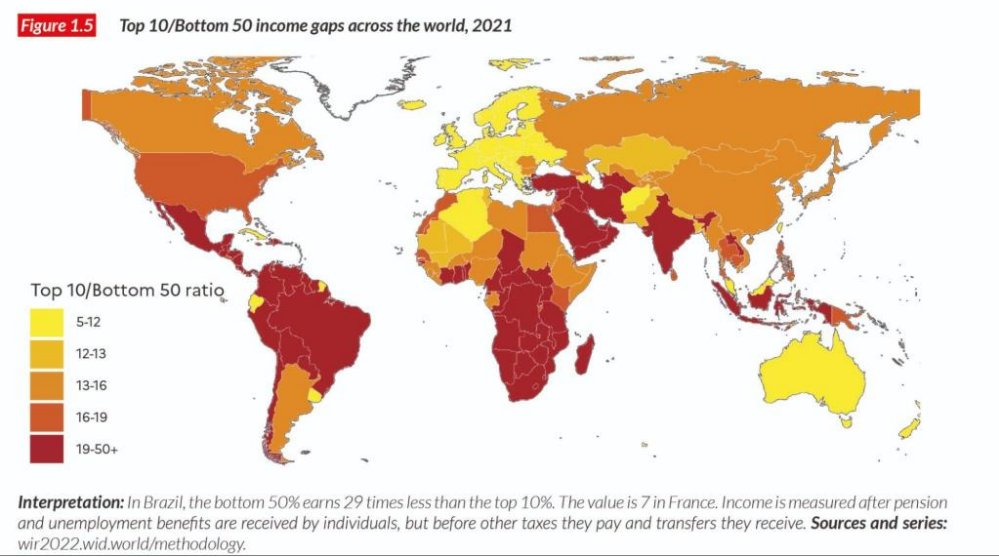


Figure 4.5. Top 10/bottom 50 income gaps across the world, 2021. This map illustrates the 90/10 income inequality ratio to measure global stratification between countries. Image description.

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Figure 4.4. "Household Wealth by Region" by Aimee Samara Krouskop and Michaela Willi Hooper is licensed under CC BY 4.0. Data from Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report 2022, Table 1.

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Figure 4.5. Top 10/bottom 50 income gaps across the world, 2021 is published in the World Inequality Report 2022 by World Inequality Lab, licensed under CC BY 4.0.

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The first paragraph of "Economic Measures Within Countries and as Compared with Other Countries" is adapted from a section in Chapter 10.1 Global Stratification and Classification by Tonja R. Conerly, Kathleen Holmes, and Asha Lal Tamang in Introduction to Sociology 3e, Openstax, which is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

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4.4: The Classification of Countries

Social scientists have devised a number of ways to categorize countries based on the sets of economic measures we've discussed here. These classification methods can be important in understanding economic differences among countries and identify trends in other areas. However, it's important to look critically at the ideology that supports those categorizations.

A major concern when discussing global classifications is how to avoid an ethnocentric bias as we describe economic differences among countries. The language that social scientists have used in the past to classify countries originated from the perspective of colonizing countries. Over time, these terms have shifted to make way for more inclusive language. The following sections will describe these changes in more detail.

First, Second, and Third Worlds

The "First World," "Second World," and "Third World" framework is one of the first typologies for the classification of countries. It came into use after World War II to distinguish between capitalist democracies, communist countries belonging to the Soviet Union, and all the remaining countries. This classification was primarily a political one, rather than a way to identify countries based on economic stratification.

Eventually, the First and Third Worlds became related to economic development and standards of living. Capitalistic democracies such as the United States and Japan were considered part of the First World. The Third World included most of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The Second World was the in-between category: countries not as limited in development as the Third World, but not as well off as the First World, and having moderate economies and standards of living, such as China or Cuba.

Although still used by many people, First, Second, and Third World terminology has fallen out of favor because it connotes a sense of superiority and inferiority. It also fails to acknowledge the role that colonization has played in determining economic and social inequality between countries.

Watch this 2.5-minute *Al Jazeera* video, "How The Term 'Third World' Is an Outdated Term" [Streaming Video], for a good explanation of the issues with the term "Third World" (figure 4.6).



Figure 4.6. "How The Term 'Third World' Is An Outdated Term" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Later, sociologist Manuel Castells (1998) added the term "Fourth World" to refer to stigmatized minority groups that were denied a political voice all over the globe. These groups include Indigenous minority populations, prisoners, and unhoused populations.

Developed, Developing, and Undeveloped Countries

Another popular categorization applies the concept of development to countries. "Developed" and other derivatives are used, such as "developing" and "undeveloped." More-developed countries have higher wealth, such as Canada, Japan, and Australia. Less-developed countries have less wealth to distribute among populations, including many countries in central Africa, South America, and some island countries.

These terms emerged during the 1950s and 60s, alongside the notion that richer nations have a responsibility to provide foreign aid to “lesser-developed” countries, thereby raising their standard of living. Although this typology was initially popular and is still widely used, calling countries “developed” denotes a label of superiority in comparison to developed countries. The terms assume that members of less-developed countries want to be like those who’ve attained post-industrial global power. They also imply that unindustrialized countries must improve to participate successfully in the global economy, when in many cases this arrangement provides more benefit for the richer countries.

Wealthy, Middle-Income, and Low-Income Countries

Today, a popular typology simply ranks countries into groups called wealthy (or high-income) countries, middle-income countries, and poor (or low-income) countries, based on measures such as GDP per capita. This typology has the advantage of emphasizing what many researchers consider the most important variable in global stratification: how much wealth a nation has. The other important differences among the world’s countries are considered to stem from their degree of wealth or poverty. Figure 4.7 depicts these categories of countries for 2021 (with the middle category divided into upper-middle and lower-middle levels).

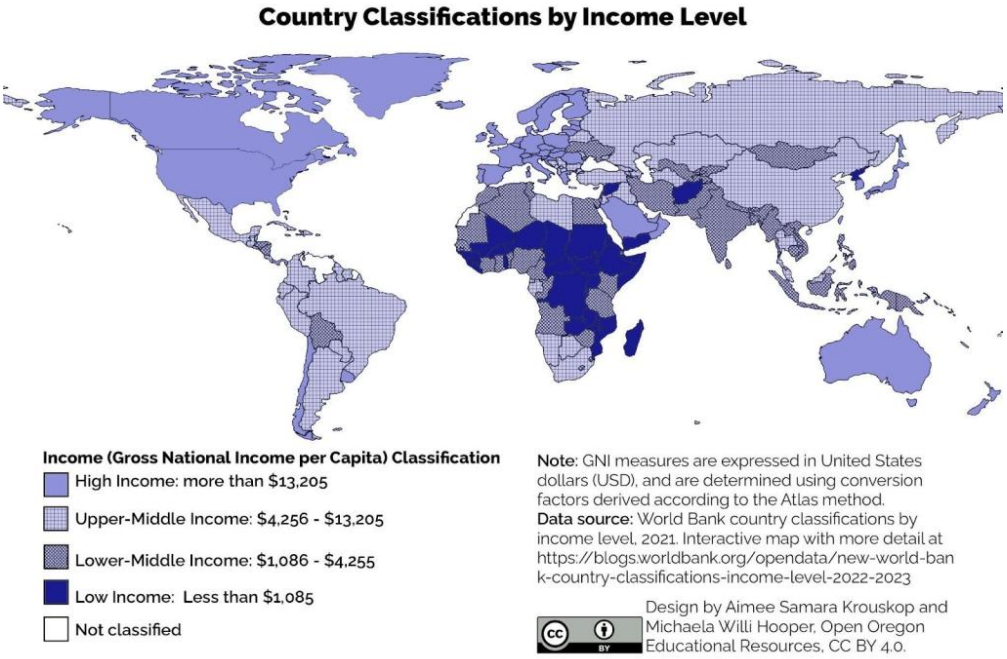


Figure 4.7. This global stratification map outlines categories for countries in 2021. It applies common categories based on high-income, middle-income, and low-income countries. Image description.

Categorizations based on GDP per capita or similar economic measures are very useful, but they also have a significant limitation. Countries can rank similarly on GDP per capita (or another economic measure) but still differ in other respects. One nation might have lower infant mortality, another might have higher life expectancy, and a third might have better sanitation. Recognizing this limitation, organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) use typologies based on a broader range of measures than GDP per capita.

While the World Bank is often criticized for its policies, it is still a common source for global economic data. Along with tracking the economy, the World Bank tracks demographics and environmental health to provide a complete picture of whether a nation is high income, middle income, or low income. We’ll include World Bank data here to illustrate differences between countries with this typology.

The wealthy or high-income countries are the most industrialized countries. They consist primarily of the countries of North America and Western Europe; Australia, Japan, and New Zealand; and certain other countries in the Middle East and Asia. They are the leading countries in industry, high finance, and information technology, and they exercise political, economic, and cultural influence across the planet. As the global economic crisis that began in 2007 illustrates, when the economies of just a few wealthy countries suffer, the economies of many other countries in the world can suffer too.

Members of wealthy countries live a much more comfortable existence than those in middle-income and poor countries. People in wealthy countries are healthier and more educated, and they enjoy longer lives. Many of these countries were the first to become industrialized, starting in the 19th century, which contributed to the great wealth they enjoy today. It is also true that many Western European countries were wealthy before they industrialized. This is because, as colonial powers, they acquired wealth from the resources of the lands they colonized.

Although wealthy countries constitute only about one-sixth of the world's population, they hold about four-fifths of the world's entire wealth. At the same time, wealthy countries use up more than their fair share of the world's natural resources, and their high level of industrialization causes them to pollute and otherwise contribute to climate change to a far greater degree than is true of countries in the other two categories.

Middle-income countries are generally less industrialized than wealthy countries but more industrialized than poor countries. They consist primarily of countries in Central and South America, Eastern Europe, and parts of Africa and Asia. They constitute about one-third of the world's population. Many of these countries have abundant natural resources, but still have high levels of poverty, partly because political and economic leaders sell the resources to business owners of wealthy countries and keep much of the income from these sales for themselves.

There is much variation in income and wealth within the middle-income category, even within the same continent. In South America, for example, the GNI per capita in Chile in 2022 was $24,431, compared to only $7,987 in Bolivia (UNDP 2024). Not surprisingly, many more people in the latter countries live in dire economic circumstances in Bolivia than in Chile.

Poor or low-income countries are the least industrialized and most agricultural of all the world's countries. They are primarily found in Asia and Africa (Hamadeh et al. 2023), where most of the world's population lives. For example, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Yemen are considered low-income countries. Many of these countries rely heavily on one or two crops, making them vulnerable to fluctuations in weather and global economic conditions.

By any standard, the majority of people in poor countries live a desperate existence in very challenging physical conditions. Many suffer from deadly diseases; live on the edge of starvation; and lack indoor plumbing, electricity, and other modern conveniences that most people in the United States take for granted. Women are disproportionately affected by poverty, and much of the population lives in absolute poverty, where household income is so low that it is impossible for individuals or families to meet basic needs of life.



Figure 4.8. Since the 2021 military coup, daily life in Myanmar has been marked, once again, by terror and violence. The artist Ma Ei's photo series bears witness to the insecurity that has become part of everyday life for millions of people there. *Where Is a Place for Me to Sleep in Peace?* is an installation with the artist in a sleeping position and a night robe in various places. This kind of economic insecurity can be influenced by political changes in countries.

Countries' classifications often change as their economies evolve and, sometimes, as their political positions change. Nepal, Indonesia, and Romania all moved up to a higher status based on improved economies. Sudan, Algeria, and Sri Lanka moved down a level. A few years ago, Myanmar was a low-income nation, but now it has moved into the middle-income category. With Myanmar's 2021 coup, the massive citizen response, and the military's killing of protesters, its economy may go through a downturn again, returning it to the low-income nation status (figure 4.8).

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Figure 4.8. Where Is a Place for Me to Sleep in Peace? on Flickr by Ars Electronica is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

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4.5: Theories of Inequality Between Countries

The study of global stratification that focuses on inequality between countries compares the overall wealth, status, power, and economic stability across countries in the world. That study also focuses on change across time and the social forces that influence those changes.

For example, a classical sociological view observes that in the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution created an unprecedented jump in wealth for Western Europe and North America. Due to mechanical inventions and new means of production, people moved from farming and artisan work to employment in factories. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, industrial technology had raised the economic standard for many in those countries.

The Industrial Revolution also saw the rise of vast inequalities between countries that were industrialized and those that were not. As some countries embraced technology and saw increased goods and wealth, the non-industrialized countries fell behind economically, and the gap widened.

The Industrial Revolution perspective is one way of describing economic inequality at the global level. This section will explore some broader perspectives that attempt to make sense of why global stratification exists: modernization theory, dependency theory, and world systems analysis.

Modernization Theory

The Industrial Revolution perspective was a focus of the theory of modernization, an early framework that was introduced by German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920). Sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902–1979) developed later ideas that added to the perspective. According to **modernization theory**, low-income countries are affected by their lack of industrialization. They can improve their global economic standing through:

> *1. an adjustment of cultural values and attitudes around work*
> *2. industrialization and other forms of economic growth (Armer and Katsillis 2010)*

The perspective posits that with assistance, “traditional” countries can be brought to development in the same manner more developed countries have been.

Proponents of modernization theory claim that as countries modernize, they become wealthier and more powerful and their citizens enjoy a higher standard of living. For example, mobile broadband access can improve rates of education, and improved roads can accelerate the speed to which companies can deliver their products. Proponents point to data showing that modernized countries tend to have lower maternal and child mortality rates, longer lifespans, and less poverty, while in the poorest countries, millions of people die from the lack of clean drinking water and sanitation facilities.

Critics claim that modernization theory has an ethnocentric bias. That is, its followers view their own society and culture as superior, then determine standards based on that judgment. It supposes all countries have the same resources and are capable of following the same path. In addition, it assumes that the goal of all countries is to be as “developed” as possible. There is no room within this theory for the possibility that industrialization and technology are not the best goals. At the same time, the issue is more complex than the data on higher standards of living might suggest. Cultural equality, community, and local traditions are all at risk as modernization encroaches.

Dependency Theory

Scholars have criticized modernization theory since the 1970s. As a result, political theorists and sociologists have begun to explain global inequality in terms of power imbalances between countries. Dependency theory developed as a response to modernization theory as social change theorists began to investigate problems arising from development practices.

Dependency theory views global inequality as primarily caused by high-income countries exploiting middle-income and low-income countries. This creates a cycle of dependence (Hendricks 2010). Proponents of this theory point out that as long as low-income countries are dependent on high-income countries for economic stimulus and access to a larger piece of the global economy, they will never achieve stable and consistent economic growth.

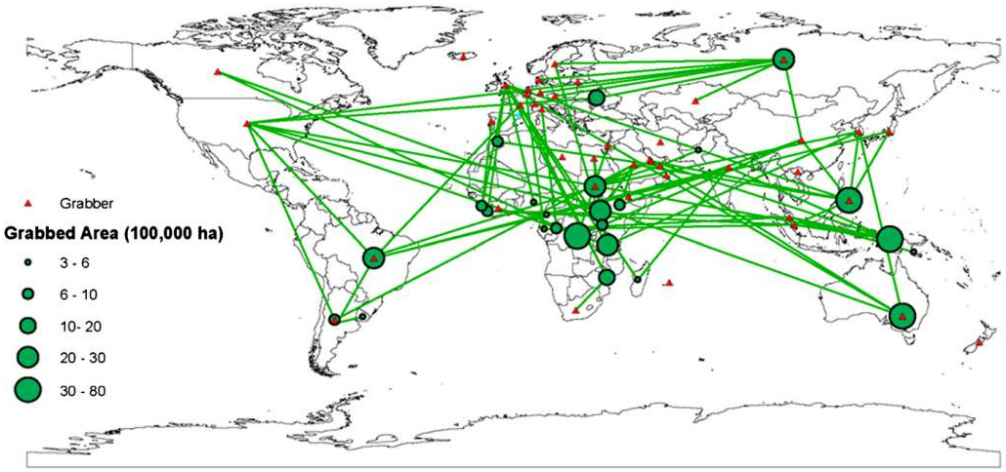


Figure 4.9. A global map of the land-grabbing network: land-grabbed countries (green disks) are connected to their grabbers (red triangles) by a network link. Land grabbing contributes to the concentration of wealth among rich nations. Image description.

Dependency theory argues that the concentration of resources held by certain countries significantly affects the opportunities of individuals in poorer and less powerful countries (Little et al. 2014). One direct example can be seen in how members of richer countries, through government or corporations, will acquire land in poor countries. Often, corporations from rich countries purchase land for production, or governments of rich countries purchase land to meet their food and energy requirements at home (Rulli et al. 2013:1). This primarily occurs in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Some of these deals are considered land grabs. According to the International Land Coalition, **land grabs** are "land acquisitions that are in violation of human rights, without prior consent of the preexisting land users, and with no consideration of the social and environmental impacts" (International Land Coalition 2011).

Often, land is taken away from local smallholders, especially in areas of the world where people have lived on the land for generations, maintaining community agreements about how they will use and share it. Property from land grabs tends to be used for large endeavors such as monocropping or generating hydropower. Land grabbers will gain control of areas in several ways. They might lease the land from governments, arranging for the farmers who reside on the land to sharecrop. Or they might actually purchase the land, forcing people into contracts that require them to use the land in a way that benefits the land grabber. Figure 4.9 shows a global land grabbing system documented in 2012.



Figure 4.10. "Land Grabbing in Mali" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

It is difficult to track how extensive the issue of land grabbing is. As a global society, we have not yet determined a common definition or a good way of monitoring the practice. Also, many transactions are conducted in secrecy. However, author Fred Pearce estimates that land exceeding the size of Western Europe was grabbed from poor countries by rich countries' corporations between 2000 and 2011 alone. In 2010, the World Bank estimated that 150 million acres of land were grabbed, and the humanitarian aid agency Oxfam estimated 560 million for the same time frame (Pearce 2021).

Watch the 2:20-minute video "Land Grabbing in Mali" [Streaming Video] for a good illustration of land grabs (figure 4.10). As you watch, pay attention to how land grabbing impacts Malian farmers, ranchers, and their families.

World Systems Analysis

Another way to look at power dynamics and global dependency is as a layered system. Sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (1930–2019) introduced the world systems analysis framework. It describes the global economy as a complex system that supports an economic hierarchy. In other words, some countries are in positions of power with numerous resources, and others exist in a state of economic subordination. Those countries with less power face significant obstacles to competing in the economic hierarchy. World systems analysis places the world's countries into three categories: core countries, peripheral countries, and semi-peripheral countries.

Core countries are dominant capitalist countries. They are highly industrialized, technological, and urbanized. For example, the United States is a core nation, an economic powerhouse that can support or deny support to economic legislation with far-reaching implications. As a result, the United States can exert control over every aspect of the global economy and exploit less powerful countries. Free trade agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which in 1994 established a free trade zone for Mexico, Canada, and the United States, demonstrate how core countries utilize their power to secure the most advantageous position in global trade.

Peripheral countries such as Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, and Nepal have very little industrialization. What peripheral countries do have often represents the outdated castoffs of core countries or the factories and means of production owned by core countries. They are economically dependent on core countries for jobs and aid.

Semi-peripheral countries are in-between countries. They are not powerful enough to dictate policy, but nevertheless act as a major source of raw material and an expanding middle-class marketplace for core countries. Semi-peripheral countries also exploit peripheral countries. Mexico is an example of this. Mexico provides abundant cheap agricultural labor to the United States and supplies goods to the U.S. market. The United States dictates the market rate of goods, and Mexican workers go without the constitutional protections offered to U.S. workers.

Dependency theory and world systems analysis have been criticized for having an incomplete description of the socioeconomic conditions of poorer countries. Some thinkers argue that it makes too many broad generalizations without sufficient quantitative study to support the ideas. Others say that it wrongly assumes globalization and capitalism affect all regions.

Comparing Globalization Theories

For a summary of the connections between globalization, dependency, and modernization analysis, watch this 4-minute clip from the video, Khan Academy on globalization theories [Streaming Video] (figure 4.11). The video also introduces three globalization perspectives: hyperglobalist, skeptical, and transformationalist. Which perspective makes the most sense to you?



Figure 4.11. "Globalization Theories [clipped at 4:05]" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

- To learn more about land inequality and land defenders, see the website of the International Land Coalition, the report "Custodians of the Land, Defenders of our Future: A New Era of the Global Land Rush" [PDF], and the report "Land Inequality at the Heart of Unequal Societies" [PDF].
- For more on land grabs, watch this 5:06-minute video, "New Film Exposes the Devastating Impact of World Bank Backing for Land Investments in Uganda," and this 5:32-minute video, "'Land-Grab' for Food Security."

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4.6: Measuring Social Inequality Within Countries

Although inequality between countries has generally narrowed, inequality within countries is rising (United Nations n.d.[a]). This is because economic growth derived from globalization tends to be unevenly distributed within countries. In 2015 all of the United Nations (UN) member states adopted a *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. It's a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future." The agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 10 is to "reduce inequality within and among countries" (Department of Economic and Social Affairs n.d.). Let's look at how some branches of the UN and other organizations identify and address internal inequality as a global concern.

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs reports that 71 percent of the world's population lives in countries where inequality has grown (2019). The "Inequality – Bridging the Divide" page at the UN website shares that within-country inequality matters to UN work because these "are the inequalities people feel day to day, month to month, year to year. This is how people stack up and compare themselves with their neighbors, family members, and society." They calculate economic differences, along with intersecting realities of social location, as they consider a country's internal inequality (UNDESA n.d.).

While researchers tend to focus on economic inequalities, other aspects of social inequality are just as harmful. Stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination (at times legally sanctioned) create and aggravate conditions of economic inequality globally, just as it does in the United States. Human rights organizations work to address these social inequalities, often applying the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see that declaration in Going Deeper). Let's look at how some international human rights organizations identify and address social inequality as a global concern.

Social Inequalities Based on Gender and Sexual Orientation

Global social research has focused on inequalities related to gender and sexual orientation over the last several decades, applying many tools to measure them. Figure 4.12 shows a map developed by the World Inequality Database [Website], an online tool providing interactive, visual data about global inequality. It offers insights into gender inequality between countries based on the percentage of income shared by women. Looking at their interactive map [Website], you can see how countries and regions differ in their share of female labor income.

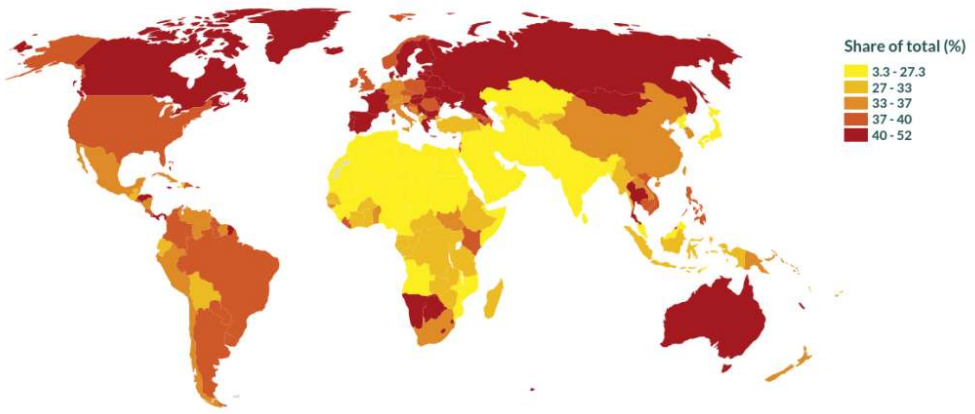


Figure 4.12. Female labor income share across countries. Research is increasingly related to gender-related inequalities. Image description.

On the interactive version of that map [Website] you can also see the different indicators that the database uses to measure female labor income. You can choose to see two measures of average income: per adult national income or per adult GDP.

Another way to measure gender inequality is with the Gender Inequality Index. It focuses on:

- Health
- Socioeconomic resources
- Gender disparities in the household
- Gender disparities in politics

Figure 4.13 shows a snapshot of the Historical Gender Equality Index [Website] map at the World Inequality Lab website. (Optional: You can see how index scores changed between 1950 and 2000 across global regions by pressing “Play” on the map view at the link.)

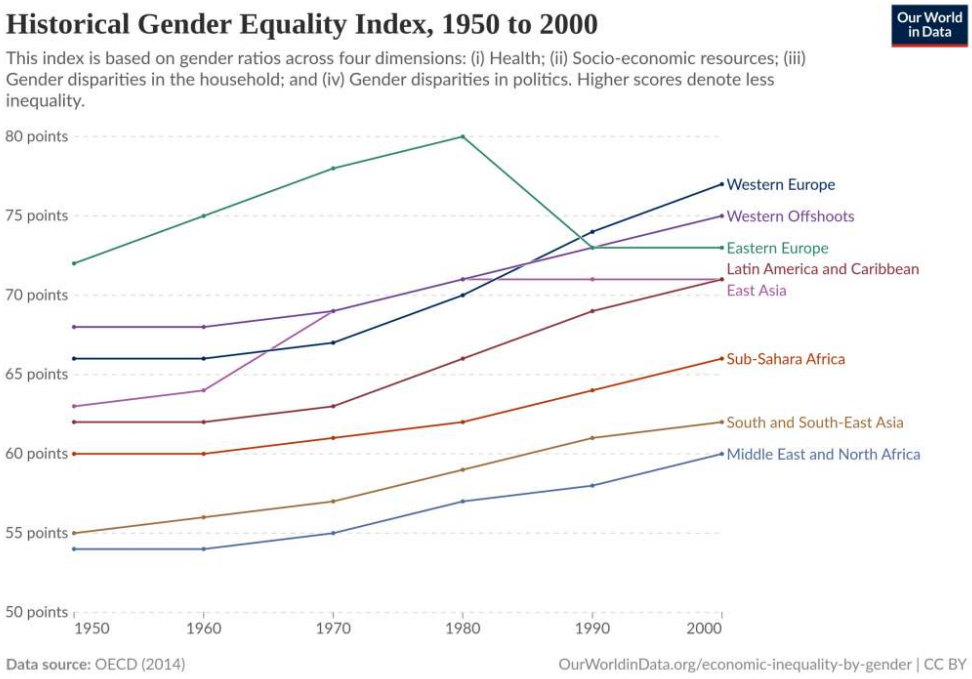


Figure 4.13. Historical Gender Equality Index map showing trends across global regions between 1950 and 2000. Image description.

The World Economic Forum produced a *Global Gender Gap Report* for 2021. Within, they note that the time predicted it will take to close the gender gap has increased by a generation, from 99.5 years to 135.6 years. This gap has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (World Economic Forum 2021).

The social inequalities related to gender identity and sexual orientation presented in Chapter 3 are also present throughout the world. While people who identify as non-binary have always existed throughout the world, stigma and discrimination, as well as violence and oppression against gender-diverse people, are part of the story of internal global inequality. The lives of transgender people are also subject to stigma and discrimination.

While these concerns do not yet receive the same attention as inequalities surrounding women and girls, some organizations are tracking the issues and working to create change. For example, the organization Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide (TvT) documented 2,982 cases of reported killings of trans and gender-diverse people worldwide between January 2008 and September 2018. We know that these kinds of totals are low, as there are no reliable methods of capturing these crimes (Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide 2018).

Social Inequalities Based on Ethnicity and Race

Global research on global inequalities across ethnic lines has not been as robust as research on gender inequalities. However, some recent attention has been devoted to this topic. In 2021, researchers with the UNDP reported that inequality among ethnic groups is consistently stark in many countries. The report highlights that in Latin America, Indigenous Peoples are among the poorest, and that in India, five out of six multidimensionally poor people are from lower tribes or castes (UNDP 2021).

What do we know about global inequalities across racial lines? As part of the UN’s sustainable goals, the organization designated the years 2015 to 2024 as the “International Decade for People of African Descent.” The International Decade “…aims to celebrate the important contributions of people of African descent worldwide, advance social justice and inclusion policies, eradicate racism and intolerance, promote human rights, and assist in creating better, more prosperous communities” (United Nations n.d.[b]).

Take a few minutes to browse the UN pages dedicated to the International Decade for People of African Descent [Website] (figure 4.14). What inequalities do you see the UN is identifying with people of African descent? What initiatives do you see the UN working on to address inequalities with this population?



Figure 4.14. The UN pages dedicated to the International Decade for People of African Descent [Website].

Let's turn to South Africa as an example of how racial discrimination affects lives in a global context. During the 1950s and until the mid-1990s, there existed "Pass Laws" in the country that prohibited interracial sex and marriage and strictly segregated residential areas, schools, trains, buses, beaches, toilets, parks, stadiums, ambulances, hospitals, and cemeteries. These laws were similar to the state and local "Jim Crow" laws in the United States that legalized racial segregation.

Enforced with police brutality, the Pass Laws served as only part of South Africa's system of **apartheid**, a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race. It is one of the most extreme cases of institutionalized and legal discrimination in the world. Through decades of social movement, with many lives lost, apartheid in South Africa ended in the early 1990s. However, today South Africa still experiences one of the highest levels of inequality in the world (Sulla et al. 2022).

One of the areas where that continued inequality is noticed is in its apartheid-era architecture. This includes city planning that segregates communities along racial lines. Plans set Black townships (predominantly Black neighborhoods formerly organized by apartheid legislation) 40 kilometers away from town. This kind of architecture forces Black South Africans to spend 40 percent of their income commuting, making it difficult for communities to develop economic and gathering opportunities.

Watch this 2:40-minute video, "Apartheid Architecture" [Streaming Video], that introduces Wandile Mthiyan, CEO and cofounder of social enterprise firm Ubuntu Design Group (he was also previously an Obama Foundation Fellow and One Young World Ambassador) (figure 4.15).

In the video, Mthiyan explores the science behind apartheid architecture and explains how it continues to disenfranchise Black townships and shantytown communities 26 years after apartheid was abolished. As you watch, consider: How does architecture in your area support institutionalized racial segregation?



Figure 4.15. “Apartheid Architecture” [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Going Deeper

Read the full UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights [Website].

World Inequality Database



Figure 4.16. The World Inequality Database income and wealth distribution tool [Website].

To learn about global inequality in relation to your life, take a look at the comparative tool provided by the World Inequality Database (figure 4.16). You can choose to make comparisons of your income or wealth within the United States or within other countries. Answer about five questions. Does anything surprise you?For more visual global inequality data, see the interactive "Worldview" page [Website] of the World Inequality Database [Website].For more on women and poverty, read Oxfam's summary: "Why the Majority of the World's Poor are Women" [Website].*The Girl Effect*



Figure 4.17. "The Girl Effect: The Clock Is Ticking" [Streaming Video].



Figure 4.18. "Yegna, the Sound of All of Us" [Streaming Video].

Read about global organizations working to bring resources to girls and bridge the gender inequity gap. Watch this pair of videos produced by the organization Girl Effect. The first, "The Girl Effect: The Clock Is Ticking" [Streaming Video], is 3:04 minutes long (figure 4.17). The second, "Yegna, the Sound of All of Us" [Streaming Video], is 2:42 minutes long and tells the story of a project supported by Girl Effect in Ethiopia (figure 4.18).To hear more about South Africa and apartheid architecture, watch "Why South Africa Is Still So Segregated" [Streaming Video] (10:15) and "Apartheid: The Rise and Fall of South Africa's 'Apartness' Laws" [Streaming Video] (6:26).

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4.7: Measuring Quality of Life

It is important to many social sciences that the study of global inequality goes beyond economic measures. That has created more focus on measuring quality of life. How do we measure the quality of life of a country's population, and how do we make comparisons with other countries? Let's look at a few ways: multidimensional levels of poverty; life expectancy; the Genuine Progress Indicator, the Human Development Index; and access to opportunity, services, and protection. Each of these may be categorized as measurements that put people, rather than economic factors, at the center of research. Some add a focus on the health of the environment as crucial to human well-being.

Poverty

Global stratification can be evaluated by considering how many people are living in poverty, particularly extreme poverty. To indicate the level of poverty within a nation or region, researchers calculate the percentage of the population living beneath various poverty thresholds. One common threshold is the **International Poverty Line**, which refers to the amount of money a person needs to consume or earn per day to avoid living in extreme poverty. In 2023 it was $2.15.

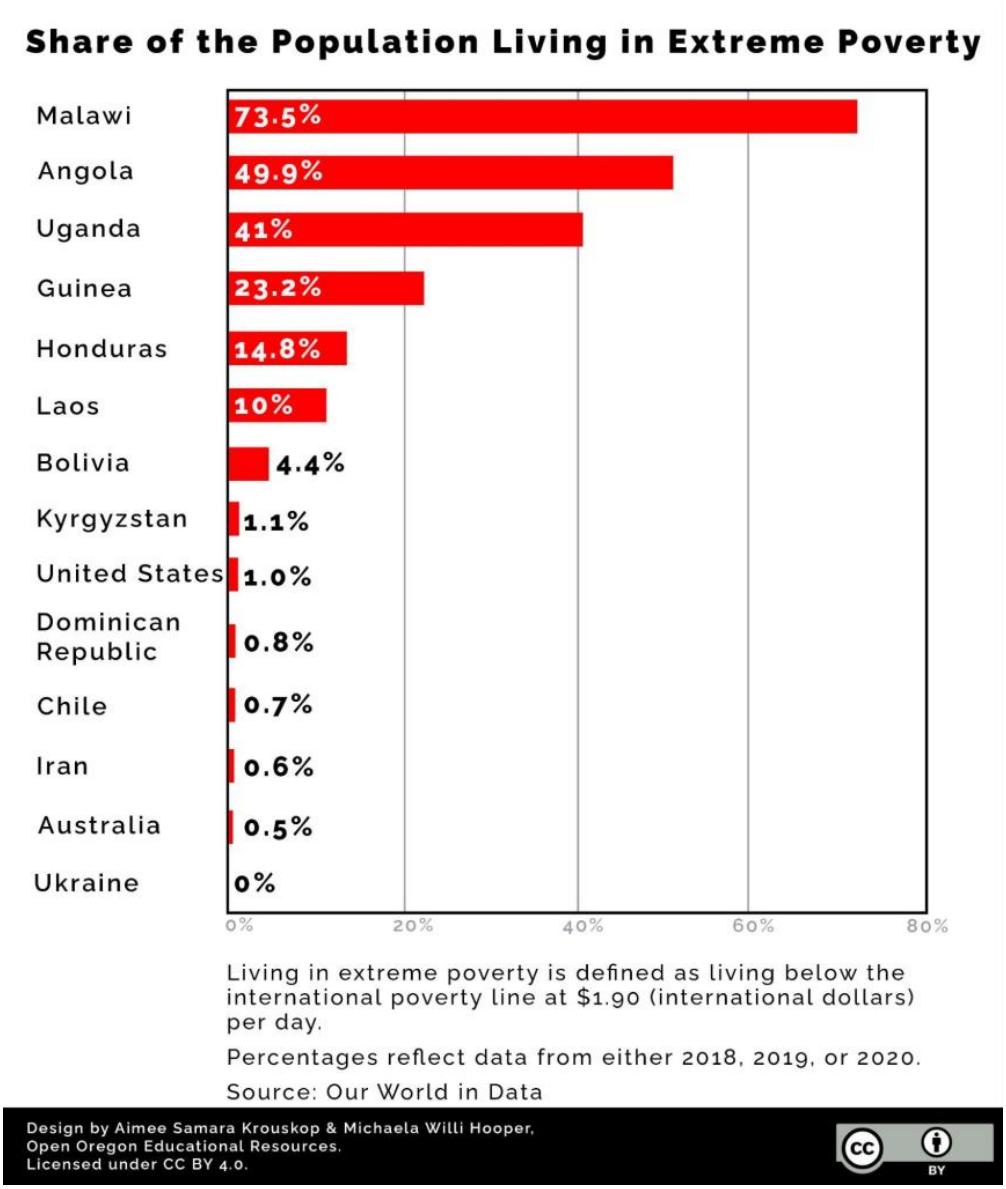


Figure 4.19. This graph shows shares of the population living in extreme poverty. The differences among countries are clear when considering their extreme poverty rates. For the most part, the selected countries show disparities even within countries from the same regions. Image description.

Poverty levels vary greatly across countries. Fortunately, until the COVID-19 pandemic impacted economies in 2020, the extreme poverty rate had been on a 20-year decline. In 2015, 10.1 percent of the world's population was living in extreme poverty; in 2017, that number had dropped an entire percentage point to 9.2 percent. While a positive change, that 9.2 percent is equivalent to 689 million people living on less than $1.90 a day (World Bank 2020). Figure 4.19 shows differences in extreme poverty between countries in the years 2018 to 2020 when the International Poverty Line was at $1.90.

The global **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)** measures severe poverty across more than 100 developing countries with three dimensions: health, education, and standard of living. Figure 4.20 shows how those dimensions are broken down in more detail. For example, access to cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, and assets are examined to determine the standard of living.

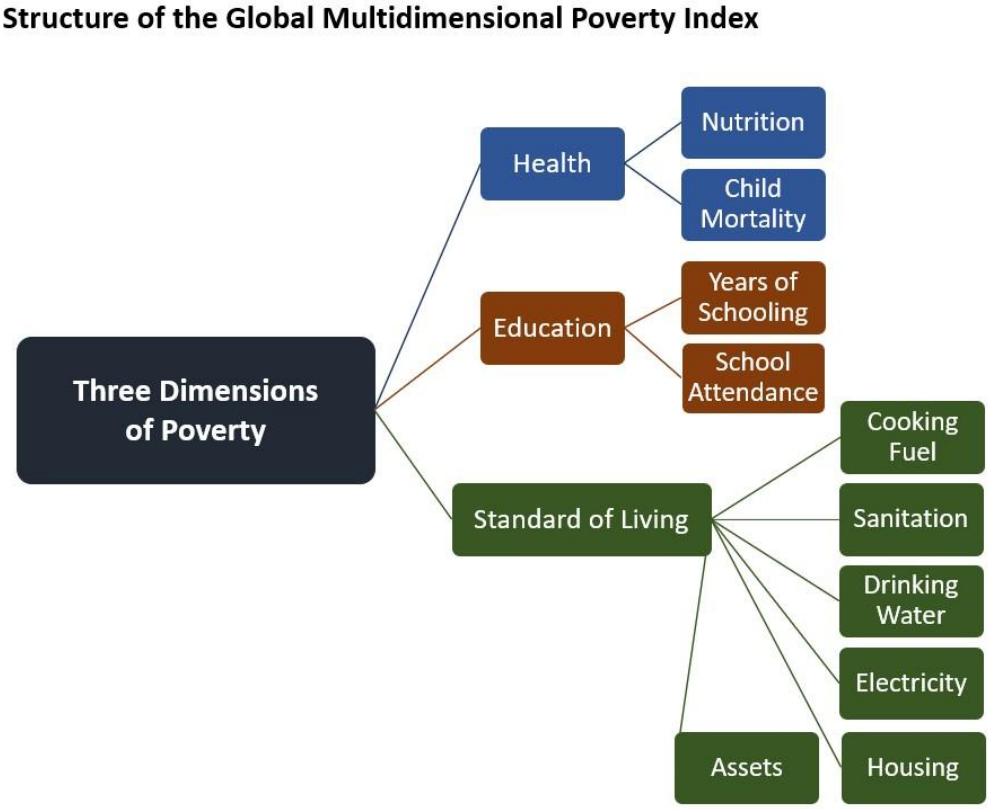


Figure 4.20. Structure of the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (HDI), used to measure quality of life. Image description.

The Multidimensional Poverty Index provides insights into the lives of poor people, in what specific areas they are deprived, and how intense their poverty is. It also complements the research on poverty that focuses on monetary measures by providing direction for poverty reduction policies where they are most needed. (Optional: Watch the video "Explainer – Global Multidimensional Poverty Index" [Streaming Video].)

Life Expectancy

One of the most striking measurements of global stratification between countries is **life expectancy**, a statistical estimate of the number of years a person can expect to live in a certain region. Life expectancy is based on an estimate of the average age that members of a particular population group will be when they die. As you might expect, people in poorer countries have lower life expectancies than people in wealthier countries. However, life expectancy can also vary significantly within countries.

Take a few minutes to visit the life expectancy map [Website] at Our World in Data to see life expectancy comparisons between countries in 2019. Play the animation to see how life expectancy between countries has changed over time. Figure 4.21 shows life expectancy illustrated by that map in 2019. You can also click the tabs below the animated tools on that page to view the data in either chart or table form. What do you notice about differences in life expectancy across the globe?

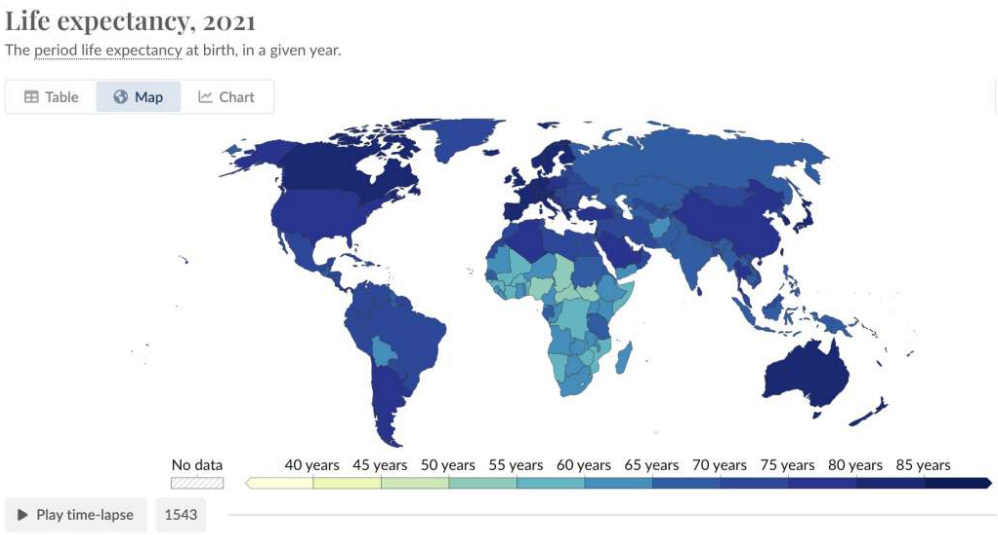


Figure 4.21. "Life Expectancy" page of the Our World in Data website illustrates estimates of the number of years a person can expect to live in a certain region. Image description.

Human Development Index

The criticisms and limitations of using GDP have led over the years to the creation of several alternative measurements. One of these is the **Human Development Index (HDI)**, developed by Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq in 1990 and adopted by the UNDP.

The HDI is a composite measure that combines a nation's GDP with many other important quality-of-life considerations, such as life expectancy at birth as a measure of health; security; the adult literacy rate and enrollment in primary, secondary, and higher education as measures of education; and the effects of environmental degradation people experience. Figure 4.22 shows an image that the UNDP created to illustrate components of the HDI.

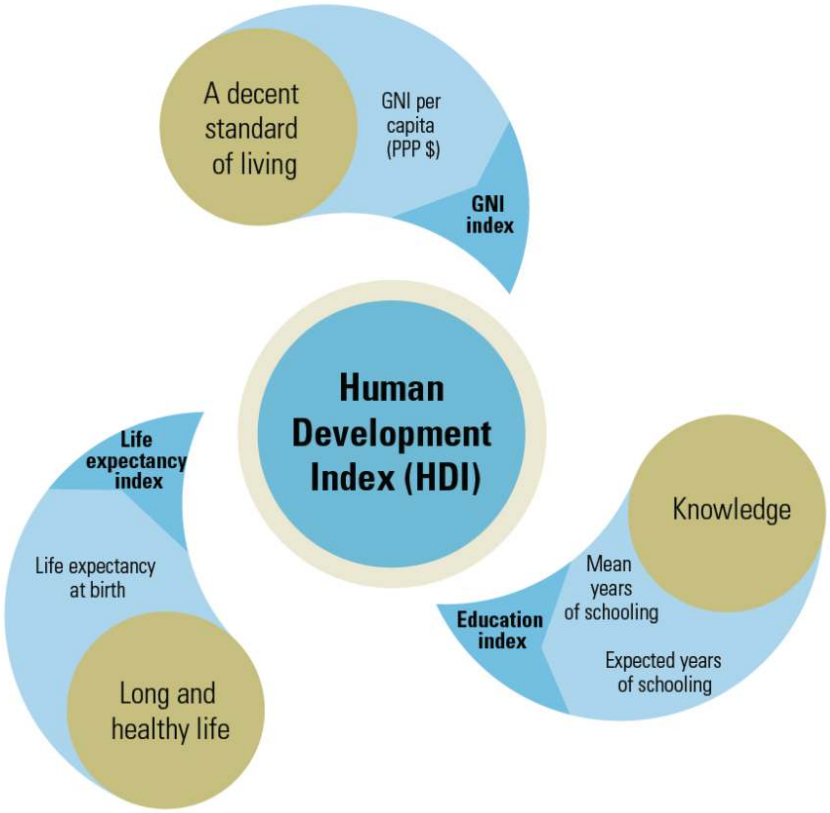


Figure 4.22. UNDP's illustration of the Human Development Index, used to measure quality of life. Image description.

The HDI expresses the capabilities of people's potential achievement. By using both financial and non-financial factors, it paints a deeper picture of the lives and issues in a region. For example, a nation with high income but low education will still have difficulty in overall opportunity. Figure 4.23 shows how countries rank according to the HDI in 2019.

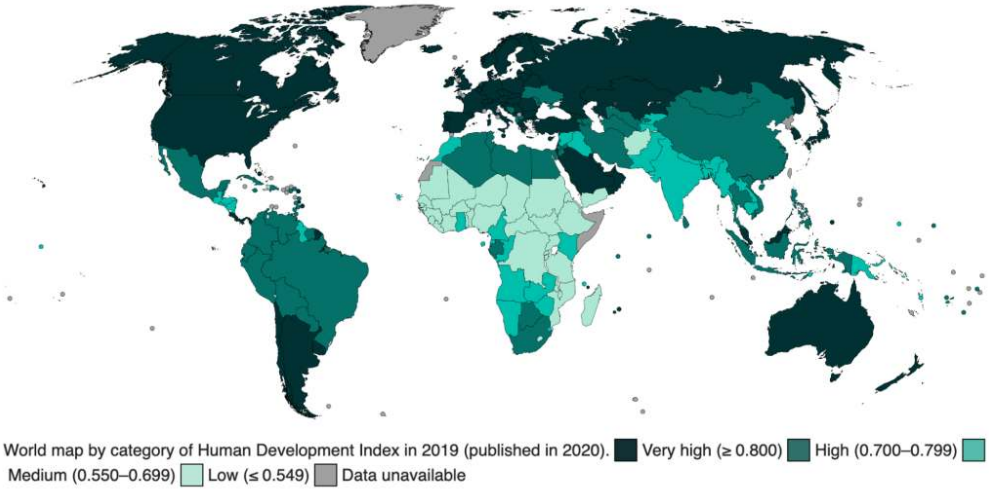


Figure 4.23. International Human Development Index rankings in 2019. Image description.

The HDI has been widely used since the 1990s and reminds us that countries differ dramatically not only in their economic well-being but also in their social well-being.

Genuine Progress Indicator

The Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) is another tool developed to replace, expand, or complement GDP. The Center for Sustainable Economy explains that the GPI "accounts for the benefits of care work [caregiving labor], higher education, modern infrastructure, and ecosystem services as well as the costs of pollution, deforestation, income inequality, crime and other social ills" ("New Measures of Progress" n.d.).

An "Ecological Footprint" indicator is included that reveals "whether the economy is operating safely within planetary boundaries or breaching of those boundaries by depleting or contaminating the stocks of natural capital on which all economic activity ultimately depends" ("New Measures of Progress" n.d.). This addition takes into account the "costs" of economic activity. In addition to crime, it includes direct social costs such as family breakdown and the time it takes to commute. The indicator also evaluates the pollution of air, water, and noise; the costs of resource and ozone depletion, and the degradation of farmland and wetlands (Lawn 2003).

Economic activity in the form of production can increase GDP, but impair nature's abilities to balance and regenerate. So the calculations of GPI might include any economic impacts that hinder nature's ability to clear waste, reduce erosion, or pollinate crops. Some costs to this impairment include added risk of mudslides, reduction of agricultural yields, and loss of species. GPI assesses whether a country's economic activity is increasing or decreasing these issues, and whether the country is implementing solutions to mitigate them.

In 2021 U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar proposed that the U.S. federal government adopt the **Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI)**. She introduced it as a more holistic measure of our collective socioeconomic welfare, as it includes overlooked social and environmental costs and benefits to economic activity.

Access to Opportunity, Services, and Protection

Another set of criteria that is helpful when assessing global inequality beyond monetary measure is access to opportunity, services, and protection. For example, some groups have limited opportunities to participate in the political process. Their voting rights, freedom of speech, or right to assembly might be curtailed. Distribution of political and physical resources often prevents individuals from some groups from running for office or supporting candidates. We also see political inequality when powerful members of society exert unequal influence over decisions made by political bodies.

Access to services encompasses various aspects, including education, healthcare, quality housing, transportation, and vacationing, as well as the extent of property rights one has, among other social goods and services. These services affect one's quality of family and neighborhood life, their occupation, and job satisfaction.

With increasing importance, social inequality also relates to the environment. This is experienced as differences in access to natural resources, usable land, parks, or freshwater. It also means differences in how people are exposed to or protected by environmental risks and hazards, such as air or water pollution. As solutions to our environmental issues are made available, differences exist in access to those solutions. We'll discuss inequality related to environmental solutions in Chapter 10.

Going Deeper

- For more information on poverty, watch this 9:01-minute video: "Globalization and Trade and Poverty: Crash Course Economics #16" [Streaming Video].
- For more on rankings of countries according to the basic HDI, the Gender Equality Index, and more, see the UNDP Human Development Data Center [Website] and the World Bank Open Data [Website].

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Figure 4.20. “Structure of the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index” by Aimee Samara Krouskop and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources, is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. Based on data from Unpacking Deprivation Bundles to Reduce Multidimensional Poverty, Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2022.

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4.8: Globalization and Inequality

How does globalization affect inequality between and within countries? There are a number of schools of thought on this question. In this section we'll look at how inequality between and within countries is connected, the economic concept of trade-offs, and the arguments between optimist and pessimist globalists.

Connecting Inequality Between and Within Countries

Improvements have been made over the last 30 years in reducing inequality between countries. However, we know that within-country inequality is greater than 30 years ago. Low-income countries, especially in Latin America, the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa, experience much wider within-country inequality than rich countries (World Bank 2016).

When we look at long-range trends, we can see that inequality between countries started decreasing at the beginning of the 21st century. However, within-country inequality grew, especially during the most recent decades (World Bank 2016).



Figure 4.24. An image from the website of a public utility agency in Washington announcing the installation of high-speed internet in rural parts of the state. Some argue that globalization increases inequality within countries but decreases inequality between countries, as high-income countries have more resources to bring education and healthcare to their remote rural areas.

The reasons for inequality increasing within countries but decreasing between countries are complex and debated. One connection that some scholars make is that high-income countries have more resources to bring education and health care to their remote rural areas than low-income countries (Permanyer and Smits 2020) (figure 4.24).

Other scholars point to countries lacking the kind of labor markets and access to skills and capital that give people of all backgrounds a chance to earn a decent living. Access to education is important, as is how specialized a country's industry offerings are. Market regulations, good governance, and labor market reforms are equally important. For example, Brazil and Mexico have supported poorer citizens by implementing minimum wage laws, plus progressive tax and benefit policies (Gradín et al. 2021).

Trade-Offs

As we grapple with the question of how globalization is related to inequality, it's helpful to borrow a concept from economics. "Trade-offs" refer to situations where making one choice that is beneficial means diminishing or losing another benefit or opportunity.

Reduced Extreme Poverty vs. Increased Competition

Let's first look at a trade-off related to the reduction of extreme poverty and increased competition. Dani Rodrick, professor of international political economy (figure 4.25), points out that extreme poverty around the world has decreased, but globalization has also caused less-skilled workers in richer countries to compete with workers of poorer countries, reducing their economic standing in their own countries. In a video produced by the CORE Project, he gives China as an example and explains the competition now faced by unskilled workers:

> *Over the last three decades or so we have had 300 or 400 million Chinese [people] that have lifted themselves out of extreme poverty, extreme deprivation. The world's greatest poverty eradication ever experienced would not have been possible if China had not turned itself towards the world markets [and] had become an exporting superpower.*
>
> *New employment opportunities for people who come from villages or the farm can be employed in textile and garment and footwear and steel factories producing for world markets. That creates new jobs, new incomes, higher productivity, and a country like China has benefited hugely from that, along with a number of other Asian countries.*
>
> *Globalization is held in very mixed regard in the advanced countries. Something like a third of the respondents in surveys in the United States fear for their economic future because of the presence of countries like China. If you are an engineer, manager, an accountant, you would do very well because your skill is in greater demand, and not just domestically but in the world economy, because those are the kinds of goods that advanced countries tend to export, but relatively less-skilled workers of the advanced countries have not done all that well under globalization.*
>
> *So a single mother in Southern California working in a textile plant, now you have to compete with Bangladesh, with Vietnam, with India, and that means that there is a downward pressure on your wages and on your employment opportunities" (The CORE Project 2015).*



Figure 4.25. Photo of Dani Rodrick, professor of international political economy, who points out that with globalization, global extreme poverty has decreased, but less-skilled workers in richer countries must now compete with workers of poorer countries, reducing their economic standing at home.

Cost and Efficiency vs. Human and Environmental Costs

Another trade-off involved with globalization is related to distribution and "costs." Members of richer countries benefit from lower prices and quicker distribution of items such as smartphones. But there are many socioeconomic, environmental, and ethical "costs" that are associated with that benefit. The people who are disproportionately affected by those costs are those in the poorer income brackets of society. Watch this 4:12-minute video, "The 'Cost' Of Globalization" [Streaming Video] (figure 4.26). As you do, pay attention to what those "costs" are.



Figure 4.26. "The 'Cost' Of Globalization" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

As the film described, lower prices and quicker distribution likely involve companies outsourcing cheaper labor in poorer countries. This often results in hiring workers who migrate thousands of miles in search of employment. They can work in deplorable conditions as they struggle to feed their families, and they exist without basic necessities such as health care because they pull in less than a living wage.

Optimistic vs. Pessimistic Views

Swedish physician and statistician Hans Rosling spent his career working to make global inequality understandable with statistics, computer software, and props. His perspective is a good example of the optimistic globalist view of globalization we introduced earlier. His analysis is that over the last 200 years, the world has made significant progress in reducing inequality.

Rosling asserts in the video that most people today "live in the middle." He does acknowledge that huge differences exist "between the best of countries and the worst of countries" and that great inequalities exist within countries as well. Watch the 4-minute video "Hans Rosling's 200 Countries, 200 Years, 4 Minutes" [Streaming Video] (figure 4.27). Rosling enthusiastically summarizes how inequality trends in global health and wealth—both between and within countries—have shifted. As you watch, pay attention to the reasons for that shift.



Figure 4.27. "Hans Rosling's 200 Countries, 200 Years, 4 Minutes" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Despite persistent and extreme inequalities (both across countries and within countries), we are closing the gap between Western and non-Western countries. In Rosling's video, he projects that in the future, everyone can "make it" to the healthy and wealthy plots on the graph. Note that this video was published in 2010. While illustrations mapped out with current statistics would show some differences, Rosling's work is also useful to identify global changes, such as war, that create significant shifts in global equality.

Other optimist globalists will note that technology and global corporations have made important contributions to the world population. Improvements in medicine and communications networks, more efficient distribution of essential goods and services, and the creation of millions of jobs are but a few of the benefits provided by these entities (Warner 2005).

The pessimist globalist view of our inequality trends is described by Indian scholar and activist Vandana Shiva (figure 4.28). In her article, "The Polarised World of Globalisation," she summarizes that much of globalization has been based on the use of force, driven by greed, and resulting in stolen lands and displacement. For example, Native Americans experienced a wave of globalization in 1492, and they continue to experience the negative consequences.

She shares that the current gap between the many who labor each day and the wealthy few who earn profits with no labor has never been greater. She also blames globalization for contributing to the deaths of thousands of children in her home country of India. Global market systems created a need for agribusiness, which destroyed the public system that was in place for giving out food. "The world of the 99.9% has grown poorer because of economic globalization," she states (Shiva 2005).



Figure 4.28. Indian scholar and activist Vandana Shiva believes that globalization has amplified global inequality.

Pessimist globalists see a dramatic and rapid deterioration of the world's natural diversity in agriculture (fewer crop varieties and livestock breeds); loss of wild species; spread of harmful invasive species; pollution of air, water, and soil; accelerated climatic change; exhaustion of resources; and social and spiritual disruption as consequences of globalization. The global free trade inherent in globalization deteriorates social and economic conditions, making the world a less healthy place overall. Pessimist globalists see that this kind of globalization has not ended, it just appears in a different form: a new form of colonization, now with partnerships between multinational corporations and powerful governments.

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4.9: Trends in Global Inequality

What does the future of global inequality look like? Once again, it depends on who you ask. There are trends that emerge as we look historically. Understanding these trends, we can make projections about how global inequality might shift in the future. We can see developments related to where wealth and poverty is concentrated, and we can identify strategies for intervening. This section will explore a few of those themes.

Projections

The *UN World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World* points to four megatrends we are seeing that contribute to global inequality: technological innovation, international migration, climate change, and urbanization. For example, the authors explain that "technological change can be an engine of economic growth, offering new possibilities in health care, education, communication, and productivity. But it can also exacerbate wage inequality and displace workers" (UNDESA 2020:5).

"Brain drain," or **human capital flight**, is the emigration of highly trained or intelligent people from a particular country. This is one way that workers are displaced as technology advances. Some thinkers argue that the loss of highly trained people from poorer countries may cause problems for the home country. In spite of the investments made in education (figure 4.29), those emigrants are not available to contribute to improving the quality of life at home.



Figure 4.29. Teenagers in Samoa return home from school. Some thinkers point to the emigration of highly trained people from a country as contributing to global inequality.

Climate change impacts the poorest countries most impacted by social inequality. Oxfam projects that hundreds of millions of people will still be living in extreme poverty by 2030. The poorest people will increasingly be concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa (Seery and Seghers 2019). Urbanization plays a role in inequality as people emigrate to cities in hopes that their quality of life will improve (UNDESA 2020). However, economic inequality is generally greater in urban areas than in rural areas.

The 1 Percent and Gender

Sociologists and other professionals have been studying both types of global inequality (within and between countries) for decades. Recently, however, an extreme concentration of wealth has developed in the world. In 2019, the world's billionaires—only 2,153 people—had more wealth than 4.6 billion people (Coffey 2020). Together, individuals in this income bracket have been coined the **1 percent**: those at the top of the income and wealth distributions in the world. Researchers at Oxfam report that 2020 to 2023 saw the 1 percent capture almost two-thirds of all new wealth – nearly twice as much money as the bottom 99 percent of the world's

population (Martin-Brehm et al. 2023). This acceleration was observed during 2020 and 2021, the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many people faced a cost-of-living crisis.

It's hard to imagine yet what that means for global inequality. However, there are some insights related to social location to explore. In Oxfam's 2020 report, *Time to Care*, the organization presents inequality with an intersectional lens that focuses on the 1 percent and gender. The report shows that our current economies enable a wealthy elite to accumulate vast fortunes at the expense of ordinary people, particularly poor women and girls. The report explained the degree of inequality in this way:

> *The 22 richest men in the world have more wealth than all the women in Africa.…This great divide is based on a flawed and sexist economic system that values the wealth of the privileged few, mostly men, more than the billions of hours of the most essential work—the unpaid and underpaid care work done primarily by women and girls around the world (Coffey 2020).*

There is a long-standing trend, in almost all societies, for women to have higher rates of poverty than men. More women and girls live in poor conditions, receive inadequate healthcare, bear the brunt of malnutrition and inadequate drinking water, and so on. This situation goes back decades and led University of Michigan sociologist Diana Pearce in 1978 to coin the phrase "**feminization of poverty**."

Why is this happening? While many variables affect women's poverty, research has identified three causes:

> 1. *The expansion in the number of households headed by women*
> 2. *Inequalities and biases against women that occur within households*
> 3. *The implementation of free-market economic policies with limited government intervention (Moghadam 2005)*

While women are living longer and healthier lives today compared to 10 years ago, around the world, many women are denied basic rights, particularly in the workplace. In peripheral countries, they accumulate fewer assets, farm less land, make less money, and face restricted civil rights and liberties. When women are able to attain higher levels of education, they account for significant economic growth within their countries (OECD 2012). However, they are often undereducated and lack access to the credit needed to start small businesses. A wide range of organizations undertake programs or provide support in order to improve opportunity, safety, education, equality, and positive financial outcomes for women.

The Fair Trade Movement

It is likely that you have seen the words "fair trade" at grocery stores or artisan shops. These are often certification labels that indicate a product was produced and traded fairly. Also known as "alternative trade," the principles of fair trade have their origins in the ancient cultural values of Indigenous communities—namely, the values of solidarity, reciprocity, and collaboration that have been crucial to their production of food, shelter, and survival.



Figure 4.30. The fair trade cosmetic company LUSH works with the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó in Colombia. The community sells LUSH the cacao they grow on their territory (left), and LUSH makes products like this PEACE massage bar (right). This arrangement supports the community in their safety and security.

The modern notion of **fair trade** is a movement and an alternative way of trading goods. It emerged to respond to the negative effects of globalization on economically vulnerable people in poorer countries. Consultant Manel Modelo explains, "…the current

economic system is socially unjust, as well as inefficient in its distribution of resources…. For people who hold this view, fair trade is a powerful way to highlight the contradictions of the current system" (Modelo 2013).

Initiated in Europe in the 1960s, fair trade has grown to become an international household word associated with a multitude of products. For example, fair trade coffee is offered by Equal Exchange, clothing by Patagonia. The fair trade cosmetic company LUSH works with the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó in Colombia we introduced in Chapter 1. The community sells LUSH the cacao they grow on their territory, and LUSH processes it into products for retail (figure 4.30). The LUSH company website describes the fair trade concept:

> *Put simply, fair trade means buying goods at a fair price from people who produce them. In exchange, producers use sustainable production practices and uphold fair working standards for their employees, benefiting both the earth and the communities involved ("What Is Fair Trade?" n.d.).*

Not all fair trade producers live in conflict zones. But for the Peace Community, this arrangement supports them by providing a steady source of income, as sometimes paramilitary presence prevents them from transporting their cacao to the local market. It also provides the Peace Community with international visibility for their struggle.

Critics of fair trade point to the challenges of monitoring the established fair trade standards and the concern that increased profits are collected by businesses or leaders of producer groups. However, it appears that many consumers are comfortable supporting people who live in poverty with their purchase choices by paying higher prices for fair trade products (Winter et al. 2006).

Fair trade is an example of grassroots initiatives that attempt to offset the impacts of inequality that arise from globalization. Two frontrunning organizations in the fair trade world share how the strategy responds to the inequalities that arise with globalization and the global market system. CEO of Fair Trade USA Paul Rice explains that between 2004 and 2014, his organization delivered over $220 million in additional market value to farming communities they partnered with. CEO of Fairtrade Harriet Lamb believes that fair trade is about "enabling consumers to buy responsibly, enabling producers to farm responsibly, [and] pushing companies to trade responsibly" (Modelo 2013).

What will be the consequences of these global trends and projections? On one hand, there's good reason to be concerned about increasing disparities and divisions. On the other hand, professionals and activists see ways that we can work with these social changes to encourage a more equitable and sustainable world. In Chapter 5, we'll explore what we've learned from decades of humanitarian and aid work that can help us move further in that direction.

Going Deeper

- To understand more about income and wealth inequality and globalization, watch this video: "Income and Wealth Inequality: Crash Course Economics #17" [Streaming Video].
- For more information on the 1 percent and inequality, read "Three Reasons Some Countries Are Far More Unequal than Others" [Website], published by *The Conversation*.
- To learn more about the fair trade relationship between LUSH and the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó in Colombia, watch the video "Meet the Peace Community, our supplier of Fair Trade cocoa beans" [Streaming Video].

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Figure 4.30. Screenshots from the video, "Lush Buying Presents: Cocoa Butter" by Lush Leaks is licensed under the Standard YouTube License.

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4.10: Conclusion

Global inequality and the impact of globalization as a social change is a complex topic that hosts many points of view. This chapter has introduced some of the main tools and concepts to support you in making connections on your own. The ways that sociologists discuss and study globalization and inequality carry heavy consequences. The measures they use to study inequality and the frameworks they use to classify countries all matter to how we view and understand the world. For example, economic measures, which have been the standard for decades, can only provide a limited picture of the forces that shape global experiences, while including measures that put people at the center provide a more holistic understanding.

Another example is how we study inequity and social location. The inequities we introduced in Chapter 3 based on class, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation repeat at the global scale. To analyze them, we need to add the impacts of power, privilege, and disadvantage at the global level. Trends in inequality at the global scale can provide insights into the direction of the world in terms of inequality and inequity. But as this chapter illustrated, there are many divergent views on the current state of inequality, and just as many that attempt to discern where we are headed.

Review of Learning Outcomes

This chapter has offered you the opportunity to:

- Compare views about the relationship between global stratification and globalization.
- Identify the measures that social scientists use to study economic global stratification.
- Summarize, with a critical lens, how countries are categorized.
- Discuss theories that explain why inequality exists between countries.
- Explain how social inequality within countries is evaluated based on social locations.
- Illustrate how quality of life is identified and measured globally.
- Discuss how globalization affects inequality between and within countries.
- Summarize trends related to global inequality.

Key Terms

1 percent: the people at the top of the income and wealth distributions in the world.

90/10 income inequality ratio: the wage or salary income earned by individuals earning more than 90 percent of other workers compared to the earnings of workers earning higher than the bottom 10 percent.

apartheid: a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on the grounds of race.

fair trade: a movement and alternative way of trading goods that emerged to respond to the negative economic effects of globalization on people in poorer countries; it means buying goods at a fair price from people who produce them.

feminization of poverty: the longstanding trend in almost all societies, for women to have higher rates of poverty than men.

Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI): a tool that holistically measures our collective, socioeconomic welfare by including overlooked social and environmental costs and benefits to economic activity.

global stratification: the unequal distribution of economic and social resources among the world's countries.

globalization: the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations due to cross-national exchanges of goods and services, technology, investments, people, ideas, and information.

gross domestic product (GDP): the total value of all goods and services produced by a nation's citizens.

gross national income (GNI): the total amount of money earned by a nation's people and businesses; it is used to measure and track a nation's wealth from year to year.

human capital flight: refers to the emigration of highly trained or intelligent people from a particular country.

Human Development Index (HDI): a measure that combines a nation's GDP with many other important quality of life considerations such as life expectancy, security, literacy, and the effects of environmental degradation people experience.

International Poverty Line: refers to the amount of money a person needs to consume or earn per day to avoid living in extreme poverty.

land grabs: "land acquisitions that are in violation of human rights, without prior consent of the preexisting land users, and with no consideration of the social and environmental impacts" (International Land Coalition 2011).

life expectancy: a statistical estimate, based on averages, of the number of years a person can expect to live in a certain region.

measures: figures, extents, or amounts of phenomena that we are investigating.

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI): an indicator that measures severe poverty across low-income countries with three dimensions: health, education, and standard of living.

wealth: the financial assets or physical possessions that can be converted into a form that can be used for transactions.

Comprehension Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=729#h5p-4

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 5: Roots of Global Inequality, Decolonization, and Resistance

Learning Objectives

This chapter offers you the opportunity to:

- Identify ideologies and systems that are the foundations of global inequality.
- Discuss how foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development have instilled positive impacts as well as increased global inequality.
- Explain the mixed impacts of foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development.
- Illustrate new perspectives and movements that exist for addressing global inequality.

5.1: Chapter Story

5.2: Foundations of Global Inequality

5.3: Globalization, Inequality, and the Development Age

5.4: Mixed Impacts of Foreign Assistance, Humanitarian Aid, and Development

5.5: New Perspectives and Movements for Global Change

5.6: Conclusion

5.7: References

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5.1: Chapter Story

COLOMBIA: DEFORESTATION, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS

In Chapter 4 we examined global inequality, its many forms, and the ways that social scientists measure that inequality. We also examined how globalization—the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations—impacts inequality. The conflict in Colombia was one case study as we made connections between the country's conflict and longstanding, profound internal disparities. Let's examine Colombia some more to understand how global systems can play a role in inequality over time.

Despite the peace accords and efforts to bring security and stability to the country, leaders in Colombia's environmental movement are being killed at an unprecedented and increasing rate. In 2020, 65 environmental leaders were killed, the most recorded in any country that year (Kryt 2021). In 2024, Colombia was the deadliest country for environmentalists and activists for the second year in a row, with 79 killings (Global Witness 2024).





Figure 5.1. Image of a man in a boat on the Amazon River (left). Podcast episode "In the Colombian Amazon, Peace Has Environmental Consequences" [Podcast] (right). Transcript.

Armed groups still exist in Colombia that earn a living through drug trafficking and collaborating with extraction, ranching, and large crop companies. Often they operate in remote regions, including the Colombian Amazon. The armed groups are hired to guard projects or make conditions too threatening for local people to remain in the region. Members of the corporations and armed actors partner with some politicians who receive kickbacks for their support of the project (Kryt 2021).

At least 424,000 acres of forest were cleared in Colombia in 2020 (Noriega 2022). An increase in illegal deforestation was documented after the peace accords began. This is attributed in great part to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia's (FARC's) departure from remote regions. This left large tracts of forests accessible where the FARC had previously maintained strict control over land use.

Federal changes since President Gustavo Petro was elected in 2022 have helped reduce illegal deforestation. New policies focus on the environment, peace, and support to rural areas to bring a better quality of life for people so they don't turn to projects involved with illegal extraction or land grabs. The government is also making forest conservation a central topic in negotiations with armed groups (Weisse and Mikaela et al. 2024). While preliminary data and satellite imagery indicate less forest loss in 2023 (Global Forest Watch n.d.), the long-term trend shows there's been a 38 percent increase in illegal deforestation since the peace deal was signed (Noriega 2022). Listen to the 5:29-minute podcast episode "In the Colombian Amazon, Peace Has Environmental Consequences" [Website], which tells the story in more detail (figure 5.1).

Beyond Colombia, threats against land and environmental defenders are a global concern. In 2022, environmental defenders were killed worldwide at a rate of one every other day (Global Witness 2023). Indigenous communities are disproportionately killed. They represent about 5 percent of the world's population but make up 34 percent of all murders.

Examining Colombia's current state as a snapshot, how can we best examine the global social systems that have allowed for land grabs and multinational corporation control? How can we best examine the global social systems that continue to allow for illegal destruction of the Amazon and the accompanying human rights abuses of eco-activists?

Colombia's Colonial Roots

A crucial place to begin is by looking into Colombia's history. Land has been acquired and ownership concentrated through violent means in the region for centuries. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Colombia was a colony of Spain, which involved the

exploitation and removal of the Indigenous and peasant populations to remote regions of the country (Gillin 2015). During this same era, some enslaved people of African descent escaped and set up remote settlements, especially along the rain-sodden Pacific coast in what many consider the most rugged, dense jungle in the country. Authors Gonzales and Vasquez add that during this colonial era, people were displaced "to 'peripheral areas of the country,' areas of the country from which much of the insurgency has its roots" (Gillin 2015).

Then, after independence from Spain, Colombia was immediately controlled by export companies extracting resources (Fajardo Montaña 2014). To many scholars, this distribution of land and control over territories became the model of power relations in Colombian society. Today, as we notice the global spike in violence and illegal deforestation in the country, it's evident that this history, climate breakdown, and oppression are connected (Kryt 2021).

Colombia's Resources and International Aid

Another situation to consider when examining Colombia's conflict and inequality is that for decades, Colombia has been the recipient of significant military and international aid. Millions of dollars of humanitarian aid and significant human action have been delivered to Colombia from other nations. Many of these contributions have helped Colombia find its way to peace, reduce inequality, and improve well-being in the country. However, other aid projects are more controversial.

One very influential and controversial aid initiative was Plan Colombia. It was an aid package and agreement that lasted between 2000 and 2015, delivering $10 billion to the Colombian government to end the armed conflict and drug trafficking in the country. This prompted Colombia to become one of the top recipients of U.S. military and police assistance in the world.

The programs and funds were distributed in great part via the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID is an agency of the U.S. federal government that is primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development and development assistance. Funds were allotted to increase funding and training of Colombian military and paramilitary forces and to eradicate coca cultivation, a major source of funding for both the FARC and paramilitary groups.



Figure 5.2. "La Única Flor que no Fue Fumigada" ("The last flower that was not fumigated") was taken in a Colombian community of Southern Bolívar resisting the fumigations of Plan Colombia (left). A woman tends her chicken farm in San Nicolas, Colombia (right).

However, the effects of Plan Colombia are very controversial. Villagers suffered from the aerial poisoning of their subsistence crops and animals as large territories were blanketed with fumigation (figure 5.2). Numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) cite human rights violations linked to war campaigns that Plan Colombia supported.

Critics of Plan Colombia argue that the main intent of the program was not drug eradication and an end to armed conflict but an elimination of the left-wing FARC insurgency that was hindering the exploitation of Colombia's valuable resources, including oil. They claim that the campaigns that Plan Colombia supported also targeted poor farmers and rural Colombian activists calling for social reform (Stokes 2005; Cuellar 2005).

Professor Noam Chomsky outlined these concerns in 2000 in his book, *Rogue States: The Rule of Force in World Affairs*:

> *Each year, some 300,000 new refugees are driven from their homes, with a death toll of about 3,000 and many horrible massacres. The great majority of atrocities are attributed to paramilitary forces. These are closely linked to the military, as documented in considerable and shocking detail …by Human Rights Watch, and (the) UN which reported*

> *that the Colombian security forces …maintain an intimate relationship with death squads, organize paramilitary forces, and either participate in their massacres directly or, by failing to take action, have "undoubtedly enabled the paramilitary groups to achieve their exterminating objectives" (Chomsky 2000:82).*

Alongside its roots of colonization, Colombia's involvement in the globalized trade, financial, and military system has led to a mixed experience with equality and the health of its environment. While Colombia is a sound example of the challenges of these systems to society and human well-being, similar issues repeat throughout the globe.

In this chapter, we'll take a deeper look at the roots of global inequality. We'll first identify the colonized perspective and actions that have created the inequities between nations and within nations we explored in Chapter 4. We'll then examine two related social changes that impact global inequality: the globalization of the trade and financial sector and the foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development movements. We'll identify some mixed impacts of international interventions in these fields, and explore the movements and emerging possibilities that exist to address our global inequality issues. This chapter will encourage you to ask questions about how our relationships across global systems influence inequality.

- What ideologies do we hold that shape patterns of inequality in the world?
- How fair and helpful are our systems designed to support other countries?
- In what ways can we improve our international systems of support so they better address global inequality?

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Figure 5.2. "La Única Flor que no Fue Fumigada" is on Flickr by Agencia Prensa Rural, and licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 (left). A woman tends her chicken farm in San Nicolas, Colombia is on Flickr by Charlotte Kesl and World Bank Photo Collection is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 (right).

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5.2: Foundations of Global Inequality

What has led to the patterns of inequality that shape and divide this world? Why are some places and peoples so wealthy and others so poor? There are no simple answers to questions that extensive. However, good answers would probably start with some history.

The painting in figure 5.3 titled *Encuentro* (in English, “Meeting” or “Encounter”) was created by Jaime Zapata in 1992. It represents a meeting between an Indigenous person and a conquistador (an early Spanish colonizer). The Indigenous person is presented as living in good health, with an abundance of nature, offering a bowl to the conquistador. The conquistador is depicted with deathly imagery and examples of a destructive modern civilization. It’s a powerful illustration of the start of a long series of events driven by the colonial system that dramatically shaped the modern world.

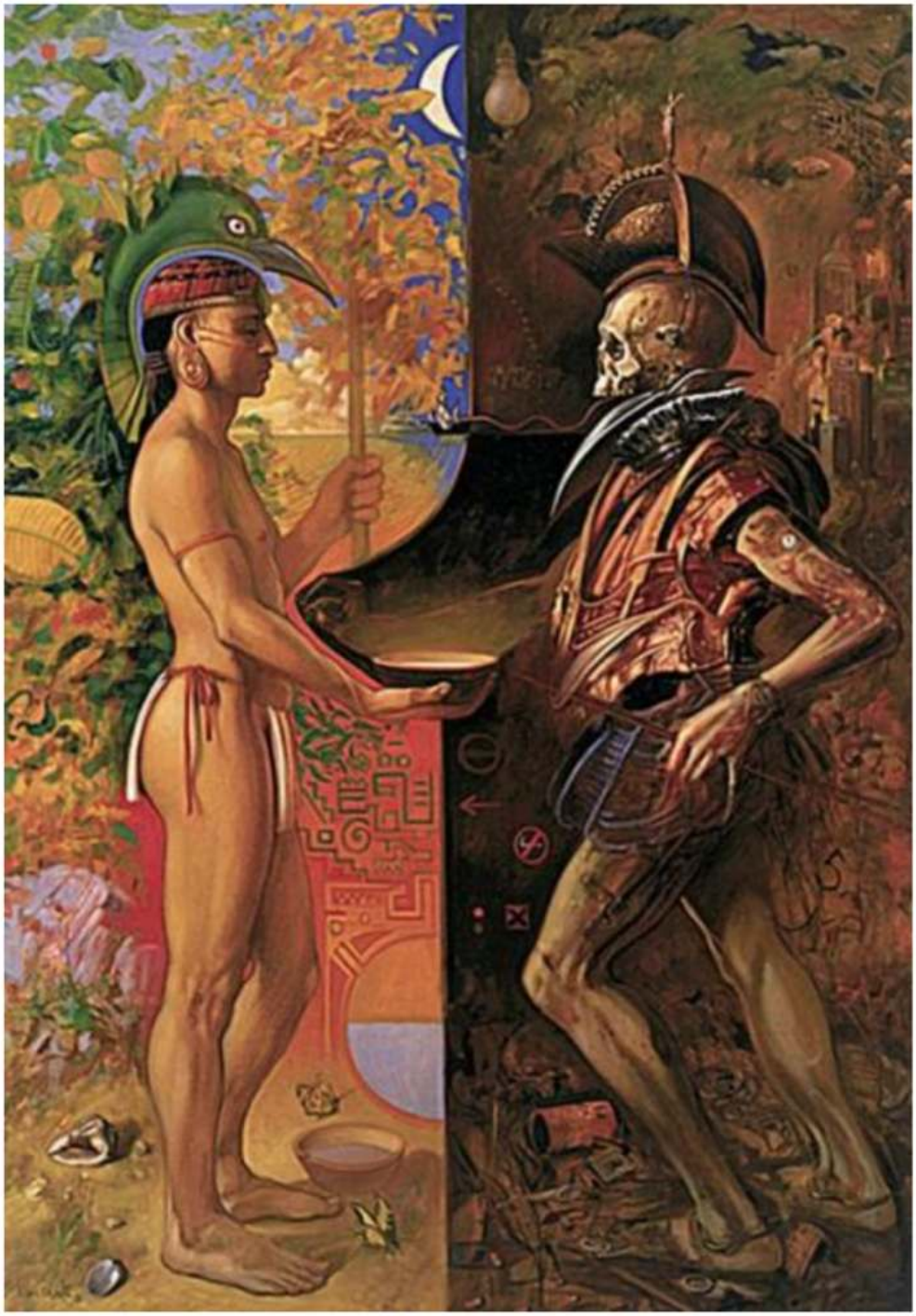


Figure 5.3. The painting *Encuentro* (in English, "Meeting" or "Encounter") by Jaime Zapata represents a meeting between an Indigenous person and a conquistador (an early Spanish colonizer). Image description.

This section will introduce the kinds of colonialism and the ideologies of colonialism as they existed during the era of Zapata's *Encuentro*. It will also explore how those ideologies and actions of colonialism have transformed into systems of power that exist today.

Colonialism

The modern system of inequality has grown in great part out of the colonial system that governed much of the world over the past several centuries. We introduced *colonialism* in Chapter 1 as the policy of military, economic, and ideological conquest of one

society by another. **Colonization** is the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the Indigenous people of an area.

European colonialism has reordered the global map, often waging wars of physical and cultural genocide on people, from West Africa to the Pacific Northwest. So if our question is about the roots of contemporary global inequality, our attention should focus a good deal on European colonialism. After all, it is not an accident that the wealthy countries in the world today are also former colonial powers, while most of the poor countries are former colonies.

European colonialism can be divided into two main forms:

- **Colonies of rule** are colonies governed by a relatively small population of colonial administrators, usually for the purpose of extracting resources and wealth. England's colonization of India would be considered a colony of rule.
- **Colonies of settlement** are colonies in which the colonial power sends a large number of its domestic population to settle the colony, thus displacing the Indigenous population. The English colonies in North America offer one important example of this. Colonies of settlement tend to be even more violent than colonies of rule, as they often involve the forced removal or mass murder of Indigenous Peoples.

So how did colonialism create the patterns of wealth and inequality that make up our world today? As a political-economic system, colonialism enabled the colonial powers to extract wealth from colonized societies, often in the form of agricultural products (like cotton, tobacco, or sugar) or mineral resources (like gold, silver, or oil). People were enslaved either from within conquered countries or brought in to serve in the extraction and production of goods. In the Americas, colonists also benefited from the *encomienda*. Also called the *hacienda* system, this was a labor system whereby the Spanish Crown rewarded conquerors with the labor of conquered non-Christian peoples.

Colonialism simultaneously enriched the colonial elite and impoverished the colony by extracting wealth from the colony and concentrating it within the colonial power. Thus, it formed an economic relationship that resulted in the enrichment of one party by way of the impoverishment of the other. The wealth of the wealthy and the poverty of the poor are ultimately two sides of the same coin—two sides of a relationship of extraction (McMichael 2017).

To create these relations of economic extraction, colonial powers attacked and restructured the social and economic lives of colonized peoples. To establish new colonial economies, most aspects of Indigenous life had to change. Local agriculture, with all of its cultural significance and nutritional complexity, was often transformed into export-oriented monocrop agriculture. Family and gender systems were often transformed, as European patriarchal traditions limited women's access to land and other resources (Waylen 1996). And colonial elites oversaw various assaults on Indigenous language, culture, and spirituality.

The U.S. government, in collaboration with the Catholic Church, orchestrated a sustained campaign to destroy Native American cultures and identities. One part of this campaign was the development of residential schools for Native American children. We'll discuss more about this campaign in Chapter 8 in the context of education. For a piece of this story now, you can find a 13:41-minute video in the Going Deeper section.

Ideologies of Colonialism

European colonialism involved genocide, enslavement, displacement, and impoverishment. But like most systems of power, it was legitimized by a host of ideologies. *Ideology* refers to the collection of ideas that form a person's worldview and help them make sense of the society in which they live. Colonial ideologies made colonialism appear legitimate, inevitable, and desirable in the minds of many of the people who carried it out.

The colonial powers almost universally presented their rule as a "civilizing force" that would ultimately benefit colonized people. The **civilization mission** has been articulated in different ways in different times and places, but it invariably frames colonized people as backward and in need of some "superior" society to intervene to improve their lives. It is a mix of dominance and paternalism—presenting colonization as serving the best interests of colonized people.

Take, for example, the 1629 Massachusetts Bay Colony seal (figure 5.4). As a symbol of the recently established British colony, it depicts a Native man, naked except for leaves over his groin, with a scroll emerging from his mouth that reads, "Come over and help us." The image depicts Native people as living in an Edenic state of nature, in need of salvation and civilization.



Figure 5.4. The Massachusetts Bay Colony seal (1629) is a symbol of the civilization mission, which depicts Native people as needing salvation and civilization.

While the civilization mission has been deployed throughout all periods of European and U.S. colonialism, it has been articulated in different ways. By the late 19th century, it had become highly racialized. The British poet and author Rudyard Kipling coined it "the white man's burden" in his 1899 poem by that name. It reads in part:

> *Take up the White Man's burden—*
>
> *Send forth the best ye breed—*
>
> *Go bind your sons to exile*
>
> *To serve your captives' need;*
>
> *To wait in heavy harness*
>
> *On fluttered folk and wild—*

> *Your new-caught, sullen peoples,*
>
> *Half devil and half child.*

The **white man's burden** became popular as a framework for interpreting colonial expansion—framing colonized people as simultaneously childlike and dangerous, while framing agents of colonial power as stern and wise parents.

The social theorist Edward Said argued in his classic book *Orientalism* that European colonialism constructed and rested upon a certain view of the world (Said 1978). That worldview divided "the West" or "the Occident" from "the East" or "the Orient." In doing so, it separated various cultural groups into these two broad categories, erasing their actual cultural complexities and histories and forging a clear sense of "us" and "them."

It also assigned each group certain characteristics. The so-called "West" represented the so-called "East" as, among other things, static, sensual, perverse, mystical, and despotic. In doing so, the "West" represented itself as the opposite: progressing, rational, moral, scientific, and liberal. From Said's perspective, colonialism rested on a discourse of power—a certain way of seeing and organizing the world. He called that discourse "Orientalism."

For more on the ideologies of colonialism, you can listen to the podcast "The Walls Built in Our Minds," which was introduced in Chapter 3.

Neocolonialism

When did the colonial period end? That question is more difficult to answer than it might seem.

Throughout the colonial period, colonized peoples organized innumerable campaigns of resistance, from Indigenous uprisings to slave revolts to independence campaigns led by colonial settlers. The first successful expulsion of a colonial power was the Haitian Revolution. In 1791, formerly enslaved people in Haiti rebelled against their French colonial administrators and won formal independence in 1804. However, the majority of colonies around the world did not gain their independence until much later.

World War II (1939–1945) marked the beginning of the end of formal colonialism. In the period just following the war, anti-colonial forces successfully took advantage of the weakened state of the colonial powers. Independence movements spread around the world, and former colonies became independent nation-states. So one could argue that the colonial period ended between the 1940s and 1960s.

However, many scholars suggest that the colonial period hasn't ended at all, only changed. **Neocolonialism** is a new form of colonialism in which the colonial powers maintain their economic and political dominance over former colonies through debt, trade agreements, and corporate influence but without formal political control.

Following formal decolonization, many newly independent states found themselves under significant pressure from the wealthy nations, particularly the United States and the Western European powers. That pressure was discussed in 1961 during an All African People's Conference, an event organized by a movement of political groups from countries in Africa that opposed colonial rule.



Figure 5.5. Kwame Nkrumah, the first prime minister and president of Ghana, and an early thinker of neocolonialism (left). Mural of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana (right).

There, neocolonialism was described as “the deliberate and continued survival of the colonial system in independent African states, by turning these states into victims of political, mental, economic, social, military and technical forms of domination carried out through indirect and subtle means that did not include direct violence” (Mentan 2018:280). While Africa is not the only continent that is subject to neocolonialism, its states experience a profound and pervasive form of this domination.

An African state that staunchly resisted neocolonialism at this time was Ghana, with leadership coming from Kwame Nkrumah, the first prime minister and president of the country (figure 5.5). He is a central thinker in our understanding of neocolonialism and was one of the first to coin the term. In his book *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonisation*, Nkrumah critiqued that aid, trade, finance, and security interventions would be used as a tool by foreign powers to keep African former colonies economically and politically subordinate to their interests. “The cajolement, the wheedlings, the seductions and the Trojan horses of neocolonialism must be stoutly resisted, for neocolonialism is a latter-day harpy, a monster which entices its victims with sweet music” (Nkrumah 1964:105).

Going Deeper

- For more on the U.S. residential schools, watch the video “How the U.S. Stole Thousands of Native American Children” [Streaming Video] (13:41).
- To learn more about the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, watch this 11:28-minute video, “Why Are the IMF and World Bank So Controversial?” [Streaming Video].
- To watch more on how colonialism affects societies today, watch the 25:18-minute *Al Jazeera* video “How Does Colonialism Shape the World We Live in?” [Streaming Video]. Also, a 25:26-minute follow-up video is “Colonialism: Have We Inherited the Pain of Our Ancestors?” [Streaming Video].

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Figure 5.5. Mural of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana by Ray Black, PhD, Associate Professor, with the Race, Gender, and Ethnic Studies Department of Colorado State University is included with permission (right).

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5.3: Globalization, Inequality, and the Development Age

With these foundations of neocolonialism, in the 1980s a new international trade and financial system emerged. This system accounts for a vast source of neocolonization pressure today. We'll explore that system in this section. We'll also explore three other systems that have developed over the last 70 years: foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and international development. They each have a complex relationship with global inequality.

The Globalization of Trade and Financial Systems

The international trade and financial systems introduced earlier were catapulted into existence after World War II at the Bretton Woods Conference. Leaders of the United States, Canada, Western European countries, Australia, and Japan sensed the political instability that led to the war was due to a failure in dealing with economic problems after World War I. So a system of global monetary management was created requiring that payments between countries be defined in relation to the U.S. dollar.

While the Bretton Woods monetary system ended by 1973, two institutions that were created from that system continued. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was established to bridge temporary imbalances of payments between countries. It is today an organization of 189 member countries that works to achieve sustainable growth and prosperity by supporting economic policies that promote financial stability and monetary cooperation. They monitor exchange rates and provide loans to nations in debt.

The World Bank, an international development bank, was created to meet the need for post-World War II reconstruction and development of Europe, offering loans to rebuild countries devastated by World War II. Today, the World Bank focuses on development, particularly with infrastructure such as dams, electrical grids, irrigation systems, and roads.

IMF and World Bank loans come with strings attached. The organizations require loan conditions of borrowing countries, often requiring them to adopt certain economic policies. These policies are based on **neoliberalism**, a political and economic ideology that emphasizes free trade, and a minimal government role in the economy and in spending.

According to the IMF and the World Bank, these "Structural Adjustment Programs" (SAPs), will spur economic growth and help poor countries pay back their loans. However, their actual consequences can be devastating for poor people. Often called *austerity* measures, the policies might be opening their national economy to foreign competitors, cutting food subsidies, lowering wages, cutting funding for public schools, or cutting social services for the poor.

In Mexico, for example, SAPs eliminated food subsidies, causing the price of staple foods like tortillas, beans, bread, and dehydrated milk to skyrocket. In a period of 6 years, minimum wage was also cut in half. Predictably, malnutrition increased (McMichael 2017). Because SAPs targeted government spending to support low-income people, the burden of structural adjustment fell primarily on the lower classes and women.

This economic relationship is called the **debt regime**, a system of global governance that empowers wealthy countries, through the IMF and the World Bank, to impose economic and social policies on indebted nations. In 1989, James Grant, the executive director of UNICEF, put it this way: "…the rich get the loans and the poor get the debts" (McMichael 2017).

Watch a 3:22-minute clip of the documentary "(Jamaica) IMF Decimating One Country After Another" [Streaming Video] (figure 5.6). Produced in 2001, it explores Jamaica's experience with SAPs imposed by the IMF and World Bank. As you watch, consider these questions: How does the IMF influence Jamaica's economic policies? What are the implications for Jamaican democracy?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=739#oembed-1

https://youtu.be/YoIJPwfsbqg

Figure 5.6. "(Jamaica) IMF Decimating One Country After Another" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Beyond the economic and social consequences within low-income countries, the start of the debt regime also marked the rise of a new system of global power. In it, the former colonial powers, such as the United States and Western European countries, are able to impose economic and social policies on their former colonies.

Foreign Assistance, Humanitarian Aid, and International Development

Building in parallel to international trade and financial systems over the past 60 years has been foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and international development. **Foreign assistance** is aid given by a national government to countries in need. It supports global peace, security, and development efforts, and it provides relief during times of crisis. Often, this foreign assistance promotes the global leadership of the donating country and is prompted by strategic, economic, and moral interests.

Humanitarian aid efforts alleviate suffering and mitigate the effects of disaster. They are provided by governments and NGOs for a short-term period until longer-term help can be provided by local governments or other institutions. The unhoused, refugees, and victims of natural disasters, wars, and famines are all considered recipients of humanitarian aid. Ofte,n humanitarian aid and foreign aid are provided simultaneously and in concert with each other, as they each are designed as short-term aid (figure 5.7).



Figure 5.7. An internally displaced person and crowd with a member of the United Nations Refugee Agency in Ukraine, March, 2015.

In early 2022, as Russia invaded Ukraine, almost immediately humanitarian agencies and governments positioned themselves to provide assistance to refugees and victims of what many feared would become a full-scale war. This response is the result of centuries of moral worldview and humanitarian action.

Philosophies of humanitarian action stem from many belief systems: the Islamic tradition of *zakat*; the concept of Christian charity; and ideas of ethical wartime conduct as outlined by the Chinese, Greeks, and Romans. Humanitarian aid carries with it a lot of cultural and political influence. One of the earliest occurrences of modern foreign assistance existed in response to the Northern Chinese Famine of 1876 to 1879.

News arrived in England of the suffering in the area, which prompted Roman Catholic and Protestant churches to send missionaries for relief. The Chinese government feared the missionaries would leverage the crisis to spread Christianity and adopt and Christianize orphaned children. So, in response, they competed with the missionaries by increasing their assistance (Rysaback-Smith 2015).

The first major U.S. aid program took place shortly after World War II to support Europe in rebuilding infrastructure, stabilizing the region, and strengthening the economy. In the decades after the war, there was a significant increase in the number of aid agencies as nations realized that there was a need for an established and organized system for international assistance. The United Nations was the first permanent international organization with the mandate to protect vulnerable populations and maintain peace (Rysaback-Smith 2015).

A set of international security bodies has evolved since the 1960s that is related to militarism and policing. These bodies have a dual role of supporting the implementation of humanitarian ideals and defending national interests. One example is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an intergovernmental military alliance between 28 European states, the United States, and Canada. It was set up in the aftermath of World War II, with member states agreeing to defend each other against attacks by third parties. The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations is another example; it works to protect civilians, prevent conflict, reduce violence, and strengthen security for countries in turmoil.

As the industry of humanitarian aid grew, it began to focus on what were then termed "Third World" countries. Soon, the ideas of development and underdevelopment began to be a focus of international organizations, sparking the industry of international development (Rysaback-Smith 2015).

International development refers to the government agencies, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic private businesses, individuals, and their actions working to address poverty and inequality on a global scale. When John F. Kennedy was president of the United States, he was looking for ways to promote rapid economic development in the "Third World." Economists serving as his advisors promoted a theory that could be used to challenge Marxist ideologies and repel communist advances that were of concern at the time. From this perspective, the organizations Alliance for Progress in Latin America, the Peace Corps, Food for Peace, and USAID were established. Kennedy declared the 1960s the "Development Decade" and increased the budget for foreign assistance significantly.

In Chapter 4, we wrote that the term "development" had connotations of superiority and expressed an ethnocentric view of other nations and their cultures. We'll continue to refer to it here to discuss the industry that has developed around its meaning. Humanitarian aid and foreign assistance differ from development work in that development seeks to address the underlying socioeconomic factors that may have led to a crisis or emergency.

A number of global organizations were shaped to support this era of foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development. Often, they have a mixed mission that touches all three initiatives. Nearly all governments of the richer nations dedicate funding to foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development.

Today, many of the largest U.S. projects are guided with strategic direction from the USAID and the Department of State. USAID's stated mission is to promote democratic values abroad and advance a free, peaceful, and prosperous world. Their in-country missions manage partnerships with organizations and act as de facto diplomats for democracy abroad.

The U.S. government also directs and funds development initiatives through NGOs abroad. Agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Defense implement the goals of the larger U.S. development initiatives.

Internationally based organizations dedicated to foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development include European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, the European Council (ECHO), the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Oxfam, and Doctors Without Borders. They also include think tanks such as the Council on Foreign Relations and the European Council on Foreign Relations.

On the surface, history tells that these initiatives were sparked in response to global inequality and suffering. It is unmistakable they have helped with global poverty reduction, human rights, and emergency relief, and still do. But the story becomes more complex when we see how they are closely linked to economic global power and continued ideologies of colonialism.

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5.4: Mixed Impacts of Foreign Assistance, Humanitarian Aid, and Development

The combined efforts of foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development since the 1960s is immense. Since the 1970s U.S. assistance has helped cut in half the number of preventable deaths of children under five, people living in poverty, and the number of children and adolescents unable to attend school (Interaction n.d.).

The average lifespan increased by 24 years between 1960 and 2017 (Norris 2021). Extensive campaigns against cholera, smallpox, malaria, and polio have been very successful, with polio nearly eradicated and smallpox abolished entirely. Campaigns have also successfully shifted economic circumstances to allow millions of girls access to a basic education and offered family planning programs that give women and men a chance to choose smaller families.

In 2020, the United States sent about $63 billion in foreign assistance to other countries (a considerable amount, but less than 1 percent of the federal budget). The total global aid (humanitarian and foreign assistance) since 1960 has been about $4.7 trillion, calculated as a combination of cash and in-kind and personnel support and taking inflation into account (Barder 2014).

Take a brief look at this interactive map of the USAID [Website] (figure 5.8) that documents trends in U.S. foreign assistance. Set the year to 1946, press play, and watch where dollars were obligated to foreign countries through the decades until today. What overall changes do you notice? What connections can you make between political, historical, and environmental events that might account for the funding priorities for some of those years?

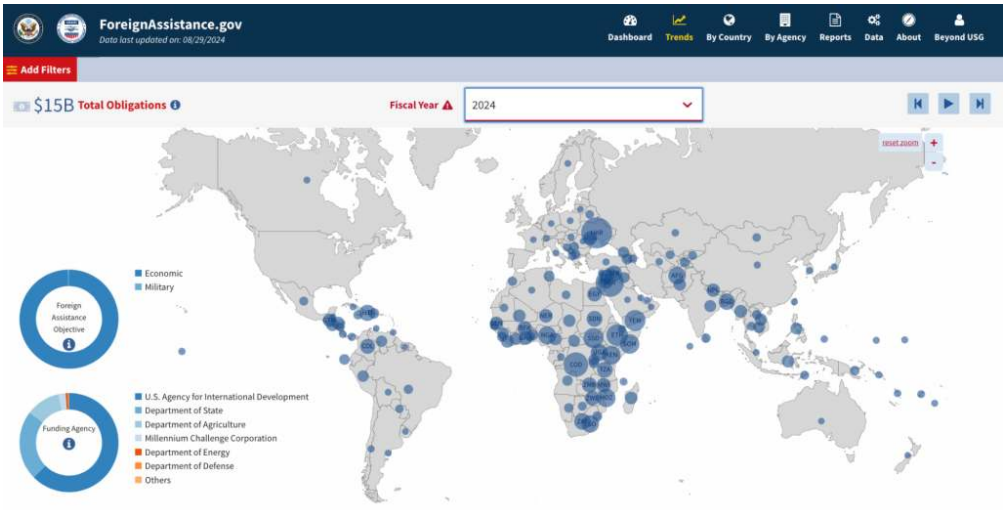


Figure 5.8. USAID's interactive map of U.S. foreign assistance [Website] provides a dynamic visualization of trends in U.S. foreign assistance.

Does Humanitarian Aid Work?

Depending on the circumstances, it can be challenging or straightforward to evaluate how well foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development work to achieve their stated goals, especially humanitarian aid. Recipient organizations and governments are often criticized for not demonstrating the effectiveness of the programs for which they receive funding. Some goals, such as sustainable development, are more difficult to show outcomes for. It can also be challenging to show shifts in society's wellbeing over the short term (Council on Foreign Relations 2023).

There are some circumstances where it is easier to track and report the impacts that aid has created. The Council on Foreign Relations points to a good example:

> *As of 2020, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has delivered care to more than 17 million people (including 6.7 million children) and provided training for 290,000 health workers in sub-Saharan Africa. When the program launched in 2003, less than 50,000 people in Africa had access to any antiretroviral treatment (Nakkazi 2023) (Council on Foreign Relations 2023).*

There are countless projects like PEPFAR that distribute humanitarian assistance and make marked inroads in treating disease, bringing water to homes, or other tangible initiatives. However, even among these direct missions, it is important to consider the challenging circumstances that members of recipient nations face (that is, after all, why they are targeted to receive funds). The image in figure 5.9 from USAID introduces midwives in Ethiopia, trained to track HIV status in mothers and HIV-exposed babies.



Figure 5.9. A USAID photo presents hardworking midwives at the Dila Health Center in Ethiopia. Like many aid workers in poorer countries, living and working conditions can pose challenges to their work.

USAID shares:

> *These women may have long distances to travel to the health center and no address or phone number to follow up. Other issues such as staff turnover have a huge effect on quality of care. When health center staff are assigned to remote areas, there is a high chance that they will want to transfer somewhere else at the first opportunity. With turnover comes gaps in training and inconsistency when it comes to tracking and reporting on HIV positive patients (USAID Ethiopia 2013).*

It is also important to consider cultural differences between the countries that send funds and those that receive support. Recipients may not be prepared to meet the specific cultural expectations for reporting outcomes that members of donor nations have.

Critical Responses to Foreign Assistance, Humanitarian Aid, and Development

As a global community, what did we learn from 60 decades of foreign assistance and development action? We've learned how to respond to conflicts related to war, natural disasters, and famine. We've also learned how to measure, monitor, and improve severe levels of poverty, lack of education, and severe global health emergencies such as pandemics. We've also developed a rapid and encompassing global emergency response system.

Alongside these developments, in the mid-1990s, we began to see a watershed of scientific and grassroots critique of foreign assistance and development applied by many large-scale organizations. Today, some see that these models are responsible for soaring international and local financial indebtedness, exacerbation of human rights crises, depleted soils, threats to native seeds and biodiversity, erosion of knowledge and skills of local people, and loss of local cultural expression.

National Interests and Support to Foreign Nations

Key to understanding globalization and inequality is the fact that often national funds and the work of government-sponsored organizations are offered with the added purpose of serving the interests of their home nation. These interests might be straightforward. For example, nations might donate to poor countries to reduce possible negative spillovers of issues from poor nations. Avoiding infectious disease, environmental degradation, violence, and human trafficking are some examples.

Other interests may be more complicated. Governments of richer countries also have an interest in opening new trade markets and keeping current ones healthy. If they can donate to struggling nations, helping them avoid crises and become more prosperous, it means there are more people to buy their goods. To some thinkers, in this way, aid can perpetuate neocolonialism through trade agreements and corporate influence.

Other thinkers posit that when funds are vested in struggling countries for the interests of donor nations, more poverty and violence are created. Author John Norris lists some examples of U.S. assistance that have proven to create more problems than help. Support to Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s, to Egypt in the 1980s and 1990s, and to Afghanistan and Iraq in the wake of September 11 has yielded disappointing and detrimental results. He adds, "Each of these settings involved high-profile national security priorities, where resources and manpower were almost unlimited but there was very little willingness to question how, or even if, development could work under such conditions" (Norris 2021).

A more current example is with the U.S. food aid program, an initiative of USAID. The program has required that food be supplied to poor nations from U.S. farms and transported on U.S. ships. Some see this arrangement as a "win-win," as the U.S. farmers receive income for the food they provide. However, with this system, the program feeds far fewer people than it could if food were delivered from a closer region. It is also a considerably ineffective way of delivering aid. In 2018, members of Congress introduced changes to this system that would give the USAID the flexibility to use cash, vouchers, or locally purchased food when one of those would be faster and more effective in helping hungry people in need (Casey 2021).

There's a long history of controversy surrounding the importation of food to poor nations, particularly when it is driven by powerful corporations. In the 1970s, the Swiss food company Nestlé faced international criticism for its marketing practices. Protesters claimed Nestlé's promotion of their baby formula was causing infant illness and death in poor communities, as it encouraged mothers to abandon breastfeeding.

Controversy with Nestlé has continued since the 1970s (INFACT Clearinghouse 1978). In 2011, 19 NGOs based in Laos organized a boycott of Nestlé, criticizing the company for failing to translate labeling and health information into local languages and for offering incentives to doctors and nurses to promote the use of infant formula ("Aid Agencies in Laos Refuse to apply for Nestlé Cash" 2011).

Watch this 3:56-minute video produced by *The New York Times*, "How Junk Food Is Transforming Brazil" [Streaming Video] (figure 5.10), which describes how the Nestlé controversy shows up in Brazil. As you watch, consider that today, Nestlé is the largest publicly held food company in the world. It also provides donations to development organizations such as the World Health Organization Foundation (Igoe 2021) and is collaborating with the Swiss government on development efforts (Frederick 2020). What potential concerns and consequences can you see with powerful food companies working with governmental and international aid agencies?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=741#oembed-1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cKUDIte2sk&feature=emb_imp_woyt

Figure 5.10. "How Junk Food Is Transforming Brazil" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Militarism, Human Rights, and Regime Change

Some international military interventions and international organizations are controversial in the context of human rights, assistance, and development. An organization of the international military system that has come under great scrutiny is the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC).

Formerly called the School of the Americas, WHINSEC is a U.S. Department of Defense school. Since the school's initial opening as the School of the Americas, the organization has trained over 64,000 Latin American soldiers in counterinsurgency techniques,

sniper tactics, commando and psychological warfare, military intelligence, and interrogation tactics (Knapke 2019).

A number of graduates of the School of the Americas and WHINSEC have been accused and sentenced for human rights violations, genocide, crimes against humanity, and other criminal activity in their home countries (School of the Americas Watch 2007). Further criticism is related to training manuals used at the school, provided by the U.S. military, that referenced execution, torture, blackmail, false imprisonment, and other forms of coercion (Priest 1996). Other manual information referred to "potential insurgents" as "religious workers, labor organizers, student groups, and others in sympathy with the cause of the poor" (Quigley 2005), which is a violation of international humanitarian law.

The School of the Americas Watch is an organization dedicated to closing the school and monitoring officers known to have committed atrocities after graduating. They have documented atrocities including the assassination of Catholic bishops, labor leaders, women and children, priests, nuns, and the massacres of entire communities. The School of the Americas Watch has organized protests against WHINSEC that include direct action at the school itself (figure 5.11).



Figure 5.11. Protesters against the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) are concerned about the rate at which graduates are accused of human rights violations and other criminal activity. A protester is dressed for a staged funeral procession that commemorates civilian victims of soldiers trained by WHINSEC (left). A group of protesters staged as civilian victims of soldiers trained by WHINSEC (right).

Over recent years, WHINSEC has received just under $10 million (approved by Congress) per year to run the Washington Office on Latin America's Defense Oversight Program. The training of Latin American soldiers is important to members of the U.S. Department of Defense and some lawmakers because it is seen as critical to U.S. national security. In 2007, former U.S. Representative Phil Gingrey explained:

> *[The school]…may be the only medium we ever have to engage the future military and political leaders of these Latin American countries, who are America's closest neighbors.…If we were not to engage with these nations…the void created would be filled by countries with different values than our own regarding democracy and human rights, countries such as Venezuela and China, whose influence in the region is growing (Grills 2011).*

Modern U.S. national security interests related to countries with "different values than our own" goes back to the Cold War, the ideological and geopolitical struggle for global influence between Russia (then the Soviet Union) and the United States. The direct Cold War between the two countries began shortly after World War II. The Soviet Union supported the expansion of communist governments around the globe, and the United States supported anti-communist regimes. This conflict has manifested in the United States supporting a number of coups and other military interventions. In the case of WHINSEC, Panama's former president Jorge Illueca described the school as the "biggest base for destabilization in Latin America" (Johnson 2004).

Concern about communist influence has waned considerably, but it still influences some U.S. policymakers today. After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, terrorism eclipsed communism as the major threat considered when prioritizing aid.

Take a few minutes to browse this Cold War in Latin America Interactive Map [Website], created by David Olson, for a snapshot of military interventions between 1953 and 1992 (figure 5.12).



Figure 5.12. David Olson's interactive map [Website] provides dynamic snapshots of U.S. military interventions in Latin America between 1953 and 1992.

What is your first impression of the map? What do you notice? What questions come to mind?

The Green Revolution Program

Perhaps the best case study to examine the critique of large-scale international development projects is the **Green Revolution** program. Beginning in the 1960s, the Green Revolution was an initiative to increase the global food supply and reduce world hunger by the use of chemicals and engineered crop varieties. Programs were supported by scientists, development professionals, and Western leaders concerned that such hunger would make countries vulnerable to communism.

The strategy of the Green Revolution was to introduce irrigation, mechanization, fertilizers, pesticides, and genetically modified high-yield varieties of food grain to increase production in poor countries. Rice and wheat were the forerunners in this experiment. These crops replaced smaller subsistence farming, especially in India, Mexico, Pakistan, and the Philippines.

Dependence on Overseas Solutions

Production did increase significantly. The production of maize, wheat, and rice almost doubled between the 1960s and 1990s, and fewer people experienced hunger (Conway 1998).

However, in order to achieve these high yields, farmers were required to apply imported varieties of pesticides and fertilizers, give additional nutrients to plants, and develop more efficient irrigation and crop management techniques. These methods created or increased poor people's dependence on technological solutions created in the faraway laboratories and factories in the United States and other industrialized nations.

For example, the Indus Valley along the border with India and Pakistan became the breadbasket for wheat in India. However, the new high-yielding crop varieties were reliant on water, fertilizers, and pesticides. As in many other parts of the world, only farmers with more capital (and larger plots of land) were able to gain access to the money needed to buy the fertilizer, buy the pesticides or herbicides, and obtain water access. Therefore, instead of improving the lives of small-crop farmers, these programs often displaced them from their land. As time went on, those fertilizers and pesticides also polluted the soil and water in the area (Ahmad et al. 1973).

Dependence on Foreign Loans

Green Revolution funding was in part provided by the philanthropist organizations the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation, as well as the U.S. government (Patel 2013). In many cases, funding that governments needed to implement Green Revolution farming methods came from organizations like the World Bank. Those loans required that countries provide local farmers access to products from the donor nations.

Critics argue this benefited the donors more than the recipients and put poor farmers at risk when they become dependent on new technologies and then fail to earn enough with their crops to pay rising prices for seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. Farmers in developing nations (figure 5.13) have been encouraged with generous loans to invest in expensive capital equipment they cannot afford to purchase or replace machinery parts when the loans disappear.

Crisis in India



Figure 5.13. A photo of a woman tobacco farmer in India.

An epidemic of suicides among farmers in India began in the 1970s and still exists today. The National Crime Records Bureau of India reported that a total of 296,438 Indian farmers committed suicide between 1995 and 2013 (Parvathamma 2016). Many attribute these deaths to farmers' inability to escape the cycle of debt created by their involvement in high-tech agriculture.

While it is difficult to track reasons for suicide, and suicide is often prompted by more than one life circumstance, some data collected by the Institute for Social and Economic Change do point to debt and high-tech agriculture as a main cause. Their survey of 528 farming families found that while unmet expectations of more credit and failure to get better crop prices contributed to many suicides, farm indebtedness was considered the major triggering factor in most of the cases (Manjunatha and Ramappa 2017).

As colonialism remains in the form of neocolonialism, the effects of the Green Revolution remain in the form of lingering multinational corporate control over production processes and resources needed for this kind of farming. In the 1990s, this control became more pronounced as patent protections began to be granted to private companies that develop and market genetically modified seeds. For example, the company Monsanto developed genetically modified corn and soy varieties that produce higher

yields, but they require the use of Monsanto's herbicide, forcing farmers to be dependent upon Monsanto products. With this change, the Green Revolution became a "Gene Revolution" (Food First n.d.).

Going Deeper

- For more information on the School of the Americas/WHINSEC, watch the two videos "School of Assassins 1/2" [Streaming Video] and "School of Assassins 2/2" [Streaming Video].
- To learn more about the Latin American Cold War, watch this 6:29-minute video, "Dictators and Civil Wars: The Cold War in Latin America" [Streaming Video], and see other resources by Retro Report 8 [Website]. Find a transcript of the video here [Website].

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Figure 5.9. Hardworking midwives at the Dila Health Center in Ethiopia is on Flickr, by USAID Ethiopia, and licensed under CC by 2.0.

Figure 5.11. "A Protestor, Dressed for a Staged Funeral Procession" by Steve McFarland is on Flickr and licensed under the CC BY-NC 2.0 license (left). "A Group of Protestors Staging Civilian Victims" by Caravan 4 Peace is on Flickr and licensed under CC by 2.0 (right).

Figure 5.12. "Screenshot of Cold War in Latin America – Interactive Map" by David Olsen (modification: overlay of "Interactive icon" by Thomas Shafee) is licensed CC BY.

Figure 5.13. "Woman Tobacco Farmer" by Adam Cohn is on Flickr and licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

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Figure 5.10. "How Junk Food Is Transforming Brazil" by *The New York Times* is licensed under the Standard YouTube License.

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5.5: New Perspectives and Movements for Global Change

Many scientists, development professionals, and global activists have been applying what we learned from the decades of aid and development. But there remains significant tension against the priorities of many development organizations and global economic institutions. For example, many continue to learn from the downfalls of the Green Revolution. They acknowledge that such an exclusive focus on technology to address the complex intersections of poverty, farming, food, and management of natural resources is problematic. However, many of these methods continue today.

During the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit, a powerful counter-mobilization effort was led by farmers and scientists, as well as civil society groups allied with Indigenous communities and small-scale food producers across the world. They voiced their concerns that leaders were framing our problems of food systems with such a focus on biotechnological interventions (Montenegro 2021). Let's look at some perspectives that have emerged from these observations, as well as some movements arising from these tensions.

The Social Construction of Development

A good way to start examining the perspectives that are shifting in relation to foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development is to examine the assumptions and meanings we make. For generations, general knowledge in the United States has been that we live a healthier and more enjoyable existence than those of countries less prosperous than us. But, when we look closer, to what extent is this really true?

The United States has very high income and wealth inequalities. According to research conducted by the Pew Trust in 2019, public opinions of the economy are mixed. Those who report that the United States is in excellent or good economic condition are, by a majority, of the upper- and middle-income classes. Most of the people polled say the economy is only fair or poor. Their research also reveals some key experiences:

> *Two-thirds of lower-income adults (65%) say they worry almost daily about paying their bills, compared with about one-third of middle-income Americans (35%) and a small share of upper-income Americans (14%). The cost of healthcare is also a worry that weighs on the minds of many Americans, particularly those in the lower-income tier.*
>
> *More than half of lower-income adults (55%) say they frequently worry about the cost of health care for themselves and their families; fewer middle-income (37%) and upper-income Americans (18%) share this worry (Igielnik and Parker 2019).*

Indeed, 11.6 percent, or nearly 38 million people, in the United States live below the poverty line (Creamer et al. 2022). In 2023, the United States ranked 63rd in the world in life expectancy, sitting in the bottom rankings among the most high-income countries ("Data Page: Life Expectancy, aged 0" 2024). Finally, while the United States leads spending on health care around the world, 25.6 million residents were uninsured in 2022 (Tolbert et al. 2023). A multitude of NGOs work to fill in the gaps (figure 5.14).



Figure 5.14. Despite leading in healthcare spending, many residents in the United States go without health insurance. Organizations like the People's Health Clinic in Portland, Oregon, work to meet their needs.

The Social Progress Imperative is a global nonprofit that provides data on the social and environmental health of societies within and between countries. Their 2022 report shows that despite the United States scoring near the top for many economic indicators, its wealth and high levels of income do not translate into advancing levels of social development:

> *Since 2011, the United States has been declining in six of the 12 components, including Personal Rights …where it's ranked 46th in the world and 33rd in Inclusiveness ….The steepest declines happened in the past 5 years. We also see stagnation in Nutrition and Basic Medical Care, Health and Wellness and a decline in Access to Basic Knowledge… (Green and Harmacek et al. 2022:1).*

It seems that in the United States, we have lived with the notion that our lives are healthier and more enjoyable than in other countries, but in many ways, this is not true. What does this mean for global inequality, aid, and development?

The book of essays, *The Development Dictionary*, critically examined ideologies related to development by looking at the social construction of terminology applied to the industry. For example, Majid Rahnema writes that our general notion of poverty was created as a result of our societies becoming monetized and our global economy becoming based on export and import. After monetization, "…the poor were defined as lacking what the rich could have in terms of money and possessions" (Sachs 2009:175). This is important, Rahnema adds, because it frames the poor exclusively with a lens of lack or deficit. He poses some important questions:

> *…[W]hen poor is defined as lacking a number of things necessary to life, the questions could be asked: What is necessary and for whom? And who is qualified to define all that? …Everyone may think of themselves as poor when it is the television set in the mud hut which defines the necessities of life, often in terms of the wildest and fanciest consumers appearing on the screen (Sachs 2009:175).*

The social construction of poverty (what it means to be poor) and its opposite, well-being (what it means to be well), have been more globally defined by rich countries like the United States. And that definition weighs heavily on whether or not a county's citizens have money and possessions. The powerful influence of this social construction is even more evident when we see that, in many ways, our health and well-being rankings are not what we think they are.

The Dominance of Development

The way we socially construct development has consequences that can be seen in the actions of the development industry. The larger and more powerful development agencies, such as the World Bank and USAID, export the practical, economic, and cultural experience of the West to low-income countries. They do this by heavily relying on the economic measurements we introduced in Chapter 4 (such as GDP and GNI) to measure progress and prosperity. But, as we explored in Chapter 4, those indicators provide only a limited view of the human experience.

Equally important is when economic development interventions reinforce the hierarchy of nations. That is, development projects can bolster the positions of rich or core countries so that poor or peripheral countries remain dependent upon them. For example, the strategy of importing genetically modified crops and other technologies, providing loans in exchange for structural adjustment, and overall strategies that focus on purely global economic indicators hold in their roots a colonialist model that relies on the theft of Indigenous land and the exploitation of farmers' and food workers' labor. For some, this evaluation, solely based on a country's capacity to produce, is part of a predatory and dominant perspective. However, this dominance is becoming more commonly acknowledged.

After the Green Revolution

In the report "Global Development Disrupted," 93 leaders share a list of new initiatives and directions in international development they are most excited about. They include:

> - *A focus on inclusion and inclusive growth rather than just poverty…*

> - *Nonviolent civic action…*
> - *More focus on climate change and sustainable business practices…*
> - *More focus on holistic efforts to address climate and energy issues…*
> - *…Giving communities more choice and voice in program design (Ingram and Lord 2019:34).*

Those leaders also explained that they see a trend toward localization in the development industry. More specifically, they see that local governments, local civil society organizations, and private companies will play increasingly important roles in addressing needs in receiving nations.

Most strikingly, some leaders are witnessing a decline in development. They say the distinction between "developing" and "developed" is narrowing as countries of all income levels experience similar social, economic, political, and environmental problems. Global issues such as migration, conflict, climate change, inequality, polarization, marginalization, and corruption are becoming common to more nations, and we need to find solutions as a global community to address them (Ingram and Lord 2019).



Figure 5.15. Photo of Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank and recipient of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize. Grameen Bank provides a way to provide loans to groups of five people at a time in Bangladesh, an alternative to the loan systems of the traditional development industry.

We're also seeing this change in perspective and strategy outside of the traditional development industry. Generally, there is a greater emphasis on initiatives that directly provide the poor with what they need to improve their lives on their own. For example, providing microloans has become a popular model to help people who have no means of supporting themselves.

A grassroots version of the microloan strategy was popularized by the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh (founder Muhammad Yunus in figure 5.15). Through this project, mini banks are set up in villages that provide loans to groups of five people at a time. No collateral is required to receive a loan, and no written contracts are required between the bank and the borrowers; instead, the system works based on trust.

While the Grameen Bank began in the 1970s, it grew significantly between 2003 and 2007. It has loaned $2.1 billion to approximately 2 million people, 94 percent of whom have been women (Hazeltine and Bull 2003). Watch the 3:26-minute video "The Grameen Model: Technology + People" [Streaming Video] (figure 5.16) to hear how the Grameen Bank works in more detail. What do you notice is different about the Grameen strategy from the more traditional development approaches we've covered in this chapter?

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ir6Z724Tvdg

Figure 5.16. "The Grameen Model: Technology + People" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Another example of people-centered poverty reduction lies in organic farming. Organic agriculture is "a method of production that forgoes the use of pesticides and chemicals in favor of practices that respect the health and purity of the land on which production occurs" (Bloechl 2018). As we described earlier in this chapter, the use of chemicals and pesticides can cause long-term damage to land that could otherwise produce valuable resources. When farmers are supported in returning to organic methods to fertilize and protect their crops, they can benefit in several ways.

With organic methods, farmers can earn higher incomes than with conventional farming, as there are lower costs of production and maintenance. Food insecurity is reduced, as organic farming allows farmers to grow a diversity of crops, relying on surviving crops if others fail in a given season. Farmers are able to have subsistence farms, living off their own production. And organic farming prevents a myriad of health issues that often arise with the use of pesticides and chemicals (Bloechl 2018).

Watch the 6-minute video "After the Green Revolution" [Streaming Video] (figure 5.17). It tells the story of the crisis in India but adds how the Green Revolution instilled a reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides, sending farmers into a spiral of debt, poisoning the soil, and leading to decreasing yields (The Sustainability Institute 2015). As you watch, pay attention to how the main narrator, Dr. Kate, encourages academic scientists to work with village farmer-scientists to solve agricultural problems. How is the role of academic scientists portrayed in comparison to the farmers?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=743#oembed-2

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWptheft724

Figure 5.17. "After the Green Revolution" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

500 Years of Resistance to Colonization and Globalization

In many corners of the world, we can see resistance to the priorities of foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development that are harmful. Take, for example, the Zapatista uprising that began in 1994 in the Mexican state of Chiapas. Prior to the uprising, Mexico had undergone a decade and a half of austerity reforms under the direction of the IMF. The IMF required Mexico to eliminate food subsidies for basic foods like beans, tortillas, bread, and rehydrated milk (McMichael 2017).

Minimum wage was cut in half while the cost of basic necessities increased. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—a neoliberal trade deal between Canada, the United States, and Mexico—threatened to exacerbate these trends. And so it was on the day that NAFTA came into effect, January 1, 1994, that Indigenous people from Mexico's poorest state, Chiapas, took up arms.

The Zapatistas would go on to transform resistance movements around the world for their generation (Holloway and Peláez 1998). They sought autonomy to build their own communities on their own radically democratic terms, but unlike most revolutionary movements in history, they didn't seek state power or government office. As their spokesman Subcomandante Marco once said, "They do not understand that we are struggling not for the stairs to be swept clean from the top to the bottom, but for there to be no stairs, for there to be no kingdom at all" (Holloway and Peláez 1998:4).



Figure 5.18. Members of the Zapatista army (left) and a painting by @tatismami97 that celebrates their 20 years of resistance (1994–2014) (right).

The Zapatistas also didn't seek recruits. Instead, they tried to forge a non-hierarchical network of communities in resistance to neoliberal globalization. As they put it, they were fighting against the one *No* and for the many *Yeses*. "We want a world in which there are many worlds, a world in which our world, and the worlds of others, will fit: a world in which we are heard, but as one of many voices" (Holloway and Peláez 1998:4) (figure 5.18).

The Zapatistas were partly responsible for inspiring the activists who organized the massive mobilization against the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle, Washington, in 1999. There, a broad coalition of groups, from environmentalists to steelworkers, staged street demonstrations of 100,000 people with the goal of disrupting WTO trade negotiations. They succeeded, both preventing a new WTO agreement and pushing the arcane world of international trade policy into the realm of public debate. Over the past two decades, the "Battle in Seattle" has found its way into Pacific Northwest lore.

Twelve years later, in 2006, 70,000 teachers walked out on strike in Oaxaca, Mexico (figure 5.19), a neighboring state to Chiapas. They demanded better resources, wages, and working conditions. Teachers created a protest camp, erecting tents and community spaces within the Zócalo, the city's central plaza, a tactic that would later be used in Cairo, Egypt, during the Arab Spring and Portland, Oregon, during Occupy Wall Street.



Figure 5.19. In 2006, 70,000 teachers walked out on strike in Oaxaca, Mexico, to demand better resources, wages, and working conditions. Similar actions around the world occur in response to periods of neoliberal austerity.

On June 14, 2006, in the middle of the night, police violently raided the teachers' camp, beating and arresting strikers and burning their tents and supplies. The next morning, the city erupted. Tens of thousands of people from various walks of life marched back into the Zócalo, pushed the police out, and held the camp for the remainder of the summer. Massive protests transformed the city,

and community members formed a kind of alternative congress called the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca, which was organized according to an Indigenous democratic practice known as *usos y costumbres* (literally translated as "customs and traditions").

Both the Chiapas and Oaxaca protests occurred during eras of neoliberal austerity. But the roots of protesters' concerns have a historical basis. They are part of a centuries-long process of resistance to colonialism and globalization. While resistance has been ever-present, it has varied widely in terms of tactics used and goals pursued.

Today, resistance to colonialism and globalization continues to take many forms, from the Standing Rock fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline to the Sunrise Movement's youth mobilizations against the perpetrators of the climate crisis. Perhaps we could think of it as a kind of "movement of movements." Each of these movements has its own history, identity, and goals, but they also exist within a network of other movements, with at least some shared values and some common antagonists. One common thread runs through many resistance movements: people haven't just been fighting *against* imposed forms of power and exploitation, they have also been fighting *for* innumerable alternative ways of life.

In all their diversity, these movements not only seek to challenge the injustices of the dominant paradigm established for international relations. They also uplift alternative ways of knowing, relating, and living in community. In doing so, they remind us that the social world is *made*, and that it could be made differently. As the slogan of the World Social Forum puts it, "Another world is possible."

Going Deeper

- For more information on the Grameen Bank, watch this 9:44-minute video, "Pennies a Day" [Streaming Video].
- Watch this 2:44-minute video, "Vivir Bien" [Streaming Video] to make connections between Indigenous values, development, and Buen Vivir.

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5.6: Conclusion

In this chapter, we've explored the roots of global inequality. We've identified the centuries old colonized perspective, and associated actions, that have created inequities between nations and among groups of people within nations. We've also examined two contemporary social changes that impact global inequality: the globalization of the trade and financial sector and the foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development movement. While these movements have developed only in this century, they are already far-reaching in their scope and complexity, so it is crucial that we examine them critically. Finally, we explored shifting perspectives, movements, and emerging possibilities that exist to address our global inequality within the global systems of today.

Ultimately, the content in this chapter has asked you to pose questions about how our relationships across global systems influence the way we interact as a global community. How do our ideologies continue to shape patterns of inequality in the world? How fair and helpful are our systems designed to support other countries? To what degree are they self-serving? With those considerations, we are better positioned to improve our international systems of support to better address global inequality.

Review of Learning Outcomes

This chapter has offered you the opportunity to:

- Identify ideologies and systems that are the foundations of global inequality.
- Discuss how foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development have instilled positive impacts as well as increased global inequality.
- Explain the mixed impacts of foreign assistance, humanitarian aid, and development.
- Illustrate new perspectives and movements that exist for addressing global inequality.

Key Terms

civilization mission: a perspective that frames colonized people as backward and in need of some "superior" society to intervene to improve their lives.

colonization: the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the Indigenous people of an area.

colonies of rule: colonies governed by a relatively small population of colonial administrators, usually for the purpose of extracting resources and wealth.

colonies of settlement: colonies in which the colonial power sends a large number of its domestic population to settle the colony, thus displacing the Indigenous population.

debt regime: a system of global governance which empowers wealthy countries, through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to impose economic and social policies on indebted nations.

foreign assistance: aid given by a national government to countries in need.

Green Revolution: an initiative to increase the global food supply and reduce world hunger by the use of chemicals and engineered crop varieties.

humanitarian aid: aid to alleviate suffering and mitigate the effects of disaster provided by governments and non-governmental organizations for a short-term period until longer-term help can be provided by local governments or other institutions.

international development: the government agencies, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic private businesses, individuals, and their actions working to address poverty and inequality, at a global scale.

neocolonialism: a newer form of colonialism in which colonial powers maintain their economic and political dominance over former colonies through debt, trade agreements and corporate influence but without formal political control.

neoliberalism: a political and economic ideology that emphasizes free trade, benefits of globalization, and a minimal government role in the economy, including spending.

white man's burden: a framework for interpreting colonial expansion framing colonized people as simultaneously childlike and dangerous, while framing agents of colonial power as stern and wise parents.

Comprehension Check

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 6: Economy and Social Change

Learning Objectives

This chapter offers you the opportunity to:

- Identify different economic systems.
- Describe different sociological perspectives on economic change.
- Discuss ways that economic systems can change over time.
- Illustrate new economic models and perspectives designed to better serve society and the planet.

6.1: Chapter Story
6.2: What Is an Economy?
6.3: Sociological Perspectives on Economic Change
6.4: U.S. Economic Change Over Time
6.5: New Economic Models
6.6: Conclusion
6.7: References

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6.1: Chapter Story

YOUR COFFEE EXPERIENCE, ECONOMIC SYSTEMS, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Imagine you're sitting in a coffee shop studying for your Social Change class. It's loud, so you have your earbuds in. The coffee is a bit spendy, but today it feels like a price worth paying for a decent wi-fi connection. It smells like espresso and cinnamon rolls. The bottomless mug of coffee on your table barely fits into your budget, but regrettably, a cinnamon roll does not. So there you are, immersed in an economic system, trying to wrap your head around an economic system.

"The economy" can feel like an abstraction. One might imagine it as a bunch of pie charts that people in boardrooms argue over. But in fact, the economy is a major (maybe *the* major?) force that shapes the lives we're all living and the people we're all becoming. It is a force that determines who eats, buys ski boats, gets thrown out of their apartments by police, or vacations in Tulum, Mexico. It might even determine whether the person who made your coffee can make their rent this month.



Figure 6.1. Starbucks workers march for the right to organize a union in Seattle, Washington, in April 2022. Starbucks workers succeeded in organizing the first union at a branch location in Buffalo, New York, on December 9, 2021, sparking a wave of union organizing at Starbucks stores around the United States.

Most people in the world today live within an economic system called "capitalism." **Capitalism** is a type of economic and social system in which private businesses or corporations compete for profit. Goods, services, and many beings are defined as private property, and people sell their labor on the market for a wage.

So, capitalism is more than just a system of trade. Much more profoundly, it is a form of social organization imbued with specific values, priorities, and relationships of power. In many respects, we all live in the world that capitalism has made.

In this chapter, we'll first outline what an economy is, and explain early sociology perspectives of economic change. Then, we'll take a deep look at how the U.S. economy has changed over time. We'll primarily focus on workers' experiences, economic inequality inherent in our economic systems, and worker mobilizations designed to shift that inequality. The Starbucks workers in figure 6.1 who organized to have more say within their jobs are one example of how people can work together to create social change. Finally, we'll explore new economic perspectives and models that better address poverty, inequality, and prioritize healthy living systems.

This chapter will encourage you to ask questions about the economic system and how it impacts your life and the lives of others.

- What creates lasting change in economic systems over time?
- How can class conflict, such as that expressed by organized labor, impact inequality?
- What effect do economic systems have on society and ecological systems?
- How can we build economic systems that better serve society and the planet?

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6.2: What Is an Economy?

An **economy** is a system for the production, distribution, and consumption of the goods and services within a society. That's a bit of a mouthful; let's look at an example.

Imagine again that you're still in that coffee shop we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. It is pretty remarkable to consider how many people's work went into your experience. For one thing, people had to grow that coffee, then harvest it, process it, roast it, ship it, grind it, and brew it. All along that line of production, other people had to contribute to the process, manufacturing tractors, roasting equipment, shipping containers, and ships. Some folks had to drill for oil, while others refined it. Others logged the forests that ended up in the napkin on your table. That entire complex web of relationships forms the economic system.

Since most people in the world live in a capitalist economy, most of the people doing that labor are wage workers—employees of various businesses. Each of those companies are competing to make profits for the owners of the businesses—the central goal of all capitalist enterprises.

Consider for a moment the number of social issues entangled within these economic relationships. Any list would have to include the wages and working conditions of all the people from seed to espresso. It would surely include the environmental impacts of coffee plantations, global shipping, and mass consumerism. It might even entail questions of corporate power and its effects on democracy. The economy, in short, is entangled with nearly every social issue we face.

Types of Economic Systems

The two major economic systems in contemporary societies are capitalism and socialism. In practice, no one society is purely capitalist or socialist, so it is helpful to think of capitalism and socialism as lying on opposite ends of a continuum.

Capitalism, as introduced in the previous section, is an economic system in which the means of production are privately owned. By means of production, we mean everything—land, tools, technology, and so forth—that is needed to produce goods and services (figure 6.2). Advocates of capitalism argue that this economic system enables individual freedom and that the desire for profit incentivizes innovation and economic prosperity.



Figure 6.2. *Automobile Industry*, a 1941 mural by William Gropper (1897–1977), hangs in a Detroit, Michigan, post office.

Socialism, on the other hand, is an economic system in which the means of production and natural resources are collectively owned, usually controlled by the government (figure 6.3). Whereas the United States has several airlines that are owned by for-profit airline corporations, a socialist society might have one publicly owned and funded airline tasked with providing air travel to the population at little or no cost. Advocates for socialism argue that public ownership enables economic activity for the common good, not just the wealthy, thus providing a higher living standard for most people and a more stable economy.



Figure 6.3. The mosaic *Our Life* by Walter Womacka [Website] showcases idealistic snippets of socialist life in East Germany, with a special focus on educators. It sits in the public square, Alexanderplatz, in East Berlin.

Communism is often considered a type of economy, but many thinkers disagree. That is, following its full and classical definition, not a single state has ever been communist. For example, the Soviet Bloc countries saw themselves as socialist and still on the road to communism. German philosopher and economist Karl Marx (1818–1883) is usually credited with the development of communism as an ideology. We will discuss more of his ideas in the next section.

At the least, most agree that **communism** is a philosophical and economic ideology within the socialist framework. Like socialism, it advocates for public rather than private ownership, especially of the means of production.

During the Cold War, the meanings of communism and socialism were blurred by political leaders in the West. In order to stigmatize Soviet Bloc countries that dared to follow the Soviet model, they amplified the term "communism" as a pejorative (Kamusella 2021).

Societies' economies mix elements of both capitalism and socialism in varying degrees. Some societies lean toward the capitalist end of the continuum, while other societies lean toward the socialist end. For example, the United States is a capitalist nation, but the government still regulates many industries to varying degrees and provides free public K-12 education. In another example, while China is formally communist, its economy is better described as state-managed capitalism, with a massive manufacturing industry catering to multinational corporations.

Capitalism and Socialism: Critical Comparisons

Capitalism and socialism, as ideologies and economic systems, have been debated for over a century (figure 6.4). Let's examine some criticisms of each to better understand them. Take a look at the ideas below. What do you notice about the critiques?

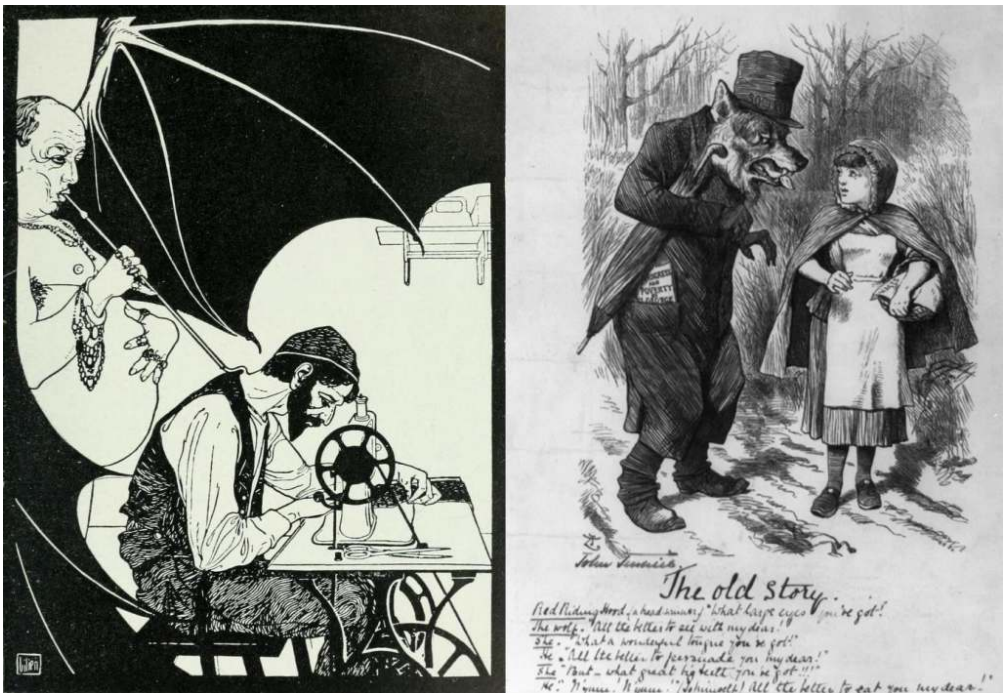


Figure 6.4. A critique of capitalism is offered in this 1915 illustration called *The Vampire*. It was published in the book *The Cry for Justice*, by Upton Sinclair, in 1915 (left). A critique of socialism is illustrated in this 1884 cartoon. It is a parody of the tale of Little Red Riding Hood and was accompanied by a poem titled "The Old Story," which depicted the girl as a laborer, and socialism personified as the wolf. Image description.

Critique of Capitalism

Exploitation: *"Capitalism fosters exploitative relationships between workers and owners of production."*

Alienation: *"Workers are unable to determine their own destinies, define relationships with other people, nor own items, goods, and services produced by their own labor. This creates a feeling of estrangement from aspects of their human nature."*

Economic inequality*: "A small minority benefit at the expense of many."*

Anti-democratic*: "Capitalism leads to an erosion of human rights."*

Incentivization for war: *"New markets and resources are required for capitalism to exist. This motivates nations to enter into war."*

Critique of Socialism

Equality: *"Socialism does not protect equity across social locations. The establishment of an equal society would have to entail strong coercion."*

Rights: *"Political, economic, and human rights need to be curtailed to achieve socialism."*

Freedom: *"Socialism infringes upon private ownership of the means of production."*

Organizing a complex economy: *"The means of production are controlled by a single entity, so approximating prices for capital goods is not possible."*

> ***Technology:*** *"Socialism slows or stagnates advances in technology due to reduced incentives."*

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Figure 6.3. Our Life by Walter Womacka is on Wikimedia Commons and licensed under CC BY 3.0 US.

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6.3: Sociological Perspectives on Economic Change

Sociology emerged as an academic discipline asking questions about why capitalism and, more generally, modern society emerged. Early sociologists also wanted to understand some of the consequences of capitalism on people's lives. So there are a huge number of thoughtful answers to those questions. We'll focus on exploring the perspectives of two foundational thinkers within the discipline: Karl Marx and Max Weber.

Karl Marx's Theory of Historical Materialism

Karl Marx is famous as one of the key intellectuals of the communist movement and the lead author of the *Communist Manifesto* [Website] (Marx and Engels 1848). Whatever you think of his ideas or his politics, he has arguably influenced the course of history as much as any other theorist in the last 200 years.

The most important thing to understand about Marx is that he's a "historical materialist." In social theory, **historical materialism** is a perspective that emphasizes the economy in explaining just about everything in society. For Marx, the economic system is the base, or foundation, of society.

Marx believed that almost all economic systems (and most social structures) are rooted in class conflict. **Class conflict** refers to the structural oppositions built into economic relationships. For example, the economic system of slavery in the United States was built on an exploitative conflict between two groups: enslavers and enslaved people. Enslaved people produced much of the wealth of the society by doing the labor. The enslaver class took the wealth produced by enslaved people. In that sense, the enslaver class is a non-productive consumer of the wealth produced by others (Marx 1976).

Note that this economic conflict, according to Marx, is structural—it is built into the very fabric of the economy, as shown in figure 6.5. It isn't just that the enslaved person and the enslaver didn't like each other. The economic systems—the social structure itself—*set them at odds*. The only way to end that conflict is to abolish that economic structure and create a different kind of economy. This basic dynamic of conflict, says Marx, also operates in other economic systems, like feudalism.

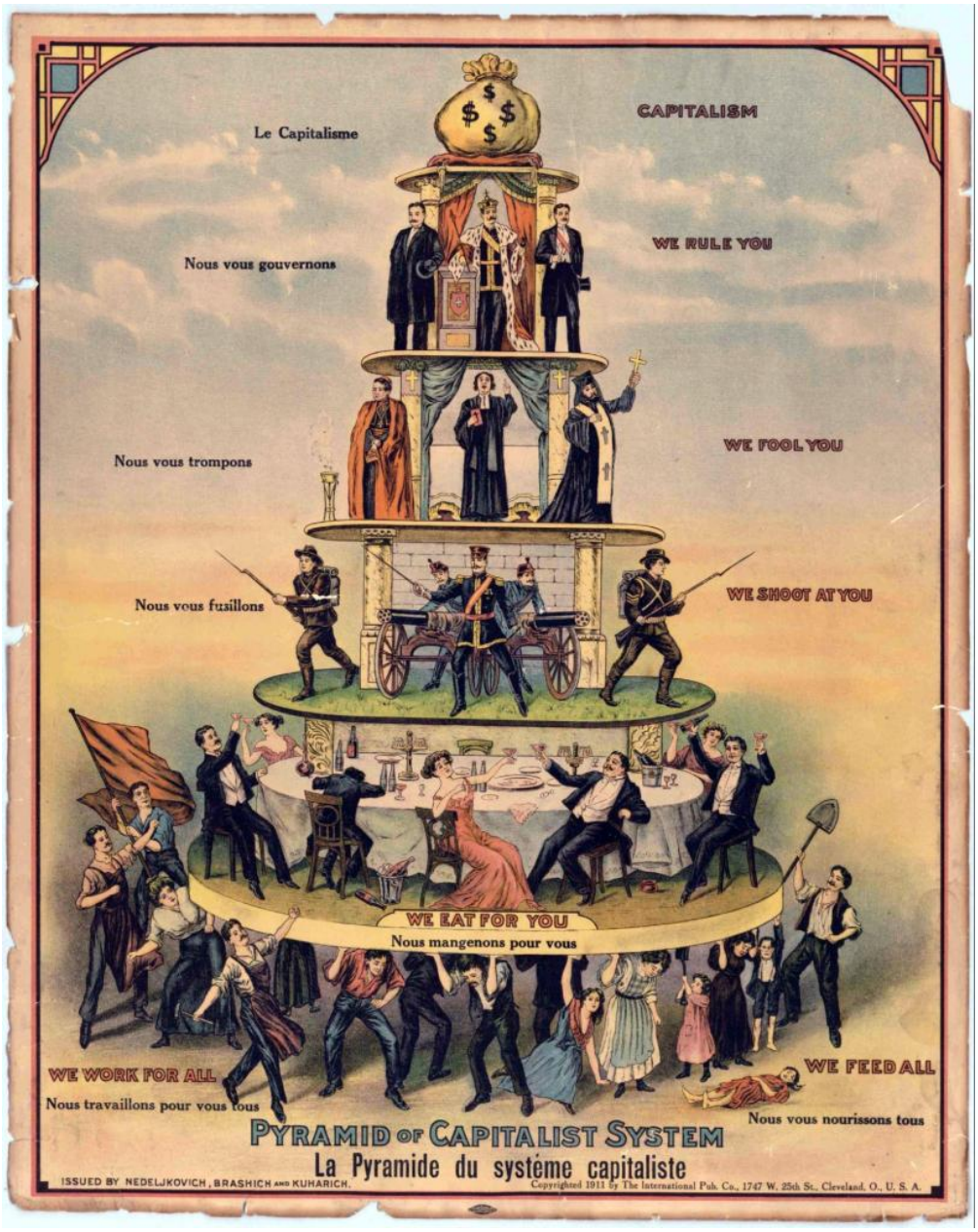


Figure 6.5. This 1911 anti-capitalism poster represents a Marxist view of conflict and hierarchy within capitalism. Image description.

Marx argues that our economic system—capitalism—is governed by these same principles. Those who own the factories and businesses (the owning class, or *bourgeoisie)* use the labor of the working class (the *proletariat*) to produce wealth. And Marx argues that the owning class can only profit when they pay workers less than their actual value—that is, when they exploit them. The less the owners pay the workers, the more they keep in profits. For Marx, this conflict between workers and owners is the core of modern society. And like all economic conflicts, it will eventually erupt and cause social change.

Marx suggests that class conflict is, in fact, the driving force of social change and progress. Social changes that arise will eventually result in the creation of a new economic system. This creates a kind of cycle of conflict, which pushes progress forward. History, he says, is a series of class conflicts.

Marx's theories are influential today, not just because they illuminate important conflicts rooted in our own economic system and our social structure but also because his emphasis on conflict has inspired many other theorists to explore power and inequality related to empire, race, gender, and sexuality.

Max Weber and the Protestant Ethic

Max Weber was a German sociologist in the early 1900s (figure 6.6). Like Marx, Weber was interested in the rise of capitalism. But unlike Marx, Weber highlighted the role of cultural beliefs in capitalism's emergence. Weber was especially interested in the role of changing religious beliefs within Christianity.

He noted that the Protestant Reformation—a 16th-century religious movement led by German theologian Martin Luther—changed the way many people thought about work and wealth. **The Protestant ethic** is a set of cultural and religious beliefs that Weber argued laid the cultural groundwork for the rise of capitalism (Weber 1992).



Figure 6.6. Max Weber in discussion, at the Lauenstein conference in Germany, 1917 (left), and his portrait (right).

So how did Protestant values enable the rise of capitalism? A significant aspect of the answer relates to how people viewed work.

Prior to the Protestant Reformation, most Europeans understood work in secular, or non-religious, terms. Sure, members of the Catholic clergy did sacred work, but everybody else did work that wasn't steeped in religious meaning. If a person were a cobbler, they made shoes because they needed income, or because their father did it, or because they enjoyed the labor, but not because God wanted them to. That changed after the Protestant Reformation.

Weber points out that Protestantism extended "the calling" to all people, not just members of the clergy. A **calling** is a Christian concept for work that is assigned to a person by God and that provides meaning and purpose to a person's life. That meant that God didn't just call some people to the priesthood; he called all people to their labor. If a person was a cobbler, that was now their "calling."

But why should that matter? Weber argued that in extending the calling, Protestantism imbued all labor with deep moral purpose. Now, one didn't just make shoes because they needed to pay the rent: they made shoes as part of their sacred duty to God. Hard work, then, became a virtue, since it showed a person's commitment to their calling. Even more, since Protestantism did not use the ritual of confession, hard work became a way for people to show their commitment to God and, perhaps, gain forgiveness for their sins. Hard work became the substitute for confession (Allan 2007).

Protestantism also encouraged thrift and modesty and discouraged the faithful from spending money on luxuries. So if a person's hard labor earned them profits, they should not spend those profits frivolously. Instead, they should reinvest their profits into the work to which God has called them.

In short, Protestantism redefined work, giving it a new moral weight. It also encouraged people to reinvest their profits into their work. Weber suggested that these new religious beliefs created fertile conditions for capitalism to develop (Allan 2007).

Going Deeper

Listen to the 58-minute podcast "Capitalism: What Is It?" [Website] to hear three experts debate the merits of capitalism today. Keep these questions in mind as you listen:

- Do you notice any discrepancies between widespread cultural beliefs about the economy (like individual responsibility and economic opportunity) and economic realities?
- How do these different scholars understand the role of social forces in shaping an individual's life experience?
- Given what you've read so far in this chapter, can you identify the theoretical perspectives of each scholar?

For some thorough notes on the difference between capitalism and socialism, watch this video by animateeducate [Streaming Video].

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Figure 6.5. "Pyramid of Capitalist System Poster" by Nedeljkovich, Brashich, and Kuharich, published by The International Pub. Co., is on Wikipedia and in the public domain.

Figure 6.6. Max Weber in discussion, at the Lauenstein conference in Germany is on Wikipedia and in the public domain (left). Portrait of Max Weber is on Wikipedia and in the public domain (right).

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6.4: U.S. Economic Change Over Time

Whatever the root causes of the rise of capitalism, it is clear that the capitalist economy has shaped the lives of the people who live within it. And as capitalism took on different forms within different time periods, lives changed. While economic inequality has been increasing in the United States for decades, it wasn't always like this.

From 1945 to 1975, income inequality decreased in the United States (Noah 2013). In other words, the gap between the rich and the poor was shrinking. This can be explained partly by the booming economy after World War II, but more importantly also by the rise of a strong labor movement. The labor movement increased wages, benefits, and working conditions for most U.S. workers, even those who weren't unionized.

Declining inequality was also enabled by **the New Deal**, a series of government initiatives installed between 1933 and 1938 during the Great Depression. The New Deal rapidly increased the number of well-paid government employees and put people to work building roads, bridges and other public works. It also created a social safety net via Social Security to unemployment insurance and subsidized housing. Finally, after the catastrophe of the Great Depression, the government began to increase regulations on corporations and banks designed to protect the public interest (Noah 2013).

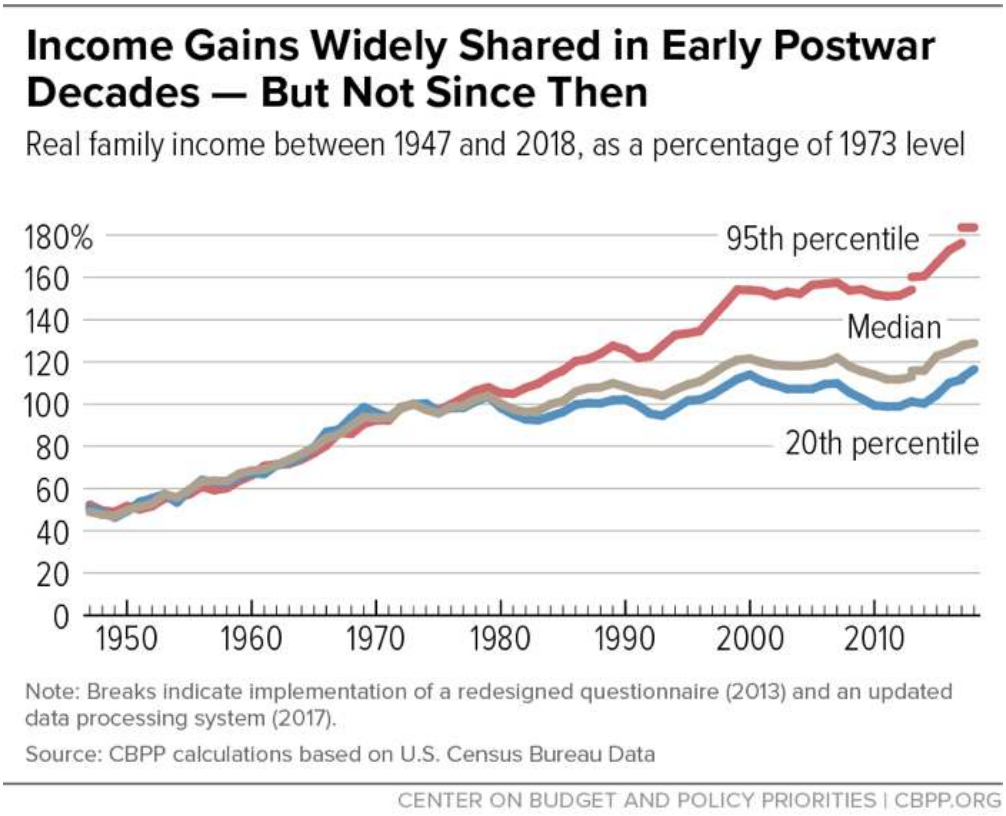


Figure 6.7. Income inequality over time. Beginning in the mid-1970s, the gap between those high up on the income ladder and those on the middle rungs widened. Image description.

Inequality began to increase dramatically in the mid-1970s following a series of policy changes that began to reverse the New Deal (Noah 2013) (figure 6.7). Many conflict theorists argue that the economic and political changes that began in the early 1980s were orchestrated by the rich (specifically, corporation owners) against the working classes. Following the election of Ronald Reagan in 1981, the federal government began adopting neoliberal economic policies.

As discussed in Chapter 5, neoliberalism is a political and economic ideology that emphasizes free trade, benefits of globalization, and a minimal government role in the economy, including spending. Confusingly, given its name, neoliberalism has been primarily advocated by the conservative and libertarian movements. However, it became so widespread that many liberal leaders (like Bill Clinton) also adopted it.

Neoliberalism calls for cutting back social services, loosening regulations on corporations and banks, lowering taxes (especially the taxes on the rich), and opening international trade. Known as “trickle-down” economics, these policies were passed in the name of boosting economic growth by creating a more business-friendly environment.

The decreased taxation of businesses resulted in fewer dollars to fund government programs for the lower classes. At the same time, business was able to undermine the already faltering labor movement. The major industries in the U.S. economy, which tended to be strongly unionized, were increasingly automated, and their production was moved offshore as business owners sought cheaper labor and looser regulations in the Global South.

In a short period of time, the U.S. economy transformed from a production economy to a service economy. Many working-class jobs in the 1960s (at lumber mills, meatpacking plants, auto factories, and the like) were unionized and usually offered relatively high wages and benefits. One worker could support a family and perhaps buy a modest home. Today, most working-class jobs are in the service sector (retail, food service, call centers, and so on). They pay minimum wage or slightly better, and offer minimal benefits. They tend to be part-time and temporary, with limited opportunities for promotion.

The effects of these economic changes have been striking. The rich have done marvelously well in the last few decades. They’ve seen their wealth and power increase markedly. However, the poor, working class, and middle class have seen their wealth and income shrink or stagnate (Noah 2013). In the graph in figure 6.8, notice that between 1970 and 2018, in the United States, most income growth had gone to the wealthiest members of society: the 1 percent, 0.1 percent, and 0.01 percent. We introduced the wealthiest 1 percent at the global scale in Chapter 4. The pattern is similar at the national level.

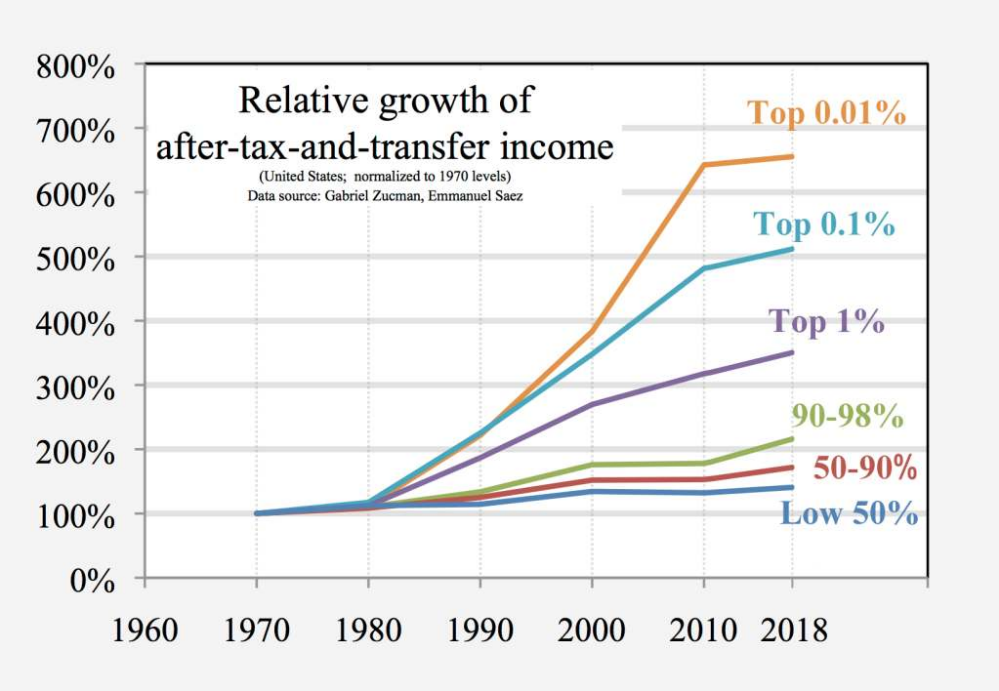


Figure 6.8. Relative growth of after-tax-and-transfer income. Between 1970 and 2018, in the United States, most income growth had gone to the wealthiest members of society. Image description.

As we’ve seen, economic systems change over time. But what causes that change? There are certainly many answers to this question. We’ll explore two: technological change and class conflict.

Technology

The development of new technologies can transform an economy, altering not only the methods of production but also the human relationships and dynamics of power. Famously, industrial production was transformed in the early 20th century with the development of the assembly line.

First implemented in Ford’s car assembly plants, the **assembly line** increased economic efficiency by breaking the production process down to a series of small actions performed repetitively by workers. A single worker might spend 10 hours performing the

same task as one car after another moves down the line in front of them, as shown in figure 6.9.



Figure 6.9. Workers on the first moving assembly line put together magnetos and flywheels for 1913 Ford autos in Highland Park, Michigan. The assembly line transformed industrial production.

This new production system produced more vehicles per "man-hour," meaning that a given number of workers could produce more cars in a single day. It also made labor increasingly monotonous (and often dangerous) for workers. So this new technology of production, the assembly line, created new efficiencies as well as new forms of labor and relations of power. And since these efficiencies increased the profits, business leaders implemented the assembly line in all kinds of industries, from fast food to fast fashion.

More recently, the development of massive data collection has enabled new economic opportunities and relationships of power. Harvard Professor Shoshana Zuboff argues in her book *Surveillance Capitalism* that the rise of big data marks a shift in the economy akin to the development of the assembly line. Entirely new markets have emerged that use surveillance data collected by various apps and websites to predict consumer behavior. For example, social media algorithms on sites like Facebook determine which ads they will show you. Zuboff warns that "surveillance capitalism" threatens to undermine our ability to function as a democratic society.

Technological changes in the economy often come "from above." In other words, economic elites develop and implement new technologies to serve their interests. However, there are also significant ways in which economies can be changed "from below."

Organized Labor

Throughout the history of capitalism, the lower classes have consistently resisted economic arrangements they see as exploitative. Over the past century in the United States, workers have successfully redefined the economy in profound ways, from fighting for the 8-hour day and 40-hour week to pushing for worker-oriented legislation, like rules that support worker safety, minimum wage laws, and Social Security.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=757#oembed-1

https://youtu.be/a-4_6bThk2E

Figure 6.10. "The Fight to Make Bad Jobs Better" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Today, many workers are fighting to retain these past gains and pushing for things like increased wages, predictable schedules, and healthcare benefits. Watch the 9-minute video, "The Fight to Make Bad Jobs Better" [Streaming Video], about the work experiences of many retail and food service workers (figure 6.10). As you watch, ask yourself: How do "flexible schedules" impact different groups differently: workers, owners, and consumers?

The Fight to Make Bad Jobs Better

How do workers, who appear to have little power within a workplace, successfully push for higher wages, benefits, and improved working conditions? Probably the clearest answer is through organizing collectively within a union.

A **union** is an organization of workers who work together to improve their wages and working conditions. Workers and business owners typically have competing interests. Business owners have an interest in maintaining a low cost of production in order to maximize profits. That means that for the business owner, it is usually ideal to keep wages as low as possible and working conditions under their discretion.

However, workers usually have an interest in increasing their wages and establishing working conditions that maintain their safety at work and quality of life outside of work. In the current service industry, for example, workers often want higher wages and stable schedules, while owners often want lower wages and "flexible" schedules. So, as conflict theorists in sociology have often pointed out, there is a structural conflict between the interests of workers and owners within capitalism.

If the interests of workers and owners are structurally opposed, how do workers achieve their goals against the interests of their bosses? Since owners rely on the labor of workers, workers can pressure owners by threatening to collectively refuse to work. This is called a strike. A **strike** is a form of collective action when workers in a given workplace refuse to work until owners meet their demands (figure 6.11).



Figure 6.11. This untitled United Auto Workers Local 174 mural by Walter Speck depicts the 1937 auto workers strike in Flint, Michigan.

Over the past century, the relative power of the labor movement has significantly impacted workers' wages and working conditions. Workers in unions usually earn higher wages than non-unionized workers. But a high level of union membership can even lead to higher wages for non-unionized workers, since they lift the overall wages of the labor market.

Partly for these reasons, periods of high union membership (like the 1940s to the 1970s) are associated with higher wages for most workers, while periods of lower union membership (like the late 1970s to the present) have seen declines in wages for most workers, when adjusted for inflation. As seen in Figure 6.12, union membership has been declining since 1970, while the income shares of the top 1 percent and top 10 percent have increased.

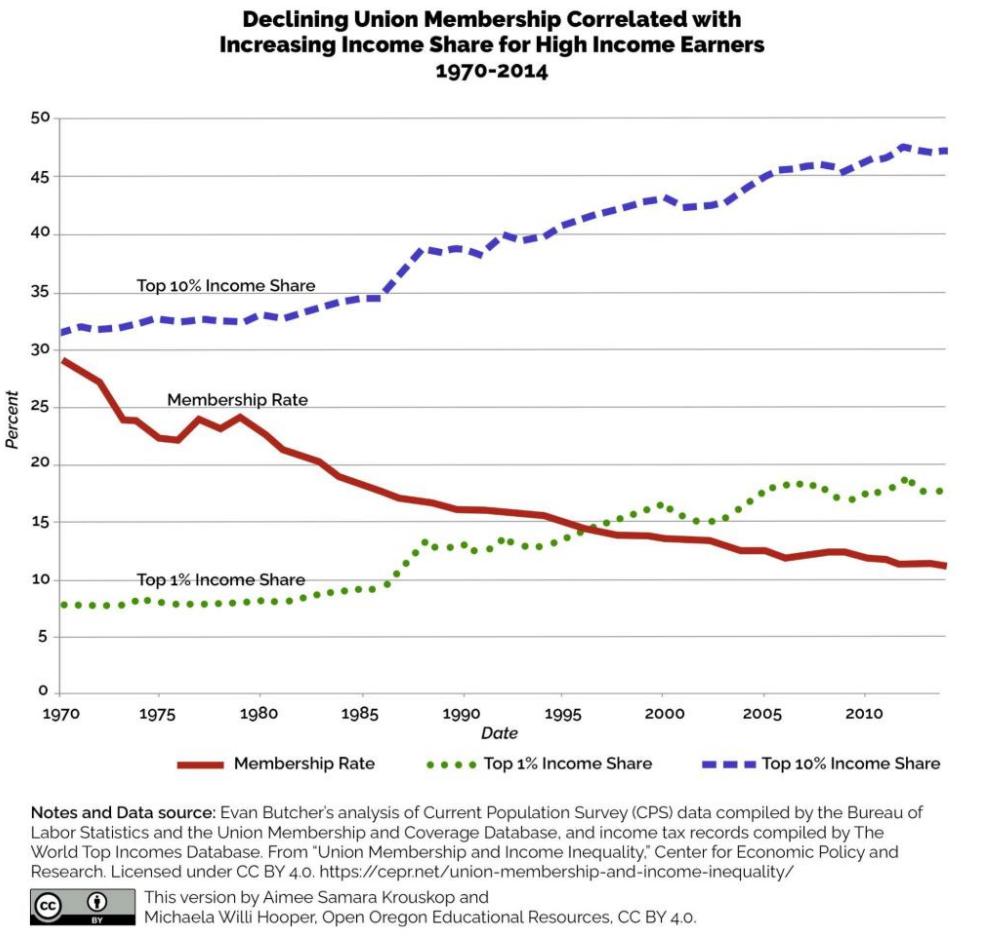


Figure 6.12. This graph from the Center for Economic Policy Research shows declining union membership is correlated with increasing income share for high-income earners. Image description.

Currently, workers around the United States have been increasingly organizing, winning union representation at companies like Starbucks and Amazon. Whether the labor movement will reverse the trend of declining real wages remains to be seen.

May Day: A Labor Movement Case Study

The year 1886 is arguably the most revolutionary in U.S. history (Brecher 1997). U.S. workers were facing a new form of labor—industrial wage labor—and many of them saw it as un-American. Many even referred to it as wage slavery. Work days were long and dangerous, and low wages left most workers in poverty.

Some of the more radical organizers within the labor movement called for a general strike on May 1, 1886, to demand the eight-hour workday. A **general strike** is a strike of all workers within a society, not just the workers at one workplace or in one industry. It is perhaps the most powerful tool available to the working class (Brecher 1997).

When May 1, 1886, arrived, hundreds of thousands of workers went on strike across the country. The movement for the eight-hour day was especially concentrated in Chicago, where tens of thousands of strikers marched through the streets, calling on their fellow workers to set down their tools, walk off the job, and join the strike. The city's ruling class prepared for the strike by deputizing and arming thousands of men to put down the strike effort.

On May 4, anarchist organizers held a rally in Haymarket Square to protest the violent death of workers the previous day. The details of the events that followed are disputed by historians, but it is clear that after police began to push workers out of the square, someone threw a bomb toward the police, which exploded, resulting in the deaths of seven police officers (figure 6.13). After the bombing, the police then began shooting into the crowd of workers, killing at least four people.

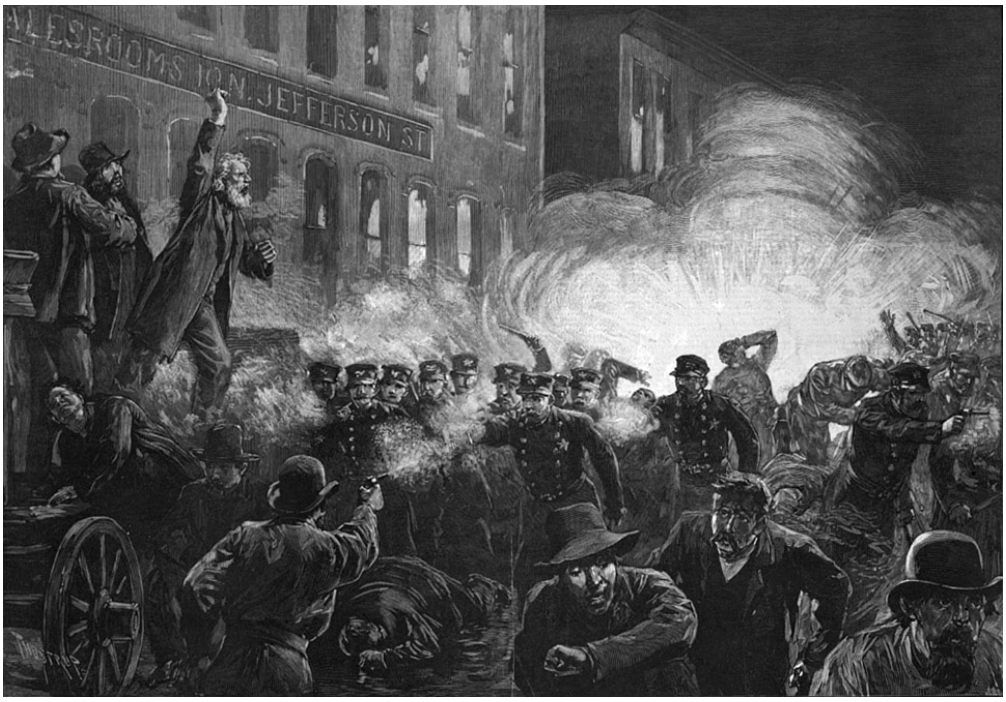


Figure 6.13. This popular engraving shows Methodist pastor and anarchist Samuel Fielding speaking at the Haymarket Rally as a bomb detonates among the police ranks and police open fire into the crowd.

Anarchism—a popular current within the labor movement at that time—is a political philosophy advocating for the elimination of all or most forms of hierarchy, including the abolition of the state. Many anarchists are committed to a basic set of principles, including mutual aid (the sharing of resources), the use of political protest to achieve a goal, and horizontalism (a non-hierarchical organizational system in which decisions are made by consensus).

It is important to note that anarchism is not inherently related to violent protest. Like with all political philosophies, its followers vary in thinking and action. They include those who support violence in the face of unjust acts as well as those who reject all forms of violence. Many also fall in between (Anisin 2019). However, the events at Haymarket Square—and the media reaction to it—resulted in a new stereotype of the bomb-throwing anarchist.

The Haymarket Massacre, as it has come to be known, provided a pretext for authorities to criminalize the labor movement across the country. At least 50 union halls and worker hangouts were raided nationwide. In Chicago, eight prominent anarchist organizers were arrested on false charges of planning the bombing. Despite no evidence linking them to the bombing, four were hanged and one was violently killed while behind bars. The survivors were later pardoned by Illinois Governor John Peter Altgeld, who stated that “the judge [who ordered the hangings] conducted the trial with malicious ferocity” (Brecher 1997).

The eight-hour day campaign is commemorated around the world as “May Day,” or International Workers’ Day (Linebaugh 2016). However, most U.S. workers don’t remember it. Why is that?

In 1894, President Grover Cleveland and conservative union leaders declared a federal “Labor Day” in September, effectively distancing the labor movement from the more radical tradition of May Day. In 1958, President Dwight Eisenhower declared May 1st “Law Day.” Over the years, May Day was largely forgotten by most U.S. workers. In the past two decades, however, May Day has begun to re-enter mainstream political consciousness in the United States. This is the result of workers from outside the United States, who have a tradition of celebrating May Day, migrating to the United States and bringing that tradition back home, so to speak.



Figure 6.14. Marchers at "A Day Without Immigrants" in Los Angeles on May Day 2006. May Day has begun to re-enter mainstream political consciousness in the United States.

For example, on May 1, 2006, immigrant workers in the United States organized a general strike, dubbed "A Day Without Immigrants" (figure 6.14). Over a million people participated in immigrant rights protests across the country. In doing so, they reminded the broader U.S. working class of a piece of its own history.

Memory matters. When workers lose the memory of past movements, such as the May 1st general strike, what else do they lose?

The U.S. Labor Movement Today

Since 2019, workers in the United States have achieved several victories. Labor improvements have been gained for Hollywood actors and writers, nurses, emergency room techs, airline pilots, autoworkers, and delivery drivers. Many industries saw successful union organizing for the first time. In 2022, workers at an Amazon warehouse in New York City voted to become the first to create a union at the company.

Achieving a union at Amazon was significant because it is the second-largest employer in the United States, and organizers were faced with considerable obstacles. Watch the 5:36-minute video, "Inside Amazon Labor Union: How Workers Took on Amazon and WON" [Streaming Video] that explores workers' organizing efforts at Amazon (figure 6.15). What challenges have they faced? How did they attempt to overcome them?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=757#oembed-2

https://youtu.be/A5Go6_SgNZ0

Figure 6.15. "Inside Amazon Labor Union: How Workers Took on Amazon and WON" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Workers at Starbucks have also achieved major historic gains in their organizing efforts. They successfully organized a union (Starbucks Workers United, or SWU) in Buffalo, New York, in 2021. This was something many saw as nearly impossible, but the workers did so, despite aggressive and illegal union-busting actions from Starbucks. Those actions included monitoring, disciplining, and firing employees engaged in organizing; promising new benefits to workers and adding workers to stores to discourage union support; refusing to bargain; and engaging law enforcement to discourage the gathering of workers (Sanders 2023; Scheiber 2023).

Alicia Flores is a former employee of a Starbucks in Portland, Oregon, who played a leadership role in organizing a union at her store. She was fired in June 2023 after working for Starbucks for seven years, following similar circumstances to those experienced by workers in Buffalo. Watch the 6-minute video, "Alicia Flores and Starbucks Workers United" [Streaming Video] to hear how and why she began organizing within her workplace (figure 6.16). As you watch, consider the issues Starbucks workers face. Have you experienced similar issues in your own work life? Why do you think Starbucks management responded to Flores' organizing in the ways they did?



Figure 6.16. "Alicia Flores and Starbucks Workers United" [Streaming Video]. Alicia shares how and why she began organizing within her workplace at Starbucks. Transcript.

Since Flores told her story in this video, Starbucks has been accused of illegally closing 23 stores nationwide to discourage union activities. The complaint came from the National Labor Relations Board, which is demanding that the company reopen all locations and pay for lost wages ("Starbucks Ordered to Reverse Closures After Shutting Down 23 Stores for Alleged Union Busting" 2023).

How is Flores's experience connected to the broader structure of the economy, particularly the dynamics of the food industry? Does the response of her managers support or refute the theory that class conflict is built into the structure of the workplace?

Flores suggests that all workers would benefit from organizing in their workplaces. Many union leaders, like Flores, are first-time organizers, but they find themselves moved to change the unfair working conditions that their coworkers and they experience. For direction, they rely on projects such as the Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee [Website], which is dedicated to creating a "distributed grassroots organizing program to support workers organizing at the workplace."

Going Deeper

For more information on surveillance capitalism, watch this revealing interview with Shoshana Zuboff, "High Tech Is Watching You" [Website], conducted by John Laidler (2019) (about a 10-minute read). Consider these questions:

- How do surveillance and data enable new profits?
- How do surveillance and data create new forms of power?

For more on Starbucks union organizing, watch the 8:20-minute video "Why Starbucks Workers Fought to Unionize" [Streaming Video].

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6.5: New Economic Models

The capitalist economic system also has profound effects on the living systems of the world. As we live in a period of cascading ecological crises, from mass extinction (Kolbert 2016) to climate disasters, many scholars have asked how we should understand this moment. An increasingly popular answer is to call this period the "Anthropocene." The **Anthropocene** is a name given to the most recent geological epoch of time, beginning around the Industrial Revolution, in which humans have fundamentally transformed the living systems of the Earth.

Since the prefix "anthro" refers to humans, the name "anthropocene" identifies "humans" as the root cause of these global transformations. And yet, most humans, for most of human history, have not reordered the world in the way that we currently see. Some scholars, like the economist Raj Patel and the sociologist Jason Moore, argue that it is misleading to place the devastation caused by our current society at the feet of "humanity." Rather than humanity itself, they argue that the root cause of these ecological crises is actually the capitalist economic system. They propose a new name for this epoch: the **Capitalocene**—the geological epoch in which capitalism has reordered Earth's systems (Patel and Moore 2018).

To consider some of the ways our economic system relates to the ecological crisis, listen to the second chapter of Ben's podcast *Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis*, "Chapter 2: Capitalism" (figure 6.17). It is 13 minutes long. In this episode, Ben explores the question: Is the climate crisis, and the ecological crisis more broadly, the predictable outcome of a certain economic order? Who is it designed to serve? Is it compatible with a thriving and just community and a survivable future? How do we dismantle such a dangerous system and build an economy that attends to the needs of human and nonhuman communities?



Figure 6.17. Tracing the Roots of Climate Crisis, "Chapter 2: Capitalism" [Podcast]. Transcript.

As Ben raises in the podcast, it's crucial that we ask questions about any *predictable outcomes* that our economic order creates toward our ecological crisis. There is growing awareness that conventional economic models do not provide the necessary solutions to the challenges we are facing.

We need to find new systems that can better address poverty, inequality, our financial crises, and climate change. These new systems must allow us to better engage with each other and the natural world. In response to this, alternative economic models are emerging. They are based upon placing real human and environmental needs at the forefront, and they honor diverse social values instead of just monetary ones. Let's look at a few.

Re-Evaluating Growth

Foundational to the new economic models we'll discuss in this section is the perspective that economic growth needs to be re-evaluated. Economic growth is an inherent trait of the capitalist model. It requires ever-increasing production and consumption. Professor and author Susan Goldsworthy states that we are "obsessed by growth; it's how we measure the success of organizations and of countries. And yet, it's this very obsession that is accelerating our own demise" (Goldsworthy 2022).

This re-evaluation of growth is not new. In Europe, in the late 1960s and 1970s, scholars debated the value of aiming for economic growth, an inherent part of our capitalist system. It wasn't until 2002 that we saw protests related to concepts of degrowth (Duverger 2020). Proponents at the heart of this movement acknowledge that endless growth is not possible on a planet with finite

resources. Growth is also seen as a phenomenon that promotes competition versus collaboration between people and prioritizes profits over people (Goldsworthy 2022).



Figure 6.18 The guerrilla street artist Bansky [Website], provides a satire of our needless consumption of material goods.

Several initiatives sprung out of this movement. For example, voluntary simplicity is a lifestyle choice that minimizes the needless consumption of material goods and the pursuit of wealth for its own sake (figure 6.18). Another example is neo-ruralism, the practice of migrants moving from cities to rural areas to live an agrarian lifestyle as a means of reducing consumerism and transforming market relations, values, and practices (Duverger 2020).

Localization

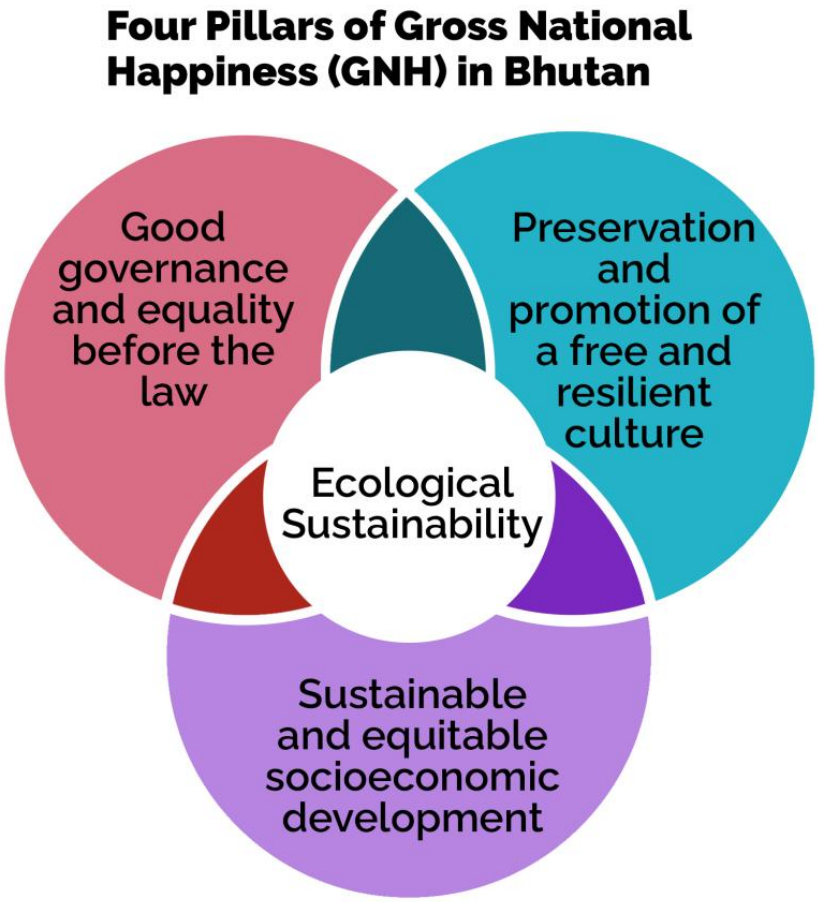
Localization is one of the movements that influence and shape new economic policies. **Localization** is a process of decentralization that shifts economic activity into the hands of millions of small- and medium-sized businesses instead of concentrating it in mega-corporations. Proponents of localization imagine a world where food comes from nearby farmers who ensure food security year-round and money we spend on everyday goods continues to recirculate in the local economy. Local businesses are able to provide enough meaningful employment opportunities for residents.

Localization is the basis from which new economic structures can evolve. As they do, they allow the goods and services a community needs to be produced locally and regionally whenever possible. Instead of communities depending on distant, unaccountable corporations, they are able to be self-reliant. Localization is not imagined as total isolation. Products from surplus production are exported by communities once local needs are met, and goods that can't be produced locally are imported. The free exchange of knowledge and ideas are still encouraged across borders, and global problems like climate change are still addressed globally.

The Economics of Happiness

A few nations have adopted economic policies that pay attention to the holistic needs of societies, such as the Human Development Index and the Genuine Progress Indicator we discussed in Chapter 4. For example, the United Kingdom and New Zealand have incorporated well-being goals into their priorities for assessing their nations' economic health. The government of Bhutan prioritizes the philosophy of gross national happiness.

Gross national happiness (GNH) includes an index that is used to measure the collective happiness and well-being of a population. The index has four pillars: Preservation and Promotion of Culture, Sustainable and Equitable Social and Economic Development, Conservation of Environment, and Good Governance and Equality Before the Law (figure 6.19).



Adapted from "Four pillars of Gross National Happiness (GNH) in Bhutan" by Felix Mueller, Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 4.0.
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Figure 6.19. The four pillars of gross national happiness (GNH) in Bhutan. GNH measures the collective happiness and well-being of a population. Image description.

Within each of those pillars are indicators of well-being that planners and policy makers can study. For example, the Preservation and Promotion of Culture is in part measured by how many residents speak their native language. Sustainable and Equitable Social and Economic Development is, in part, measured by how many healthy days residents have in a year. Among other calculations, the Conservation of the Environment is measured by the level of responsibility that people take in caring for the environment.

Watch this 3:29-minute video, "What is 'Gross National Happiness'?" [Streaming Video] (figure 6.20). As you watch, what comparisons can you make between the dominant economic system most of us live with and the system established with GNH priorities?



Figure 6.20. "What Is 'Gross National Happiness'? Explained by Morten Sondergaard" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Doughnut Economics and Māori Worldview

Another alternative way of structuring our economic systems is with **Doughnut Economics**, an economic model that balances essential human needs with planetary boundaries (figure 6.21). First published in 2012 by economist Kate Raworth, Doughnut Economics provides an alternative to the goal of gross domestic product (GDP). It is also based on the principles of re-evaluating growth. It is a way to acknowledge real human and ecological needs in our economic systems. Key to this model is a visual depiction with two concentric rings: a social foundation and an ecological ceiling.

The social foundation is framed to ensure that everyone receives life's essentials. The ecological ceiling is designed to prevent humanity from using Earth's life-supporting systems beyond healthy boundaries. The target spot for achieving this balance is in a doughnut-shaped space that sits between the two. The idea is that if a society can be managed within that doughnut space, it will be both ecologically safe and socially just (Doughnut Economics Action Lab n.d.).

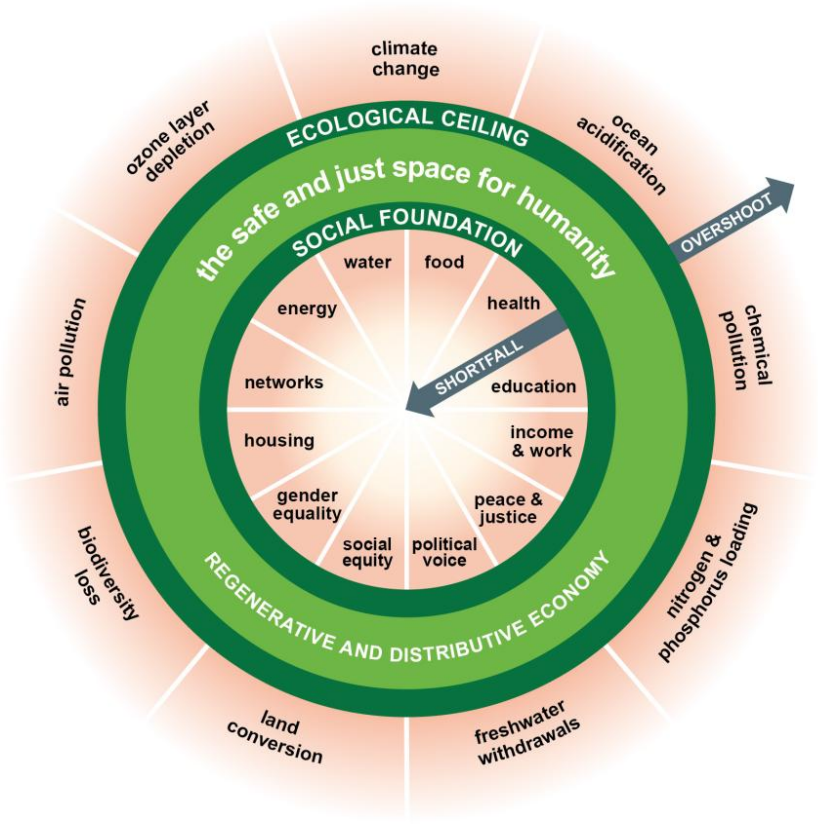


Figure 6.21. A visual framework of Doughnut Economics [Website], an economic model that balances essential human needs with planetary boundaries. Image description.

Figure 6.21 shows the visual framework of Doughnut Economics. Note how this model acknowledges that economies, societies, and the natural world exist as complex, interdependent systems. Watch the 6:30-minute video "How the Dutch Are Reshaping Their Post-Pandemic Economy" [Streaming Video] (figure 6.22). It is narrated by the originator of the Doughnut Economics concept, Kate Raworth. The video explains how the doughnut is applied and how planners in the city of Amsterdam have committed to using it as a model. Can you imagine applying the doughnut to a place where you live? What would that look like?



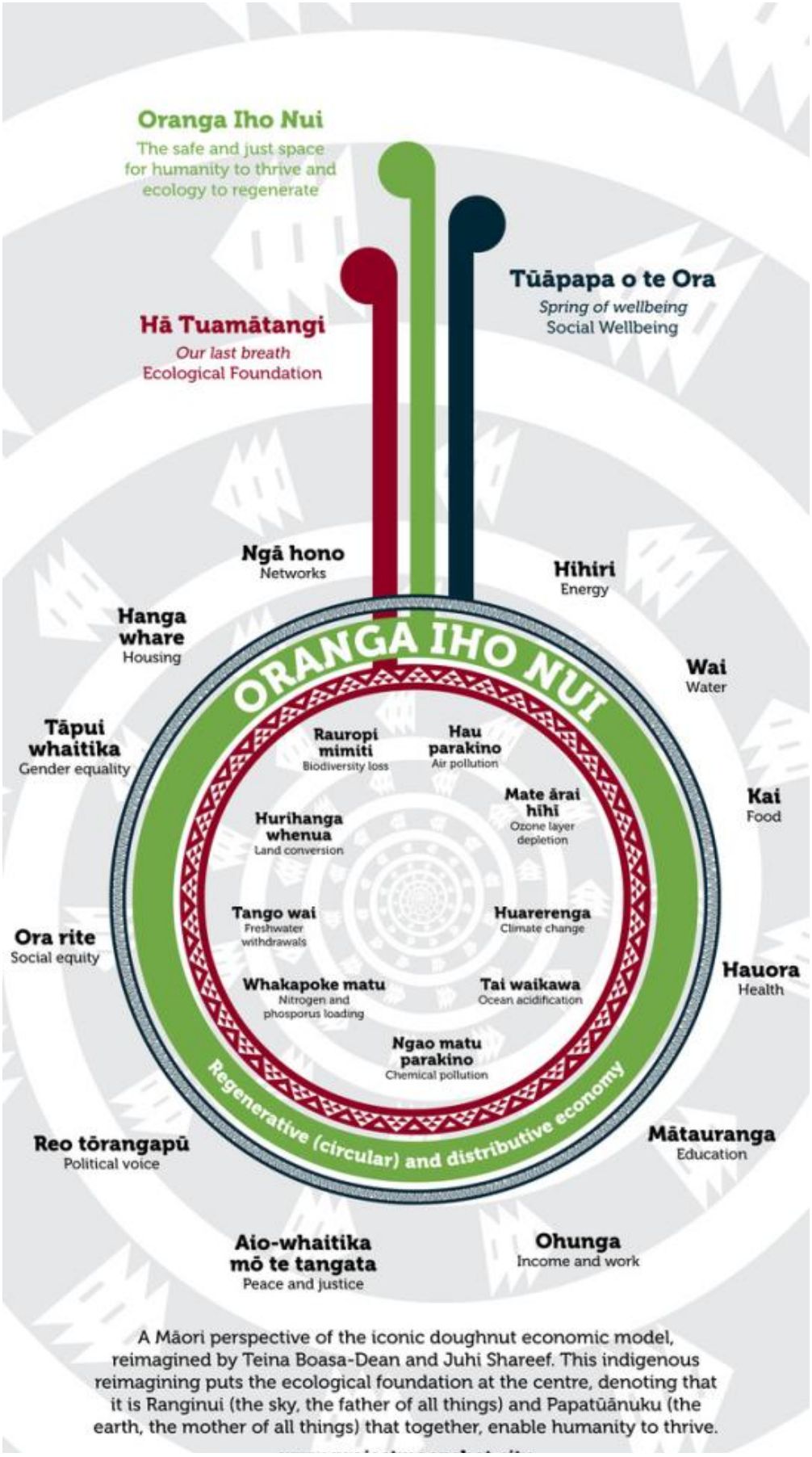
Figure 6.22. "How the Dutch Are Reshaping Their Post-Pandemic Economy" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

A crucial element in any organizational model for societies is that it is designed with the perspectives and worldviews of those who reside within that society. For example, sustainability professional Juhi Shareef is an adopter of the Doughnut Economics model. When she moved to New Zealand, she recognized the need to partner with the Indigenous people of that area to make the model truly useful. She explains:

> *Working in sustainability, one understands that context is key. When we fail to identify or understand the nuanced, complex, systemic and local context of a situation, the best-intentioned solutions simply won't solve society's most pressing problems (Shareef 2020).*

Shareef reached out to Teina Boasa-Dean, a member of the Tūhoe Māori *iwi* ("tribe" in Māori). Shareef asked her to help in understanding how the Doughnut Economics model could be adapted to better reflect the worldview of the more than 775,000 Māori people who live in New Zealand. Teina Boasa-Dean is an environmental scientist who works with both a technical perspective of the Tūhoe and an understanding of Western science (Shareef 2020).

Take a look at the way that Boasa-Dean reimagined the doughnut in figure 6.23. How does it differ from the original doughnut in figure 6.21?



A Māori perspective of the iconic doughnut economic model, reimagined by Teina Boasa-Dean and Juhi Shareef. This indigenous reimagining puts the ecological foundation at the centre, denoting that it is Ranginui (the sky, the father of all things) and Papatūānuku (the earth, the mother of all things) that together, enable humanity to thrive.

www.projectmoonshot.city

Figure 6.23. A Tūhoe Māori perspective of the Doughnut Economics model reimagined by Teina Boasa-Dean. Image description.

It is important to remember that Boasa-Dean is a member of only one *iwi*, and over a hundred *iwis* reside in New Zealand, each with unique cultural expressions. Thus, she can only speak to the cultural perspectives of the Tūhoe Māori. However, what she shares can serve to help us better understand communities that place nature at the center of existence.

What is most pronounced about Boasa-Dean's interpretation is that the environment sits in the middle of the doughnut as its foundation. Social elements sit in the outer ring. This reflects Boasa-Dean's perspective that humans are dependent on the biosphere, not the other way around (Shareef 2020). Boasa-Dean spoke more about this perspective in a speech at the Circular Economy Pacific Summit in 2019:

> *…My own experiences of the land, the waterways, the winds, the sun, the moon and the stars have been guided and enhanced by the cosmological and pragmatic teachings of my elders. In turn their insights had been nurtured over thousands of years. I have been nurtured by these elders to understand a deep respect for mother nature and the myriad of rituals and [they have] affirmed and reaffirmed my relationship.*
>
> *I have been taught to leave offerings at the entranceway of forests of the mountain ranges and rivers and at ocean landmarks. I have also been taught to leave a new offering when I exit these natural paradises and each offering is couched inside a brief but relevant karakia or thanksgiving prayer. The offerings were often leaves or stones infused with prayer. It is a whole living system whether we know it or not. We are constantly re-humanized by this divine bond with nature and this is the relationship that was most valuable to my elders (Boasa-Dean 2019).*

Teina Boasa-Dean's perspective adds a crucial perspective to the Doughnut Economics model, as well as other new models in development: that economic systems should serve "the management of people for the benefit of *Whenua* [Earth], not the reverse" (Boasa-Dean 2019).

Going Deeper

To better understand how economic growth is being reconsidered, watch the documentary "Sustainable Business, Rethinking Growth" [Streaming Video], produced by DW Documentary.

For more on Bhutan's economics of happiness, watch this 6:23-minute video, "Bhutan's Gross National Happiness" [Streaming Video], or this 19:15 video, "The Economics of Happiness (Abridged Version)" [Streaming Video], a short version of a film by the organization Local Futures.

For more on Doughnut Economics and the re-evaluation of growth, watch this 15:53 minute TED Talk video, "A Healthy Economy Should Be Designed to Thrive, Not Grow" [Streaming Video].

To hear more about Teina Boasa-Dean's perspective on Doughnut Economics based on the Tūhoe Māori worldview, listen to the 22:50-minute podcast "Episode 2 – Teina Boasa-Dean and a Maori Interpretation of Kate Raworth's Doughnut Economics" [Streaming Audio].

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6.6: Conclusion

The economic system isn't just about numbers on corporate spreadsheets. It is about people and power. It is tied up in cultural and religious beliefs. In many respects, it determines the lives we're living. It isn't an exaggeration to say that the future of life on Earth, from the livability of the climate to the survival of innumerable species, rests on the decisions we make within and about our economy.

In this chapter, we've laid some groundwork for thinking about the economy. We've examined types of economies, sociological perspectives on the economy, historical changes in the U.S. economy, and some social and ecological impacts of capitalism. We closed with an exploration of new perspectives and economic models designed to better respond to poverty, inequality, our financial crises, and climate change.

These new systems place real human and environmental needs at the forefront, and they aim to go beyond monetary social values so we can better engage with each other and the natural world. How well do you think those new models can serve societies and ecological systems?

Review of Learning Outcomes

This chapter has offered you the opportunity to:

- Identify different economic systems.
- Describe different sociological perspectives on economic change.
- Discuss ways that economic systems can change over time.
- Illustrate new economic models and perspectives designed to better serve society and the planet.

Key Terms

anarchism: a philosophical and political tradition advocating the abolition of all or most forms of hierarchy, including the state.

Anthropocene: the most recent geological epoch of time, beginning around the Industrial Revolution, in which humans have fundamentally transformed the living systems of the Earth

assembly line: a way for employers to increase economic efficiency by breaking the production process down to a series of small actions performed repetitively by workers.

calling: a Christian concept for work that is assigned to a person by God and that provides meaning and purpose to a person's life.

capitalism: a type of economic and social system in which private businesses or corporations compete for profit. Goods, services, and many beings are defined as private property, and people sell their labor on the market for a wage.

Capitalocene: the geological epoch in which capitalism has reordered Earth's natural systems.

class conflict: the structural antagonisms built into economic relationships.

communism: a philosophical and economic ideology within the socialist framework that advocates for public rather than private ownership, especially of the means of production.

doughnut economics: an economic model that balances essential human needs with planetary boundaries.

economy: a system for the production, distribution, and consumption of the goods and services within a society.

general strike: a strike of all workers within a society, not just the workers at one workplace or in one industry.

gross national happiness (GNH): a philosophy that guides the government of Bhutan and includes an index used to measure the collective happiness and well-being of a population.

historical materialism: a perspective that emphasizes the economy in explaining just about everything in society, and sees economic class conflicts as main drivers of social change and progress.

localization: a process of decentralization that shifts economic activity into the hands of millions of small and medium-sized businesses instead of concentrating it in mega-corporations.

Protestant ethic: a set of cultural and religious beliefs that value hard work, thrift, and efficiency in one's worldly calling. It was theorized by Max Weber to have laid the groundwork for the rise of capitalism in modern Western society.

socialism: an economic system in which the means of production and natural resources are collectively owned, usually controlled by the government.

strike: a form of collective action when workers in a given workplace refuse to work until owners meet their demands.

the New Deal: a series of government initiatives under Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency, during the Great Depression. They focused on strengthening the economy by employing workers for public works and creating a social safety net with programs such as Social Security.

union: an organization of workers who work together to improve their wages and working conditions.

Comprehension Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=761#h5p-6

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 7: Health, Safety, and the State

Learning Objectives

This chapter offers you the opportunity to:

- Explain how sociology applies policy evaluation and a social construction lens to study healthcare in the United States.
- Illustrate how groups experience health, safety, and security in the United States differently, and how government plays a role.
- Explain how colonization shapes contemporary issues around health, safety, and security.
- Discuss alternative and decolonizing models for providing health, safety and security in society.

7.1: Chapter Story

7.2: The Study of Healthcare as an Institution

7.3: Government Services and a Disparity of Support

7.4: Health, Safety, and the Legacy of Colonization

7.5: Alternative and Decolonizing Models for Health, Safety, and Security

7.6: Conclusion

7.7: References

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7.1: Chapter Story

COVID-19 AND POLICE REFORM: RETHINKING SAFETY FOR ALL

The year 2020 forced us all to reflect on what health and safety means to our communities. At its start, we witnessed the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. It became startlingly apparent that the U.S. government was unprepared to deal with COVID-19 efficiently and effectively. Stay-at-home mandates, or lockdowns, were present in many states across the country, but most families were not equipped with the resources or abilities to comply.

Domestic abuse rates in the United States saw a drastic increase with lockdowns and pandemic restrictions (Mineo 2022). Additionally, many people were forced to continue to work and expose themselves to COVID-19. Hospitals were overflowing with patients in some areas because of the mass increase in hospitalizations. In 2022, over 1 million people died from COVID-19 in the United States alone ("United States" n.d.).

This inefficiency of our response to COVID-19 has had devastating consequences worldwide. From the initial stages of the disease, members of **the global majority** were more severely impacted. That is, Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC), typically (though not all) with origins in Africa, Central and South America, and Asia, who constitute approximately 85 percent of the global population.



Figure 7.1. Two Army specialist corporals register people at a mobile testing center in New Rochelle, New York, on March 14, 2020. Some states acted swiftly to provide vaccines and mask mandates during the early COVID-19 pandemic; others provided few to no resources.

The U.S. eventually supported waiving patent protections so other countries could make their own vaccines. However, that support came late. This made it nearly impossible for governments of many low-income countries to effectively handle COVID-19 themselves. At the same time, U.S. policy was slow to pave the way to deliver vaccines to residents of those same countries that desperately needed them. Our for-profit healthcare system had harmful effects that resulted in the unnecessary deaths of people around the world and domestically. Devastatingly, companies prioritized profits from vaccine patents over saving lives.

Additionally, communities in the United States suffered needlessly. While some states acted swiftly to provide vaccines and mask mandates (figure 7.1), others provided few to no resources for their residents. This resulted in unequal and sometimes inaccurate depictions of how COVID-19 spread throughout the country.



Figure 7.2. Screenshot image of the 2021 Police Violence Report [Website]. The publishing organization, Mapping Police Violence, documents that in the U.S. police use of force across race is persistently disproportionate.

Then, in May 2020, the murder of George Floyd by the police sparked uprisings against police brutality, likely to an extent our country had not seen before (Buchanan et al. 2020). It became more brutally apparent that, as a nation, we still have not found a consistent and compassionate way to respond to crises around public safety.

According to the organization Mapping Police Violence, the police killed more people in 2021 than almost any other year in recent history. The use of force across race is persistently disproportionate, as Black people were more likely to be killed by police, more likely to be unarmed, and less likely to be threatening someone when killed (Mapping Police Violence 2021). This presents real concerns about **racial bias**: preconceived beliefs, attitudes, and expectations about racial group members. Take a few minutes to browse through the 2021 Police Violence Report [Website] of Mapping Police Violence (figure 7.2). What else stands out to you in the data they present?

Both COVID-19 and the police brutality crisis sparked national civil society action in 2020. It had become clear that we need to rethink how to provide safety and security for us all. Because of the state's lack of response to COVID-19, many community members across the nation stepped up to form mutual aid organizations to fill in the gaps. These organizations popped up in every state and were responsible for providing food, personal protective equipment (PPE), COVID-19 tests, and material or emotional support to people who were otherwise unable to access state resources. In this way, dozens of communities came together to take care of each other.

For example, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in Oregon were motivated to help drive the nation out of the pandemic. They delivered vaccines to people in the spring of 2021, regardless of their Tribal status. They provided 12,000 vaccines, focusing on frontline workers and others who were not yet eligible for the shot under state guidelines (Kisiel 2021). (Optional: Read more about the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde [Website].)



Figure 7.3. Braxton Winston protesting the police killing of Keith Lamont Scott and police use of excessive force in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2016. Winston was elected to the Charlotte City Council five years later. Protests against police use of force have been ongoing for years.

After the murder of George Floyd, followed by the police murders of Daunte Wright and other Black individuals, thousands of people took to the streets in every major city, demanding an end to police brutality. On one end of the spectrum, some called for an elimination of police altogether. Others called for reform. That might mean an entire revamp of our law enforcement system, or a less radical change that includes more police accountability, more community policing, body-worn cameras, and police training that examines their biases. While protests against police use of force have been ongoing for years (figure 7.3), the protests of 2020 proved pivotal.

Little overall changed regarding funding. However, the discussion of how to implement the abolition of the prison-industrial complex was brought to the national stage. This abolitionist movement, which originated from communities organizing to abolish chattel slavery, is not new, but its energy was reignited by the uprisings. Today, people from across the country are working together to figure out alternative ways to build safety in their communities without the use of police, prisons, violence, and punishment with imprisonment.

Combined, our country's crisis in care during the COVID-19 pandemic and uprising against injustice in law enforcement have revealed important realities about institutions in the United States. It's become crucial to ask: How well do our institutions provide health, safety, and security for all?

This chapter will explore two intersecting institutions whose weaknesses were revealed in 2020: healthcare and government. We'll explore how sociology studies healthcare in the United States with policy evaluation and a social construction lens. Then, we'll explore how and why groups experience safety, security, and health in the United States differently, and how government plays a role. We'll explain how colonization shapes contemporary issues around health, safety, and security, then discuss alternative and emerging models for providing for those rights in society. Finally, we'll peek into recent history and current models to identify alternative ways of providing health, safety, and security in society.

We will introduce some perspectives and projects from Canada, so we've applied the terms "First Nations" and sometimes "First Nations and Inuit" to refer to Indigenous Peoples living there. (Optional: This guide [Website] gives more information on terminology for Indigenous Peoples in Canada.)

This chapter will encourage you to ask questions about the institutions we have built that provide us with health, safety, and security.

- What shapes our ideas of health, safety, and security?
- Who receives sound health, safety, and security in the United States, and who doesn't?
- How equitable are the systems that define and deliver health, safety, and security?

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7.2: The Study of Healthcare as an Institution

The World Health Organization defines health as not merely the absence of disease or infirmity ("WHO Remains Firmly Committed" n.d.). **Health** is the extent of a person's physical, environmental, emotional, mental, and social well-being. This emphasizes that health is a complex concept that involves not just the soundness of a person's body but also the state of a person's mind and the quality of the social environment in which they live. The quality of the social environment can affect a person's physical and mental health, underscoring the importance of social factors for both these aspects of our overall well-being. Our healthcare systems are designed to provide care to members and support these aspects of well-being.

As an institution, **healthcare** refers to the system of norms, rules, and organizations established to provide medical services. So sociologists will study the problems, worldviews, and policies related to the goals of providing health. To examine healthcare in the United States, we can group our healthcare systems into three parts. One part of that system includes community care, the care that members of society offer for each other, such as parents and community members providing for a sick child at home. A second part involves health care providers delivering conventional care and services, often through private insurance companies. The care via insurance is delivered to individuals and families directly, through employers, or as a public service. The third part involves alternative care. Practitioners are most often naturopathic doctors and acupuncturists. They usually provide care outside of our national system, but laws are changing to include them in insurance plans.

Sociologists examine how well healthcare as an institution serves the needs of society. In this section, we'll illustrate two ways they engage in that inquiry: through policy evaluation and through the social construction of illness with medical sociology.

Policy Evaluation

When sociologists examine U.S. health care provided through private insurance companies, they tend to assess how well certain policies meet health needs. For example, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (usually referred to as the ACA) was enacted in 2010 with the aim of ensuring that all U.S. citizens have access to affordable health insurance. Considerable studies have been conducted on how well it accomplished that goal. The ACA can give us a snapshot of how sociologists would inquire about and evaluate policy related to healthcare.

Dr. Wendy Hellerstedt, professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota, outlines key reasons why the ACA was needed:

> *Compared with other countries, the U.S. has a much stronger focus on diagnostic and treatment-related technology than on primary prevention. Many believe that this focus has translated into our high rates of potentially preventable causes of morbidity and mortality, such as obesity, and explains our poor international ranking in infant survival and in life expectancy. We also have deep social disparities in health outcomes.…Such disparities have complex [causes] that may not have been completely addressed by medical care (Hellerstedt n.d.).*

ACA policies provided public preventative health care that, in the long term, was expected to reduce disparate health outcomes among economically and socially vulnerable citizens. The ACA also expanded Medicaid, the joint federal and state program that helps cover medical costs for some people with limited income and resources. Finally, it lowered the cost of health care in general.

The ACA also changed some of the ways insurance companies can operate. It prevents insurance companies from turning you down or drastically hiking your rate for pre-existing medical conditions. The policy ensures that you can't be turned down for any reason, and costs are expected to be contained. The ACA marks a significant change to the healthcare system in the United States.

So, what do we know about how the ACA impacted health outcomes, particularly across social locations? The ACA has dramatically improved health insurance coverage across the United States (Kessler 2015). Researchers at the National Health Interview Survey found that the overall number of U.S. residents without health insurance dropped to a record low of 7.7 percent in the first three months of 2023 (Tsai 2023). We also know that the ACA likely prevented an estimated 50,000 patient deaths between 2010 and 2013 (National Health Interview Survey 2016).

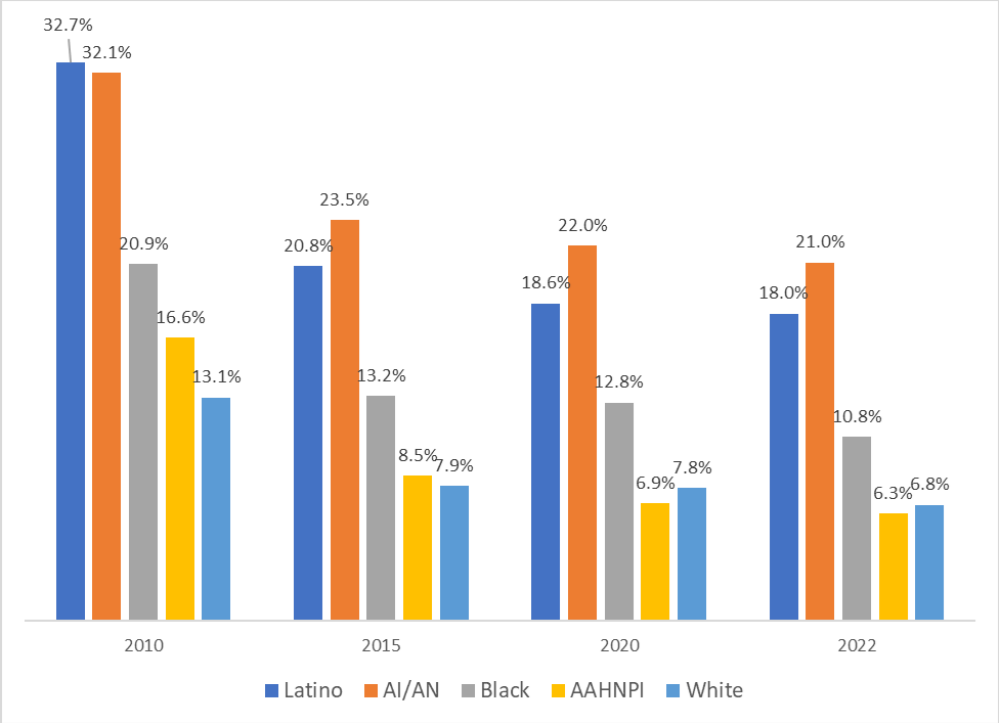


Figure 7.4. Uninsured rates by race and ethnicity from 2010 to 2022. The rates of uninsured went down for each of these groups after the ACA. *Source: American Community Survey, 2010, 2015, 2020, 2022.* Image description.

The ACA also addressed disparities in access to coverage. Prior to the ACA, the groups most likely to be uninsured were Black, Latino, and American Indian and Alaska Native populations (AI/AN in figure 7.4) and Asian-American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander populations (AANHPI in figure 7.4). The rates of insured improved for each of these groups at a rate much larger than other ethnic groups (Buchmueller 2024).

However, we also know that over 26 million people remain uninsured, and uninsured rates vary substantially between racial and ethnic groups. It's also important to keep in mind that being insured does not necessarily mean that you are healthier. And reducing disparities among the insured is not sufficient for eliminating disparities in health outcomes.

Medical Sociology

If sociology is the systematic study of human behavior in society, **medical sociology** is the systematic study of how humans manage issues of health and illness, disease and disorders, and health care for both the sick and the healthy. Medical sociologists study the physical, mental, and social components of health and illness. Main topics for medical sociologists include the doctor/patient relationship, the structure and socioeconomics of healthcare, and how culture impacts attitudes toward disease and wellness.

This section will focus on those cultural aspects of health: the underlying societal beliefs that have shaped health institutions today. This is the social constructionist approach we introduced in Chapter 2, applied to health. At first glance, the concept of a social construction of health does not seem to make sense. After all, if disease is a measurable, physiological problem, then there can be no question of socially constructing disease, right?

Well, it's not that simple. The social construction of health emphasizes the sociocultural aspects of the discipline's approach to physical, objectively definable phenomena. In other words, "What we take to be the truth about the world importantly depends on the social relationships of which we are a part" (Gergen 2018:7).

We'll explore what sociologists Peter Conrad and Kristin K. Barker have named as the main themes of study in this field: the cultural meaning of illness, the social construction of the illness experience, and the social construction of medical knowledge (Conrad and Barker 2010).

The Cultural Meaning of Illness

Cultural ideas play a significant role in how, as individuals, we experience illness. They also greatly influence the institution of healthcare in the United States. Many medical sociologists contend that illnesses have both biological and experiential components. The experiential component is in large part related to the cultural meaning we associate with illness. Let's look at a couple of examples.

The first is that we establish and communicate the meaning of illness through labels. Society, through culture, determines which illnesses can receive the label of disability and which cannot. Society also decides which disabilities are deemed contestable. That is, some medical professionals, based on their perspectives, may find the existence of certain ailments questionable (Conrad and Barker 2010). Depending on the opinion of the medical professional, disorders like fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome may be either true illnesses or only in the patients' heads. This dynamic can affect how patients seek treatment and what kind of treatment they receive.

The second way we establish and communicate the meaning of illness relates to stigmatization. (We introduced stigmatization in Chapter 3 as *the labeling or spoiling of an identity, which leads to ostracism, marginalization, discrimination, and abuse.*) Society constructs ideas of which illnesses are stigmatized and which are not. Then society decides what the sanctions will be against those carrying stigmas. Many assert that our society and even our healthcare institutions discriminate against certain diseases—like mental disorders, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), sexually transmitted infections, and skin disorders (Sartorius 2007).

The social stigma related to a disease may keep people from seeking help for their illness, making it worse than it needs to be. When they do get care, the stigmatization of illness often has the greatest effect on the patient and the kind of care they receive. Facilities for these diseases may be subpar or patients may be segregated from other health care areas or relegated to a poorer environment.



Figure 7.5. Erving Goffman identified stigma as a powerful influence in the social construction of illness (left). In his book *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, he relied on autobiographies and case studies to understand stigmatized persons' feelings about themselves and their relationships to "normal" people (right).

Sociologist Erving Goffman (figure 7.5) described how, due to this exclusion, social stigmas hinder individuals with illness from fully integrating into society. He believed that the stigmatization of illness also influences a person's self-conceptions, and they become primarily concerned with the management of their identity.

Similar to Charles Horton Cooley's "looking glass self" theory, Goffman noted that people who are stigmatized assume this exclusionary perspective of society as they develop their identity. That is, their identities are shaped based on how they perceive society views them, leading them to see themselves as separate from "normal" society. How they manage this illness stigma—how they conceal it, disavow it, or claim a more favorable social identity—depends largely on such factors as the visibility of the stigma and how well they are able to control information about themselves.

One way to observe this stigmatization and exclusion is by looking closer at mental illness. In the United States, mental illness is severely stigmatized. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness ("Criminalization of People with Mental Illness" n.d.), less than half of people with mental illness receive help for their disorders. People avoid or delay seeking treatment due to concerns

about being treated differently or fears of losing their jobs and livelihood. Even more devastating, the stigmatization of mental illness often also leads to the criminalization of people when they are suffering from mental health crises. The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports:

> *People with mental illness are overrepresented in our nation's jails and prisons. About 2 million times each year, people with serious mental illness are booked into jails. Nearly 2 in 5 people who are incarcerated have a history of mental illness (37% in state and federal prisons and 44% held in local jails).*
>
> *Many people with mental illness who are incarcerated are held for committing non-violent, minor offenses related to the symptoms of untreated illness (disorderly conduct, loitering, trespassing, disturbing the peace) or for offenses like shoplifting and petty theft ("Criminalization of People with Mental Illness" n.d.).*

While stigmatization exists in most parts of the world, there are communities that value mental illness differently. Malidoma Somé (1956–2021) was an Elder and spiritual leader from the nation of Burkina Faso. He was specifically from the cultural region of Dagara, which covers areas of Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire.

In 2015, Somé spoke in a video about his experiences visiting a psychiatric hospital. He noted the stark contrast between how the patients there were treated and how people experiencing mental health challenges are treated in Dagara Land. Watch the 5:01-minute clip, "Answering the Healer's Call" [Streaming Video] (figure 7.6). As you do, pay attention to the meaning that the Dagara people hold for mental and spiritual struggles and those who experience them.

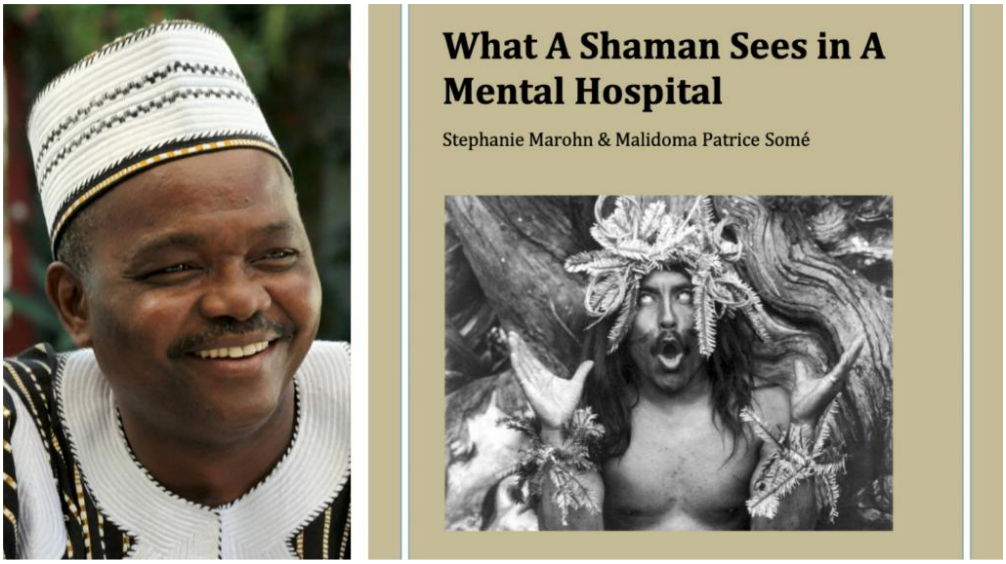


Figure 7.6. Malidoma Patrice Somé (left). *What a Shaman Sees in A Mental Hospital*, co-authored by Somé (right). Watch the video, "Answering the Healer's Call" [Streaming Video] to hear Somé speak about the meaning that the Dagara people hold for mental and spiritual struggles and those who experience them. Transcript.

In the United States, the same degree of stigma is applied to harmful drug use. The stigma of harmful drug use often carries connotations of character and morality. This is despite the efforts of drug and alcohol counselors and other support practitioners to convey it as an illness. Both those suffering from mental health challenges and those suffering from harmful drug use suffer discrimination based on these stigmas.

Construction of the Illness Experience and Medical Knowledge

Let's look at two more ways we socially construct illness. The first is our experience with illness. We create meaning out of our personal struggles living with illness. For example, for some, a long-term illness can make their world smaller, more defined by the illness than anything else. For others, illness can be a chance for discovery and reimagining a new self (Conrad and Barker 2010).

An important observation of the illness experience relates to people with AIDS. When AIDS swept the world in the 1980s, it was labeled as the fault of gay men whose illness resulted from what was perceived as promiscuity (Isay 1987). As such, AIDS was originally termed "gay-related immune deficiency" (GRIDS) by the U.S. government, and it wasn't renamed AIDS until 1983. It was also widely assumed that the gay men who suffered from the disease were largely white, while in fact, minorities suffered disproportionately from the disease (Royles 2017).

The racism prevented Black communities from recognizing the growing crisis sooner and from getting the care they needed. Similarly, homophobia obscured the fact that AIDS reached people in all social locations, preventing important outreach to people other than gay men (Royles 2017). For those who were part of groups vulnerable to AIDS, communications from the federal government and other stations of power drove a sense of shame and stigma for their illness experience.

Over time, attitudes have shifted. This is in part due to organizations like the Stigma Project, which uses social media and advertising to promote shifts in attitudes around human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and AIDS (figure 7.7).

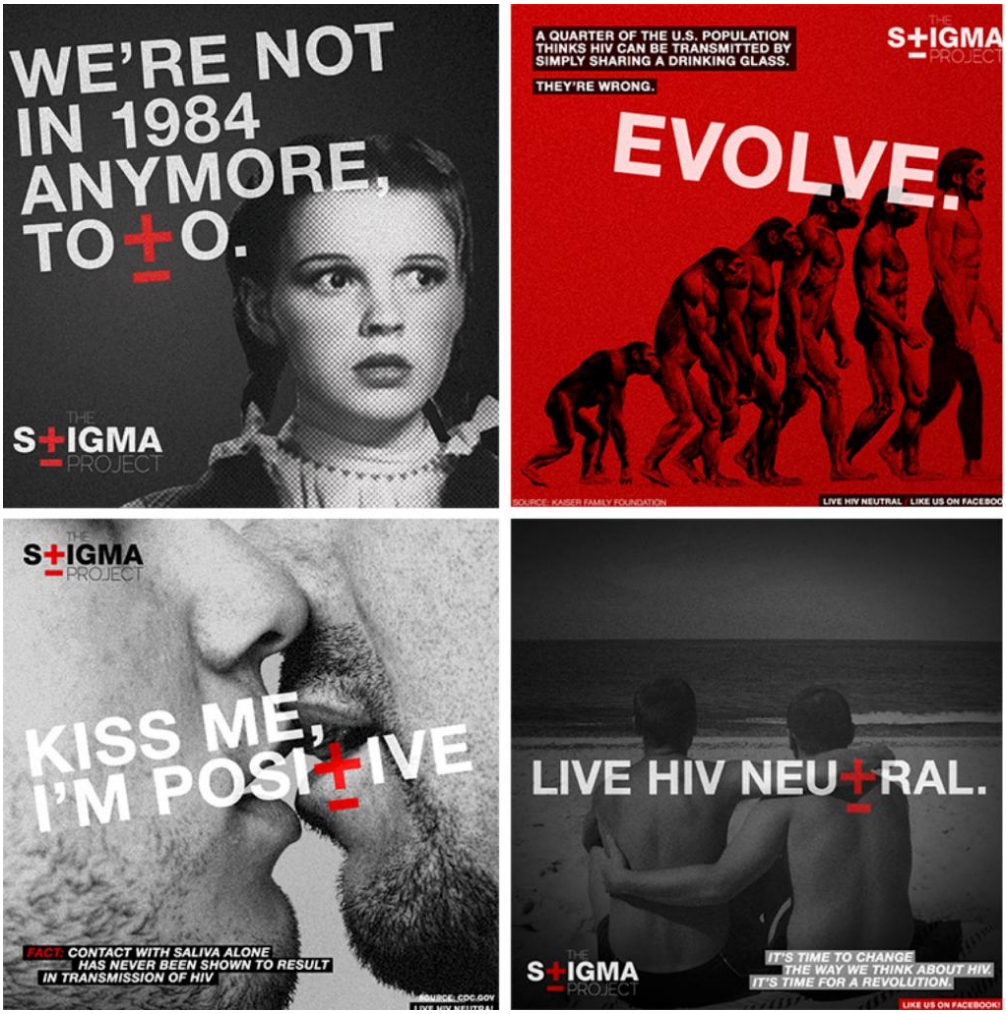


Figure 7.7. Advertisements from the Stigma Project [Website] aim to shift attitudes around HIV and AIDS.

In addition to tackling societal stigma about HIV and AIDS, the Stigma Project aims to redirect the personal experiences of those who are HIV positive. They developed a campaign they call "HIV Neutral":

> *To truly live "HIV Neutral," we must begin shifting towards a new way of thinking about HIV/AIDS. Moving away from thoughts full of death and sadness and towards thoughts of life and hope for the future.*

> *"HIV Neutral" is a state of mind regardless of your status, in which you are informed and aware of the constantly evolving state of HIV/AIDS.…Because HIV is now classified as a chronic manageable condition, treatment is now focused on people living full and healthy lives ("The Stigma Project" n.d.).*

A second way we socially construct illness relates to medical knowledge. We decide as a society which health experiences need professional or product support and which do not. This meaning-making often happens with the influence of people in power in the medical and pharmaceutical world.

For example, medicalization occurs when human problems or experiences become defined as medical problems. Some diagnoses become accepted as medically valid and are used to define and treat patients. Women often find their natural reproductive functions (e.g., pregnancy, childbirth, menstruation) to be medicalized (Barker 1998; Riessman 1983; and Riska 2003 as cited in Conrad and Barker 2010).

People who are gay are also subject to their sexual expressions being medicalized (Conrad and Schneider 1992). When the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* was first published in 1968, it listed homosexuality as a mental disorder. Today, all of the major medical organizations agree that homosexuality is not an illness or disorder, but a universal form of sexual expression. However, it was not completely removed until 1987 (Mayes 2005). In Chapter 9 we'll discuss conversion therapy, a practice that strives to change peoples' sexual orientation that is still promoted today.

The way that we socially construct illness influences the institution of healthcare. And the way our healthcare system is built shapes our personal experiences with our health. It shapes how well we are cared for when we are sick or have a disability, whether or not we are able to remain an integral part of society, and how safe we are. Each of these experiences is also influenced by our social location.

Going Deeper

To better understand how mental illness is criminalized in the United States, watch the 22:18-minute video "Mental Illness in America" [Streaming Video].

Also see the National Alliance for Mental Health infographic "Mental Illness and the Criminal Justice System" [Website].

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7.3: Government Services and a Disparity of Support

The degree to which we live safe lives is directly related to the access we have to resources that provide well-being. In addition to effective health care, those resources include reliable and safe housing, fresh and culturally relevant food, clean water, physical and mental stimulation, a secure home life, and connection to our surroundings and communities.

Reread what was listed in the previous paragraphs and note what you currently have access to within your own life as well as what you don't. Take another moment and survey internally how much each of those necessities currently costs. How much does it cost you annually to access all or some of these? What feelings come up when you are thinking about this?

If you feel anxiety, fear, sadness, or anger, you are unfortunately not alone. It is rare, both internationally and nationally, for people to have the ability to secure all of what is necessary to achieve a holistic state of health, safety, and security? This is due to systems in place that create inequality and disparities among us. While most of us are familiar with these injustices, they often show up differently and at varying levels of severity depending on our social location.

Government is the institution by which a society organizes itself and allocates authority to accomplish collective goals and provide benefits that the society needs. In "The Study of Healthcare as an Institution" we introduced how a sociological study of health can examine how well government addresses our health needs.

Government ideally provides other benefits for their citizens. It can provide indirect benefits such as economic stability and enforcement of national borders. Government also provides direct benefits such as education, transportation infrastructure, and support for people experiencing poverty or hardship. Those benefits are guided by laws and policies which can support or deny granting safety and security to residents. As decisions are made to pass them or block them, and the manner in which they are enforced, the values and prejudices of policy makers are revealed.

This section will focus on how the U.S. government addresses some basic safety and security needs beyond healthcare for residents. We'll first offer a brief summary of the criminal justice and public assistance systems in the United States. Then with some examples we'll explore the question, "How does class, race, gender, and sexual orientation influence the ability to receive the security and safety that government is asked to provide?"

This chapter will not discuss questions of diverse experiences related to citizenship status; however, that is also an important aspect to consider when evaluating the overall well-being of life in the United States. We'll cover experiences related to immigrant status in Chapter 8 as we discuss education, and in Chapter 10 as we explore social movements.

The U.S. Criminal Justice and Public Assistance Systems

The U.S. government, like all industrialized countries, controls a criminal justice system. It is an organization that enforces the laws and legal codes of the United States. There are three branches of the U.S. criminal justice system: law enforcement, the judicial system, and the incarceration system. Police enforce laws and public order at a federal, state, or community level. Federal officers operate under specific government agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI); the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF); and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The U.S. judicial system is divided into federal courts and state courts. As the name implies, federal courts (including the U.S. Supreme Court) deal with federal matters, including trade disputes, military justice, and government lawsuits. The incarceration system, more commonly known as the corrections system, is responsible for removing individuals from the public who have been arrested, convicted, and sentenced for a criminal offense.

While the U.S. military is not formally a part of the U.S. criminal justice system, scholars and activists have identified it as a major component of the criminal justice system. For example, the Coast Guard branch of the military can be utilized to enforce federal laws or restrictions.

The U.S. government is also in control of many social service systems. The largest take the form of public assistance and welfare (such as food stamps, Medicaid, and unemployment). Like many countries, in the U.S. social services are paid for by the taxes and labor of those residing within the country. When working well, they promote the health and well-being of individuals by helping them to become more self-sufficient; strengthening family relationships; and restoring individuals, families, groups, or communities to successful social functioning.

Fundamentally, if as an institution, it is the government's role to care for the safety and security of a society then it must contend with inequalities and inequities of that society. Let's look at a few that are more evident in the U.S.

Class Inequality

In Chapter 3, we introduced class as the set of people who share similar status based on factors like wealth, income, education, family background, and occupation. Your class can have a profound impact on your life. It allows or restricts the opportunities and resources available to you. For example, class differences, exacerbated by increasing systemic wealth inequality, have created massive disparities between people's ability to access healthy and culturally diverse foods, have a healthy workload, and acquire reliable shelter.



Figure 7.8. Chinatown, New York City, N.Y. Brian Godfrey, the photographer of this shot, captioned it, "Waiting in line for the freshest – and cheapest – produce on the street!" Culturally relevant food is crucial for the nourishment of everyone.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) states that 30 to 40 percent of the food supply in the United States is wasted (USDA n.d.). While concurrently, we know that 13.5 percent (18.0 million) of U.S. households were food insecure at some time during 2023. We also know that single parents, Black people, and Latinx people experience food insecurity at substantially higher rates (USDA 2021).

What's important to note with these data is that "food security" simply means access to food; it does not include access to culturally relevant and healthy food (figure 7.8). If we include this criterion in our ideas of health, then many families within the United States struggle to obtain true food security (USDA 2015).

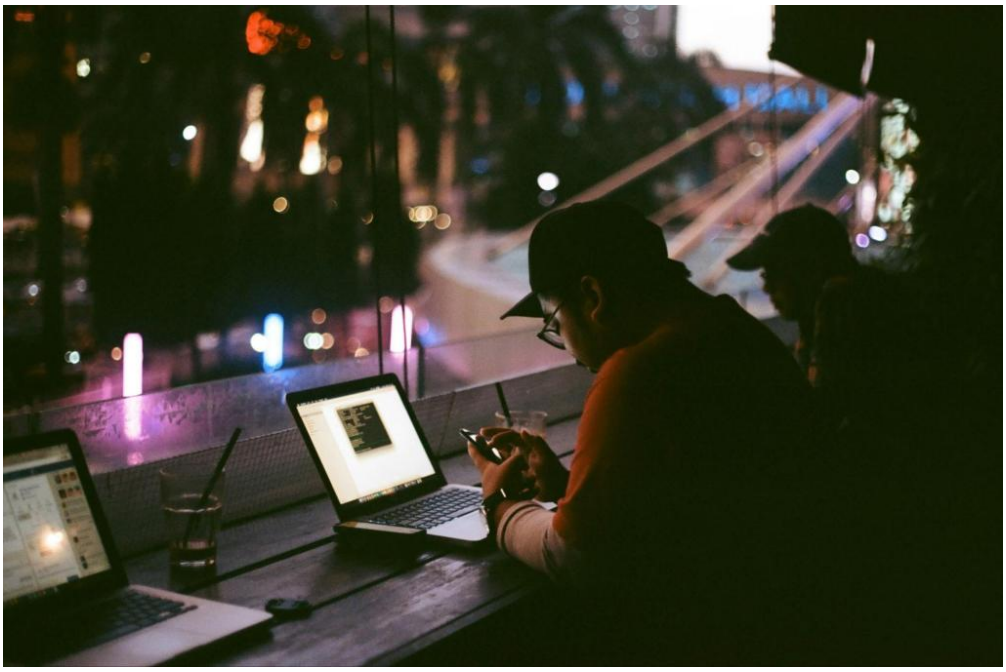


Figure 7.9. A man working late at night. Overwork is a systemic issue.

While mental and physical stimulation is necessary for a well-rounded life, the United States currently has a problem with overworking. Colleagues at Stanford University researched the question of overwork and found that pre-COVID people working long hours are two and a half times more likely to experience depression than those who work an eight-hour day. Working that much particularly increases your likelihood of having coronary heart disease. They also found that work-family conflict increases the odds of reporting poor physical health by 90 percent (Schulte 2022).

Most of us are familiar with the terms “side hustle,” which means additional jobs, and “grind culture,” or working as much and as often as possible to become financially stable. These terms come from an underlying issue with our class structure that forces us to work for fear of being in poverty, even if it is unhealthy for us (figure 7.9). NPR reports, “Between 2000 and 2016, the number of deaths from heart disease due to working long hours increased by 42%, and from stroke by 19%” (Chappell 2021).



Figure 7.10. A houseless veteran on the streets of Boston, Massachusetts. In 2023, more than 650,000 people in the United States lack permanent shelter.

You may have heard the phrase, “Housing is a human right.” This phrase holds truth—housing or shelter is not simply a commodity but in fact a requirement to survive. However, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reported that in 2023, more than 650,000 people in the United States lack permanent shelter (figure 7.10). That’s the highest number since at least 2007 (Department of Housing and Urban Development 2023).

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many states mandated stay-at-home orders. But what happens when you do not have a home to shelter in place? The likelihood of becoming infected with COVID-19 was much higher for unhoused people than for those with secure shelter. Pandemic aside, people experiencing houselessness have lifespans shorter by about 17.5 years on average than those recorded for the general population in the United States (Perri et al. 2020).

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the main federal agency that works to address houselessness. (More frequently, the word houseless is used in place of homeless, to make the distinction between a house and a home. People described as without homes are not necessarily without homes.) HUD provides funding for emergency shelters, permanent housing, and transitional housing.

Why do the human needs of healthy food, a healthy work life, and shelter security remain elusive in the U.S.? The answers are complex, and opinions vary greatly. However, class inequality is a significant source of the challenge. This poses the fundamental question: What role does government have in providing policy and programs to counter such disparity in well-being? What options do governments have? Taking a closer look at shelter and insecurity in the U.S. can give a better idea of the kinds of programs and policies that could be put in place to address inequities of this kind.

Houselessness is a complex issue that requires multi-faceted solutions to address the myriad reasons that individuals may be unsheltered. However, many houselesss advocates claim that it will only be solved with the political will to install *housing first* programs. The housing first strategy provides permanent housing to people experiencing houselessess. It is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and shelter before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting, or tackling substance use challenges.

Housing first programs require providing more up-front costs to implement than most programs currently in place. But they have proven to be less costly in the long run as they shorten stays in hospitals, residential substance abuse programs, nursing homes, and prisons. In short, there are solutions to houselessness; they just require the political will to fund them that the U.S. has not achieved.

In 2019 the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, Leilani Farha, announced some other ways government could do better in addressing houselesssness in the U.S. She pointed to policies that offer "financial supports" and tax breaks to companies to encourage investment in housing, but that don't include investment in housing for the most vulnerable populations. She also notes that local governments have failed to enact legislation such as rent control and policies linking housing prices with minimum wage regulations (Farha 2019).

Some severe lived experiences are revealed when we look closely at class in the United States. Limited access to healthy and cultural foods, reliable shelter, and overworking are experienced by too many. Considering the severity of class inequality in the United States and the consequences related to basic human needs such as food, housing, and a healthy workload, it's crucial to examine what the responsibility of the government is to address these hardships.

The Impact of Racism

In Chapter 3, we explored institutional racism and structural racism. Both refer to the unfair policies and discriminatory practices that exist to produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. In the United States, we can trace some of those policies and practices to government systems. Three examples are the access people have to clean water, treatment by police, and the incarceration system.

The consequences of racism affect every area of our lives. As you read, ask yourself: What experiences listed in this section remind me of crises of racism that my community or I have faced? How did we get through them? In what ways did we come together or implement creative solutions?

Access to Clean Water

As discussed by Marccus Hendricks, an associate professor of urban studies at the University of Maryland, "The legacy of racial zoning, segregation, [and] legalized redlining have ultimately led to the isolation, separation and sequestration of racial minorities into communities [with] diminished tax bases, which has had consequences for the built environment, including infrastructure" (Costley and Pettus 2022).

One of the most necessary infrastructure needs is the provision of water. Unfortunately, access to clean and safe water is not the reality for all in the United States. This may be a scenario that you associate with countries of the global majority. However, systemic racism in the United States created an ongoing water crisis in Jackson, Mississippi.

After a river flooded from severe storms in 2022, the city's largest water treatment facility failed, leaving approximately 150,000 residents without access to safe drinking water (Flavelle 2022). Hospitals, fire stations, and schools were also affected. The governor issued a state of emergency, and President Joe Biden declared it a federal disaster to trigger federal aid.

However, the governor withdrew the state of emergency on November 22 of the same year. This crisis continues today. The Southern Poverty Law Center, a civil rights organization, points to local government for blame, "as Mississippi's governor and white-dominated Legislature continue to block funds necessary to repair the system" (Mississippi City's Water Problems Stem from Generations of Neglect 2023).

Watch the 2:33-minute video "Racism Seen as Root of Jackson Water Crisis" [Streaming Video] for the story (figure 7.11). As you do, pay attention to how the student organizers explain the reasons for the water crisis in their city.



Figure 7.11. “Racism Seen as Root of Jackson Water Crisis” [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color frequently experience a lack of updated and efficient infrastructure in the United States. This can leave whole cities scrambling for solutions when their systems fail.

Discrimination, Law Enforcement, and the Incarceration System

Being cared for, protected, and treated fairly by state-sponsored systems is fundamental to a healthy and safe life. Regrettably, widespread police brutality and state violence stemming from prejudice, discrimination, and racism in the United States often means that these needs are unable to be met for many people of color, especially Black or African Americans.

We’ve explored institutional discrimination within the U.S. police systems and community response in several sections of this book. The 2020 George Floyd uprisings were one of the largest nationwide protests that the United States has experienced (Buchanan et al. 2020). The spark for the protests was the appalling murder of George Floyd, a Black man, by police in May 2020.

Police officers had apprehended Floyd over what was allegedly the use of a $20 counterfeit bill, during which Officer Derek Chauvin kneeled on Floyd’s neck and back for over nine minutes, suffocating him to death. The protests that this murder inspired continued well into the summer and, in some cities, throughout the year (see a mural and memorial to Floyd in figure 7.12). The police brutality that Black and African Americans experience on a daily basis has been a consistent issue since the end of slavery in the United States.



Figure 7.12. The area outside Cup Foods in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Floyd was killed, has been named George Floyd Square. It is also a memorial, with a mural painted by Xena Goldman, Cadex Herrera, and Greta McLain.

Related to discrimination within our criminal justice systems, another area that impacts safety is the U.S. incarceration system. The U.S. incarceration rate has grown considerably in the last 100 years. In 2008, more than 1 in 100 U.S. adults were in jail or prison, the highest benchmark in our nation's history. And while the United States accounts for 5 percent of the global population, we have 25 percent of the world's inmates, the largest number of prisoners in the world (Fair 2021). In 2021, 1,204,300 residents were behind bars in the U.S. (figure 7.13).

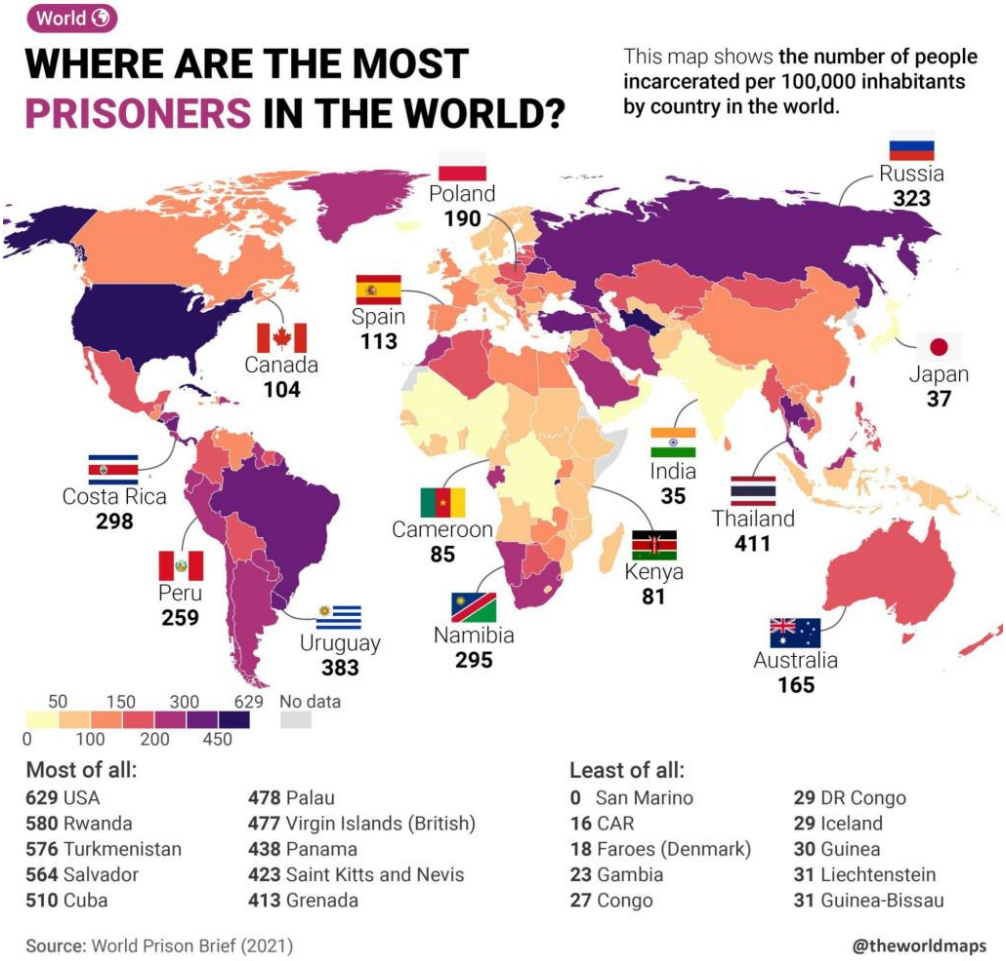


Figure 7.13. A snapshot of the number of people incarcerated in 2021 (per 100,000).

The U.S. incarceration system of today upholds the legacy of slavery. While Black people make up only about 12 percent of the population in the United States, they make up almost 40 percent of people who are incarcerated (“Inmate Race” 2024). Currently stated in the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution is the clause that “neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, *except* as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction” (United States Constitution).

By policing and imprisoning a significant portion of the population—a majority of whom are people of color—the incarceration system continues a legacy of exploitation and cheap or “free” labor. Watch the 2:33-minute video, “Mass Incarceration, Visualized” [Streaming Video] in figure 7.14 for an insightful discussion on U.S. incarceration rates, the inevitability of prison for certain demographics of young Black men, and how it’s become a normal life event. What trends do you see in incarceration rates, and what consequences do you notice?



Figure 7.14. "Mass Incarceration, Visualized" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

The Impact of Sexual Orientation Discrimination

Like racism, gender and sexual orientation discrimination are things that many of us face in our daily lives. It can be discreet or overt, and embedded in cultural beliefs. Sometimes it can be hard to identify and unlearn. As in all institutions, gender and sexual orientation discrimination exist in the political structures of the United States, creating disparity in access to safety and security.

The U.S. legal system was built upon a religious framework that stigmatized and criminalized homosexuality. Historically, laws have been passed to restrict private sexual acts between consenting adults and to deny benefits and basic civil liberties to gay and lesbian individuals. Until 2020, discrimination against people who identify as LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and other identities) was legal in employment (Herek et al. 2007). While lawmakers are working on one, currently, there is no federal law that consistently protects LGBTQ+ individuals from housing discrimination.

When HIV/AIDS was declared a worldwide epidemic, discrimination became especially apparent. As we described earlier, the disease was at first incorrectly stereotyped to be a "homosexual" or "gay" disease, even though HIV/AIDS was and is diagnosed among people of all sexual orientations. ACT UP! was one of the first organizations to bring the mistreatment of people diagnosed with HIV/AIDS to the national political stage. They protested government agencies for a host of failures, including the high cost and lack of availability of HIV treatment, a lengthy drug approval process, and a lack of prioritizing diverse types of AIDS treatments (figure 7.15).



Figure 7.15. One protestor holds an ACT UP! logo. Another holds up a sign that reads, “Big Pharma Price Gouging Kills.” ACT UP! continues to be a prominent voice in fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Same-sex marriages were illegal at the national level until 2015. Until then, same-sex couples were not able to receive the same federal benefits as heterosexual couples nor be entitled to the same legal protections. There are over 1,000 federal rights that protect married couples and their families. They include Social Security survivor and pension benefits, hospital visitation rights, medical decision-making rights, inheritance rights, family leave under the federal Family Medical Leave Act, and end-of-life decisions (ACLU n.d.).

In addition to discrimination, people who identify as LGBTQIA+ often experience compounded challenges from resource inequality. According to the Trevor Project, in 2021, 28 percent of LGBTQIA+ youth in the United States experienced houselessness or housing instability at some point in their lives (DeChants et al. 2021). Examining the intersecting social locations of LGBTQIA+ and race/ethnicity reveals more of the picture. For example, in 2021, nearly half (44%) of Native/Indigenous LGBTQ youth had experienced homelessness or housing instability at some point in their life (The Trevor Project 2022). See more rates of housing instability for LGBTQIA+ youth by race and ethnicity in figure 7.16.

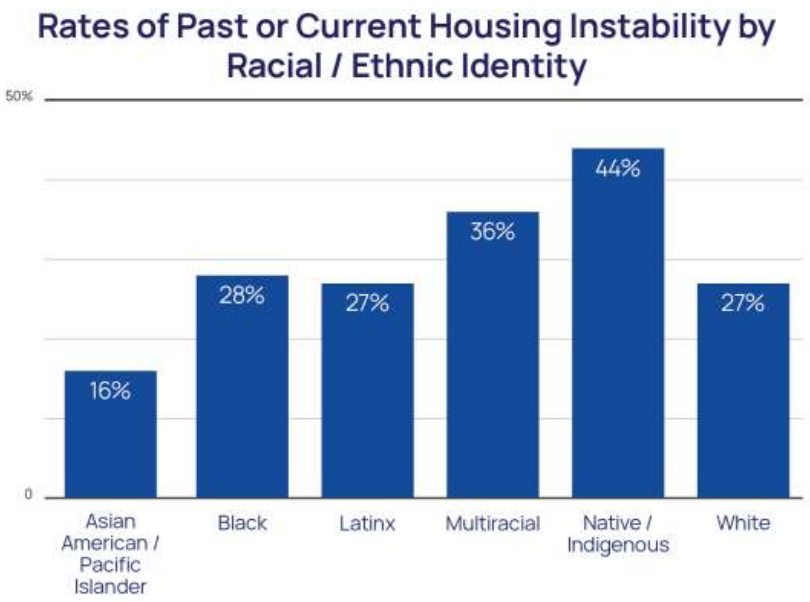


Figure 7.16. Rates of housing instability for LGBTQIA+ youth in 2021 by race and ethnicity, from the Trevor Project. Image description.

These rates are staggering and can have life-threatening or deadly consequences. Statistics are often more severe for youth who identify as transgender. Watch the 2:23-minute film "A Road to Home" [Streaming Video]. It's a trailer for a documentary that follows the journeys of six unhoused young LGBTQIA+ people over the course of 18 months (figure 7.17). What unique challenges do you notice the youth profiled in the video face?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=771#oembed-3

vimeo.com/159711608

Figure 7.17. "A Road to Home – Trailer" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

There have been some significant gains in human rights protection for people who identify as LGBTQIA+. The granting of legal marriage rights was an enormous achievement. However, efforts at legislation that legitimize and legalize discrimination against people who identify as LGBTQIA+ continue. In 2023, over 520 anti-LGBTQIA+ bills were introduced by the legislature. This is more than has ever been introduced in the U.S. (Cullen 2023). Most of these recent bills target the basic freedoms of transgender people, particularly transgender youth.

Unfair policies and discriminatory practices are deeply embedded within the structure of government. This section only introduces a few examples of how those policies and practices create negligent and dangerous circumstances for people of color and for people who identify as LGBTQIA+. Ultimately, it requires civil society to monitor discriminatory laws and policies, counter initiatives that violate human rights, and fill in the gaps where government fails to provide services for safety and security for all.

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7.4: Health, Safety, and the Legacy of Colonization

To fully understand the institutions and social issues we grapple with today, we must understand our history. In previous chapters, we've explored the role of colonialism in shaping our experiences today. The United States is a country founded on European colonization. As is true throughout the world, colonial control was established with atrocities and slavery. Colonizers murdered the people who already lived on the land through war and resettlement. Their occupations killed Indigenous Peoples through disease. Colonizers used forced education and relocation as a way of destroying families, communities, and cultures.

The United States still has colonies, or territories*:* three in the Caribbean Sea and eleven in the Pacific Ocean. Five territories (American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) are permanently inhabited unincorporated territories. Territories of the United States are overseen by the federal government of the United States and are not sovereign entities.

For example, the people who live in the territory of Puerto Rico are U.S. citizens. However, they are not allowed to participate in many elections and often do not receive the same kind of federal funding that the recognized states receive. Residents of these territories and Indigenous communities residing on the mainland still feel the effects of the historical destruction of colonialism.

How does colonialism shape our ideas and actions around health, safety, and security? Powerful groups in society continue to apply many of the worldviews and tools of colonization, resulting in the discrimination and oppression that is felt by many every day. How do those ideas affect us today?

Colonized vs. Indigenous Worldviews

In Chapter 3, we explained how colonial thought, white supremacy, and capitalism reinforce each other. In Chapter 5, we explored how colonial practice and thought contribute to inequality. We can apply these connections to our study of the institution of government. That is, the worldviews of colonialism contribute to the structure of the U.S. government and inform priorities, policies, and laws around health, safety, and security. Let's look closer at that worldview with a comparison.

Although Indigenous Peoples throughout the world have very different cultures, their collective worldview is significantly different from the Western worldview. We've summarized some of the core differences in Indigenous and Western worldviews in the table in figure 7.18. Each worldview defines relationships to both wealth and land. In the Indigenous worldview, land is sacred, something to be cared for from generation to generation. Wealth is shared. In the Western worldview, land is owned or controlled, and the purpose of living is to accumulate wealth.

Figure 7.18. Table of Indigenous and Western worldviews.

Indigenous Worldview	Western Worldview
Collectiveness	Individualism
Wealth is shared	Accumulate wealth
The natural world is more important	People's laws are more important
Land is sacred; we belong to the land	Land is a resource, it is dangerous, and must be controlled
Silence is valued	Silence needs to be filled
Generosity	Scarcity
Binaries do not exist	Binaries are crucial

Capitalism

A good example that illustrates the differences between the dominant Western lifestyle today and Indigenous ways of living is our current economic system, better known as capitalism. We defined capitalism in Chapter 6 as a type of economic and social system in which private businesses or corporations compete for profit. Goods, services, and many beings are defined as private property, and people sell their labor on the market for a wage.

Chapter 6 explained that capitalism requires endless consumption and resource usage, which is not sustainable on a finite planet. In addition to the decimation of Indigenous populations and the land that they lived on, colonization supports a worldview that contributes to ecological devastation. In the colonist view, land is to be owned and subjugated, rather than tended and cared for. Capitalism also prioritizes people's laws and wealth over the natural world. Colonial worldviews support the value of individual well-being above all else. This individualism leads to a lack of action and concern regarding the well-being of our neighbors, plants, and animals who surround us.

Finally, in Chapter 3, we introduced autodecolonization, which comes from the idea that we can internalize capitalism, but can choose to fight against it within ourselves. This internalization can be seen in how we consume resources, what we see as valuable forms of work, and what we determine to be basic living standards.

The Myth of the Right to Live

Anthropologist Edward Tyler (1832–1917) was one of the earliest social scientists to define culture, stating that it was "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits" that people learn from other members of their group (Tyler 1871). In other words, culture is both learned and taught. **Enculturation** is the gradual process of an individual or group learning and adapting to the norms and values of a culture in which they are immersed.

A belief that we must work to earn the right to live is a Western colonial example of something that's been deeply enculturated. Children are taught from a young age that we must work jobs until our older years to afford basic necessities, such as food, shelter, water, and acceptance within our communities. This belief is steadily reinforced throughout adolescence and into adulthood through toys, media, job fairs, career days, and so on. When individuals are unable or unwilling to work, society then punishes them by denying them these basic necessities.

Colonial Conceptions of Health

Colonization worldwide has left us detached and afraid of what is part of our nature, so concepts of health involve regulation and control by the state. Additionally, in the United States, the healthcare system treats symptoms instead of addressing root causes. An example of this would be the intense treatment of cancer after a diagnosis, instead of working toward a public health goal that fosters low levels of cancer through healthy eating, exercise, and preventative care.

An Indigenous worldview encourages us to adopt a holistic approach and prioritize prevention. The First Nations Health Authority of Canada describes these measures as follows:

- Taking responsibility for our own health and wellness
- Balancing mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical facets of our lives
- Honoring where we come from: our cultures, traditions, and ourselves
- Knowing traditions, culture, and medicine
- Acknowledging that land is what sustains us physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally
- Receiving family and community as our support base (First Nations Health Authority n.d.)

Childbirth is another example of colonial cultural conceptions in the U.S. healthcare system. Childbirth is seen as a sterile procedure that can result in stress and even trauma for the person giving birth. It often happens in an unfamiliar environment, like a hospital, with doctors and nurses unfamiliar with the person giving birth.

Watch the first 3:12 minutes of the video, "Spirit of Birth" [Streaming Video] (figure 7.19). It tells the story of creating an Indigenous-led and designed birth center in Toronto, Canada. The vision for the center is to provide people giving birth with knowledge and care from Indigenous midwives and Elders. In the process, they are building and regaining control over the birthing process in ways that are culturally valuable to their communities (Tabobondung n.d.). As you watch, what do you hear is the meaning and value of the birthing process for parents and their communities? What do they need in a birthing facility to express those values and meanings?



Figure 7.19. “Spirit of Birth” [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

It is important to note that just because this is how childbirth has historically been in the United States doesn’t mean that this is how it *must* be. Childbirth, like many life experiences, can be liberating and an incredible learning opportunity if people are given the tools, support, and care that they need.

Take a few minutes to revisit the table in figure 7.18. Where can you see our current challenges with providing health, safety, and security for all are informed by a colonized worldview?

Going Deeper

This webpage provides an image and description of how the First Nations Health Authority of Canada describes their perspective on health and wellness.

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7.5: Alternative and Decolonizing Models for Health, Safety, and Security

We've organized this chapter to discuss three main human needs that we rely on institutions to support: health, safety, and security. We expect the institution of healthcare to provide medical services to prevent, diagnose, and treat health problems. It's probably safe to say that most people in the United States expect the institution of government to provide safety in the form of protection against crime and violence. Many expect the institution of government to play a role in ensuring its residents have security such as stable shelter.

As we've explored in previous sections, when it comes to equity for health, security, and safety our concepts and the institutions and systems we build for them can improve. But what are the options? Let's look at a few alternative perspectives and models: decolonization of policing, models that redefine public safety, and universal and accessible healthcare.

Universal and Accessible Healthcare

The ACA passed in 2011. Considering health systems in other industrialized countries offer the same benefits to citizens (and often more), it is a stretch to call it an alternate model of healthcare. However, it was the first time in the United States that a national program was approved to ensure that all citizens have access to affordable health care. One important tension arose while the passing of the ACA statute was being debated, however. Some decried that it would bring us closer to a system of socialized medicine. Others felt it didn't go far enough to provide universal healthcare.

Under a **socialized medicine** system, the government owns and runs the healthcare system of a country. It employs doctors, nurses, and other staff and owns and runs the hospitals (Klein 2009). A prime example of socialized medicine is in Great Britain, where the National Health System has provided healthcare to all its residents since 1948 (figure 7.20). As we mentioned in Chapter 6, many people in the United States have negative connotations of the idea of socialism after political leaders in the West stigmatized the term during the Cold War. However, the United States already contains a number of socialized systems.



Figure 7.20. The National Health System (NHS) in Great Britain has provided healthcare to all its residents since the day this photo was taken to mark its beginning in 1948. Aneurin Bevan, Britain's Minister of Health and the spearhead of the NHS, is pictured here with nurses and a patient at Park Hospital, Davyhulme, near Manchester.

One socialized system in the United States that addresses healthcare is the Veterans Health Administration. Funding for the Veterans Health Administration comes from the federal budget, and the government controls its operations, including employing the practitioners. The United States also has two systems related to health that are, in a sense, socialized. Medicare is a government-run health insurance program for everyone over 65 that has existed since 1965.

Medicaid is jointly funded and administered by federal and state entities. It provides free or low-cost health coverage to low-income people and families, pregnant women, and people with disabilities. All three programs offer no-cost care funded through tax dollars. The only thing that separates Medicare and Medicaid from the true definition of a socialist program is that the government does not administer the care.

With **universal healthcare**, the government doesn't necessarily own and administer the healthcare system. It is simply a system that guarantees healthcare coverage for everyone. Germany, Singapore, and Canada all have universal healthcare. Often, healthcare is publicly funded and administered by the government, but the care itself comes from private providers. Private providers are the main difference between universal healthcare and socialized medicine.

The basic principle behind socialized medicine and universal healthcare is that health is a human right for everyone. We all will need medical care at points in our lives, and as a society, we have a collective obligation to care for those who are infirm or vulnerable. While Medicaid, Medicare, and ACA programs are well known, there are other lesser-known programs that have emerged from these principles.



Figure 7.21. A mural depicting a woman of the Black Panther Party, by Rachel Wolfe-Goldsmith, 2021 (left). The Black Panther Party's Franklin Lynch Peoples' Free Health Center in Boston, ca. 1970 (right). The Black Panther Party's creation of free and accessible health programs responded to the discrimination that many Black people face in hospitals and private medical practices.

One example is the People's Free Medical Clinics (PFMCs), organized and funded by the Black Panthers. The Black Panthers were a powerful organization that grew from the Black Power movement in the 1960s. The Black Power movement emphasized Black self-reliance and self-determination more than integration into dominant white systems. Their strategy was to secure their human rights by creating political and cultural organizations that served their interests. Many people know the Black Panthers as a militant socialist organization. What is not widely known is that they created free and accessible health programs throughout the country (figure 7.21).

PFMCs were designed to address the systemic discrimination that many Black people receive in hospitals and private medical practices, leading to a lack of care. It was also designed to address health disparities that Black people and other people of color experience in the United States. Many of the Black Panthers' health programs remain in some shape or form today. For more information on the PFMCs, watch the first 6:46 minutes of this video, "The Black Panthers' Overlooked Health Programs" [Streaming Video] from *TIME* (figure 7.22). As you do, consider what the legacy (the long-lasting impact) is of the PFMCs.



Figure 7.22. "The Black Panthers' Overlooked Health Programs" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Many consider organizations like Occupy Medical and CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) (figure 7.23) as part of the legacy of the PFMCs. Both organizations are located in Oregon and aim to provide free health care, including crisis assistance, to anyone in Eugene or Springfield. Their success is apparent in the growth of their collectives and the services they provide to all people, but especially marginalized community members such as the unhoused.



Figure 7.23. Photo of an Occupy Medical van, March 2013. Occupy Medical aims to provide free health care, including crisis assistance.

Occupy Medical's website states, "We believe that everyone, regardless of income or status, should have access to medical care without the fear of financial burden or being considered unimportant by their caregivers. We strive to listen to everyone who comes to our clinic, to build a positive culture in the community, and to give the best care possible at no cost to the city and the people" ("What is Occupy Medical?" n.d.).

Similarly, CAHOOTS describes itself as "a mobile crisis intervention team, designed as an alternative to police response for non-violent crises. CAHOOTS provides mobile crisis intervention 24/7 in the Eugene-Springfield Metro area. They provide services to stabilize patients who have urgent medical or psychological needs or require an assessment, information, referral, or advocacy. CAHOOTS also provides transportation for patients to their next location for treatment" (White Bird Clinic n.d).

Health, Resilience, and Resistance

Our orientation to nature, our economic systems, and our systems of health care are intertwined. Indigenous or First Nations economic systems generally have not relied on exponential growth and consumption to lead a healthy lifestyle. Many journals from early colonists describe the Americas as places with lush and ample resources. Indigenous Peoples had consistently managed and stewarded the land using techniques perfected throughout generations. Today, over 80 percent of the world's biodiversity is currently stewarded by Indigenous Peoples (Raygorodetsky 2021). This is true, only because Indigenous Peoples have fought, resisted, and created new systems for protecting the land, its inhabitants, and their cultures.

Good health relies on a healthy environment. However, we all struggle with the loss of the natural environment because of five centuries of colonization that persists today. Because Indigenous identity is deeply connected to place and territory, the destruction

of ancestral land is especially detrimental to the health and safety of Indigenous communities. Generally speaking, Indigenous cultures are rooted in place, tradition, and stewardship of the land. Because there are Indigenous Peoples on every acre of land that is habitable or has been habitable by humans, each act of destruction to the environment or peoples is also an act of destruction for the Indigenous Peoples who are from there.

A popular example of Indigenous resistance in the United States was the #NoDAPL (Dakota Access Pipeline) protests, otherwise known as Standing Rock ("No DAPL" 2021). The #NoDAPL movement began when the Standing Rock Sioux peoples decided to fight the construction of an oil pipeline that would be built on their ancestral land, destroy cultural resources, and violate century-old treaties made between the Tribe and the U.S. government. (Optional: Read more about the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe [Website].)

This led to intense protests where Indigenous Peoples, allies, and community members from all over the world came to occupy and resist the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. More than 300 people were injured, and hundreds were arrested by the U.S. government during these protests (Montare 2018). While the Dakota Access Pipeline is still in commission, the #NoDAPL movement paved the way for many contemporary Indigenous resistance movements in North America, such as #StopLine3.



Figure 7.24. A protest sign that reads, "Stop Line 5/Stop Line 3," crude oil pipelines located in Wisconsin on the Tribal territories of the Omāeqnomenew-ahkew (Menominee), Hoocąk (Ho-Chunk), and many other Tribes. (Optional: Read about the Omāeqnomenew-ahkew (Menominee) [Website] and Hoocąk (Ho-Chunk) [Website] Tribes.)

First Nations in the United States, such as the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, as well as many others, have been resisting a Canadian oil company named Enbridge for nearly two decades and continue to do so today ("Stop Enbridge's Line 5" n.d.). Figure 7.24 shows one protest sign of many. Line 3 and Line 5 are both massive pipelines that have already endangered critical ecosystems and ways of life in Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, and Lake Huron. These pipelines break centuries-old treaties between the U.S. government and Tribes. They also endanger the wild rice, or *manoomin*, which is crucial for the health and spiritual identity of many Indigenous Peoples of that area ("Stop the Line 3 Pipeline" n.d.)

Indigenous Peoples' resistance to colonialism, their displacement from ancestral lands, and the destruction of nature have occurred around the world since the arrival of colonists. These campaigns of resistance serve as a crucial reminder that the foundation of our health is reliant on the health of the environment.

Decolonization of Policing

In "The Impact of Racism" presented earlier, we explored how the U.S. policing and incarceration system is too often entangled with racialized practices. That is, racial disparities in policing persist, particularly in the threat or use of force (Wang 2022), and the incarceration system upholds the legacy of slavery (an extension and tool of colonization).

To many thinkers, these practices are built on a foundation of a colonial mindset. We described some aspects of that mindset in the Colonized vs. Indigenous Worldviews section. They include a prioritization of the individual and wealth, prioritization of people's laws over the natural world, and an assumption that our safety needs to be controlled by the state.

To respond, a body of knowledge is being developed around ways of decolonizing many justice-related systems. Those systems include the courts, prisons, mental healthcare, the study of law and criminology, and policing. People from many professions, such as academics, social service practitioners, and elected government officials, are putting critical thought into damaging colonial worldviews that permeate these systems.



Figure 7.25. Police system reformists push for better representation of Indigenous and BIPOC in police forces. The Qalipu First Nation on the Island of Newfoundland, Canada, recruited for an Indigenous Pre-Cadet Training Program with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. (Optional: read more about the Qalipu First Nation on their Cultural Information page [Website].)

Considering what we've learned about the racialization of law enforcement, what does decolonization mean in the context of that system? Some thinkers focus on reform. They might look for better Indigenous and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) representation within police forces (figure 7.25). Others ask that we look toward alternative policing models and "community empowerment" (Porter 2016:561). They ask that agencies better reflect cultural and historical understanding and awareness of the communities in which they police. They see potential in community-based policing programs for building trust between communities and officers.

Reform strategies also might attempt to share authority with communities. Programs that involve First Nations and Inuit policing, and Indigenous patrols in Canada are examples of that model of policing. (Optional: Read more about Inuit communities [Website].) They strive to engage in meaningful collaboration with Indigenous communities in order to incorporate the current ideas and voices of those community members in their policies and practices.

Going further, reform might mean handing over full responsibility. For example, Canada implemented a First Nations Policing Policy (FNPP) in 1991. With that program, agreements are negotiated among First Nations and Inuit communities, provincial or territorial governments, and the federal government. Under such agreements, communities are responsible for managing their own police service, which is primarily staffed by officers of First Nations or Inuit descent (First Nations Chiefs of Police Association n.d.).

However, this reform only goes so far toward decolonization. First, there are significant limitations to these reforms. The primary limitation is in the fact that power remains in the same social structures and population that oppressed the communities involved. In addition, funding is a great challenge for these programs, and they rely on government budgets (What Does Defund the Police Mean? 2024). While programs like the FNPP are thought to give autonomy and self-governance to Indigenous communities, they continue to be restricted through excessive government control (Kiedrowski et al. 2017). Furthermore, these reform programs continue to be built within the framework of the same policing systems.

Because reform measures for policing only go so far toward decolonization, some police accountability groups might lobby for policing to be defunded (figure 7.26). Defundthepolice.org explains defunding as the redirection of funds "from institutions that kill, harm, cage, and control our communities, and investing in violence prevention and interruption, housing, healthcare, income support, employment, and other community-based safety strategies that will produce safer communities for everyone" ("What Is Defund the Police?" n.d.).



Figure 7.26. “Defund the Police” projections at a Seattle protest. Proponents of defunding the police argue with the assumption that our safety needs to be controlled by the state.

This worldview is reflective of decolonizing practices. First, it calls us to diminish our investment in a system that is built on harmful colonial values. For example, it acknowledges that our law enforcement systems are built within a white supremacist culture and history of slavery. Second, it’s a protest against the colonial value of prioritizing the individual. This value prevents us from acting for the well-being of others. Third, it counters the assumption that our safety needs to be controlled by the state.

Redefining Public Safety

The ideas about decolonizing policing through defunding also reframe the way we think about what public safety means. That is, it shifts our notion of creating public safety from punishment, violence, imprisonment, and control to providing care for peoples’ basic needs—especially those who are in crisis or vulnerable. As the Police Brutality Center describes, “…redirecting funds from police departments to social services and public health agencies better-qualified to address some public safety concerns eliminates the need for punitive policing by addressing the root causes of violent crime” (“What Is Defund the Police?” n.d.).

As we mentioned, some thinkers and activists take the question of our police systems another step further and call for abolition, or ending the practice and institutions of punishment. During the George Floyd uprisings, two main messages rose to the surface: 1) “Black Lives Matter,” and 2) “Abolish the Police.” People across the country rallied and joined each other in the streets to decry the violence that people of color, particularly Black people, experienced at the hands of the police. This movement was widespread because of the abolitionist work that had been happening on smaller scales for decades. These movements are more thoroughly reframing what public safety means.



Figure 7.27. The Facebook banner of Critical Resistance, an organization in Portland, Oregon, that works to "end the prison industrial complex by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe" (Critical Resistance).

Organizations like Critical Resistance (figure 7.27), Interrupting Criminalization, Transform Harm, and the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective have held these movements. They have created containers where communities build systems of safety that are not founded on racism, violence, or punishment. Coined and practiced by these collectives, some of the processes that are used are called "transformative justice" and "community accountability."

Mia Mingus is the founder of the organization SOIL: A Transformative Justice Project. She defines **transformative justice** as a "political framework and approach for responding to violence, harm, and abuse." It begins with a belief that oppression is at the root of all forms of harm, abuse, and assault, and it works to address and confront that oppression.

As a practice, it seeks to respond to violence without creating more violence. Some practitioners think of this process as a way of getting in "right relation," or creating justice together. Responses and interventions don't rely on law enforcement or the criminal legal system, and they actively invest in what we know prevents violence: healing, resilience, and providing safety for all ("Transformative Justice and Community Accountability" n.d.).

Related to transformative justice is **community accountability**. It's a community-based strategy, rather than a police/prison-based strategy, to address violence within our communities. The organization INCITE! explains community accountability as a "process in which a community—a group of friends, a family, a church, a workplace, a neighborhood, etc.—works together to transform the conditions that reinforce oppression and violence. They might provide safety and support to community members who are violently targeted. Or they might address community members' abusive behavior, creating a process for them to account for their actions and transform their behavior" ("Transformative Justice and Community Accountability" n.d.).

Watch the first 2:05 minutes of "What Is Transformative Justice?" [Streaming Video] (figure 7.28). You can hear more from Mingus there. How do you notice the practitioners define the scope and potential of transformative justice? (Optional: If you have time, it's worth watching the entire video for a broader understanding of transformative justice.)



Figure 7.28 "What Is Transformative Justice?" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Both transformative justice and community accountability address harm in communities by focusing on healing the person who was harmed. Simultaneously, they work to fix the conditions that made the harm possible in the first place. In other words, these abolitionist programs work toward public safety in the United States by addressing the root causes that result in harm.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

In Chapters 3 and 8, we referred to Indigenous knowledge in the context of decolonization. As we decolonize practices and worldviews, the knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples have room to be more valued in society. One way to refer to knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples is **Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK).**

TEK encompasses the wisdom, intelligence, innovations, and practices of Indigenous and local communities that have been passed down through generations. TEK focuses on the relationship of living beings with one another and with their environment. While not new to institutions in the United States, TEK is increasingly being considered as crucial for whole understandings of healthy human and environmental systems.

TEK Inclusion



DECEMBER 01, 2022

White House Releases First-of-a-Kind Indigenous Knowledge Guidance for Federal Agencies

Figure 7.29. A December 2022 blog on the White House website announced guidance to federal departments and agencies to apply Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

In December 2022, a team from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy submitted a blog to the White House website. It announced a marked intention in shifting our colonial-based worldviews of health, security, and safety. The blog provided a definition of TEK and explains its value:

> *(TEK) applies to phenomena across biological, physical, social, cultural, and spiritual systems. Indigenous Peoples have developed their knowledge systems over millennia, and*

> *continue to do so based on evidence acquired through direct contact with the environment, long-term experiences, extensive observations, lessons, and skills.*
>
> *This familial intimacy with nature enables the ability to detect often subtle, micro-changes and to base decisions on deep understanding of patterns and processes of change in the natural world of which people are a part. The information and summative historical and cultural ecology contained within Indigenous languages, practices, values, place names, songs, and stories hold data and knowledge that are relevant today (Daniel et al. 2022).*

The blog also introduced new guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies to incorporate TEK in their work (figure 7.29). Created at a White House Tribal Nations Summit, the guidance recognizes that in order to make the best scientific and policy decisions possible, the federal government should value and find ways to respectfully include Indigenous knowledge. This was the first guidance document of its kind drafted by members of White House offices (Daniel et al. 2022).

The number of people with institutional power who recognize the need for Indigenous participation appears to be growing. They are often those who see limitations and concerns with our current systems, especially with those systems related to healthy human and environmental systems. One of the institutions illustrating this recognition is the government.





Figure 7.30. Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais (left) of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (right).

The increased respect for TEK in government reflects a couple of ways we are redefining our notion of health, safety, and security as a society. One, there is growing acknowledgement of the relationship between our environmental crisis and colonial worldviews and practices. During White House consultations with Tribes, Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (figure 7.30) shared:

> *Had our traditional cultural practices and ceremony not been outlawed and had our information keepers been listened to over the centuries, we probably would not find ourselves in the position we are today—with the losses and extinction and contamination we face as our global community. This is a valuable component of being able to face not only climate change but the preservation and protection of all of our resources (Daniel et al. 2022).*

With climate change, our health, safety, and security are increasingly related to our vulnerability in our changing environment. Redefining health, safety, and security in this context means having a deeper understanding of living systems and humans' impact on their balance.

Two, if redefining public safety involves providing care for peoples' basic needs—especially those who are in crisis or vulnerable—it is important to acknowledge that our environmental crisis is creating disproportionate hardship for the poor, Indigenous, and people of color.

Decolonization of Health

In this chapter's Colonized vs. Indigenous Worldviews section, we noted some priorities of an Indigenous worldview on health: 1) taking responsibility for your own health and wellness, 2) knowing traditions, culture, and medicine, and 3) acknowledging that land is what sustains us physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. The increased respect for TEK in society means more people have access to this perspective. It also reflects ways that health is becoming decolonized.

At the same time, there is a resurgence of traditional medicinal practices in Indigenous communities in the United States. For example, the Public Broadcasting System introduced the story of how Indigenous Peoples in California are practicing herbalism with traditional gathering and processing practices to provide for all of their food and medicinal needs.

Watch the 11:35-minute video "Gathering Medicine | Tending the Wild" [Streaming Video] (figure 7.31). It describes TEK in relation to health, and it shows some of the ecological knowledge that members of Indigenous Nations in California keep and apply. As you watch, consider: What do the people in the video consider important for healthy living?



Figure 7.31. "Gathering Medicine | Tending the Wild" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

In order to provide good health, safety, and security for our communities as climate change advances, it is essential that we better understand the world and include Indigenous knowledge for our well-being. Scientists, environmentalists, and activists are turning to TEK for better ways of living with and managing ecosystems. Many Indigenous communities continue to live close to the Earth, understanding how to act within Earth's systems for survival. In Chapters 3 and 8, we referred to Indigenous knowledge in the context of decolonization. That is, as we decolonize embedded practices and worldviews, the knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples have room to be more valued in society.

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7.6: Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the intersecting systems and institutions that are designed to provide health, safety, and security in the United States. The way we build our systems for these human needs are influenced by the way we socially construct our understanding of them. That includes the meaning we make of illness and the medical experience, the worldviews we inhabit about health, safety, and security, the ones we historically shunned, and the ones that are returning. The way our institutions are built for caring for our health, and keeping us safe are influenced by our social location and our human interactions. Often those interactions yield unequal access, discrimination, and deep harm, as they are built on a legacy of colonization. It is the negative effects of these interactions, and prompts from climate change, that have nudged social changes so we may reframe our needs around health and safety. From that reframing we are able to construct new ways, or recall traditional ways, of providing care and safety for everyone.

Review of Learning Outcomes

This chapter has offered you the opportunity to:

- Explain how sociology applies policy evaluation and a social construction lens to study healthcare in the United States.
- Illustrate how groups experience health, safety, and security in the United States differently, and how government plays a role.
- Explain how colonization shapes contemporary issues around health, safety, and security.
- Discuss alternative and decolonizing models for providing health, safety, and security in society.

Key Terms

community accountability: a community-based strategy, rather than a police/prison-based strategy, to address violence within communities.

enculturation: the gradual process of an individual or group adapting to the norms and values of a culture in which they are immersed.

global majority: Black, Indigenous, and other people of color and typically (though not all) with origins in Africa, Central and South America, and Asia who constitute approximately 85 percent of the global population.

government: the institution by which a society organizes itself and allocates authority to accomplish collective goals and provide benefits that a society needs.

health: the extent of a person's physical, environmental, emotional, mental, and social well-being.

healthcare: the system of norms, rules, and organizations established to provide medical services.

medical sociology: the systematic study of how humans manage issues of health and illness, disease and disorders, and health care for both the sick and the healthy.

racial bias: preconceived beliefs, attitudes, and expectations about racial group members.

socialized medicine: a healthcare system that is owned and run by the government.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK): the wisdom and intelligence, innovations, and practices of Indigenous and local communities that have been handed down through generations; TEK focuses on the relationship of living beings with one another and with their environment.

transformative justice: a political framework and approach for responding to violence, harm, and abuse. It seeks to respond to violence through harm reduction, or without creating more violence.

universal healthcare: a system that guarantees healthcare coverage for everyone.

Comprehension Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=777#h5p-7

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 8: Education- Inequality and Justice

Learning Objectives

This chapter offers you the opportunity to:

- Discuss how sociological perspectives view the role of education in unequal societies.
- Describe the relationship between education, poverty, and wealth with an intersectional lens.
- Illustrate the importance of social and cultural capital in education.
- Identify how policy can impact access to education and educational outcomes.
- Discuss how education can be a vehicle to advance genocide and cultural hegemony.
- Explain how education can support social justice and cultural restoration.

8.1: Chapter Story
8.2: Perspectives on Education in Unequal Societies
8.3: Policy Matters for Social Justice
8.4: Genocide and Cultural Restoration
8.5: Teaching That Transforms
8.6: Conclusion
8.7: References

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8.1: Chapter Story

CULTURAL RESTORATION AND THE WISDOM OF INDIGENOUS-DESIGNED LEARNING

In southwest Colombia, members of the Indigenous Inga Tribe are creating a university with the intention of radical social and ecological transformation. Panamazonic Biocultural Pluriversity AWAI is located in the Putumayo region, where the Amazon and Andes meet. It centers on teaching Indigenous traditional knowledge and aims to address solutions to challenges the Inga people experience. While the university conveys the Inga way of life to their youth, it is also a model that values knowledge from multiple cultural sources. The term "Pluriversity" distinguishes it from colonialist models of education that teach cultural supremacy (the idea that some cultures are more advanced or more valuable than others).



Figure 8.1. A graffiti wall in Mocoa, Putumayo, Colombia, depicts the richness of the area, nurturing of the biodiversity, and resistance to industrial exploitation.

Of great importance to the organizers is teaching how to best preserve their culture and how to best protect and nurture the biodiversity of their territories (figures 8.1 and 8.2). To the Inga people, raising awareness of the interconnectedness between human lives and biodiversity is key to this protection. The Pluriversity is also a model of education that incorporates the values of *sumak kawsay*, Buen Vivir, and "good living" we learned about. In this way, it is part of a larger social movement.



Figure 8.2. A young boy looks over a farm damaged by fumigation in Putumayo, Colombia.

Hernando Chindoy, a leader of the Inga community, has taken a lead role in creating the Pluriversity. Watch this six-minute interview: "Hernando Chindoy – Two Questions" (figure 8.3) to hear why he believes an Indigenous university is important and some guiding values that inform the project. As you watch, consider what Hernando means by "we learn and reproduce that which is not ours." Consider what he means by the "imposed layers" that need to be dismantled or transformed.



Figure 8.3. "Hernando Chindoy – Two Questions" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Hernando shares that the project will "reaffirm" their community "as Inga," in great part by amplifying the use of their language. (Optional: Read more about the Inga Tribe (Spanish Language) [Website].) They also hope to "educate a new generation of Indigenous youth to be prepared for a professional future in their territories and beyond." It's a powerful example of cognitive justice, the right for different traditions of knowledge to coexist (Devenir Universidad 2021).

Education in Bolivia: A Very Brief History

Projects similar to Panamazonic Biocultural Pluriversity AWAI have emerged in South America over the last several decades. But they are the fruit of considerable resistance and organizing by Indigenous communities over generations. While the experiences are similar across the continent, let's look to Bolivia's story to better understand this history.

When colonizers from Spain arrived in South America, they insisted on teaching the Spanish language and customs. They set up schools led by Catholic missionary priests and brothers, putting pressure on local families to assimilate (Gertostado n.d.). In Bolivia, early colonial education was mostly reserved for the wealthy. However, missionaries would teach Indigenous groups enough language to convert them (Hudson et al. 1991).

In the 1900s, Indigenous communities organized underground schools to educate their children with freedom and autonomy (Jiménez Quispe 2011). As Spanish rule continued to take hold, restricting education was one method of restricting access to power. Then, in the early 1950s, during a national revolution and despite resistance from wealthy landowners, the Bolivian government mandated universal education.

Part of the goal of this government-led education was to separate Indigenous people from their cultural practices. Spanish continued to be required. And practices considered "superstitions" were replaced by more "scientific" education. This was an education that put local Indigenous culture at risk (Contreras 1999).

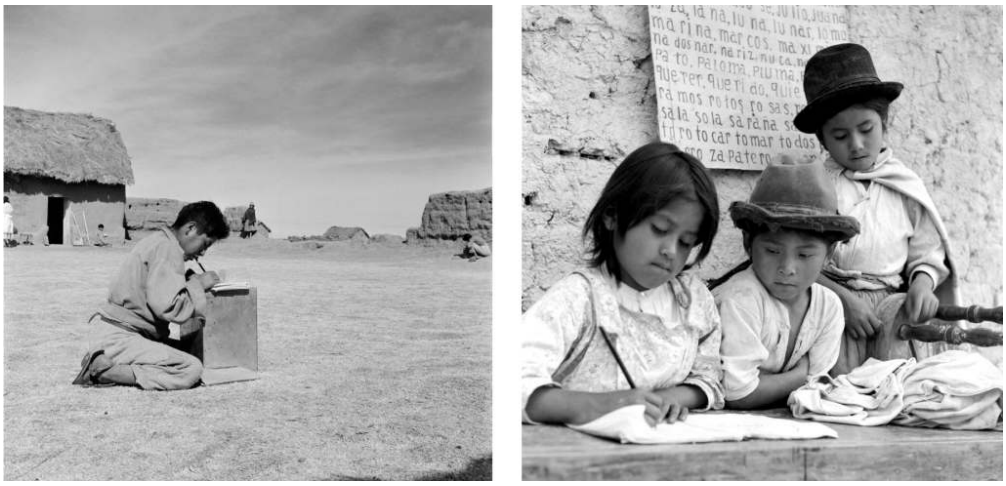


Figure 8.4. After the revolution in Bolivia, learning to read and write became increasingly necessary to survive. An Indigenous student in Huma Marca, Bolivia (1955), writes his assignments with a makeshift desk (left). Students in La Paz, Bolivia (1955), study outdoors while awaiting the completion of a school building (right).

Despite this "castellanización," the turning of a society's language and culture into Spanish form, nationalized education had become crucial for survival in Bolivian society. So many Indigenous communities in Bolivia welcomed the opportunity to send their children to school to learn to read and write in a "modern" Bolivia (figure 8.4).

However, many Indigenous students in this era applied their education to advance the Indigenous movement (Jiménez Quispe 2011). This included their right to education based on their own cultural practices. For example, this statement was written by students in 1973:

> ***Excerpt from the Tiwanaku Manifesto***
>
> *We, Quechua and Aymara farmers…feel economically exploited and culturally and politically oppressed. In Bolivia there has not been an integration of cultures but rather only a layering and domination, maintaining us in the lowest and most exploited stratum in the social pyramid.*
>
> *The education [we receive] not only seeks to convert the Indian into a species of mixed person without definition or personality, but it also pursues his assimilation into the western and capitalist culture (Jiménez Quispe 2011 in Rivera Cusicanqui 1986).*

Policy and Indigenous Autonomy

This legacy of resistance to colonial education continued in Bolivia. Indigenous education projects began to prioritize Indigenous knowledge. These changes came hand in hand with increasing human rights violations against Indigenous Peoples in Bolivia. Because they live on land that armed groups often want to control, Indigenous lives became particularly at risk (figure 8.5).

Indigenous education projects also began to incorporate Western education to prepare students to make change for their communities from within Western institutions. Eventually, Indigenous leaders found their way to spaces of power, such as the government, where they began to win policy changes that better served their communities.



Figure 8.5. During Colombia's civil war, schools became part of a strategy to keep internally displaced children safe. A young person peers into a garden box in Putumayo, Colombia, as part of a United Nations project, "School, a space of protection" in 2018 (left). Students at the Mixed Indigenous School on a Kichwa Reservation in Putumayo in 2010 (right).

Bolivia's Constitution of 2009 was a significant achievement for education. It recognized the country as a plurinational state. That is, it acknowledged the country is made up of many Indigenous Tribes with their own languages and customs. It dictates that, in addition to Spanish, education must be provided in the Indigenous languages of students (The Constitute Project n.d.).

Equally important are the Constitution's articles that uphold Indigenous autonomy, acknowledging Indigenous Peoples' rights to decide how to educate their children. Education is an agent of social change. When communities and students question authority to fight for the kind of education they need, education can be a force for social justice.

In this chapter, we'll explore how education can be used as a tool to reinforce inequality historically, currently, and worldwide. We'll also examine how education serves as a medium for resistance against that inequality. It will encourage you to ask questions about how education, as a conveyor of culture, influences your life experiences and the experiences of others.

- How does our access to certain cultural practices and knowledge play a role in educational inequality?
- How can education be a vehicle to impose a culture upon another society and advance cultural genocide?
- How can education support social justice and cultural restoration?

Going Deeper

For more information on the Indigenous University (Panamazonic Biocultural Pluriversity AWAIP), watch more of the video with Hernando: "Hernando Chindoy – Indigenous University" [Streaming Video] (starting with 6:02). Also, see the website of Devenir Universidad, the Swiss project that is partnering with the Inga organizers.

For a snapshot of the state of Bolivia's education system today, watch "Indigenous Bolivians Learn to Read and Write" [Streaming Video].

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8.2: Perspectives on Education in Unequal Societies



Figure 8.6. If you were to ask students around the world what education means to them, you would receive many different answers based on their life circumstances. (Optional: Watch "What Does Education Mean to You?" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

When sociologists study the social institution of education, they focus on various questions. Often, those questions fit within the theoretical frameworks we introduced in Chapter 3. Functionalists, for example, ask how schools are instrumental in helping societies agree on morals and what is acceptable behavior. Conflict theorists ask how education supports the power of the dominant class. They see that gender, race, ability, or other social locations impact who teaches and who learns. Symbolic interactionists focus their inquiry on how people interact in educational settings, and the symbols, meanings, and consequences related to those interactions. Let's look at those questions and perspectives in the context of unequal societies.

Democracy and Americanization: A Functionalist View

If you were to ask students around the world what education means to them (figure 8.6), you would receive many different answers based on their life circumstances. But most would point to specific life functions that schooling prepares them for. That might be gaining employment, supporting their family, or fulfilling life goals.

When studying education and social change, functionalists focus on the positive functions that education fulfills. They contend that education contributes to two kinds of functions for society. The first is manifest functions, which are the intended and visible functions. The second is latent functions, which are hidden, not recognized, or unintended functions.



Figure 8.7. Students learn how to get along with others through group activities like this parachute game (left). Dress-up play in kindergarten serves to prepare students for adult economic roles like this young police officer (right).

Manifest Functions

One major manifest function associated with education is socialization. In the late 19th century, the French sociologist Émile Durkheim characterized schools as "socialization agencies that teach children how to get along with others and prepare them for adult economic roles" (Durkheim 1956) (figure 8.7). Since then, sociologists have extensively discussed the role of schools in producing a workforce for society. But socialization in schools also involves learning the values and norms of the society as a whole. Specifically, schools teach the values and norms of dominant culture.

Two of the most widespread dominant U.S. values students learn are individualism and competition. Instructors socialize students to value individualism and competition by openly rewarding the "best" individual. U.S. schools also teach patriotism as a cultural value, with associated norms and rituals. For example, students recite the Pledge of Allegiance each morning and learn about national heroes and the nation's history (figure 8.8).



Figure 8.8. A manifest function of education may be teaching patriotism as a cultural value. Elementary school children, most of Japanese ancestry, reciting the pledge of allegiance to the U.S. flag at a school in San Francisco, California, 1942 (Library of Congress n.d.) (left). A teacher and fourth graders in Honolulu, Hawai'i, lead the Pledge of Allegiance (right).

Educational systems also serve a manifest function of social control. Social control happens as instructors and school leaders encourage—and sometimes force—compliance with the norms of dominant society. For example, U.S. schools have established comprehensive systems for punishment, ranging from solitary confinement to interactions with campus police officers. Punishments are explained by school personnel as necessary to better equip students to navigate the authorities in the world. However, there are important implications to this system.

First, many punishment methods in schools normalize violence and isolation as forms of discipline (Michaelson and Durrant 2020). Sitting in a corner or expulsion is common. Nineteen states in the United States still allow corporal punishment (physical punishment intended to cause physical pain or discomfort) in the classroom, even though research shows that it's not effective in redirecting student behavior (Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor 2016; Regev et al. 2012) (figure 8.9).

Second, Black and Brown youth are treated with discrimination (Gershoff 2016). For example, the school-to-prison pipeline refers to a national trend that funnels students out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal legal systems. Many of these youth are Black or Brown and would benefit from additional support and resources. Instead, they are isolated, punished, and pushed out through "zero-tolerance" policies and the criminalization of minor infractions of school rules. As law enforcement officers have been increasingly assigned to schools, students are exposed to an institution that has a history of institutional racism.



Figure 8.9. The social control that schools enforce is often challenged. A protester in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, wears a mask with a slogan of the Black Lives Matter movement: "I can't breathe." These were the last words of Eric Garner, an unarmed man who was killed in 2014 by a New York City police officer. They display a sign that protests police presence in schools and calls for counseling in schools as a better option.

Education, being used for socialization and social control with discrimination, has a long history in the United States. After the Revolutionary War, then again in the mid-1800s, government leaders wanted to establish a common set of shared values for the nation: freedom, liberty, patriotism, and unity. They aimed for a **democracy:** a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives.



Figure 8.10. A cropped detail from the mural *Government* painted by Elihu Vedder in 1896. The tablet that reads "A government of the people by the people for the people" shows an early U.S. ambition of government. Education in this era was believed to support democracy.

On one hand, early U.S. leaders argued that the democracy they strived for depended on freemen (those not enslaved or living as serfs) being able to read and write. Education was championed, particularly for families who were immigrants or poor (Bandiera et al. 2018) (figure 8.10). So through shared values, there could be more social stability in a rapidly expanding country. However, it was illegal for enslaved people to receive an education (and in some states, illegal for freed Blacks). Textbooks transmitted ethnic, racist, and sexist prejudices. This idealistic vision of a democracy of people unified with free and universal education was a myth.

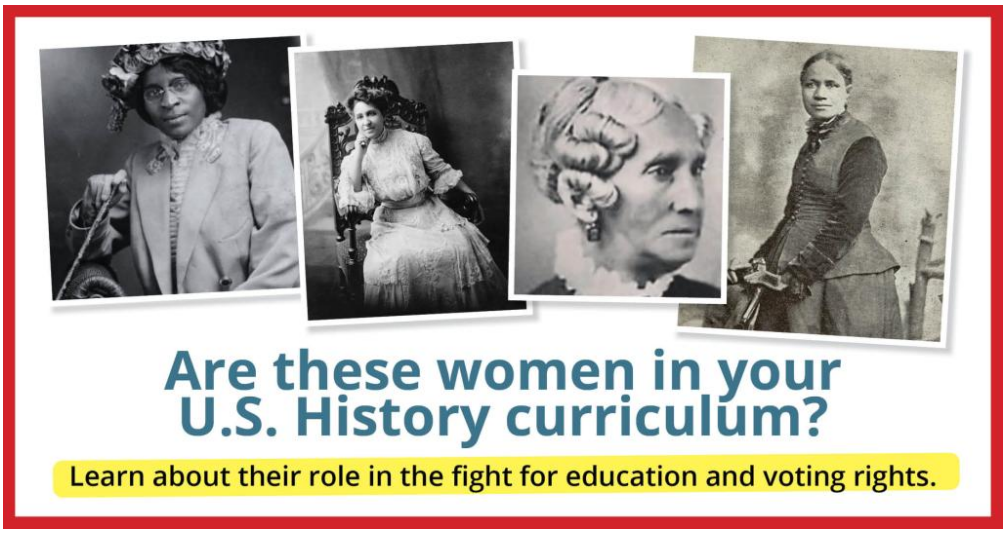


Figure 8.11. An image from the Zinn Education Project that aims to "introduce students to a more accurate, complex, and engaging understanding of history than is found in traditional textbooks and curricula." Photographs are of Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Mary Church Terrell, Maria Stewart, and Frances Watkins Harper (Zinn Education Project 2022).

This myth plays out in many ways today. In some U.S. schools, there are vast omissions related to slavery, genocide of Indigenous Peoples, forced displacement, and lack of recognition of women's contributions to society (figure 8.11). Or reconsider the two groups of students reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in figure 8.8. At least two of the Japanese-American students shown there were forced into World War II internment camps soon after the photo was taken (Library of Congress n.d.). And Hawai'i, where the other students live, became a U.S. state after a U.S.-led illegal coup. Despite these conflicts, students were asked to express patriotism.

Latent Functions

Education also fulfills latent (hidden, not recognized, or unintended) functions. One important example, more often seen on university campuses, is providing a place for students to learn about and act on social issues. In 2011, the Occupy Wall Street movement swept across college campuses all over the United States (figure 8.12). The movement brought diverse groups of students together to address social and economic inequality. This is essentially a function of education that serves democracy.



Figure 8.12. A latent function of education is the creation of places to act on social issues. Protest encampments propelled the Occupy Wall Street movement on U.S. campuses like this one at Harvard University in 2011.

Other latent functions, like their manifest cousins, have mixed implications when examined with an equity lens. For example, in school and college, students establish peer relationships and develop what sociologists call social networks. As we described in Chapter 2, social networks are social structures that exist between individuals and organizations. Social networks are important for connecting individuals through familiarity and for sharing access to resources.

In the educational setting, classmates or sports teammates might become friends, share tips on homework or dating, provide connections to extracurricular events, and offer access to myriad resources related to doing well in life. Those networks might last well beyond school years. The connections can help members access resources such as advanced education, jobs, or financial opportunities. However, membership in groups that have more financial and educational resources is often “pay to play.” That is, you have to pay extra fees to join activities or have specific clothing or equipment to be part of those groups. And even when there isn’t a financial barrier, you may not have time for extra socializing if you need to work and go to school at the same time. This function of education that leads to professional networking is only accessible to people with expendable income (Renn 2022).

Improved socioeconomic social status has also been traditionally identified as a latent function of education. However, education is not guaranteed to work this way. Social status requires access to social networks that are not available to some. Furthermore, some have access to better education than others. Even if direct access to education is the same, if students are not associated with the class and culture of the dominant society, they can experience obstacles to receiving an equitable education.

In the next section, we’ll discuss social capital, which dives further into the unequal implications of social networks. We’ll also discuss education’s impact on social mobility and how well this applies across groups of diverse social locations.



Figure 8.13. Pakistani Malala Yousafzaï was praised for her courage in fighting for girls' right to education, and in 2014 she became the world's youngest Nobel Prize laureate. In 2023, the United Nations announced that 130 million girls are denied access to education around the world (Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights 2023).

As students are asked about the meaning of education for them (figure 8.6), their responses will inevitably differ greatly based on their social location. Education for some means that they can help their families eat and maintain shelter. If you are a new immigrant student, education might simply mean gaining a better chance of doing well in your new home. If you are a girl in many parts of the world, education may be something that is even difficult to imagine obtaining (figure 8.13). Education for others means they can pursue the career that interests them the most.

Conflict theorists in sociology look at how education maintains or challenges unequal social power. As we examined in Chapter 3, students from under-resourced communities don't receive the same educational opportunities as their more affluent peers, even when they have the same intellectual potential and are equally hard-working. This inequality helps to maintain existing structures of power across generations. Conflict theorists also examine students' experiences through the lens of other intersecting social locations, as education reinforces and perpetuates social inequalities.

Social Mobility

One of the critical questions sociologists examine when they consider education and social change is whether education actually makes a difference in an individual's life or the quality of life in a society. A common saying for those who work to end family poverty is "there are two ways out of poverty—education and savings." Is this really true for all families?



Figure 8.14. Early conflict theorists critiqued education as a strategy for keeping working-class students within the lower class. They might point to scenes such as this, which depicts new immigrant students practicing professional (as well as gender) roles at the North Bennet St. Industrial School in Boston, Massachusetts (sometime between 1908 and 1918). Boys equipped the lunchroom, and girls provided the wait service. Today, the North Bennet School trains students to excel at various professional crafts.

Getting out of poverty, or changing one's quality of life, is considered social mobility. As we described in Chapter 3, social mobility is an individual's or group's movement through the class hierarchy due to changes in income, occupation, or wealth. Families are an important group to consider with social mobility. When we consider the dream of immigrants to the United States in the past and today, many say that their aspiration is to work hard so that their children can have a better life than they do. Over time, individuals and families can get richer or poorer, moving between social classes. Education can contribute to social mobility, but many other influences impact a person's relative ability to benefit from education and their potential for social mobility.

Early conflict theorists identified schools as designed to train working-class students to accept and retain their position as lower-class members of society (figure 8.14). They argue that our educational systems disperse resources with inequity, allocating more resources and opportunities to students in richer neighborhoods (Lauen and Tyson 2008). This inequity creates barriers to escaping poverty or improving the quality of one's life. In Chapter 3 we introduced the inequities in education that exist in the United States based on intersecting social locations. That is, students from families with more wealth and income are more likely to have better access to educational opportunities and better chances of educational attainment.

Tracking

Tracking is considered one of the barriers to benefiting from education for some. **Tracking** is a formalized sorting system that places students on "tracks" (advanced versus low achievers) that perpetuate inequalities. Some educators believe that students do better in tracked classes because they are with students of similar ability and may have access to more individual attention from teachers. However, conflict theorists argue that tracking leads to self-fulfilling prophecies in which students live up (or down) to teacher and societal expectations (Education Week 2004).

Race, ethnicity, and gender-based tracking are easy to see in historical examples. In the early 1900s, Mexican-American children attended segregated schools, which deliberately defined what they could learn based on their ethnicity and their gender. For example, in 1923 in San Fernando, California, the Mexican Industrial School defined the curriculum in this way:

> *Girls will have more extensive sewing, knitting, crocheting, drawn work, rug weaving, and pottery. They will be taught personal hygiene, homemaking, and care of the sick. With the aid of a nursery, they will learn the care of little children. The boys will be given more advanced agriculture and shop work of various kinds (Los Angeles School Journal 1923 in Gonzalez 1996:47).*

Mexican-American students in the United States were not only segregated, but they were also tracked into gender-specific vocational occupations.

But tracking is not just a historical practice. One way to see tracking today is by examining the Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The degree to which students have access to AP courses, and the rates by which they pass the AP test, all vary significantly by race and ethnicity, class, and geographic location. Researchers estimated that during the 2015–2016 school year, Black, Indigenous, and Hispanic students and students from rural areas had less access to AP exams. Indigenous and rural students were most likely to attend a high school with no AP offerings (Chatterji et al. 2021). These differences continue when you look at the amount of school support offered to students to learn the AP content and then actually take the test.

Social and Cultural Capital: A Symbolic Interactionist View

Let's look one more time at what the diverse responses from students around the world might be when asked what education means to them (figure 8.6). As we described, responses will vary depending on their class, race, ethnicity, and gender. They will also vary according to their culture of origin. For example, if students were raised in an upper-class family, it might be important to them to achieve a final doctorate degree to meet the expectations of their social circle. If they were raised on a Native American reservation, they might find the most value in devoting their education to the betterment of their community.

Inquiry about meaning is at the core of symbolic interactionism. In the context of education, this perspective focuses on the cultural symbols present (gestures, signs, objects, signals, and words) in an educational setting. The meaning of those symbols is created through interactions, so everyone can understand that educational setting. For example, what meaning is there to desks and chairs in classrooms all facing forward in a row versus in a circle? How do the communication and language of principals influence the experience of teachers? How does social interaction with teachers affect how well students learn?

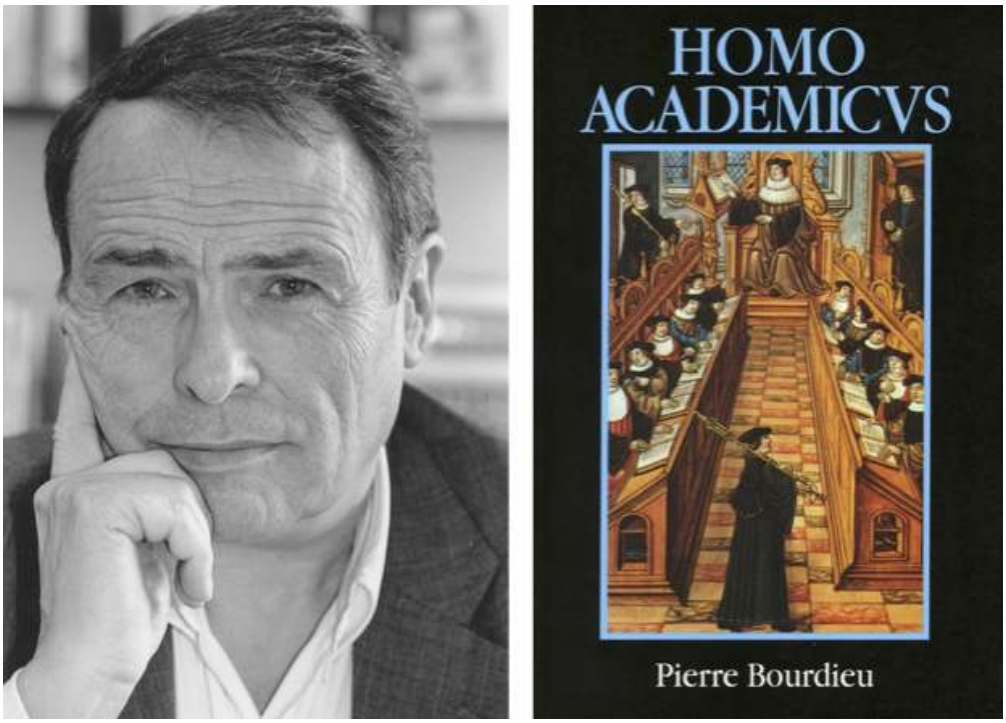


Figure 8.15. Pierre Bourdieu's work connects class inequality and educational inequality (left). Bourdieu's book, *Homo Academicus* (1990), is an analysis of the academic world (right).

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu studied interactions in the context of social capital and cultural capital (figure 8.15). **Social capital** is the social networks or connections an individual has available to them due to group membership. **Cultural capital** is the cultural knowledge and items that help us navigate a society. It includes tastes, mannerisms, skills, material belongings, and credentials.

When expressions of cultural capital are shared, like specific tastes in music or how you hold your utensils, groups create a sense of collective identity. The degree to which members understand and follow the cultural capital of a group establishes their social

position.

Applied to education, the kind of cultural capital a student has alters their experiences and opportunities in school. Because students of upper and middle classes are more likely to be raised by parents who graduated from college or have a college degree, they will enter school with more cultural capital to navigate the formal state-run educational systems than families of lower-class status. Ways of interacting and producing work, as well as understanding instructions and tests, are often the cultural capital of society members with more power and resources. This leaves others struggling to identify with cultural values and competencies outside their social group.

For example, there has been a great deal of discussion over what standardized tests such as the SAT really measure. Many argue that the tests group students by cultural capital rather than by natural intelligence. Consider the example SAT question used in the late 1980s in figure 8.16.

RUNNER: MARATHON
(A) envoy: embassy
(B) martyr: massacre
(C) oarsman: regatta
(D) horse: stable[43]

Figure 8.16. This SAT question relies on cultural capital or class-based knowledge to answer, rather than knowledge learned through study.

Most students probably know what a runner is and what a marathon is. However, many of the possible answers require specific cultural or class knowledge. In general, words like embassy, oarsman, regatta, and stable are typically used only by upper-class people in everyday life, which puts students from lower-income families at an unfair disadvantage. Passing the test is therefore based on cultural knowledge that some students do not have access to.

Colleges and universities are beginning to recognize that these and other standardized admissions tests are racially, ethnically, and culturally biased. Some schools are not using the test scores, and others are making the test optional (Carey 2023).

The power of cultural capital as a resource points to another concept examined in sociology, hidden curriculum. **Hidden curriculum** refers to the implicit social and cultural expectations, designed by dominant culture, that inform the educational process. This hidden curriculum reinforces the positions of those with higher cultural capital and bestows status unequally.

For example, consider how part of doing well in college is about following specific expectations of engaging in class, or understanding why an instructor would have office hours, or knowing that you can ask for an incomplete grade. Fifty-six percent of U.S. college students are the first in their families to attend college (Renn 2022). A first-generation student may not know these basic routines and practices of a college or university.

Hidden curriculum can go much deeper than these basics. First, critical theorists consider the socialization of students to strictly follow individuals in authority and take their rewards and punishments seriously as part of a hidden curriculum. There's an irony that, although teachers convey the positive values of democracy in their political science curriculum, schools are rarely run democratically. Second, students are expected to follow the norms and values related to the dominant culture, which gives more validation to white, male, Christian, and cisgender bodies.

We can see this clearly in school dress codes, as they regulate which bodies are acceptable and which are not. For example, many dress codes prohibit wearing hats, do-rags, bandanas, or hijabs. This prohibition is racially and ethnically discriminating and supports oppression based on religion. In many cases, head coverings express a person's racial, ethnic, or religious identity.

Another example is when dress codes prevent girls (but not boys) from wearing spaghetti straps or other clothing that shows too much skin (figure 8.17). Applying these rules to just girls is sexist. Professor of education Rouhollah Aghasaleh adds that this rule becomes part of supporting rape culture because the rules blame the survivor of sexual violence for "inciting" the attack, rather than holding the perpetrator responsible (Aghasaleh 2018).

Dress codes are also often written with gender binaries in mind. If a person is genderfluid or non-binary, they are invisible and unrecognized in the eyes of the school administration. If transgender or genderqueer students are forced to conform to gender-restrictive codes, they may have to do so at the cost of their identity. Social scientists point out that the results of this hardship may

mean decreased academic success, more disciplinary issues, homelessness, and eventually incarceration (Greytak et al. 2009; Grant et al. 2011 in Glickman 2016).

Dress codes, as elements of hidden curriculum, reinforce the power, values, and behaviors of the dominant class. As Aghasaleh explains: "…our textbooks, teaching strategies, and instructional guides all tend to discriminate against bodies that do not fit" (Aghasaleh 2018:99). Non-white, lower-class, and female bodies are considered "disruptive, dangerous, or distracting" (Aghasaleh 2018:104). What is your assessment? Does the dress code in figure 8.17 sexualize women, support racism, or marginalize queer or non-binary students?

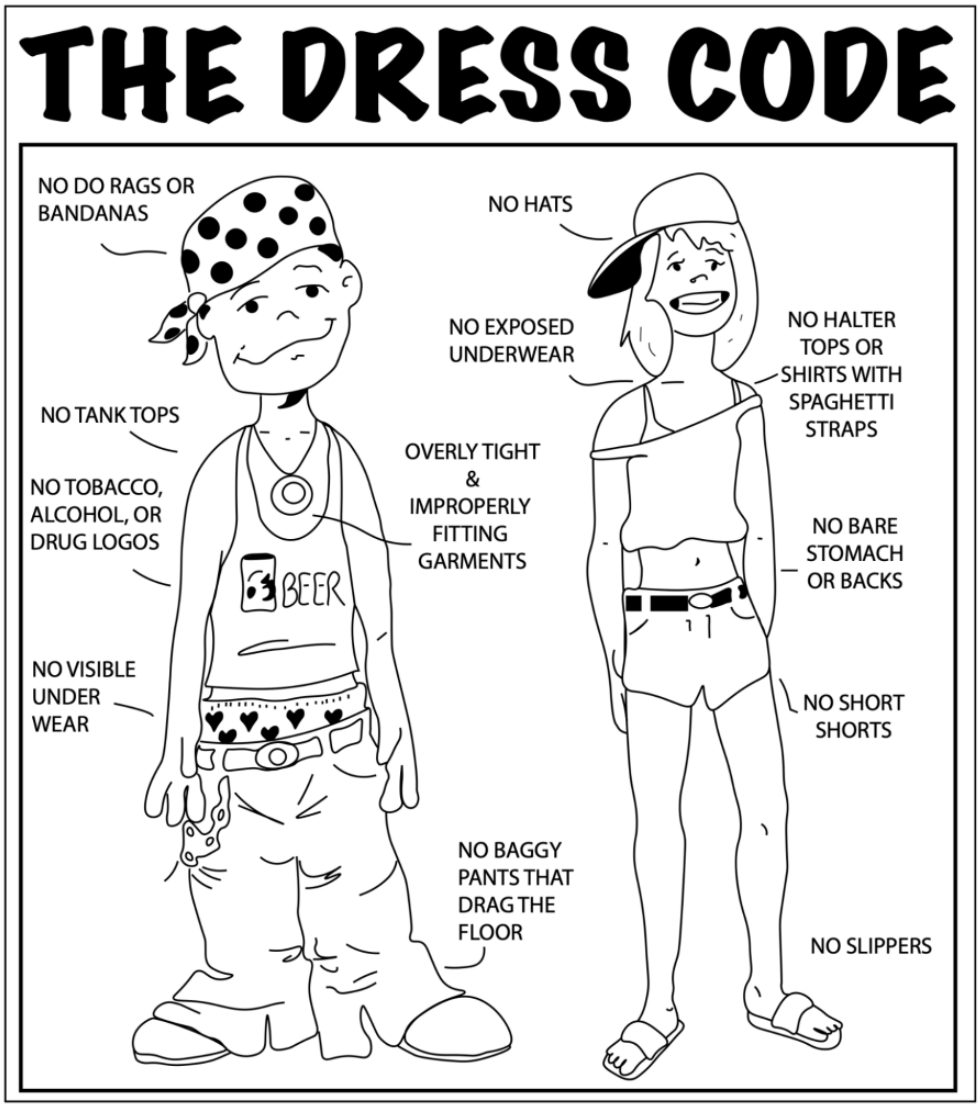


Figure 8.17. Dress codes are an example of the hidden curriculum. In 2022, the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that most schools in the United States have a dress code. They also made recommendations to address inequity and prevent detrimental effects, such as when students are removed from the classroom for dress violations (United States Government Accountability Office 2022). Image description.

The concepts of social capital, cultural capital, and hidden curriculum are useful in explaining and predicting educational success in the U.S. mainstream educational scene. However, it's important to acknowledge that they are based on the assumption that conforming to white dominant cultural practices, beliefs, and values is the only way to achieve educational (and life) success.

Labeling

When he was 23 years old, recent Stanford graduate Jeremy Iversen went undercover, posing as a high school student at a California high school. Out of that experience, he wrote the book *High School Confidential*, an account of the life experiences of

Millennials. One of the problems he identified in his story is that of teachers applying labels to students.

Labels such as “easily distracted” or “ideal pupil” might seem to be helpful hacks for overburdened teachers as they struggle to give students what they need. A student learning English as a second language may be assigned classes to enhance their English skills. An autistic child will be given plenty of routines.

However, when students hear their labels from a person with authority over them and are treated as their label throughout the year, it can be detrimental to their schooling. If the label is a negative one, the student might begin to “live down to” that label. Sometimes these messages are extreme. One teacher, unaware that Iverson was a bright graduate of a top university, told him he would never amount to anything (Iverson 2006). Such labels are also difficult to “shake off,” which can create a self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton 1968).

Symbolic interactionists are interested in labeling as it relates to student-teacher interactions. A conflict theorist might add that this labeling is integrally related to inequities in the structure of education. For example, racially biased testing, as we discussed earlier with the SATs, may lead to a student being unfairly labeled a low achiever.

Credentialism

Closely related to labeling is **credentialism**, or the assumption of social superiority and inferiority based on formal educational attainment. In mainstream U.S. culture, credentials come in the form of diplomas, certificates, or awards we have achieved from formal institutions (figure 8.18). They serve as indicators of achievement, knowledge, and ability.



Figure 8.18. The importance of credentials is conveyed early, as we create ceremonies around kindergarten graduation.

Credentialism is also an ideology that places formal education as superior to other ways of understanding human potential and ability. Ultimately, credentials are part of determining social status in the U.S. dominant society, prompting unequal life opportunities both during the process of education and in one’s career.

Going Deeper

To learn more about education and social mobility, watch “How America’s Public Schools Keep Kids in Poverty” [Streaming Video].

To understand more about the connections between education level and social mobility, take a look at this model. It was developed by economists from the Federal Reserve Bank. They studied wealth defined as owned land, savings, stocks, buildings, or businesses, and proposed the following relationship between education and wealth in the United States (figure 8.19).

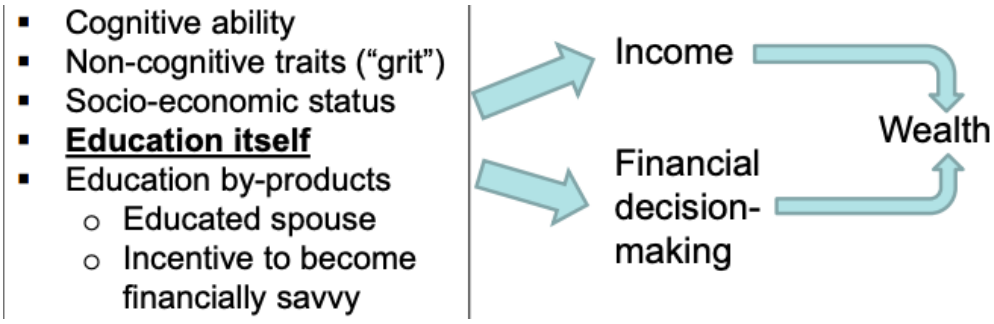


Figure 8.19. This model of education and wealth looks at the variables that increase income, improve financial decision-making, and lead to wealth. Image description.

In the first column, the researchers list characteristics that might influence a person's attainment of wealth:

- Your cognitive ability
- Other traits related to success (such as "grit," or how persistent you are)
- Your socioeconomic status
- Education itself
- Byproducts that come as a result of your level of education. These include the likelihood you will marry a similarly educated spouse and the likelihood that if you are born into a higher socioeconomic bracket, you're more likely to live longer. This incentivizes people to do financial planning and allows investments to grow.

All of these factors both increase income and lead to better financial decision-making. Increased income and better financial decision-making influence the acquisition of wealth. This study concludes that it's not education itself that directly leads to wealth. Rather, people who are wealthy already are more likely to have access to education and attain higher educational outcomes (Emmons 2015).

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8.3: Policy Matters for Social Justice

One of the key drivers toward improving equitable access to education is government policy. In the Chapter Story, we introduced Indigenous communities in Bolivia and Colombia that see education as a force to create a more just society. Change in education in those countries has depended on students and teachers engaging in critical analysis while being deeply rooted in their communities and the environment.

Those qualities have been coupled with Indigenous-led civic action to transform education policy in government. In Bolivia, activists have achieved constitutional changes at the national level that grant more access to culturally relevant education that better serves students. These transformations in the institution of education provide a remarkable example of social justice.

Social justice is achieved when "everyone has fair access to the resources and opportunities to develop their full capacities, and everyone is welcome to participate democratically with others to mutually shape social policies and institutions that govern civic life" (Bell 2023). Policy related to the institution of education is crucial for achieving social justice. In this section, we look at three ways that education policy can play a role in changing educational systems and advance social justice.

Unequal Access



Figure 8.20. A mural titled *The End of the Beginning* (1998) by Wayne Rafiki Morris depicts people and events related to the emergence of the Washington, D.C., public school system. The building shown is the Perry School, one of the first schools in the nation to provide secondary education to former enslaved people and their children.

As we discussed earlier in this chapter, education for the "common man" was a core principle in establishing democracies in the late 1700s and early 1800s. However, in the United States, we haven't yet achieved universal access to education, nor equitable ability to participate in education regardless of social location.

Segregation

One set of obstacles that exists in every state's education system is segregation and lack of protection for students based on social location. Early education systems in the United States were segregated by law. Even when education was legal for many marginalized groups, it was in separate, segregated facilities that often provided lower-quality education. Or it was education that enforced oppression, and genocide. Educator and educational researcher Gloria Ladson-Billings summarizes part of this history:

> *In the case of African Americans, education was initially forbidden during the period of enslavement. After emancipation, we saw the development of freedmen's schools whose purpose was the maintenance of the servant class. During the long period of legal apartheid, African Americans attended schools where they received cast-off textbooks and materials from White schools….Black students in the south did not receive universal secondary education until 1968 (Ladson-Billings 2006:5, italics added).*

To the extent that higher education was possible for Black students, it was in schools established to primarily serve African Americans because admission was not possible in white universities. This segregation led to significant unequal outcomes in education. At the same time, African Americans responded resourcefully to create the educational institutions they needed (figure

8.20). Those schools established for African Americans were a resilient response. Many still exist, including the first: Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, which was established in 1838.

Today, in addition to providing the formal education needed to navigate U.S. society, these Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) also build economic wealth. Nathenson (2019) found that while HBCUs enroll far more low-income students than predominantly white institutions, more students experience upward mobility at HBCUs than at white institutions. For example, their calculations show that two-thirds of low-income students at HBCUs end up in at least the middle class.



Figure 8.21. In the 1940s, Mexican and Puerto Rican–American student Sylvia Mendez, along with her siblings and other Latinx students, were required to attend separate schools in Orange, California. A legal case filed by Sylvia's parents and others laid the foundations for the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision declaring racial segregation in schools unconstitutional (left). A mural created by Orange County, California, students in 2009 conveys the conditions of the neighborhood school and the school Latinx students were required to attend. Stark differences are shown between the building conditions, resources available, and the happiness of the children (right).

Segregation happens to Latinx students as well. Earlier in this chapter, we introduced the experience of students who attended segregated schools for Mexican-Americans and who were tracked into ethnic and gender-specific classes. Mexican-American parents fought this segregation.

In California, parents Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez, who were Mexican and Puerto Rican, argued that their children deserved the right to go to the neighborhood school, rather than a school that Latinx students were restricted to. They organized other parents, boycotted schools, and sued the school district. Eventually, in 1947, school segregation based on ethnicity and language became illegal in California (Gonzales 1996:50) (figure 8.21). This case was foundational for further civil rights work, including national school desegregation (Robbie 2002).

Nationally, state-sponsored racial segregation of public schools and other public spaces became illegal with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v Board of Education* (U.S. Supreme Court 1954). This change in federal law resulted in passionate and often violent conflicts over integrating schools. One group of students in Little Rock, Arkansas, was the first to integrate a high school as a result of Brown. They were known as the Little Rock Nine.



Figure 8.22. Members of the Little Rock Nine made history as the first African Americans to integrate into the Arkansas schools. Black student Elizabeth Eckford is jeered by white students as she attempts to enter Little Rock Central High School (left). Arkansas soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division escort members of the Little Rock Nine to Central High School in Little Rock in September 1957 (right).

These nine Black high school students faced violent white mobs protesting their attendance, and President Eisenhower was forced to authorize the National Guard and the Air Force to protect them. Only one of the Little Rock Nine graduated from Central High. The governor closed the school for a year to prevent integration, so the other students graduated from different high schools (figure 8.22).

Since 1954, many more laws have been passed that prohibit educational segregation and require integrated schools. For example, in 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, which prohibited discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, and national origin. Title IV of this act prohibits segregation in schools. Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, and national origin for any programs that receive federal funds, including schools and colleges.

Later measures outlawed discrimination based on sex (Title IX). Title IX opened the doors of education even wider to women, because colleges could no longer use sex as a reason to admit or fail to admit students. It also resulted in funding for women and for women's sports. More recently, this amendment has been used to protect LGBTQIA+ students from discrimination in public and private schools, at least legally.

These legal changes were the result of fierce activism by Black, Brown, and white people, marked historically by the 1963 Freedom March of more than 200,000 demonstrators (figure 8.23). The march was successful in pressuring the administration of President John F. Kennedy to initiate the federal civil rights bill in Congress.



Figure 8.23. The Civil Rights Act was the result of massive organizing. Button from the 1968 Washington, D.C., Freedom March, also known as the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Martin Luther King Jr. presents his "I Have a Dream" speech during the Freedom March (right).

De Facto Segregation

Changes in federal and state laws are only one step in the process of creating social change for educational equity. Educational segregation is illegal. But **de facto segregation**, the segregation that occurs without laws but because of other social influences,

still exists.

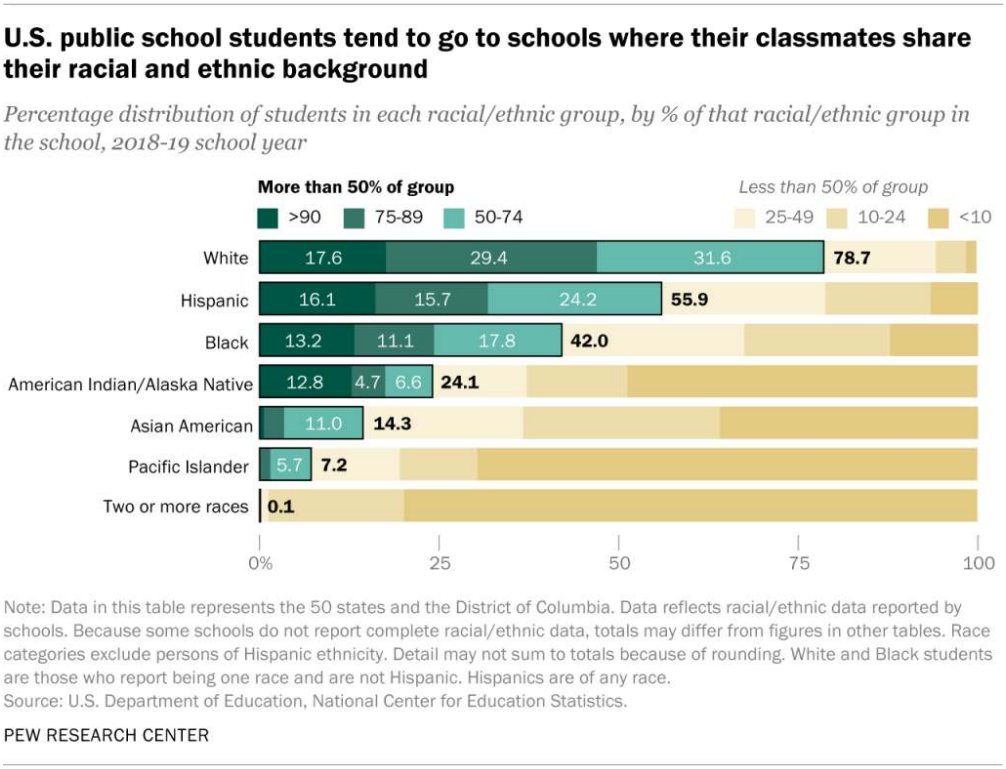


Figure 8.24. Schools are still segregated. White students are still more likely to go to school with white students than any other racial or ethnic group. Image description.

Using U.S. Department of Education data, Pew Research reports that in 2018–2019, most students attended schools that serve other students of their race and ethnicity (figure 8.24). One reason for this segregation is that we tend to live in neighborhoods that are also segregated. Rich people, who are more often white, tend to live with other rich people. Because children commonly go to schools in their own neighborhoods, the schools mirror the lack of integration in neighborhoods. While school segregation is against the law, segregated classrooms are alive and well.

Differences in educational opportunities and educational outcomes are integrally linked to school spending. Unlike many other countries, where school spending is decided by the federal government, the United States allows each state to determine its education budget and how to spend it. Although school districts may be supported by federal funds, we see significant state and local variations in student spending. Because schools are funded by each state, partially based on local property taxes, the de facto segregation of schools is caused by the segregation of housing.

Why do we have housing segregation? As we discussed in Chapter 3, structural racism and de facto housing segregation have limited access to home purchasing for people of color. For decades, Black families especially were excluded from mortgage loans through redlining and contracts woven into property deeds that prevented them from purchasing in white neighborhoods.

This legacy has made an intergenerational impact. As families are excluded from neighborhoods that provide better educational access, they have been essentially excluded from the opportunities that better education affords.



Figure 8.25. As an example of inclusion, the Rise School at the University of Alabama maintains a 50:50 ratio of children with and without special needs. This is believed to create the optimum learning culture for all young children.

In addition to prohibiting segregation based on race, ethnicity, color, and gender, federal law requires that students who are labeled as "disabled" receive equitable education and educational support. The right to equal education and other accessibility was legalized in 1990 with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) was also passed in 1990. It required that K–12 school districts provide free and appropriate education to students with disabilities (Rivera et al. 2023).

In order to ensure equitable education, schools began to integrate classrooms (figure 8.25). The term **inclusion** began to be used, referring to the laws and practices that require disabled students to be included in mainstream classes, not separate rooms or schools.

In one example of inclusion supported by law, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (EHC) of 1975 included deafness as one of the categories under which children with disabilities may be eligible for special education and related services. This law required public schools to provide educational services to disabled children ages 3 to 21. This law included d/Deaf students as disabled under the law, expanding the services available to them and increasing integration.

Inclusion advocates use "d/Deaf" to distinguish between two meanings: a physical condition and a social location. The term "deaf" is the medical condition of being physically unable to hear. It reflects the perspective of medical professionals who define deafness as a medical disability needing intervention, treatment, and special support to enable deaf people to function in a hearing world. "The *medical model of disability* says that people are disabled by their impairments or differences" (Thierfeld Brown 2023, emphasis added). In the medical model, people suffer from deafness.

When the word "Deaf" is capitalized, on the other hand, it refers to a culturally unique group of people. According to Dr. Lissa D. Stapleton, a Deaf studies professor, "The upper-case D in the word Deaf refers to individuals who connect to Deaf cultural practices, the centrality of American Sign Language (ASL), and the history of the community" (Stapleton 2015:569).

In this idea of Deafness, Deaf communities have their own language, culture, and practices that are different from hearing cultures but just as valuable. This definition uses the social model of disability, which says that disability is caused by the way that society is organized (Thierfeld Brown 2023). This model says that a physical limit is only a problem if society doesn't address the need. If the world were organized to support d/Deaf people and hearing people, we would not see inequality.

Let's look at d/Deafness with an intersectional lens, as defined in Chapter 3. Specifically, what are the educational outcomes related to race and hearing status? The table in figure 8.26 addresses the overall educational attainment for Black Deaf, Black hearing, white Deaf, and white hearing students. It's based on U.S. Census data from between 2008 and 2017.

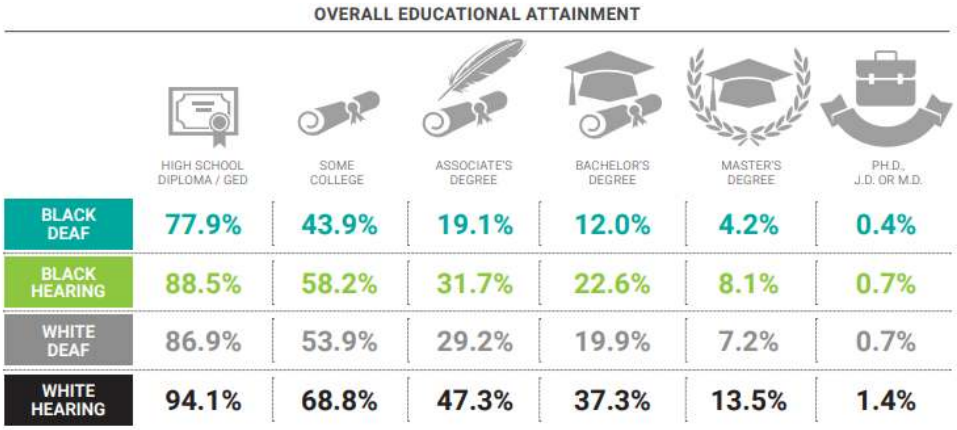


Figure 8.26. Overall educational attainment for Black d/Deaf, Black hearing, white d/Deaf, and white hearing Students. White hearing students have the highest educational attainment in all categories. Black Deaf students have the lowest educational attainment. Image description.

Hearing people have higher educational attainments than d/Deaf people, except for the PhD, JD, or MD levels, in which Black hearing and white d/Deaf people comprise only 0.7 percent of each population that attained that level of education. Black d/Deaf people had the lowest level of educational achievement of any category.

Audism is one factor explaining the suffering in these students' stories and the different outcomes of d/Deaf students. Audism is "the notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in a manner of one who hears" (Humphries 1977:12). Students who are d/Deaf experience discrimination because others assume hearing people are superior. They design the education experience with hearing people in mind. Together, audism and racism impact who learns.

Educational Debt

One of the most common ways that analysts study inequity in education is with the **achievement gap**: any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students. For example, gaps might be studied between white students and students of color, or students from higher-income and lower-income households (Great Schools Partnership 2013). Achievement gaps can be identified at any level of schooling, from kindergarten to high school and college.



Figure 8.27. Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings encourages us to rethink how we look at achievement gaps and focus on unequal resource distribution, structural racism, and our moral obligations to provide equitable education for all.

Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings (figure 8.27) explores what makes the most effective teachers, with a particular focus on those who are able to close the achievement gap for Black students. During a speech in 2006, she argued that sociologists should study educational debt rather than the achievement gap.

Educational debt is the cumulative impact of directing social-political harm toward students of color, including allotting fewer resources toward their education (Ladson Billings 2006). This education debt includes a few characteristics.

The first characteristic is economic. According to Ladson-Billings, the achievement gap is problematic because it is a short-term measure, not a long-term one. Short-term measures don't help us understand the deeper roots of the problem. Our educational debt stems from a series of long-range decisions that initially made education illegal for some and segregated for others, followed by decades of inequitable spending.

The second component of our educational debt is sociopolitical (a combination of social and political factors). For example, consider the impact that structural racism in voting arenas has on education. Black and Brown people face more tangible barriers on their way to the polls, such as transportation problems, times, and locations not conducive to their work schedules. They are also more likely to be asked to show photo ID at the polls. As people of color are excluded from voting, they are, in turn, excluded from decision-making that affects their school districts.

Finally, Ladson-Billings argues that education experiences a moral debt "that reflects the disparity between what we know and what we actually do" (Ladson-Billings 2006:8). She asks, "What is it that we might owe to citizens who historically have been excluded from social benefits and opportunities?"

She quotes Randall Robinson: "No nation can enslave a race of people for hundreds of years, set them free bedraggled and penniless, pit them, without assistance in a hostile environment, against privileged victimizers, and then reasonably expect the gap between the heirs of the two groups to narrow" (Robinson 2000 as cited in Ladson-Billings 2006:8).

Education-related policy in the United States has an extensive and elaborate history, from the exclusion of students based on race and ethnicity to the rights laws that tackled integration and access, including protections for students with disabilities. The notion of educational debt provides another framing for our education story. It avoids calling out specific groups for poor outcomes. It instead encourages us to focus, with a moral lens, on the results of unequal social and economic structures and their impact on education over time.

For more on the story of educational segregation and integration, watch the video "Separate but Not Equal: The Stories Behind *Brown v The Board of Education*" [Streaming Video].

For more on desegregation with Latinx students, watch "Austin Revealed: Chicano Civil Rights 'Desegregation and Education'" [Streaming Video].

For more on the Little Rock Nine, see this History.com page [Website] with a blog and video.

To hear more on Sylvia Mendez and *Mendez vs Westminster*, watch the video "*Mendez v Westminster*: Desegregating California's Schools" [Streaming Video].

For more information on school funding, read the report *Education Statistics: Facts About American Schools* [Website]. At the end of the article, there is an interactive map of the United States that shows the spending per pupil for each state.

To see more maps that show redlining, see the site Mapping Inequality [Website] and this accompanying guide [Website].

For more information on racial restrictive covenants in Seattle, see this Seattle Civil Rights and History project page [Website].

To hear more about inclusion, watch "Integrating Deaf Children into a Regular Classroom" [Streaming Video].

To learn more about Gloria Ladson-Billings, read the article "Gloria Ladson-Billings: Daring to Dream in Public" [Website].

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Figure 8.26. "Overall Educational Attainment" from Postsecondary Achievement of Black Deaf People in the United States (p. 12) by Carrie Lou Garberoglio, Lissa D. Stapleton, Jeffrey Levi Palmer, Laurene Simms, Stephanie Cawthon, and Adam Sale,

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Figure 8.24. "U.S. Public School Students Tend to Go to Schools Where Their Classmates Share Their Racial and Ethnic Background" from "U.S. Public School Students Often Go to Schools Where at Least Half of Their Peers Are the Same Race Or Ethnicity" by Katherine Schaeffer and Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C., is licensed under the Center's Terms of Use.

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8.4: Genocide and Cultural Restoration

The institution of education is a powerful influence on the lives of members of society. One reason it is so powerful is that it teaches cultural norms and expression to young people as they are in their developmental stages. Education can help unify societies when it gives young people a chance to learn and practice their shared culture. Educational systems can also be a vehicle for violence, oppression, and the breakdown of societies through access to and control of young people.

The establishment of boarding schools for Indigenous children in the 1800s and 1900s was one part of the U.S. government's history of genocide, which we defined in Chapter 1 as the systematic and widespread extermination of a cultural, ethnic, political, racial, or religious group.

In this section, we'll look at the history of American Indian boarding schools (also known as Indian residential schools) in the United States. We'll also look at how Tribal nations are exercising cultural resilience and recovery from this history. They are using education to fight back against oppressive policies of the past, reclaim their sovereignty, and restore the widespread practice of their ways of life.

Indian Residential Schools





Figure 8.28. Deb Haaland launched a Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report early in her appointment as U.S. Secretary of the Interior. A member of the Laguna Pueblo Tribe, Haaland was sworn in as Secretary in 2021 (left). Formerly a congresswoman from New Mexico, Haaland is the first Native American to serve as a cabinet secretary (right).

In 2021, Deb Haaland, a member of the Laguna Pueblo, was sworn in as the first Native American Secretary of the Interior (figure 8.28). (Optional: Read more about the Laguna Pueblo [Website].) After her confirmation, she immediately launched a Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report. In her role as secretary, and as a Native American, she was uniquely positioned to introduce the history of the schools to the wider public:

> *Beginning with the Indian Civilization Act of 1819, the United States enacted laws and implemented policies establishing and supporting Indian boarding schools across the nation. The purpose of Indian boarding schools was to culturally assimilate [I]ndigenous children by forcibly relocating them from their families and communities to distant residential facilities where their American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian identities, languages and beliefs were to be forcibly suppressed. For over 150 years, hundreds of thousands of [I]ndigenous children were taken from their communities (Haaland 2021b).*

The investigation reported that tragically, many children died while in the schools—a restatement of what many survivors of the schools have known (Beaumont 2021).

The report documents that at least 500 children were buried in 53 burial sites on residential school properties (Newland 2022). "The Department expects that continued investigation will reveal the approximate number of Indian children who died at Federal Indian boarding schools to be in the thousands or tens of thousands" (Newland 2022, p. 93).

Recent discoveries in Canada indicate that up to 6,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children died while in Canadian residential schools, which were run similarly to those in the United States (Montoya Bryan 2021). (Optional: Read more about First Nations, Inuit, and Métis [Website].)



Figure 8.29. A souvenir pamphlet for the Carlisle Indian School (1895) depicts the intention of the founders, sponsors, and staff for Native American children: abandonment of their cultural heritage and adoption of the cultural values of white Americans.

The boarding schools were government-funded and often operated by churches. They were part of a three-pronged land acquisition strategy to make way for the expansion of the United States. First, that strategy included reorienting the practices of Indigenous Peoples so they could be forced to exist in smaller geographical areas. As early as 1803, President Thomas Jefferson wrote that discouraging the traditional hunting and gathering practices of the Indigenous Peoples would make land available for colonists:

> *To encourage them to abandon hunting, to apply to the raising stock, to agriculture, and domestic manufacture, and thereby prove to themselves that less land and labor will maintain them in this better than in their former mode of living. The extensive forests necessary in the hunting life will then become useless, and they will see advantage in exchanging them for the means of improving their farms and of increasing their domestic comforts (Jefferson 1803 in Newland 2022:21).*

The boarding school system coincided with the direct removal of many Tribes from their ancestral lands. This is a concrete example of land grabbing, a practice you learned about in Chapter 4.

Second, that strategy included the disruption of the social fabric of Indigenous Peoples through the separation of families. Government records written at the time read, “If it be admitted that education affords the true solution to the Indian problem, then it must be admitted that the boarding school is the very key to the situation” (Newland 2022:38). Sometimes their parents wrote letters asking for their children to be returned. Sometimes the children tried to run away (Hiruko 2023).

Third, that strategy included the disruption of the culture and belief systems of Indigenous societies. Secretary Haaland recounted the suffering in her own family: “My great-grandfather was taken to Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. The school’s founder coined the phrase ‘kill the Indian and save the man,’ which genuinely reflects the influences that framed the policies at that time” (Haaland 2021a).

The Indian schools stripped Native American children of their cultural heritage and indoctrinated them with the cultural values of white U.S. society (Newland 2022) (figure 8.29). This was a practice of **cultural hegemony**: “the dominance of a culturally diverse

society by the ruling class who shapes the culture of that society…so that the worldview of the ruling class becomes the accepted cultural norm" (Bullock et al. 1999).

Upon their arrival, Native children were given Anglo-American names and military-style clothing. Their hair would be drastically cut, as authors at *The New York Times* described: "A particularly cruel and traumatic step for those coming from cultures like the Lakota, where the severing of long hair could be associated with mourning the dead" (Levitt et al. 2023).

Students were required to learn English, agriculture, math, history, and trades that would make them marketable in U.S. society. Education emphasized U.S. values such as the concepts of private property and wealth through material possessions. Students were also forced to convert to Christianity. Boarding school staff punished them if they spoke their Indigenous languages or practiced their own spiritual practices. Lack of food, corporal punishment, sexual abuse, and shaming were all used to force children to conform (King 2008).

This system that required stolen Native children to adopt a different culture and belief system than their own was a form of **forced cultural assimilation**: a process by which a community with a dominant culture forces members of other groups to adopt their language, national identity, norms, customs, values, ideology, and way of life. Their food, shelter, and their avoidance of abuse hinge on their cooperation.

Take a moment to look at the photos taken at the Forest Grove Indian Training School in 1881 (figures 8.30 and 8.31).



Figure 8.30. "A group portrait of students from the Spokane Tribe at the Forest Grove Indian Training School, taken when they were 'new recruits'" (Francis 2019).



Figure 8.31. "Seven months later—the children pictured are probably the Spokane children who, according to the school roster, arrived in July 1881: Alice L. Williams, Florence Hayes, Suzette (or Susan) Secup, Julia Jopps, Louise Isaacs, Martha Lot, Eunice Madge James, James George, Ben Secup, Frank Rice, and Garfield Hayes" (Francis 2019).

In the Pacific University magazine, Mike Francis writes about these photos, noting that the first photo (figure 8.30) is of new arrivals from the Spokane Tribe. The second photo of the group (figure 8.31) is dated seven months later. "In this photo, the same children are seated stiffly on chairs or arranged behind them. The six girls wear similar dresses; the four boys wear military-style jackets, buttoned to the neck" (Francis 2019). Sadly, one girl is missing in the second photo. Martha Lot was about 10 years old, and historical records only indicate she suffered "a sore" on her side before passing away. Mike Francis reflects:

> *The before-and-after photos of the Spokane children were meant to show that the Indian Training School was working: Young native people were being shaped into something "civilized" and unthreatening, something nearly European. But today the before-and-after shots appear desperately sad—frozen-in-time witnesses to whites' exploitation of [I]ndigenous children and the attempted erasure of their cultures (Francis 2019).*

With this forced cultural assimilation, government leaders and missionaries produced a spiritual and emotional breaking of young people and an assault on their sense of Tribal identity. Alongside the separation of families and removal of Tribes from their ancestral lands, there was a severe rupture of previously intact communities.

Healing Generational Harm

The last American Indian boarding school closed in 1983 (Wertheimer et al. 2022). Like others, it was demolished (in 2007), to the relief of many former students and their families. However, as survivor Regina Gasco-Bentley shares, "…there's part of it still there and there's still a lot of memories. It's right in the middle of our homelands and there's people that have not been able to heal from the abuse they took in the school" (Ware 2022).

While there is much more to be done, there are recent efforts that acknowledge the horrors of the residential schools and offer to support the healing of survivors. For example, the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition was formed in 2011 to advocate on behalf of Native peoples impacted by American Indian boarding school policies. Among other goals, they focus on revealing the truth of the residential school system through research and education and providing opportunities for healing through programs and traditional gatherings. In 2023, they launched a database that allows Native Americans to search for information on relatives who attended American Indian boarding schools and an interactive digital map of American Indian boarding schools (figure 8.32).



Figure 8.32. The Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition has produced an online digital map to support education about the schools (left). The Road to Healing tour stopped in South Dakota. This project of the U.S. Department of the Interior connected communities with trauma-informed support and allowed survivors and family members to share their boarding school experiences as part of a permanent oral history collection (right).

Another example of working to repair generational harm occurred in 2022, under Secretary Haaland's leadership, when U.S. Department of the Interior officials commenced a Road to Healing tour. It was a year-long initiative that invited former boarding school students from Native American Tribes, Alaskan Native villages, and Native Hawaiian communities to share their stories as part of a permanent oral history collection.

Secretary Haaland shared, "It is my priority to not only give voice to the survivors and descendants of federal American Indian boarding school policies but also to address the lasting legacies of these policies so Indigenous Peoples can continue to grow and heal" (Fonseca 2022). With both of these initiatives, education is being applied to heal generational harm.

An obvious question emerges as the United States begins to grapple with its residential school history: How well does the education system in the United States serve Native Americans today? Researchers point to the fact that Indigenous students have the lowest educational attainment of any group in the United States (Martinez 2014). This is in great part due to limited access. But it's also no wonder, considering the kidnapping, violence, forced assimilation, and abuse that Native Americans have experienced in the U.S. educational system.

It's important to think critically about the negative value overall that a U.S. model of education would hold for many Native Americans due to this history. It also remains that credentials and a certain degree of formal education are important to navigate and survive in U.S. society. How can this be reconciled?

One important way is through language. As mentioned earlier, one of the strategies for forcibly assimilating Indigenous children at the boarding schools was to forbid them from speaking their own languages. There is a movement underway in the United States to weave Indigenous languages into school offerings. The Native American Languages Act was passed in 1990. It established a federal policy to allow the use of Native American languages for instruction in schools. It also affirmed the right of Native American children to express themselves, be educated, and be assessed in their own Native language.

Oregon Tribes were provided funding to develop curricula specific to their culture and location. For example, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde developed a curriculum for fourth graders that teaches students about Chinuk Wawa, the trade language used by many Tribes who lived up and down the Pacific coast. Students may learn in an app if they choose, and the language is becoming revitalized for the entire community (figure 8.33).



Figure 8.33. Language is becoming revitalized among Indigenous communities. This screenshot shows the Chinuk Wawa language learning app developed by the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde.

Language is important to families and communities because it serves as the vehicle for cultural expression and heritage. Languages often convey knowledge about life and the natural world known by communities that can only be expressed in their own tongue.

Incorporating language and culture into educational offerings is also important to creating equity. Dorothy Lazore, who teaches immersion Mohawk, observes: "For Native people, after so much pain and tragedy connected with their experience of school, we finally now see Native children, their teachers and their families, happy and engaged in the joy of learning and growing and being themselves in the immersion setting" (Lazore as cited in Johansen 2004:569).

Scholars at the Bureau of Indian Affairs write:

> *…Language revitalization is a core aspect of cultural continuity, protecting traditional knowledge and practices, and resisting assimilation.…revitalization efforts increase the visibility and prestige of Indigenous culture and can be used deliberately and strategically by speakers to combat cultural and linguistic hegemony (Bureau of Indian Affairs 2023:24).*

Watch the 4.53-minute video "Boarding School Healing Voices [Streaming Video]" (figure 8.34) to hear from Elder survivors about their experiences. As you do, consider: Why is educating people about the boarding schools important to them?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=789#oembed-1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjUto-mQrfQ

Figure 8.34. "Boarding School Healing Voices" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

The genocide of people and culture that occurred as colonists established Indian residential schools created wounds that remain unhealed today. At the same time, Indigenous people are reclaiming the bones of their children, their languages and ceremonies,

and sometimes the spaces where schools stood themselves.

Going Deeper

For more information on the history of genocide in the United States, read "Genocide and American Indian History" [Website].

For more on Indian boarding schools:

- Read sections written by authors of this chapter in Chapter 5 and Chapter 14 of *Contemporary Families* [Textbook].
- See the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report [Website] mentioned in this chapter.
- Watch "How the U.S. Stole Thousands of Native American Children" [Streaming Video], "Unspoken: America's Native American Boarding Schools" [Streaming Video], and "The Forest Grove Indian Training School, 1880–1885" [Streaming Video].

Read more about the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition [Website] advocacy on behalf of Native peoples impacted by American Indian boarding school policies.

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Figure 8.29. "Commemorative booklet of the United States Indian School" is on Flickr, by Midnight Believer and in the public domain.

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Figure 8.32. "Road to Healing South Dakota" is on Flickr, by the U.S. Department of the Interior and in the public domain (right).

Figure 8.33. Screenshot of the "Chinuk Wawa Book and App Image" by the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde is in the public domain.

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Figure 8.32. "Screenshot of NABS Indian Boarding School Digital Map" by National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition is included under fair use (left).

Figure 8.34. "Boarding School Healing Voices" by Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition is licensed under the Standard YouTube License.

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8.5: Teaching That Transforms

Improving access to education through policy, bringing residential school survivor voices to the forefront, and restoring culture through language are all strategies that help change the institution of education so it works for everyone. Teaching itself also has the potential to transform when administrators and instructors listen to students (and former students) as they relay what they need. This section will look at some ways teaching approaches are changing to improve equity in education.

Community Cultural Wealth

One way of advancing equity in education involves examining our assumptions about what is valuable for success in life—that is, examining how we socially construct the resources we believe are needed to do well in school, care for ourselves and others, or thrive in society. Earlier in this chapter, we discussed how educational opportunities are unevenly offered in U.S. society due to differences in cultural capital. Through a social construction lens, we can see that the cultural capital valued in that framework is that of the dominant society.

In 2005, Dr. Tara Yosso introduced a different way of seeing and thinking about resources. **Community cultural wealth** is the "interdependent overlapping forms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and networks possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist racism and other forms of subordination" (Yosso 2023). For individuals, this is the personal and community resources they have beyond their income or accumulated financial wealth. Often, they include skills such as resilience and social networks developed from navigating or resisting social bias and inequities.

As she presented the concept of community cultural wealth, Yosso critiqued the common idea that youth of color need to be taught dominant forms of "cultural capital." Instead, she illustrated how they are already rich in various cultural wealth.

One component of community cultural wealth is familial capital. Yosso writes:

> *…Familial capital is nurtured by our "extended family," which may include immediate family (living or long passed on) as well as aunts, uncles, grandparents, and friends who we might consider part of our familia. From these kinship ties, we learn the importance of maintaining a healthy connection to our community and its resources. Our kin also model lessons of caring, coping and providing (educación), which inform our emotional, moral, educational and occupational consciousness (Yosso 2005:79).*

The family itself can help students succeed in school, and it can serve as a source of power for people of color to resist white supremacy and thrive despite economic and social inequality. Take a few minutes to look at the Cultural Wealth Wheel in figure 8.35. It's an adaptation from Yosso's model, but it describes the six specific types of cultural capital she introduced. In what area is your strongest cultural wealth?

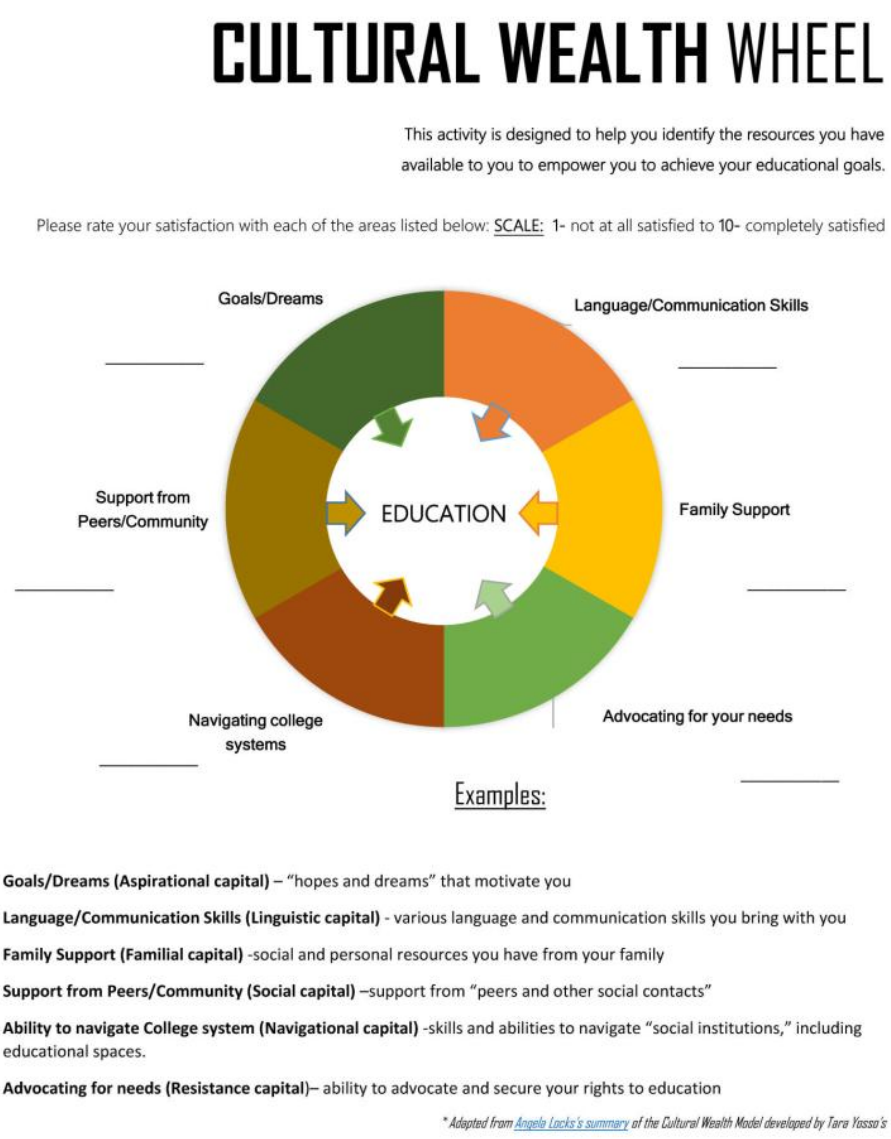


Figure 8.35. This Cultural Wealth Wheel illustrates the "interdependent overlapping forms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and networks possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist racism and other forms of subordination" (Yosso 2023). Image description.

Yosso's model asks school administration and instructors to consider less how a person's race, ethnicity, or class might lead them to have less cultural capital than white and middle- to upper-class students. Instead, she encourages them to focus on the wealth of cultural capital that is often unacknowledged and undervalued. When educators are able to make this shift in perspective, they can better serve students, and they can better serve a larger purpose of struggle toward social and racial justice.



Figure 8.36. Brazilian activist and educator Paolo Freire encouraged students and teachers to look critically at inequality in their world and change it via education (left). A mural of Paulo Freire at the Center for Training, Technology, and Educational Research (right).

Paulo Freire (1921–1997; figure 8.36) was a sociologist, activist, and educator in Brazil and internationally from 1940 to his death in 1997. He founded and ran adult literacy programs in the slums of northeast Brazil. When he taught reading and writing, he used everyday words and concepts that his students needed to know to live well, like terms for cooking, childcare, or construction. More revolutionary, though, was his idea that education could also be a force for liberation.

He believed that students and teachers could ask questions together about why things were the way they were in society. By arguing that the teacher was also a learner and that students were also teachers, he created classrooms in which students could feed their own curiosity and come to their own conclusions. Freire explored the practice of pedagogy: the art, science, or profession of teaching.

His most famous book is *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. There, he condemns the **banking model of education**, which he defines as "the concept of education in which knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (Freire 1970). He argues that the banking model of knowledge is the most common but least useful form of education. He writes:

> *Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat…but in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system (Freire 1970:72).*

As a response, Freire's model of education emphasizes dialogue, action, and reflection. Each person contributes from their own experience and knowledge. This combination of engaging in the world and then reflecting on what you learned, or praxis, is the true goal of education. He writes, "It is not enough for people to come together in dialogue in order to gain knowledge of their social reality. They must act together upon their environment in order critically to reflect upon their reality and so transform it through further action and critical reflection" (Freire 1970). Freire's institute still influences educators and thinkers worldwide about how to use education to promote social justice.



Figure 8.37. Author, educator, and activist bell hooks introduced ways that education can transform society, specifically for Black liberation and for Black women.

Author and educator bell hooks (1952–2021; figure 8.37) used lowercase letters for her name to encourage more focus on her works than her personal qualities (Alhumaid 2019). She joins the work of Paulo Freire and feminist theorists to expand on ways that education can transform society, specifically for Black liberation and for Black women. In her book, *Teaching to Transgress*, she writes:

> *Almost all our teachers at Booker T. Washington were black women. They were committed to nurturing intellect so that we could become scholars, thinkers, and cultural workers—*

> *black folks who used our "minds." We learned early that our devotion to learning, to a life of the mind, was a counter-hegemonic act, a fundamental way to resist every strategy of white racist colonization. Though they did not define or articulate these practices in theoretical terms, my teachers were enacting a revolutionary pedagogy of resistance that was profoundly anticolonial.*
>
> *For black folks teaching—educating—was fundamentally political because it was rooted in antiracist struggle. Indeed, my all-black grade schools became the location where I experienced learning as revolution (hooks 1994:2).*

Hooks names the classroom itself as a space of resistance and a place to create social justice. She takes an intersectional lens to describe how Black women have unique experiences of inequality in society. Through feminist critical education, they can challenge the ideas of white women who define their experience as universal. They can challenge the ideas of Black men, who also universalize their experiences as Black. She writes:

> *I am deeply committed to black liberation struggle and want to play a major role in re-articulating the theoretical politics of this movement so that the issue of gender will be addressed, and feminist struggle to end sexism will be considered a necessary component of our revolutionary agenda (hooks 1992:112).*

Not only does Black liberation need to include issues of gender, but feminism needs to include issues of race and ethnicity. From this perspective, she encourages engaged pedagogy, a style of teaching and learning that combines personal experience and academic learning to think critically about the world and act to change society. Education itself must be revolutionary in its approach and its outcomes. Like Freire, she argues that a classroom is a community. Social justice occurs within a community of engaged learners when they act to change the world.

Culturally Responsive Education

Culturally responsive education is another framework that educators are applying to better serve a diversity of students. Professor Gloria Ladson-Billings introduced the term in the mid-1990s, describing it as "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings 1994:382). With this methodology, teachers make content and curricula accessible to students and teach in a way that students can better understand in the context of their lives.

A star in this field is Chris Emdin, a professor at Columbia University's Teachers' College. He challenges educators to embrace and respect each student's culture and to use culturally relevant strategies. In his own teaching of science, he applies hip-hop music and call-and-response to connect to the experiences of urban youth.

Watch the 2:14-minute video in figure 8.38, "Dr. Christopher Emdin: Hip Hop Ed in the Classroom." It highlights the culturally responsive methods of Professor Emdin and how he weaves hip-hop into his curriculum. As you do, consider: Why are his methods effective for the students present in the video?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=791#oembed-1

https://youtu.be/VnXjgdCuEi8

Figure 8.38. "Dr. Christopher Emdin: Hip Hop Ed in the Classroom" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Decolonization and Indigenization

Another perspective and set of tools for social transformation within schools is decolonization and indigenization (sometimes called re-indigenization). They work together to acknowledge and begin the long process of healing the effects of colonization, including systematic, extended effects like the intergenerational damage of residential schools.

Decolonization of knowledge is the process of examining and undoing colonial ideologies that frame Western thought and practices as superior. A topic in academia since the 1970s, a significant contribution came from Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (1928–2018; figure 8.39). Quijano explored coloniality and power and argued that if knowledge is colonized, then one of the most important tasks ahead is to find ways of decolonizing that knowledge (Quijano 2000).



Figure 8.39. Aníbal Quijanoa was a Peruvian sociologist influential in the fields of decolonial studies and critical theory (left). An image created for Aníbal Quijanoa's memorial features the caption (translated to English): "To cease being what we are not" (right).

Decolonization of education is the process of confronting and challenging the colonizing practices that have influenced education in the past and which are still present today. It is an approach that recognizes how worldviews rooted in colonization, in and out of the classroom, perpetuate systems of inequity, violence, and separation. It also involves valuing and revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and approaches, and weeding out Western biases or assumptions that have impacted Indigenous ways of being.

Non-Indigenous educators who practice decolonization acknowledge different ways of knowing and examine the knowledge they hold and how they acquired it (Antoine et al. 2018). They will include scholars or knowledge keepers in their curriculum who have been overlooked. They will try to reflect broader global and historical perspectives. The decolonizing approach also reflects carefully on the goal of education, often revealing that the motives of mandated, state-sponsored education are rooted in colonialist policy (Centre for Youth and Society n.d.).

One way to visualize the decolonizing of knowledge is to consider the map of the world most commonly introduced to students: the Mercator projection (figure 8.40). This is how the image of our flattened world has been generally accepted since the 1500s.

As maps are tools that dramatically guide understanding of our social world, they have considerable power. However, this map projection distorts the relative sizes of global regions. It is drawn with parallels of latitude as horizontal lines spaced farther and farther apart as their distance from the Equator increases. This presents landmasses such as Greenland and Russia as far larger than they actually are relative to landmasses near the equator, such as central Africa. It also presents Europe and North America as larger than they are relative to Africa and South America.

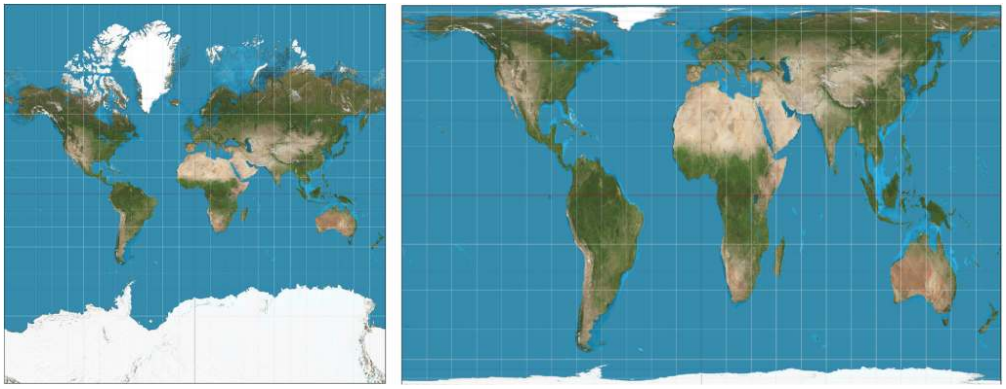


Figure 8.40. The world on the Mercator projection presents a Eurocentric and North America-centric view of the world. The horizontal lines are spaced incrementally farther apart at the top and bottom of the map (left). The world on the Gall-Peters projection shows a more accurate representation of the globe (right).

Compare the Mercator projection to a map drawn with the Gall-Peters projection (figure 8.41). Africa, South America, and Australia take on a whole new shape as this map represents the sizes of countries in a far more accurate manner. In comparison, we can see how the Mercator projection exaggerates the size of colonizing powers, prioritizing them and reflecting a Eurocentric and North America-centric view of the world.

Another way to undo the predominant placing of nations is with inverted maps. Joaquín Torres-García (1874–1949), an Uruguayan modernist painter, offered one of the first inverted maps as a political statement in 1900 (De Armendi 2009). The modern and popular McArthur's Universal Corrective map (figure 8.41) is as accurate as the Gall-Peters projection, but it turns the north-south placement of land masses on their heads. This orientation places colonizing nations at the bottom of the map and the southern hemisphere more centrally.

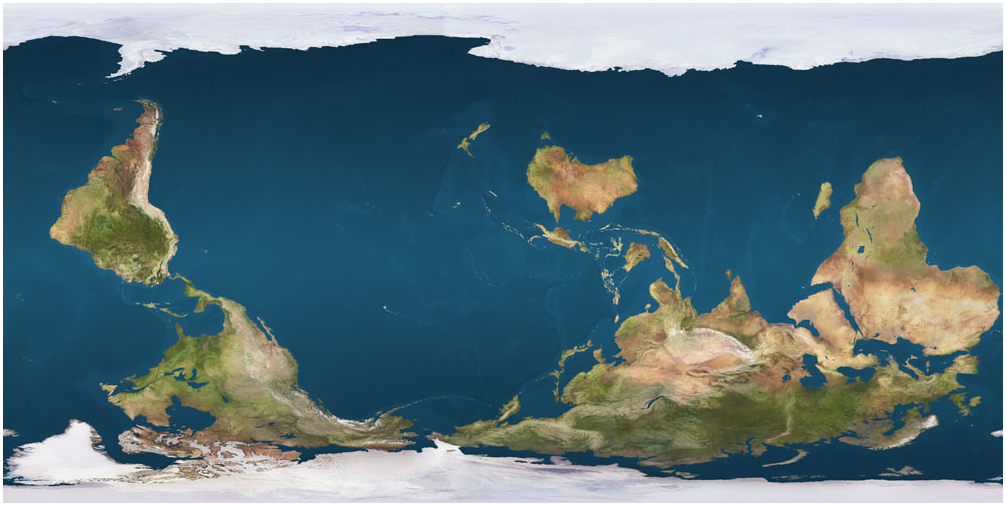


Figure 8.41. McArthur's Universal Corrective Map of the World simply inverts the perspective we usually see in maps. It places colonizing nations at the bottom of the map.

Making these alternative maps available is a powerful way of decolonizing knowledge in the classroom. Recently, maps based on the Gall-Peters projection have been promoted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). They've become widely used in British schools and have been adopted as the standard in the Boston public school system in the United States (Higgins 2009; Walters 2017).

Indigenization is a process of making Indigenous knowledge systems evident, prevalent, and available. In the educational setting, this means recognizing that Indigenous knowledge systems are embedded in a relationship to specific lands, cultures, and communities. So when educators practice indigenization, they will prioritize learning experiences that are place-based and that help Indigenous students access their cultural knowledge. As they do so, other forms of education and knowledge systems are acknowledged, appreciated, and incorporated into the dominant education system.

Community involvement is crucial to this model of education, as it connects students to their support system and allows them to place knowledge in context (Centre for Youth and Society n.d.). Professor Rowena Arshad offers a good example:

> *…In astronomy when we discuss life, universe, planet and stars, we can open up discussions on how different perspectives might understand these topics. How might different [I]ndigenous communities understand and talk about stars? Would it be in the language of exploration and conquest of space or in terms of navigation and survival? (Arshad 2021)*

Elder Albert Marshall from the Eskasoni Mi'kmaw First Nation (2012) describes this approach as *etuaptmumk*, "two-eyed seeing." It's a way to learn to appreciate both Indigenous and Western knowledge and ways of knowing. He contends that by fostering an active engagement with both ways of seeing, we are providing all students (not only Indigenous students) with support systems to move toward a decolonized academy.

Finally, indigenization of education includes addressing the social injustices and racist policies to which Indigenous Peoples have been subjected. The history and current situation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the United States differ in significant ways from that of immigrants and minority settlers. These differences must be acknowledged to form respectful relationships.

For more reading on cultural capital, read Yosso's article, "Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth" [Website].

To learn more about Paulo Freire, watch "Paulo Freire and the Development of Critical Pedagogy" [Streaming Video]. To listen to Paulo Freire speaking about his work, watch "Conversation with Paulo Freire" [Streaming Video].

To hear more about feminism and critical education theory, watch "bell hooks on Paolo Freire" [Streaming Video]. You can also hear more from bell hooks on violence and race in "bell hooks Interview" [Streaming Video].

For a take on how the television series The *West Wing* introduced the Mercator projection, Gall-Peters projection, and McArthur's Universal Corrective map into an episode, watch this scene [Streaming Video].

For more about two-eyed seeing by Elder Albert Marshall, you can read the paper "Two-Eyed Seeing – Elder Albert Marshall's Guiding Principle for Inter-Cultural Collaboration" [Website].

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8.6: Conclusion

The relationship between education and social change is multifaceted. The institution of education is a force for social change as it is used to support the formation of countries through national identities, national values, and national pride. However, this formation can come at a high cost. Groups of people who don't fit the dominant culture or who threaten the goals and beliefs of dominant culture often are prevented from being educated. They receive substandard education or experience violence in school.

At the same time, oppressed groups bring cultural wealth, resistance, and resilience to education to ensure that their children and their communities learn and thrive. We can examine who goes to school and whose education is funded, and we can invest in education to change the chances for economic success for individuals and groups. We can track how changes in laws can expand access to education based on social locations of race, ethnicity, gender, and ability.

Instructors can also learn to critically analyze their society and work to transform it. They can do this by creating classrooms where students can challenge how we teach and what we teach so that Indigenous ways of knowing and other culturally affirming practices nurture our students and ourselves.

Review of Learning Outcomes

This chapter has offered you the opportunity to:

- Discuss how sociological perspectives view the role of education in unequal societies.
- Describe the relationship between education, poverty, and wealth with an intersectional lens.
- Illustrate the importance of social and cultural capital in education.
- Identify how policy can impact access to education and educational outcomes.
- Discuss how education can be a vehicle to advance genocide and cultural hegemony.
- Explain how education can support social justice and cultural restoration.

Key Terms

achievement gap: any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between groups of students with different social locations.

banking model of education: a critical term for a type of education in which "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (Freire 1970: 72).

community cultural wealth: the interdependent overlapping forms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and networks possessed and utilized by communities of color to survive and resist racism and other forms of subordination (Yosso 2023).

cultural capital: the cultural knowledge and items that help one navigate a society

cultural hegemony: the dominance of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class that shapes the culture of that society …so that the worldview of the ruling class becomes the accepted cultural norm (Bullock et al. 1999).

culturally responsive education: "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings 1994:382).

credentialism: the assumption of social superiority or inferiority based on formal educational attainment.

decolonization of knowledge: the process of examining and undoing colonial ideologies that frame Western thought and practices as superior.

decolonizing education: the process of confronting and challenging the colonizing practices that have influenced education in the past and which are still present today.

de facto segregation: segregation that occurs without laws but because of other social influences.

democracy: a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives.

education debt: the cumulative impact of directing social-political harm toward students of color, including allotting fewer resources toward their education.

forced cultural assimilation: a process by which a community with a dominant culture forces members of other groups to adopt their language, national identity, norms, customs, values, ideology, and way of life.

hidden curriculum: the implicit social and cultural expectations, designed by dominant culture, that inform the educational process.

inclusion: the laws and practices that require disabled students be included in mainstream classes, not separate rooms or schools.

indigenization: a process of making Indigenous knowledge systems evident, prevalent, and available.

social capital: the social networks or connections that an individual has available to them due to group membership.

social justice: a state where "everyone has fair access to the resources and opportunities to develop their full capacities, and everyone is welcome to participate democratically with others to mutually shape social policies and institutions that govern civic life" (Bell 2023).

tracking: a formalized sorting system that places students on "tracks" (advanced versus low achievers) that perpetuates inequalities.

Comprehension Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=793#h5p-8

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Key term, tracking, is used from "Key Terms" in Education, of Introduction to Sociology 3e.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 9: Religion, Spiritual Belief Systems, and Social Change

Learning Objectives

This chapter offers you the opportunity to:

- Explain the relationship between religion, spiritual belief systems, and power.
- Compare and contrast how early sociologists explained religion and spiritual belief systems in society.
- Discuss how the contemporary feminist, critical race, and queer sociological perspectives view religion and spiritual belief systems in society.
- Describe how religion and spiritual belief systems can be used as a tool of oppression or to support social justice.
- Explain how religion and spiritual belief systems play a role in addressing our climate crisis.

9.1: Chapter Story
9.2: Religion, Spiritual Belief Systems, and Power
9.3: Foundational Perspectives on Religion
9.4: Newer Perspectives on Religion
9.5: Resilience, Resistance, and Justice
9.6: Religion, Spiritual Belief Systems, and the Environment
9.7: Conclusion
9.8: References

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9.1: Chapter Story

A BELOVED RIVER, RELIGION, AND SPIRITUALITY INSPIRE SOCIAL CHANGE

The Ganges River in India supports the lives of 400 million people who use her channel and her tributaries for water, transportation, fishing, and the removal of waste. Beyond the physical presence of the river, the waterway is sacred to Hindus. They revere her as Mother Ganga who cleanses the sins of those who see or touch her. During the festival of Kumbh Mela, millions of pilgrims travel to the Ganges so they can bathe in her water and be purified. At the end of life, people come to her banks to die. Their bodies are cremated, and the ashes are scattered in the current. Physical and spiritual life are nourished by this mighty river, an unchanging part of social existence for centuries (figure 9.1).



Figure 9.1 Women in India perform a puja, a worship ritual, while standing in the Ganges River.

The 1,500-mile-long Ganges begins in the Himalayan mountains, where her water is pristine. But as she moves through the populated plains of northern India she quickly becomes polluted—by human waste, the remains of people buried there, chemical deposits from factories, and the pressures of the millions of people who live surrounding her (figure 9.2) (Scarr 2019). In 2014, the Indian government set out to restore the Ganges through one of the most ambitious engineering programs in the history of sanitation. Along with monitoring pollutants, they have been planting native trees along her watershed and supporting farmers in transitioning to sustainable farming (UN Environment Programme 2023).



Figure 9.2. The Ganges River flanks the Indian city of Varanasi. It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, where activities of life and death bring pollution to the water.

But engineering and planting are only part of the cleanup. A combination of religion, spirituality, and activism plays another important role. Spiritual activists see that caring for the Ganges is a sacred obligation. They assert that the Ganges is a living entity with her own unique personhood. She has the right to flow freely, to be protected from harm (including the harm of pollution), and to maintain her unique biodiversity.

For example, the Dalai Lama, the leader of Tibetan Buddhism, and His Holiness Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, leader of an interfaith ashram, were instrumental in starting the foundation Ganga Action Parivar to focus on restoring the health of the Ganges. They connect people and organizations involved in the cause, and members lobby for a National Ganga Rights Act to protect her rights.

Professor Veer Bhadra Mishra and his organization, the Sankat Mochan Foundation, have also been crucial in protecting the Ganges. Mishra, a hydraulic engineer, worked tirelessly before his death in 2013, designing ways to remove pollution from the river. He was also the *mahant* (leader) of the Hindu temple Sankat Mochan. Amberly Polidor, an activist filmmaker, writes:

> *[Mishra and the foundation] found new ways to talk about the river that respect the Hindu worldview and veneration of the Ganges.… To tell a Hindu that Ganga, goddess, and mother, is "polluted" or "dirty" is an insult; it suggests that she is no longer sacred. Rather, the approach must acknowledge that human action, not the holy river herself, is responsible: "We are allowing our mother to be defiled."*
>
> *This approach has stimulated grassroots involvement in the clean-up effort, and is transforming the work for environmental preservation into a model for cultural and religious preservation as well (Polidor 2014).*

Seen through the lens of sociology, the case of the Ganges restoration work reveals how religious leadership, support of spiritual ideas, and changes in religious practices play a role in social and environmental change.

Sociologists explore patterns in belief and behavior to understand how and why society changes, and the Ganges restoration is one of many stories where spiritual principles encourage people to take social action. When we focus globally on religion, social change, and rivers, we can see more patterns. Watch the 4:06-minute video "The Novel Legal Concept to Protect Sacred Rivers"

[Streaming Video] (figure 9.3) to see how religion and activism combine around the world to grant rights to rivers to protect them. As you do, consider the ways in which religious beliefs inform the debate about river rights.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=799#oembed-1

https://youtu.be/d42L4hVJmrA

Figure 9.3. This video, "The Novel Legal Concept to Protect Sacred Rivers" [Streaming Video], describes how activists use religious beliefs to support ecological activism. Transcript.

In the beautiful U.S. Pacific Northwest, Indigenous Peoples are using similar approaches to protect rivers. The Yurok Tribe is working to protect the Klamath River, which flows in Southern Oregon and Northern California (figure 9.4). (Optional: Read more about the Yurok Tribe [Website].) In May 2019, the Yurok people granted the rights of personhood to the Klamath, upholding the idea that she is an entity worthy of respect, care, and protection. This belief is deeply rooted in the worldview and the spiritual practices of the Yurok people. In the words of one Tribal member:

> *I was born and raised on the River. My life is woven with the river and its fish and people. If the River is sick, so am I. So are we all, because it is our spirit and strength. It is not the simple fact of eating healthy food from the River that is important.… It is the knowing in my mind, heart and spirit that the River itself is whole and healthy. We are merely a reflection of the River, and will never be healthy again until it is (Yurok Tribal Member Survey Respondent 2006 in Sloan 2011:91).*

The physical and spiritual health of the people and the river are intertwined. To restore health to the Klamath, the Yurok advocate for the removal of dams along the river and pay attention to the water quality of her tributaries. Work began in December 2023 to remove the first of four dams. The other three are expected to be removed by the end of 2024.



Figure 9.4. Keith Parker, a Yurok Tribal member and biologist, examines Blue Creek, a waterway that connects to the Klamath River. The Yurok Tribe recognizes the Klamath River as a person.

In this chapter, we will explore how globally, religion and spirituality can be powerful forces that support stability in society and energize social change. On one hand, they are forces that influence change for a better society—not just through protection of the environment but through virtually all aspects of human existence. But what about other realities? Religion also plays a role in

justifying inequality and creating harm. This chapter will encourage you to ask questions about those contradictions and other aspects of religion in society.

- Who decides what is sacred?
- How do sociologists explain the role of religion and spiritual belief systems in society? How can we best acknowledge the diversity of experiences based on social location when we think about religion and spirituality?
- How can we encourage the well-being of the Earth and all humans?

Going Deeper

To learn more about the Ganges River, her pollution, and her spiritual significance, read:

- "The Race to Save the River Ganges" [Website], an interactive infographic.
- "The Ganges, Hinduism's Holy River" [Website], a blog post about why the Ganges River is sacred.
- "Kumbh Mela" [Website], a blog post about the festival of Kumbh.

To learn more about dam removal on the Klamath River, read and watch:

- "Largest Dam Removal Project in History Nears Final Approval" [Website], an article by the Yoruk tribe that recommends the removal of the lower four Klamath River Dams.
- "Nature Undammed" [Website], an article and pictorial about the removal of the Klamath River Dams.

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9.2: Religion, Spiritual Belief Systems, and Power

Religions help answer questions that hold meaning for societies and communities. They might be, "What does it mean to be a good person?" or "What happens when we die?" Sociologically defined, **religion** is a communally organized and persistent system of beliefs, values, practices, and relationships concerning what is sacred or spiritually significant. For example, Christianity establishes codes by which members agree to live. It is also an organization that maintains places of worship and spiritual leaders, organizes spiritual education for children, manages wealth, and exerts political influence. We see these same structures repeated across time, place, and culture. Sociologists identify religion as one of the major social institutions we explored in Chapter 2.

Identifying spirituality and how it relates to religion and society is more complicated. It requires us to consider that it is groups in power that evaluate the diverse sets of beliefs and practices in the world. It also requires that we consider the consequences of classifying some beliefs and practices as legitimate and others as not.

Decolonizing "Religion"

In Chapter 1, we introduced the specific process of colonization implemented by France and the Catholic Church in the 19th century. As France colonized Algeria, it incorrectly defined Islam as backward and immoral. As Western Europeans colonized other parts of the world, they used their own concept of religion to similarly dismiss, denigrate, and suppress the spiritual practices of those in the land they were occupying. This was true for other organized religions like Islam and spiritual worldviews held by Indigenous groups.

Islam, like Christianity, has extensive origins. It is a monotheistic faith centered around belief in the one God (Allah) and traces its history back to the biblical patriarchs Abraham and Adam. Indigenous Earth-based spiritualities have sophisticated understandings of the interrelationship between people and the natural world. Nevertheless, European colonists saw their practices as incorrect and simple, believing people who practiced these ways needed to be converted to Christianity in order to be civilized. Religious conversion became a tool of colonialist power. Dr. Sarah J. King, a Canadian religious scholar, writes:

> *Through the colonial process, as European Christians moved around the world, they struggled to understand the diverse cultures and philosophies they encountered. They brought the category of "religion" with them, to help them order and understand the unfamiliar….*
>
> *[I]ndigenous ways of life have been recast in Western terms, made into "actual religions," in order to render them more familiar. Even the use of the word religion to describe the lives of [I]ndigenous people is a part of this process since the category of "religion" arises in Western (and not [I]ndigenous) epistemology (King 2013).*

As you prepare to think about religion and social change, consider that the ways religions are acknowledged and approved depend on the people who are in positions of power. For example, the next section will introduce you to the ideas of Émile Durkheim, known for establishing the first formal, independent academic discipline of sociology. Durkheim's ideas are presented in this text as foundational to how sociologists analyze the role of religion in society. However, Durkheim's ideas on religion were developed in the context of the 19th-century British settlement of central Australia. They were informed by white supremacist ideas that framed the beliefs of other societies as disorganized and "primitive" in contrast to European religion (Nye 2019).

While plenty of religious organizations today recognize the value of other faiths and practices (figure 9.5), many of these supremacist perspectives remain. Therefore, examining religion and social change requires challenging these ideas of correct or incorrect beliefs. It's important to think critically about how these ideas influenced the treatment of communities that did not practice the endorsed religions of the European world. It is equally important to frame these ideas in the context of power and colonization, as they exist today.

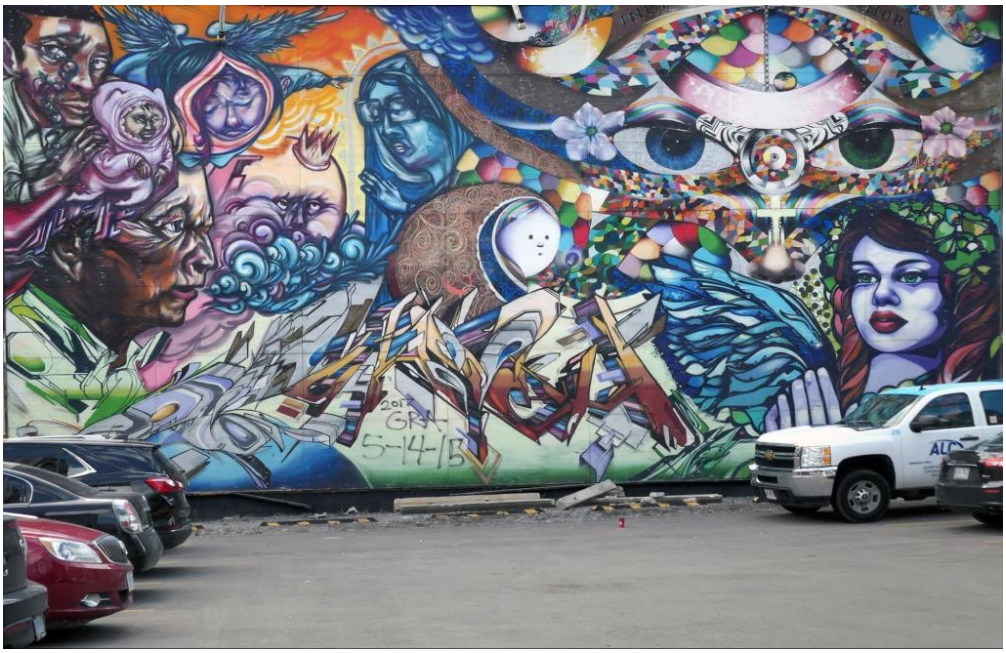


Figure 9.5. This mural, part of the Paint Your Faith event in Toronto, Canada (2010), expresses the universality of spirituality. It was a collaborative effort of four aerosol artists: Siloette [Streaming Video], Elicser [Website], Mediah [Website], and Chor Boogie [Website], who said of his portion: "It's all forms of spirituality, religion, and culture all together as one" (Paint Your Faith n.d.).

To decolonize our study, we will explore how religion as an institution can be used to subjugate and ostracize people who live outside of the power structures of dominant organized religion. We also acknowledge that "religion" as a term is not adequate. It does not universally define the myriad cultural ways societies connect to what they find sacred. It omits beliefs that are not part of the religious framework defined by colonial power structures. While religion includes the experience of spirituality, participation in organized religion is not a universal human experience. We'll use the terms "spirituality" and "spiritual belief systems" in this chapter to include societies and communities that do not define themselves using the language of religion.

The Cultural Universal of Spirituality

What then is spirituality, and what is a spiritual belief system? Psychologist Kenneth Pargament defined spirituality as "the search for the sacred" (Pargament 1999:12). As a psychologist, his focus was on the personal and individual experience that all humans have with what is divine, mystical, or transcendent to them.

Applying a sociological lens, spirituality may be a label that groups use to define their own traditions. For example, author Christopher Peters calls his tradition "Earth-based spirituality." He is a member of the Pohlik-lah (Yurok) and Karuk Tribes in Northwestern California. (Optional: Read more about the Karuk Tribe [Website].) He shares, "Our primary purpose in life is to heal and renew the Earth. We are put here for no other reason" (Peters 2012). Other people may refer to their beliefs as **interspiritual**. Mystic Wayne Teasdale calls interspiritual the idea that "beneath the diversity of theological beliefs, rites, and observances lies a deeper unity of experience that is our shared spiritual heritage" (Teasdale 2003).

Medical educator Christina Puchalski defines **spirituality** as "the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred" (Puchalski et al. 2014). This definition combines the individual and social experience.

However, there is also a more structural aspect to spirituality in societies. In Chapter 2, we referred to a system as a group of two or more related parts that interact over time to form a whole that has a purpose, function, or behavior. When members of societies interact and create meaning out of shared spiritual beliefs, they develop a system of beliefs and practices together. In fact, Durkheim referred to religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things" (Durkheim 1912:62). But if we look at those beliefs and practices with a universal lens not based in white supremacy, those beliefs are not necessarily organized into religions.

Building on Puchalski's definition, we'll call **a spiritual belief system**: a series of related beliefs and practices of a society that help members seek and express meaning and purpose. This system is what allows members to experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred.

Going Deeper

To learn more about spirituality in the United States, read key findings from a report by the Fetzer Institute: "What Does Spirituality Mean to Us?" [Website]. As you review this research, you will see art from many people. Using images or drawings to gather responses [Website] is a unique but powerful way to gather sociological data.

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Figure 9.5. "Paint Your Faith Mural in Toronto" is on Flickr, by Bernard Spragg. NZ and in the public domain. Mural by the United Church of Canada and artists Siloette, Elicser, Mediah, and Chor Boogie.

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9.3: Foundational Perspectives on Religion

Sociologists explain how religion influences social change using different perspectives. While the shape and label of sociology did not develop until the 19th century, there were earlier thinkers that spoke and wrote extensively about sociological ideas.

Social phenomena were dominant topics in ancient Greece. The guidance developed by Confucius to achieve a harmonious society became prominent in China around 260 BCE (Tseng et al. 1985). Tunisian-born Ibn Khaldun became a prominent Muslim scholar during the 14th century. Some consider Khaldun to be the father of sociology, as he presented some of the earliest known theories of social cohesion and social conflict (Mendoza et al. 2023). The term “sociology” was first introduced in the 1700s, and foundational theories of the discipline were developed in the 1800s.

As we explore all these foundational ideas, keep in mind that each contributor framed their perspective within the specific historical and cultural realities that existed during their lives. For example, Khaldun’s writings were influenced by his Islamic faith and the political and religious turmoil of his Mediterranean homeland during Islam’s Golden Age. Durkheim’s major works were influenced by a politically stable period in France in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This allowed him to focus on what creates that stability and on policy issues. On the other hand, Marx was influenced by a youth spent during the tumultuous first half of the 19th century and an adulthood that witnessed a rapidly industrializing Europe.

As we introduced in Chapter 3, the foundational theories of sociology include functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. This section will examine how sociologists view religion’s role through those perspectives.

Religion as Symbolic Interaction

Symbolic interactionism examines how society is created and maintained through face-to-face, repeated, meaningful interactions. This perspective arises from the concept that our world is socially constructed. So, in the context of religion and spiritual belief systems, beliefs and experiences are not sacred unless members of a society agree to regard them as sacred. Interactionists also recognize that religious and spiritual traditions use many physical and nonphysical symbols to help us construct meaning, come to these agreements through interaction, and cohere a community around a specific set of beliefs.

For example, researchers studying religion in Croatia argue that celebrating religious feast days, while using iconic religious symbols, connects people in a common religious membership (Kovačević et al. 2021). One feast day that brings Catholics together is the feast of Our Lady of Sinj. *Our Lady of Sinj* is the title of a painting venerated as miraculous of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The sanctuary in Sinj, where the painting is located, is a pilgrimage site (figure 9.6).



Figure 9.6. Church leaders and non-ordained people participate in the holy day of Our Lady of Sinj in Croatia. The painting of the Virgin Mother Mary is a religious symbol. So are the vestments, bishop's mitre (elaborate hat), and crosses worn by the clergy.

A scholar using the interactionist approach might ask questions about the interactions between religious leaders and practitioners. They might study how religion and spiritual belief systems influence our daily decision-making or the ways people express their belief-based values to others.

Also core to the interactionist perspective is how individuals identify themselves within groups. Some sociologists will focus on how people categorize their religious or spiritual identity and count the people who belong to or ascribe to those beliefs. This allows them to track membership or affiliation over time, providing insights into how the world is changing.

In one approach to categorization, the Pew Research Center measured the religious affiliations of people in 2010 and predicted what they would look like in 2050 (figure 9.7). The researchers named Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism as major worldwide religious traditions. People practicing these world religions in 2010 included approximately 77 percent of all the people worldwide.

Size and Projected Growth of Major Religious Groups

	2010 POPULATION	% OF WORLD POPULATION IN 2010	PROJECTED 2050 POPULATION	% OF WORLD POPULATION IN 2050	POPULATION GROWTH 2010-2050
Christians	2,168,330,000	31.4%	2,918,070,000	31.4%	749,740,000
Muslims	1,599,700,000	23.2	2,761,480,000	29.7	1,161,780,000
Unaffiliated	1,131,150,000	16.4	1,230,340,000	13.2	99,190,000
Hindus	1,032,210,000	15.0	1,384,360,000	14.9	352,140,000
Buddhists	487,760,000	7.1	486,270,000	5.2	-1,490,000
Folk Religions	404,690,000	5.9	449,140,000	4.8	44,450,000
Other Religions	58,150,000	0.8	61,450,000	0.7	3,300,000
Jews	13,860,000	0.2	16,090,000	0.2	2,230,000
World total	**6,895,850,000**	**100.0**	**9,307,190,000**	**100.0**	**2,411,340,000**

Source: The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 9.7. This chart, "Size and Projected Growth of Major Religious Groups," describes the current number (column 2) and percentage (column 3) of people worldwide who identified as part of a religion or spiritual tradition in 2010. It also projects how affiliation will change by 2050. Column 4 shows the projected number of people in each category. Column 5 shows the percentage of the world's population. With the exception of Buddhism, most groups will add members. Image description.

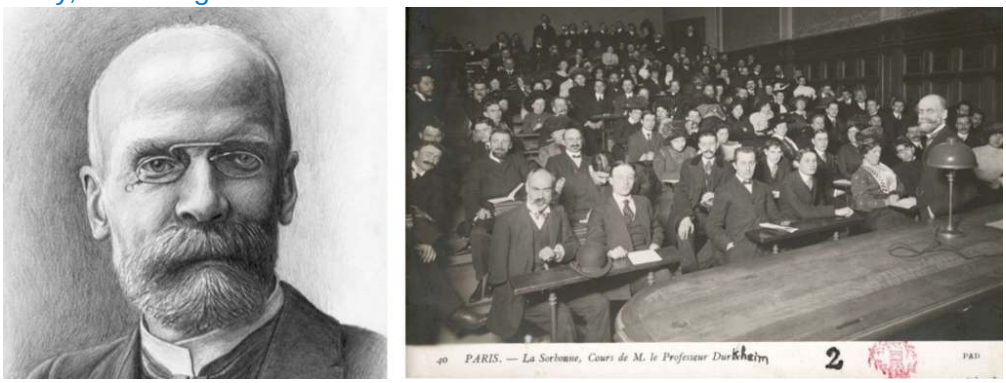


Figure 9.8. Drawing of Émile Durkheim, French sociologist (left) and photo of Émile Durkheim teaching a course at the Sorbonne University in Paris (right). His theories of religion and social stability are fundamental to the sociology of religion, but modern scholars challenge his methods and conclusions.

French social theorist Émile Durkheim (figure 9.8 [left and right]) defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things." To him, "sacred" meant "extraordinary"—something that inspired wonder and connected to the divine. Durkheim argued that we create separations between ordinary life, *the profane*, and spiritual life, *the sacred*. A rock, for example, isn't sacred or profane as it exists. But if someone makes it into a headstone, or another person uses it for landscaping, it takes on different meanings—one sacred, one profane. Durkheim also identified ways that religion serves society, building a functionalist view of religion.

Functionalism examines religion's contribution to social stability through solidarity and social integration. This perspective focuses on four main ways that religion serves society. First, religion gives meaning and purpose to life. Many things in life and death remain a mystery, especially for societies that rely on Western scientific knowledge. Religious faith and belief help many people make sense of phenomena that science cannot explain. Often, members of religious organizations talk about the way that faith in a higher power provides meaning in their lives. The kind of meaning that faith provides might be associated with how they relate to others (such as parenting), their professional calling, what happens after death, or their individual experience with a higher power.

A second function of religion is greater psychological and physical well-being. Religious faith and practice can enhance psychological well-being. It can be a source of comfort to people in times of distress by enhancing their social interaction with others. Many studies find that people of all ages, not just the elderly, are happier and more satisfied with their lives if they are religious. Religiosity also apparently promotes better physical health. Some studies even find that religious people tend to live longer than those who are not religious (Moberg 2008).

Third, religion reinforces social unity and stability. This was one of Durkheim's most important insights. Religion strengthens social unity and stability in at least two ways. It gives people a common set of beliefs and thus is an important agent of socialization (explored in Chapter 2). Also, the communal practice of religion brings people together physically, facilitates their communication and other social interactions, and thus strengthens their social bonds. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, congregants came together virtually to celebrate community.

A fourth function of religion is the implementation of social control and social order. Social control is a way to formally and informally regulate, enforce, and encourage conformity to norms. Religion teaches people moral behavior and thus helps them learn how to be good members of society. In Christianity, for example, the Golden Rule is "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Many religions share this rule, written in alignment with their own cultures, as shown in figure 9.9.

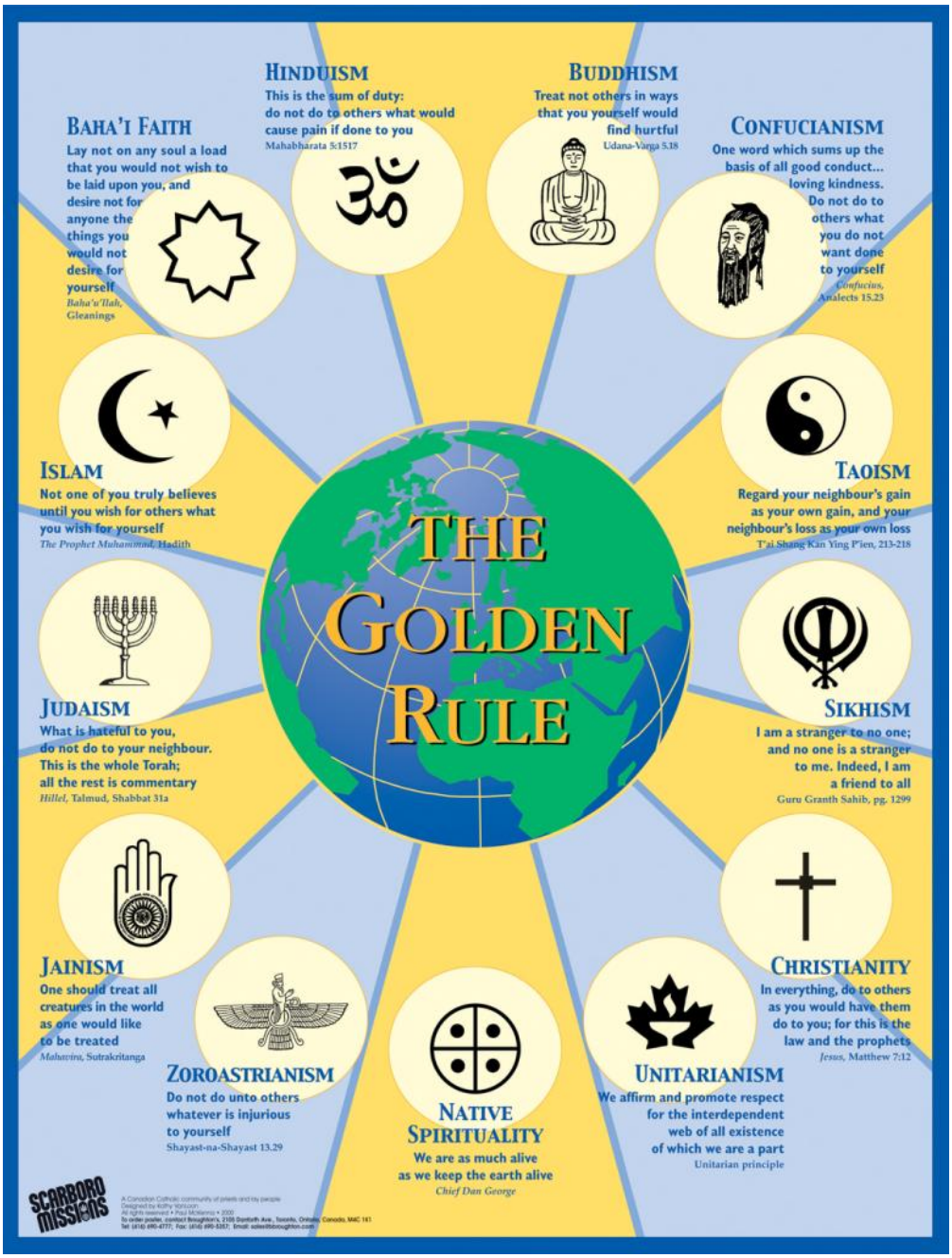


Figure 9.9. The Golden Rule is a common principle in many religious and spiritual traditions. Image description.

Unity, Stability, and Religious Change

How do the functions of religion relate to social change? Durkheim believed that people prefer to maintain the outcomes of religion he outlined: social control, amplified meaning, interrelatedness, and unity. Thus, religion prevents social change as members will choose to follow and expect the social norms and values that serve these functions. Social scientists Bronisław Malinowski and Talcott Parsons also supported the idea that religion reinforces social norms and stimulates social solidarity. To them, this creates more stability in society than change.

Religion can be a source of two kinds of stability. Sometimes that stability is positive, creating connection and continuity for groups. Other times, religion's resistance to change preserves harmful practices of discrimination and oppression. While religious systems are very complex, it can be said broadly that many world religions vary from fundamentalist to progressive beliefs.

Judaism, for example, varies from ultra-Orthodox (called Haredi Judaism) to Reform denominations. Christianity varies from Catholicism to United and Metropolitan community churches, and Islam also varies between Shia and Sunni adherents. **Fundamentalism** is a religious movement that requires a strict and typically literal interpretation of core texts and adherence to traditional beliefs, doctrines, and rituals. This orientation emphasizes social control.

As a vehicle of that social control, fundamentalist forms of religious traditions insist that members comply in detail with their related **holiness code**, a set of core laws or principles that define the key ideas for that organization. In the United States, we see Christian fundamentalism related to views such as abortion. Hindu fundamentalists support a philosophy in India that includes the outlawing of beef consumption. Muslim fundamentalists insist on strict interpretations of the Qur'an, perhaps most visible in interpretations of the role of women.

Many fundamentalist believers view homosexuality as a sin as part of their holiness code. Further, they argue that same-sex relationships violate the God-given order. Sometimes religious people further on the fundamentalist spectrum will implement social control over gender and sexuality, using shunning and derogatory words. In one study, the researcher found that some fundamentalist church members called LGBTQIA+ people sinful, broken, and confused. LGBTQIA+ church members were threatened by eternal damnation (Hollier et al. 2022).

On the far end of fundamentalism is religious extremism. Extremism can look like vocal or active opposition to religious tolerance. It can also be a system that tries to manage religious social control through the political system, such as criminalizing abortions in the United States. Sometimes extremism legitimizes violence as a tactic of social control. Violence against women can be allowed and encouraged when they don't follow the rules (Derichs and Fleschenberg 2010:21). In the United States, we are seeing an increase in hate crimes by white Christian extremists against South Asians, in part because they are targeted as Muslim, even if they are from a completely different faith system (Dirks 2022).

Media accounts sometimes use the words religious fundamentalism, extremism, and terrorism incorrectly, as if the words are interchangeable. For example, you may have heard that Islamic fundamentalists were responsible for the bombing of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. However, these bombers were not just fundamentalists; they were violent extremists. People can be fundamentalist in their beliefs without being violent.

Another example of extreme religious social control is conversion therapy. In this "therapy," people who are gay are subjected to physical and mental torture in an attempt to change their sexual orientation (Bradfield 2021) (figure 9.10). Only some people from fundamentalist religions would agree with conversion therapy. However, this example of social control is rooted in extremist fundamentalist beliefs.



Figure 9.10. Many fundamentalist believers view homosexuality as a sin. Some use their religious beliefs as an extreme form of social control, proposing that conversion therapy will "heal" LGBTQIA+ people. In reality, LGBTQIA+ people are not broken or sinful.

Opposing Ideas on Conflict

We introduced Karl Marx in Chapters 3, 5, and 6, and Max Weber in Chapters 4 and 6. They were 19th-century sociologists who studied religion in the context of conflict and change. As conflict theorists, they focused on patterns of social inequality that religion fosters. They each emphasized the relationship between religion and society's economic and social structure.



Figure 9.11. German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) made connections between religion and economic and social change. A quote of his is included in this mural in Freiburg, Germany. In English: "inspiration does not replace work."

Max Weber believed religion could be a force for social change. As we discussed in Chapter 6, Max Weber (figure 9.11) argued that the shift from an agrarian to a capitalist economy in Western Europe was supported in part by a particular kind of religious belief. This variation of Protestantism encouraged making money by motivating believers to work hard, be successful, and not spend their profits on frivolous things. Success in the world became a sign of God's favor. He pointed out that heavily Protestant societies—such as those in the Netherlands, England, Scotland, and Germany—held the most highly developed capitalism as their economic structures. As Protestantism became the religion of the dominant social class, it drove economic and social change.

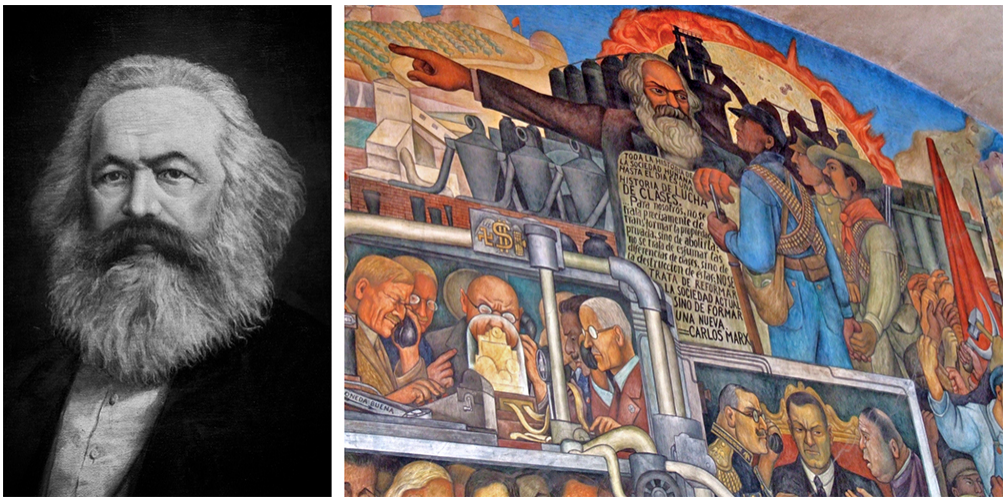


Figure 9.12. Photo of Karl Marx (1818–1883) (left). Karl Marx in a mural by Diego Rivera, pointing the way for Mexican laborers and revolutionaries toward independence (right).

Karl Marx (figure 9.12) viewed religion as a tool used by capitalist societies to perpetuate inequality. He believed religion reflects the social stratification of society. The religion of the dominant class maintains inequality and perpetuates the status quo. For him, religion was just an extension of working-class (proletariat) economic suffering. He famously argued that religion "is the opium of the people." By focusing on rewards in the afterlife, religion was a drug that served to numb people to their suffering here on earth.

Like Durkheim, Marx argued that the dominant religion in a society maintains social stability and resists social change. Unlike Durkheim, he focused on how religion helped wealthy capitalists (the owners of the means of production) maintain their power. By using theology that claimed that social inequality was part of the divine plan, capitalists could maintain an impoverished labor force. They would proselytize that in "God's will," some people would always be poor. In this sense, religion is a force for economic and social stability.

Modern conflict theorists also point out that those in power often dictate religious beliefs and practices through their interpretation of religious texts or via proclaimed direct communication from the divine. People in the dominant class use religion to enforce their social control. Because people in power want to retain their power, they emphasize religious practices that resist social change.

Going Deeper

In addition to the categories listed in figure 9.7, the researchers at Pew also categorize people into the category "folk religions." This category includes traditions such as Chinese folk religions, African folk religions, and other Indigenous folk religions. However, many people who practice these traditions wouldn't consider them religions (King 2013).

The category "Other Religions" is "an umbrella category that includes Baha'is, Jains, Sikhs, Taoists, and many smaller faiths" (Pew Research Center 2015:8). The categories "folk religions" and "other religions" hide more diversity than they reveal. They also reflect the power of dominant world religions, minimizing the unique worldviews, beliefs, and practices of many other spiritual traditions.

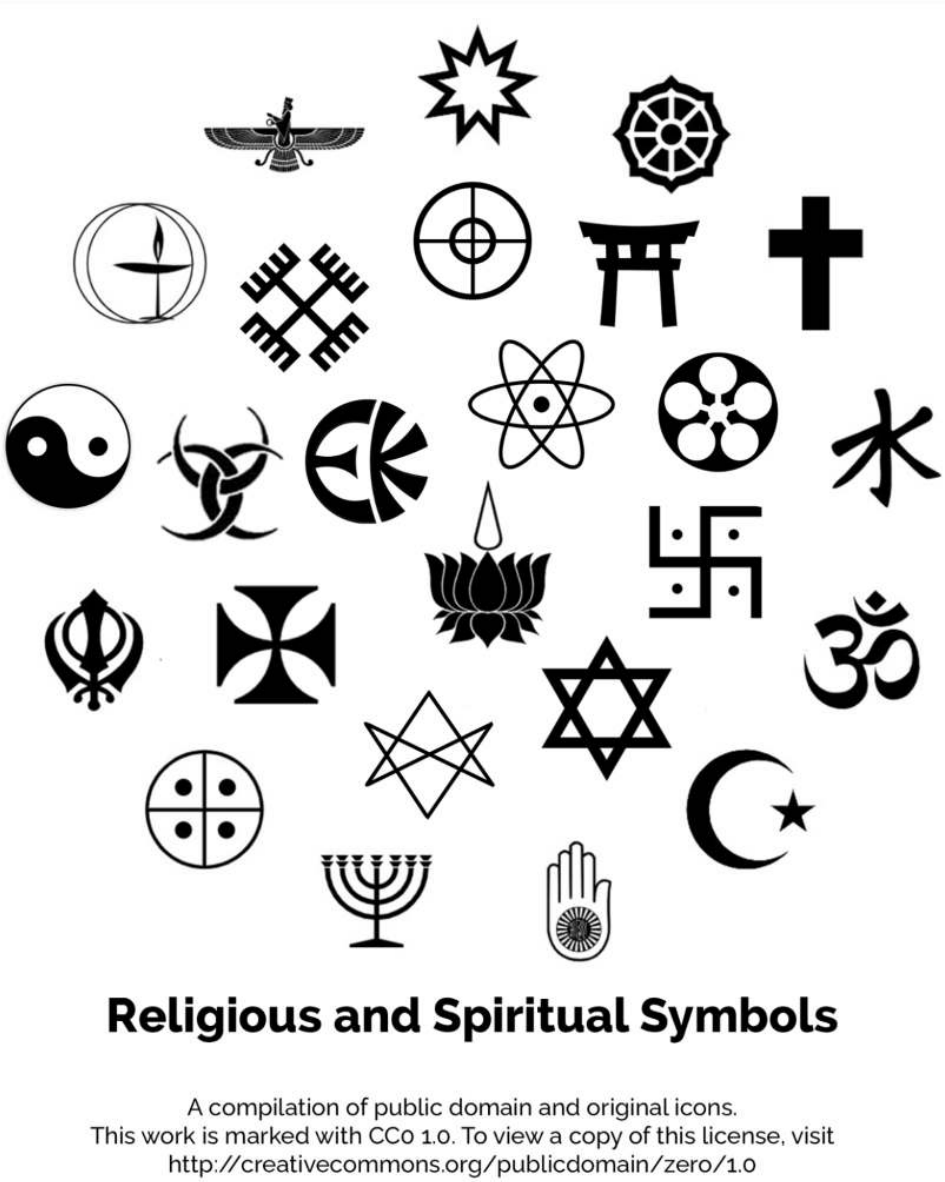


Figure 9.13. Symbols of religion and spirituality. The name of the religion or spiritual belief system and its related symbol is contained in the image description. Image description.

Even though spiritual belief systems are universal, there is vast diversity among religious and spiritual beliefs. Review the infographic of religious and spiritual symbols presented in figure 9.13. The Star of David represents Judaism. The cross symbolizes Christianity. The crescent and star icon represents Islam. Intersecting lines through two circles symbolize the Isese spirituality of the Yoruba people (a West African ethnic group, mainly residing in Nigeria, Benin, and Togo).

Interactionists are interested in the shared meaning these kinds of symbols hold. In what ways can you imagine that interactionists study this diversity in the context of social change?

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9.4: Newer Perspectives on Religion

Many of the foundational ideas of sociology and religion inform sociological perspectives today. However, societies have changed dramatically since the development of sociology as a discipline. As societies change, so do the perspectives that make sense of those changes.

Common to many newer perspectives in sociology is the examination of how members of society have diverse experiences based on our social locations (introduced in Chapter 3). Let's look at a few of the 20th and 21st century sociological perspectives that have developed on religion: feminist sociology, critical race, and queer theories.

Feminist Sociology of Religion

Feminist sociology examines social roles, experiences, and interests based on gender. It developed as a type of conflict theory in that it focuses on inequalities experienced by women, and more recently by non-binary people. Applied to religion and spiritual belief systems, feminist sociology points out key observations related to leadership, gender roles, belief, and language. This line of focus for feminist sociology is closely linked to **feminist theology**, the study of the nature of God and religious belief, which centers the religious and spiritual experiences of women.

Feminist religious scholars draw our attention to contradictions in religion. First, they challenge the assumption that men's religious experiences are more central than women's experiences. Women have always been central to spiritual rites and rituals. Some of the earliest spiritual icons we find are female. They are small figures, carved of limestone or formed from clay, highlighting breasts and pregnant stomachs. They highlight female fertility, and many archaeologists believe they also served to represent fertility deities of ancient societies (figure 9.14).



Figure 9.14. The Venus of Willendorf was carved 25,000 years ago. These ancient clay figures highlight female fertility and likely portray a fertility deity, pointing to women being central to spiritual rites and rituals in prehistory.

A second contradiction is that worldwide, while women are more likely than men to be religious (Pew Research Center 2016), they are less likely to hold leadership positions in religious organizations. Only 11 percent of religious leaders in the United States are women (Masci 2014). In Catholicism, even today, only men can be priests. Many Muslims assert that women should be led only by female *imams* (worship leaders). It was only in 1972 that a rabbinical seminary formally ordained Sally Priesand, the first woman to lead as a Jewish rabbi. Until recently, Buddhist nuns were prohibited from being fully ordained. Our religious institutions reflect and amplify patriarchal ideas, limiting women from leadership and power. To the extent that these structures remain in place, they resist social change.

Along with feminist theologians, feminist sociologists argue that the institution of religion is one of the institutions that support patriarchy. They assert that in order to understand how collective belief and spiritual membership are organized, we must use the lens of gender and power. Often, their work attempts to promote equality by challenging those patriarchal social structures.

Feminist sociologists also study the ways in which religious and spiritual beliefs help us to define gender roles. In some traditions, women have been seen as either madonnas or whores—either pure, innocent, and close to God or sexual, sinful, and dangerous to

men. Take a moment to examine the painting in figure 9.15. What beliefs about the power and agency of women are portrayed here?



https://socialsci.libretexts.org/@go/page/331052

Figure 9.15. *The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve* by Olivuccio di Ciccarello. It shows the power and agency of women in various ways.

The painting *The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve* by Italian artist Olivuccio de Ciccarello was created around 1400. Its focus is on the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus, who are surrounded by gold and angels. At the bottom of the painting, we see Eve, wrapped in a snake and naked. This depiction represents the dichotomy of how women are viewed in some world religions.

Feminist sociologists also look at how language expresses the social construction of gender and gendered power. When they apply these principles to religion and spiritual belief systems, the most obvious example is that the supreme deity or God is referred to as male, "He," or "Lord." This language is common in major world religions and has consequences. Feminist theologian, a former Catholic nun, and lesbian, Mary Daly points out that when religions refer to God as male, then power becomes centralized with men: "If God is male then male is God" (Daly 1985:19).

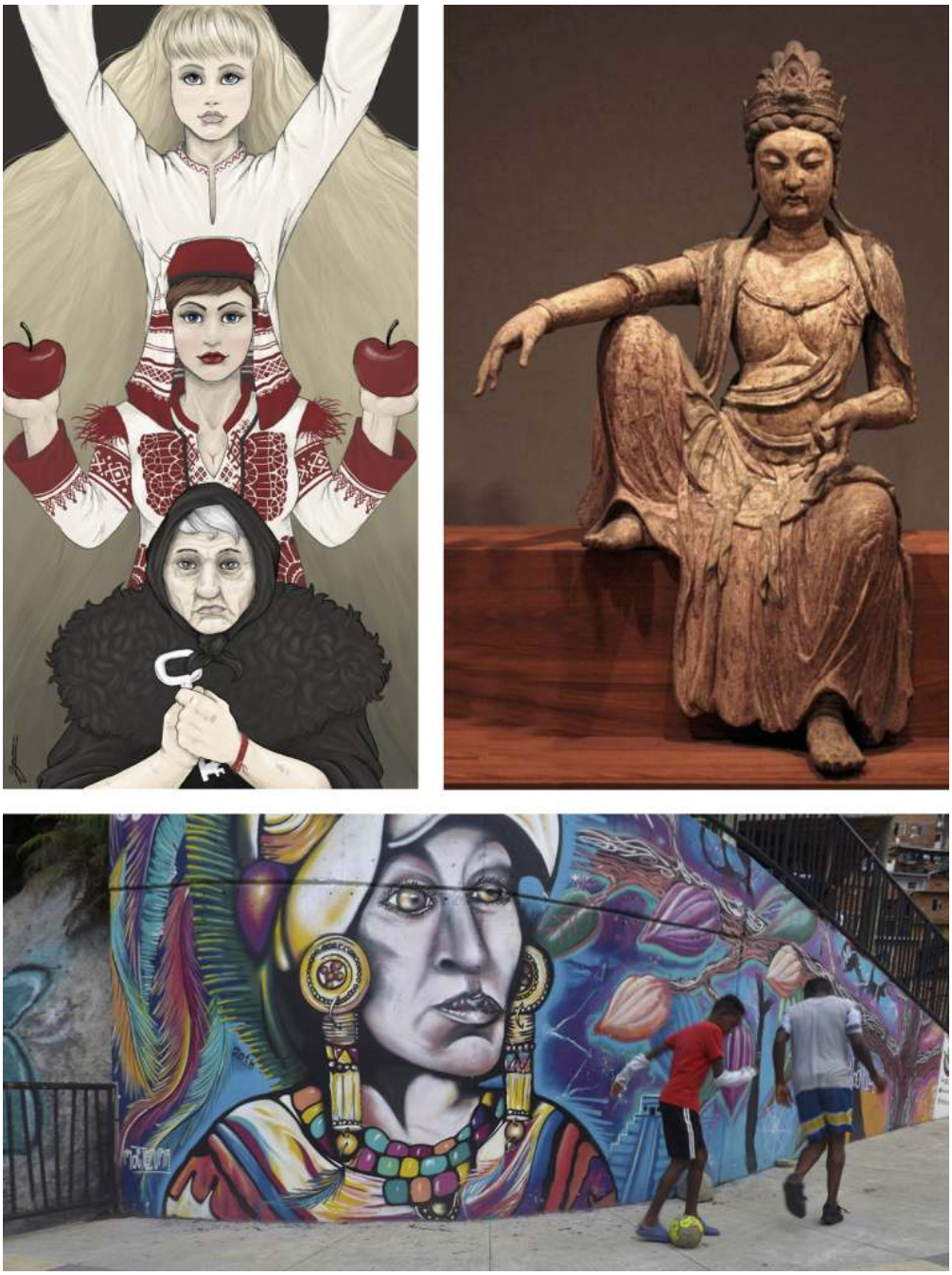


Figure 9.16. Feminine portrayals of the divine can challenge patriarchy. *Mother Maiden Crone Triple Allmother* by artist Dušan Božić (top left). Wood carving of Buddhist Deity Quan Yin (c. 1025) from the Northern Song dynasty, China (top right). Kids play soccer in front of a mural in Medellín, Colombia, that depicts Pachamama, Earth Mother and fertility goddess of Indigenous Peoples in the Andes (bottom).

However, this is far from the only language of God or spirit. In Judaism, Shekinah, the Sabbath itself, is female, compared to a shy bride. Wiccan traditions venerate the Goddess as mother, maiden, and crone in addition to any male figures. St. Julian of Norwich, a Catholic mystic nun, calls God a mother. Buddhists call upon Quan Yin, the goddess of compassion, who hears the cries of the poor. Mahakali is a black mother goddess from Hinduism and Buddhism. Mexicans and Mexican Americans often pray to La Virgen de Guadalupe as a patron saint. Pachamama is an Earth Mother and fertility goddess of Indigenous Peoples in the Andes. Pachamama is also a name for Mother Nature. Take a look at figure 9.16. How do feminine portrayals of the divine challenge patriarchy?

Amplifying these feminine faces of God is part of the work of dismantling patriarchy in religious structures. In 2019, religion scholar and mystic Miribai Starr shared changes she is seeing in this male-dominated paradigm:

> *Across the faith traditions women are being initiated, ordained and sanctioned as rabbis and acharyas, priests and priestesses, ministers and murshidas, lamas and shamans. We are disrupting the balance of power and reorganizing the conversation.*
>
> *Increasing numbers of men, secure in their positions of privilege and authority, are voluntarily abdicating their power and handing it over to women, calling God "she" from the pulpit, seeding the academy with female philosophers (Starr 2019:3).*

As women become leaders in religious and spiritual traditions, they are creating the social change they wish to see for themselves and for others.

We don't have much data to help us understand the changes in religious leadership among transgender and non-binary people. But patriarchal structures are also being dismantled as transgender and non-binary people use religious and spiritual principles as a foundation for their activism. Commonly, activism holds an intersectional lens, including race and ethnicity in the conversation.

Critical Race and Queer Theories

Feminist vision and feminist action have been powerful in creating social change. However, some of the early work in this area was criticized by scholars of color and queer theorists for lacking representation of their experiences. As feminist sociology of religion relied on the more general feminist vision, it too fell under this criticism.

Critical race theorists noted that feminist perspectives focused on the lives of white women and made assumptions that their experience is universal. One good example is in the writing of Mary Daly. In her book *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*, she explores patriarchy, particularly how male-centered religions erase or hide women's spirituality. She describes cultural and religious practices that limit female power or kill women, such as European witch burning and female genital mutilation. Finally, she celebrates the power of spirituality as claimed and reclaimed by women. She describes some of the goddesses that women revere in female-centered spirituality (Daly 1978).

As revolutionary as this work was in 1978, it failed to address the intersectionality of gender and race. Audre Lorde, a radical feminist, professor, and civil rights activist, critiques Daly's work:

> *…why doesn't Mary deal with Afrekete as an example? Why are her goddess images only white, western european, judea-christian? Where was Afrekete, Yemanje, Oyo, and Mawulisa? Where were the warrior goddesses of the Vodun, the Dahomeian Amazons and the warrior-women of Dan?*
>
> *I feel you do celebrate differences between white women as a creative force toward change.… But you fail to recognize that, as women, those differences expose all women to various forms and degrees of patriarchal oppression, some of which we share and some of which we do not (Lorde 1979).*

The goddesses that Lorde refers to originate in West Africa. Yemanje and Oyo are *Orishas* (divine spirits) of the Yoruba religious tradition (figure 9.17). Afrekete is the guardian goddess of the sea, known to the Dahomey people. Mawalisa is the creator goddess of the Fon and Ewe people. The women warriors of Dahomey fought 19th-century colonizers with formidable strength. All of these women and goddesses embody the power of the feminine in African traditions and are missing from Daly's scholarship.



Figure 9.17. The power of the feminine is present in African spirituality, but is often not included in scholarship. This image is from a Yemanje festival in Salvador, Brazil. In Brazil, this divine spirit is celebrated as Queen of the Ocean, the patron spirit of the fishermen and the survivors of shipwrecks, the feminine principle of creation, and the spirit of moonlight (Magalhães 2003).

Second, although some early feminist religious scholars were lesbian, early feminist theory generally failed to challenge assumptions that gender is binary, or limited to two categories: female and male. In reality, many spiritual traditions see gender as fluid or non-binary. For example, in the Yoruba worldview, male and female gender identities are interdependent rather than fixed (Olajubu 2004). In Hinduism, the deity Ardhanarishvara is depicted as half man and half woman (figure 9.18). By bringing together male and female energy, Ardhanarishvara unifies the opposites of the universe, including gender (Raveesh 2013). Indian culture also recognizes third-gender people, some of whom are *hijra*. Hijras are often male-assigned at birth but choose castration as an offering to the gods. Hijras are considered spiritually powerful but are often socially oppressed.



Figure 9.18. The Hindu deity Ardhanarishvara. One side of this God's body is female; the other side is male. Many spiritual traditions see gender as fluid or non-binary.

Similarly, in North America, some Indigenous traditions recognize Two-Spirit people. Geo Neptune Soctomah is a Two-Spirit activist, storyteller, and educator from the Passamaquoddy Tribe of Indian Township, Maine. (Optional: Read more about the Passamaquoddy Tribe [Website].) In the video "What Does Two-Spirit Mean?" [Streaming Video], Geo explains that "Two-Spirit refers to another gender role believed to be common among most if not all First Peoples of Turtle Island (North America)." It is distinct from the dominant gender and sexual orientation expectations of Western culture.

Watch the 6:16-minute video in figure 9.19 to hear more from Geo about the Two-Spirit identity. As you do, consider how they explain the origins of the term "Two Spirit." It's an identity that "had a proper and accepted place within native societies. This

acceptance was rooted in the spiritual teachings that say all life is sacred" (Soctomah 2018).

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4lBibGzUnE

Figure 9.19. "What Does 'Two-Spirit' Mean?" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Even practitioners of Christian traditions are finding ways to express their non-binary gender identities. Marley, an Episcopalian transgender person, is creative in how they use language and gender to express their understanding of God:

> *…This practice entails reimagining the gendered significance of the Holy Trinity: I use male pronouns for Jesus and I use female pronouns for the Holy Spirit. And just God for God.…there's one bit in the liturgy where it says, "And Blessed Be His kingdom, now and forever." I say, "And Blessed Be God's Kingdom, now and forever." (Darwin 2020:195–196).*

Exclusively exploring white experiences and binary categories of gender misses vast stories of how people practice their spirituality (Olajubu 2004:60). Sociologists studying religion who use the lenses of critical race and queer theory contribute to a more whole understanding of religion and spiritual belief systems in societies.

Going Deeper

To see documentation of women's leadership in religion, spirituality, and scholarship, read "Women Spiritual and Religious Leaders" [Website] or "Influential Women in Religious Studies From the Last 10 Years [Website].

For more on non-binary gender experiences and religion, read "The Third Gender and Hijras" [Website].



Figure 9.20. Valarie Kaur has dedicated herself to learning more about hate crimes she witnessed as a child and promoting alternative ways of interacting.

Valarie Kaur is a Yale lawyer, civil rights activist, and Sikh (figure 9.20). After September 11, 2011, members of her extended family and other Sikhs and Muslims were killed in hate crimes just because they wore turbans (Dirks 2022). In her childhood, when she experienced hate, her grandfather repeated this mantra three times with her: "*Tati vao na lagi, par brahm sarnia*"—"The hot winds cannot touch you; you are shielded by love" (Kaur 2020:13).

As an adult, Kaur dedicated herself to learning more about these crimes she witnessed so closely as a child. She also dedicated her life to articulating alternatives to the hate that fueled them. She offers a different metaphor for activism: revolutionary love. Her Revolutionary Love Project hinges on the spiritual practice of "seeing no stranger" that so many wisdom traditions teach us.

For more on Valerie Kaur and how she combines religious principles and feminist metaphors to energize social activism, watch this 6-minute video: "Valarie Kaur: Revolutionary Love" [Streaming Video], as well as her full TED Talk, "Three Lessons of Revolutionary Love in a Time of Rage" [Streaming Video].

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Figure 9.20. "Valerie Kaur in Manhattan Beach" is on Wikipedia, by JcpwikiRL, and licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

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9.5: Resilience, Resistance, and Justice

Feminist sociology, critical race, and queer perspectives reflect the realities of everyday lives. As perspectives, they also challenge society to rethink the status quo of dominant social structures. But finding ways to exist and organize against belief systems that are racist, patriarchal, and discriminatory against non-binary people is critical. Religion and spiritual belief can be powerful influencers for groups as they work for this kind of social justice.

This section will focus on ways that organized religion can both maintain oppressive social structures and dismantle them. Each example highlights how oppressed groups apply spiritual belief systems and the organization of religions to live with resilience, act in resistance, and dismantle harmful social structures.

Slavery, Civil Rights, and the Black Church

The harm of slavery is complex. White enslavers used Christianity to support the system of slavery in the United States. In this theology, they incorrectly asserted that men and women of African descent could not morally and ethically discern right from wrong. Enslavers believed that enslaved men and women were inherently sinful and morally inferior even after they converted to Christianity (Pierce 2015).

In these ways, the system of slavery was based on white supremacy. The doctrines of Christianity were twisted to shatter Black families and ensure the economic advantages of wealthy white slave owners. Some Christian churches even sponsored slave ships to capture and transport enslaved Africans to the states (Pierce 2015 in Weil 2019).

When enslavers permitted enslaved people to go to church, white enslavers or preachers taught the Christian lessons. Their religious messages typically glorified the “civilizing” paternalism of enslavers. They were based on proslavery theology that relied on a literal interpretation of the Bible to justify racially based slavery. This literal interpretation is a component of religious fundamentalism, which we discussed in the previous section.

For example, the King James Bible, widely printed during the slavery era (Cedarville University Digital Commons n.d.) reads: “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ” (Ephesians 6:5, King James Bible 1611). It is generally accepted that “servant” meant “slave.” Both the Old and New Testaments refer to slavery often.

Enslavers used these interpretations of Christianity as a means of social control. More directly, enslavers and preachers at the pulpit emphasized a scriptural message of obedience to white people and a better day awaiting enslaved people in heaven.



Figure 9.21. A painting titled *The Old Plantation* (ca. 1785–1795), attributed to enslaver John Rose of South Carolina, is the only known painting of this era that depicts African Americans engaged with their own activities (Bontemps 2001). Two women carry *sheguras*, rattles made of gourds. One man plays a gourd banjo. Another plays a *gudugudu*, a traditional drum used by the Yoruba ethnic group of Nigeria (Mazow 2005; Epstein 1975). Rituals, dances, and other cultural expressions created spiritual connections and provided a sense of community and identity for people in slavery.

Obvious contradictions between God's word and the cruelty of enslavers did not pass unnoticed by many enslaved African Americans. They created and practiced their own versions of Christianity, typically incorporating aspects of traditional African spiritualities or Islam. The rituals, dances, use of various plants by healers, naming patterns, and making of musical instruments created spiritual connections to their African past while also providing a sense of community and identity (figure 9.21). Other enslaved people resisted Christianity altogether by fully retaining their native African and Islamic practices.

Simultaneously, some enslaved people were attracted to the Methodist and Baptist church's response to scripture and became preachers. As English literacy advanced for people in slavery, spiritual songs that referenced the Exodus (the biblical account of the Hebrews' escape from slavery in Egypt), such as "Roll, Jordan, Roll," allowed them to freely express messages of hope, struggle, and overcoming adversity. They focused on the uplifting message of being freed from bondage.



Figure 9.22. This record of a family tree, printed in 1880, was designed specifically for formerly enslaved people in the United States. It contrasts the family before the Civil War and after the Civil War. Black churches were created after the war, and their rituals (such as weddings) supported the healing of family systems that had previously been under the control of slavery.

After slavery was abolished and Black U.S. residents were liberated from white-controlled churches, they were able to remake their religious worlds according to their own social and spiritual desires. Black people created their own churches and, within them, began to heal and develop their own social structures.

For example, these new churches supported the healing of family systems that had previously been under the control of slavery. For some, this meant opting for state and religious recognition, as many freed people rushed to get married in formal and legal wedding ceremonies (figure 9.22). New Black churches also became the foundation of state and national organizations that supported anti-racist politics.

Years later, Black churches provided the leadership and organizational structures that energized the civil rights movement. Many U.S. residents know Martin Luther King Jr. as an activist. Not everyone knows that he was a minister and had a doctorate in divinity. King was part of the social gospel movement, which emerged in response to the abuses of industrialism of the 20th century. Cheap labor bred poverty, hopelessness was prevalent, and the extreme wealth of business owners was evident (PBS n.d.).

The social gospel perspective viewed racial and economic oppression as social evils that Christians had a moral duty to resist. The church was seen as instrumental to both individual and social salvation.

Sociologists often credit the social gospel movement and the organizational power of "the Black Church" as part of the civil rights movement's success. It sustained activists during the civil rights era in the face of violence and emboldened individuals to stand up to a white supremacist system.

Optional: Watch the 3.5-minute video "The Role of the African-American Church in the Civil Rights Movement" [Streaming Video] for a summary of this history (figure 9.23). As you watch, please consider the specific ways that spiritual belief systems and religious organizations played a role in the social changes of the civil rights movement.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=807#oembed-1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLxddvkYmic

Figure 9.23. Optional: "The Role of the African-American Church in the Civil Rights Movement" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

The Christianity practiced by white enslavers supported genocidal economic systems in the United States. That same Christianity, and at times the preservation of African and Islamic beliefs, supported resilience and resistance to slavery. Later, Christianity, as practiced by black freedom activists of the civil rights movement, drove a fight for social justice.

Syncretism and Día de los Muertos

The worship style of combining two religions, as enslaved people did in the United States, is seen globally and throughout history. It is known as **religious syncretism**, the process by which the beliefs and practices of one religion are fused with or assimilated into another spiritual belief system. In some parts of the world, syncretism has been a powerful way to resist colonization in plain sight.

One illustration of this is *Día de los Muertos* ("Day of the Dead"), an event to remember and connect with loved ones who have died. While the celebration likely originated with earlier practices of Indigenous groups, we know that *Día de los Muertos* was important to people who were part of the Aztec empire of the 1300s to 1500s in central and southern Mexico. Today, it's observed by people of Mexican and Indigenous Mexican heritage.



Figure 9.24. An Aztec dancer dressed for a *Día de los Muertos* ("Day of the Dead") celebration. The persistence of *Día de los Muertos* is impressive, considering the colonization of Mexico.

Families create altars with photos of their ancestors, along with *ofrendas*, or offerings, intended to welcome the deceased to the altar setting. They add the food and drink that the person loved in life and other objects that capture their unique personalities. The altars are decorated with candles, religious statues, rosaries, and flowers—especially marigolds, whose fragrance is said to lead souls from their burial place to their family homes. Celebrations happen at home, public gatherings, and parades (figure 9.24).

The persistence of *Día de los Muertos* is impressive, considering the story of colonization that surrounded its origins. When the Spanish arrived in Mexico in 1519, they were awed by the complexity of the Aztec world. Tenochtitlán, founded in 1325, was the largest Aztec population hub and cultural center (now present-day Mexico City). Upon arriving, one conquistador wrote: "It was all so wonderful that I do not know how to describe this first glimpse of things never heard of, seen or dreamed of before" (Fredrick 2019) (figure 9.25).



Figure 9.25. A wall with stucco-covered skulls at the *Templo Mayor* ("Main Temple"). It is one of the sights a Spanish conqueror would have seen upon arriving at the Aztec center, Tenochtitlán, which is present-day Mexico City.

The Spanish conquistadors had to work hard to conquer such a complex and organized society. The Spanish formed alliances with Indigenous empires that rivaled the Aztecs, aiming to seize their land for the Spanish crown and plunder gold and other resources. Between the violence, disease contracted by exposure to the Europeans, and Spain's advanced weaponry, the Aztec empire lost power in 1521. A century later, after more waves of disease, the Aztec population plunged from what was once 5 to 6 million at its peak, to around 1 million (Callaway 2017).

As part of this conquest, Spanish missionaries worked with conquerors to destroy the belief systems and practices of the Aztecs, while forcing their conversion to Catholicism. They forbade rituals and celebrations and burned temples, books, and other sacred objects, or appropriated them to be part of local Catholic rituals. For example, baptisms were conducted in basins traditionally used for sacrifices. Catholic churches were built on top of destroyed temples (Sherry n.d.). They also appropriated spiritual symbols, incorporating them into their own, such as adding Indigenous symbols to Christian crosses. This was cultural genocide (a term we first introduced in Chapter 1).



Figure 9.26. Two renditions of Mictlantecuhtli, the Aztec god of the underworld. A carving at the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City, Mexico (left). A person representing Mictlantecuhtli (right). Death and the afterlife are important aspects of Aztec culture.

The Aztec people had a complex belief system around death, the afterlife, and the divine that was at least 5,000 years old. For example, they recognized many layers of the underworld. One is the final destination for all people who have died of natural causes. Another is for warriors who died in combat, people sacrificed to the sun, and women who died while giving birth for the first time. Yet another layer is for those whose death was caused by the water element and for infants who died while still nursing from their mothers (University of New Mexico Latin American and Iberian Institute n.d.).

Their practices included using ancestor mortuary bundles, particular ways to wrap dead bodies. They also worshiped Mictecacihuatl and Mictlantecuhtli (figure 9.26), the goddess and god of the underworld. In Aztec stories, Mictecacihuatl and Mictlantecuhtli meet the souls of the dead and preside over the afterlife.

Spanish conquerors could not convince the Aztec people to stop practicing these rituals, which were essential to their worldview and their connection to the underworld. The Spanish witnessed the power of these beliefs and practices to stabilize society. So they changed the dates of the festivities celebrating the dead to early November, to coincide with the three-day Christian observance related to All Souls' Day. This succeeded in connecting worship of the underworld to Catholicism, but many of the Aztec practices and beliefs remained (Farah n.d.).

Later, the celebration became known as *Día de Los Muertos* (Nutini 1988). Optional: Watch the 5-minute video "Día de los Muertos: Lake Pátzcuaro" [Streaming Video] (figure 9.27) that shows how one community in Mexico practices for the Day of the Dead celebration. As you watch, see if you can notice symbols from Catholicism that are filmed. What aspects of this celebration do you imagine prompt solidarity and stability for the people who celebrate?



Figure 9.27. Optional: "Día de los Muertos: Lake Pátzcuaro" [Streaming Video].

Over time, many Indigenous Peoples have blended Catholicism with their own customs and ancestral worldviews as a means of resistance. Evidence remains today of religious syncretism throughout Latin America. It is common in several countries, for

example, to make offerings of food, drinks, candles, or flowers to entities that are both deities from Indigenous traditions and saints from Catholicism. According to a Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2013 and 2014, about half of Mexican Catholics reported “medium” to “high” levels of engagement with Indigenous beliefs and practices. About 80 percent of Mexicans identified as Catholic, but many practiced a unique version of Catholicism that includes pre-Hispanic traditions (Pew Research Center 2014).

This longstanding and vibrant celebration is not just a mixture of Indigenous and Spanish traditions. It is also a profound example of Indigenous resistance to 500 years of colonialism (Felipe Ramos 2018). As Roberto Cintli Rodríguez writes, it is an example of how Indigenous Peoples “accepted Christianity into their cosmovision for purposes of cultural survival” (Rodríguez 2014 in Felipe Ramos 2018).

Liberation Theology

Hundreds of years after colonizing the Aztec territories, the Catholic Church hosted a movement that brought some acknowledgment to the harm it sponsored in the Americas. The liberation theology movement was a religious movement of the 1960s and 1970s that combined Christian principles with political activism to enact social change.

Scholar and social ethicist Sharon Welch describes liberation theology as “concerned with political and social transformation and the role that religion plays both in fostering liberation and in maintaining oppression” (Welch 2017:15). Its inspiration came from the rapid changes of industrialization and the inequalities it fostered. Business owners were able to amass riches. But for workers, industrialization meant long work hours, dangerous child labor, and a sharp decline in buying power.

Some Catholic leaders wanted to support the status quo in order to remain part of the economic systems in place. Similar to the way Christianity was used to legitimize slavery in the United States, these leaders found biblical and theological justifications for the oppression that this structure and the people within it caused (Singer n.d.). But, eventually, the Catholic Church began to grapple with how to respond to this new economy and the harm it brought.

Colonial-era messages that the Catholic Church was delivering to the poor included a promise of eternal salvation. Followers of liberation theology found this kept the poor subdued as they waited for a better afterlife. In contrast, they wanted the church to assume the responsibility of liberating the poor from oppression and suffering on earth. They demanded that the church move beyond simple charity work toward a more active role in promoting social justice (figure 9.28).



Figure 9.28. *En la Cena Ecológica del Reino/At the Ecological Kingdom Dinner* (1980) by liberation painter and Catholic priest Maximino Cerezo Barredo depicts Jesus at the Last Supper with ordinary people: children, women, and men. It illustrated a new vision for Catholicism in Latin America.

In 1965, structural reforms provided an institutional foundation for liberation theology in the Catholic Church. During Vatican II, a large conference of Roman Catholic leaders, Pope John XXIII established a new platform built on the idea of the church as a servant of the people rather than a partner with governments in asserting power over them (Tombs 2002). He made reforms designed to reposition the church away from a socially privileged institution. Vatican II changed the rules so Mass could be celebrated in everyday language instead of in Latin. The altar was turned so priests faced the people and spoke directly to them. The council also added more biblical texts to the Mass and encouraged people to read the Bible (Guardado 2022).

Small groups of lay people (non-clergy) were organized to serve smaller municipalities. They provided food, water, sewage disposal, and electricity to communities. They taught basic literary skills and religious teachings and encouraged civilians to participate in civil society. These efforts were to empower the poor to better question their own conditions, question society, and organize politically (Singer n.d.).

Liberation theology was further influenced by missionaries and other members of the church who were awakening to the harmful impacts of globalization, acknowledging the impacts of colonialism. The people in the Global South were becoming poorer, and the people of the Global North were exploiting them to get richer. Especially in Latin America, priests and others in leadership began to link poverty with dependency perspectives (introduced in Chapter 4) as they explained economic inequality.

The term **institutionalized violence** emerged at this time, a form of violence in which some social structure or social institution may harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. Church leaders sensitive to these realities began asking what their faith had to do with these struggles (Guardado 2022).

Liberation theologians brought support and solidarity to the social and political struggles of Latin America and the world. As civil protest and demand for change increased in the 1970s and 1980s, governments of Latin America began to adopt repressive measures to establish social control. Many of these military actions were backed by U.S. funds, which fueled further solidarity from followers of the liberation theology movement, now on a political international scale (Tombs 2002).

Two Catholic leaders became forerunners in this movement. Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez Merino was critical of both the social and economic injustice he believed to be responsible for poverty in Latin America. He was also critical of the clergy within the Catholic Church that supported those systems. He prioritized his work on education, research, engaging with lawmakers, and collaborating with grassroots organizations.

St. Oscar Romero also worked to protest poverty and dismantle the structures that supported injustice. He worked in El Salvador as a priest during the country's civil war of 1979 to 1992. During this era, 57 percent of the usable land in the country was controlled by 2 percent of the population. Sixteen families in El Salvador owned an exorbitant amount of land, the same amount used by 230,000 of the poorer families.

This impacted Romero greatly, as did the political and economic violence in El Salvador during the war. Military and paramilitary death squads murdered tens of thousands of men, women, and children to quell the government's fears of communism, under the guise of "law and order." In 1977, a right-wing paramilitary group forced all Jesuits to leave the country or be executed.

Romero was assassinated while presiding at a memorial Mass in 1980: a punishment for his work with the poor to help them organize and secure self-determination. In 1981, he posthumously won a Nobel Peace Prize, and he was canonized (made a saint) by the Catholic Church in 2018 (The Kellogg Institute for International Studies n.d.) (figure 9.29).



Figure 9.29. Óscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez, archbishop of San Salvador, worked to protest poverty and dismantle the structures that supported injustice (left). Two men sit in Plaza Salvador del Mundo during Romero's beatification event (a formal announcement in the Roman Catholic Church that someone who is dead has lived a holy life, usually as the first stage of making that person a saint) in May 2015 (right). The sign reads, "The people have already made you a saint."

Eventually, the Vatican became alarmed by the radical changes influenced and supported by liberation theology. Opponents argued it could lead to disunity and excessive focus on material success (Lynch 1994). By the 1990s, under a new pope, the church had begun to curb involvement in the movement, mostly by appointing conservative bishops in Latin America. The Vatican and more

traditional sects of Catholicism proposed a watered-down version of liberation theology that avoided the disruption that liberation entailed (Singer n.d.).

It would be interesting to hear what Marx and Weber thought about the impact of liberation theology, had they been alive in those years. Weber would likely have been interested in the cultural changes that liberation theologians promoted and how they influenced criticism of the economic status quo. Marx would likely have been interested in the vast social and economic changes that liberation thought introduced. They turn his perspective of religion controlling the masses on its head. Liberation theology rethought the power structures of Latin American society and showed that belief, economic analysis, and activism could dramatically change the roles and function of religion.

Protesting Gender-Based Violence

The liberation theology movement of Latin America has several related schools of thought. Paulo Freire (introduced in Chapter 8) applied principles of liberation in his revolutionary work of educating the poor. Black theologies of liberation and Islamic theologies of liberation see organized religion as a means of changing the material conditions of marginalized and oppressed groups. Queer theologies of liberation examine society's definitions of gender and sexuality, with the goal of revealing the social and power structures at play in our everyday lives.

Feminist liberation is also part of this school of thought. It began in the 1960s as well and seeks to free women from oppression and male supremacy. A central concern of feminist liberation theory is **gender-based violence**, harmful acts directed against a person because of their gender and expectations of their role in a society or culture (The United Nations Refugee Agency n.d.) (figure 9.30). In examining gender-based violence, we can see how it is both supported and challenged by religious organizations.



Figure 9.30. Gender-based violence is often challenged by religious organizations. Seamstresses from Quetta, Pakistan, work with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women 2016) to support the fight against gender-based violence. Slogans on their hands read: "Strong hands prevent violence against women and girls."

Gender-based violence is a relatively new area of research in social science. Researchers acknowledge that religion is not the only institution that supports gender-related abuse. However, this kind of violence often happens in families, and religious communities can cover up abuses due to their view of the sanctity of the family. In these instances, the family is considered a divinely ordained institution, and its preservation takes precedence over denouncing domestic violence (Nason-Clark et al. 2018; Nason-Clark 2000).

The ability of families and religious organizations to hide violence makes gender-based violence a challenging topic to study globally. In the West, this violence is difficult to study because of the legal separation of church and state. The laws give religious institutions exemption from some legal responsibilities, so churches are not required to report cases of abuse to state authorities (McPhillips and Page 2022).

However, since the 1980s, there have been ample studies that shed light on the extent and severity of gender-based violence in Western religious communities (Aune and Barnes 2018). Recent scandals in both the Catholic Church and various Protestant denominations in the United States have revealed some disturbing facts on the extent and cover-up of sexual violence (Hidalgo and Doyle 2007; Plante 2020).

Gender-based violence takes place at three levels: physical, legal, and social. For example, child marriage is internationally recognized as a form of gender-based violence. It puts girls at increased risk of sexual, physical, and psychological violence throughout their lives. Nevertheless, it is a legal practice in some countries. In other countries, women are considered property of men or need to be under the care or control of a male guardian.

Gender-based violence in some Islamic societies is also a subject of inquiry. *Shari'a* is the overall way of life in Islam, according to traditional, early interpretations. For many Muslims, the penalties outlined in scripture for deviating from *Shari'a* were designed for a specific historical context. They are inapplicable to the very different modern world. Most Muslim-identifying governments do not allow severe penalties.

However, countries like Iran, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia have established laws based on those stricter *Shari'a* interpretations with severe penalties (Abdullahi n.d.). Sometimes women who are disobedient or viewed as dishonoring their families are beaten or killed by their family members. These forms of gender-based violence may be endorsed by more extremist Islamic leaders. In some cases, due to religious, cultural, and legal constraints, victims cannot or are unwilling to come forward to register their cases (Naciri 2018).

Protection and Resistance in Iran

Iran has a poignant story of struggle with gender-based violence. For decades before the revolution of 1979 (figure 9.31), women rallied for progressive changes to family law to protect their human rights. Their efforts culminated in the Family Protection Law of 1967, which, according to Neeki Memarzadeh, "put Iran into the forefront of the movement for law reform in the Muslim World" (Hinchcliffe 1968:517).



Figure 9.31. Students at Tehran University, Iran, in 1971.When Tehran University opened in 1936, both men and women were admitted.

This law took many family disputes and regulations out of the hands of *Shari'a* law, the body of religious law that forms a part of the Islamic tradition. Women could then navigate family concerns in secular courts. The Family Protection Law also expanded women's rights to seek divorce and extended mothers' rights to custody of their children (Memarzadeh 2023). These changes emboldened women to seek attention from courts in the event of domestic abuse.

After the revolution, Iran became an Islamic Republic. It was built to enforce laws compatible with *Shari'a*. Thus, it has a **theocratic government**, one where religious leaders rule in the name of God or gods and interpret their holy texts as law. The new government suspended the Family Protection Law and implemented many laws that diminished the rights and protection of women. The age of marriage for girls was reduced from 18 to 9. Only men could seek a divorce. The hijab became mandatory in public. If women did not wear one, they could be punished with 60 lashes from a whip (Esfandiari 2020).

Since 1979, Iranian women have formed a powerful movement for their rights in the face of a strict and oppressive government. They have also experienced tragedy. In 2022, Jina Amini, who is also known as Mahsa, was a young Kurdish-Iranian woman. The morality police in Iran murdered her because she allegedly violated the law that requires women to wear a hijab. (The police say that she experienced health problems while in custody.)

Adding to the concern and outrage is that Kurdish people in Iran experience considerable ethnic discrimination. Iran is a predominantly Shiite country, and most of Iran's Kurds are Sunni, many of whom opposed the adoption of Shiism (Shia) as the official state religion after the revolution (Nada and Crahan 2021). Amnesty International reports a "double oppression" suffered by Kurdish women and girls in Iran, for their ethnicity and gender (Amnesty International 2008).



Figure 9.32. Protesters gather in Melbourne, Australia, to stand in solidarity with Iranian protests (left). Jina Amini was killed by police after being taken into custody by the morality police.

The epithet on Amini's tombstone reads, in Kurdish: "Jina, dear! You didn't die. Your name will be a code [rallying call]" (Lace-Evans and Auer 2022) (right). Amini's death sparked protests in Iran and internationally.

Jina Amini's death sparked protests in Iran and internationally (figure 9.32). Protesters attacked symbols of the regime. Some women protesters removed their hijab as a way of resisting. The photo in figure 9.32 is an epithet written in Kurdish on Amini's tombstone. It reads, "Jina, dear! You will not die. Your name will be a code [rallying call]" (Lace-Evans and Auer 2022). This renewed women's rights movement in Iran is gaining support around the world. In 2022, people marched in protest in Seoul, Beirut, Santiago, New York, Rome, London, and other places around the world. Some women cut their hair in solidarity.

Many religious and spiritual traditions include cutting hair as a symbolic gesture or ritual. Buddhist monks shave their heads when they take vows, and some spiritual traditions call for family members to shave their heads when a loved one dies. In the case of Amini's death, protesters are giving an ancient ritual a modern twist by cutting their hair to show solidarity.

Watch this 1:45-minute video, "Iran Protests: Why Is Cutting Hair an Act of Rebellion?" [Streaming Video] (figure 9.33). As you do, consider: How are the protesters using religious beliefs and practices to initiate social change?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=807#oembed-2

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfBB50ktdPw

Figure 9.33. "Iran Protests: Why Is Cutting Hair an Act of Rebellion?" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

In the story of Iran and women's rights, we see religious power and beliefs on both sides of the conflict. The Islamic Republic uses religious beliefs and organizations to prevent social change. The story of gender violence, women's rights, and religion is played out on the world stage. The players use religious beliefs and practices to uphold their existing power or to resist it.

Going Deeper

To learn more about Martin Luther King Jr. describing the Social Gospel, watch: "Martin Luther King, Jr. – Influence of Social Gospel Mov't" [Streaming Video].

For more information on "the Black Church" in the United States, watch the PBS episode "The Black Church" [Streaming Video].

For more information on the connection between white supremacy and Christianity, read and watch "White Supremacist Ideas Have Historical Roots In U.S. Christianity" [Website].

For more on the Aztec god and goddess of the underworld in figure 9.26, read: "Mictlantecuhtli" [Website] and "Mictecacihuatl" [Website].

For more information on femicide protests alongside Day of the Dead celebrations, watch "Protest Against Femicide on Mexico's Day of Dead" [Streaming Video] and "Women in Mexico Protest Femicide on Día de los Muertos" [Streaming Video].

To learn more about St. Oscar Romero, watch "Oscar Romero" [Streaming Video] from the Oscar Romero Trust and read the article "Archbishop Oscar Romero" [Website].

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9.6: Religion, Spiritual Belief Systems, and the Environment

How are religion, spirituality, and our relationship to the environment connected? For Hindus and Buddhists working to save the Ganges, and for the Yurok Tribe protecting the Klamath, there is no separation. Members of other spiritual and religious traditions around the world are also taking action to restore and protect nature.

Although these might be newer or more urgent actions, there are deep connections between religion, spiritual practice, and how we see our place in nature. In this section, we will look at ways that some religions and spiritual systems have played a role in shaping our environmental crisis. We'll also return to the theme of the Chapter Story and explore more about religions and spiritual belief systems that are actively serving to encourage the protection of the planet.

Sometimes the connection between caring for the planet, religion, and spiritual belief systems comes as critique. Early U.S. environmentalists in the mid-20th century pointed to Christian beliefs as contributing to environmental degradation. Historian Lynn White Jr. pointed to Christianity as a belief system that gives "man" power over the Earth, creating a dynamic in which environmental degradation is almost inevitable. He writes, "Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen" (White 1967:1206).



Figure 9.34. In the painting *Schöpfung/Creation* by German artist Johann Elias Ridinger (1698–1767), Adam stands in a pose of dominion over animals in paradise. This is an example of anthropocentrism present in the Bible.

We introduced anthropocene in Chapter 6. It refers to our most recent geological epoch of time, in which humans have fundamentally transformed the living systems of the Earth. Related to this, **anthropocentrism** is the worldview that makes humans central to decisions about ethics and daily life. It is built on the belief that humans are the most important existence in the universe. White sees anthropocentrism in the Bible. Genesis 1:26, for example, says: "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground'" (The Holy Bible: New International Version 2011).

In this version, man isn't just another animal. He is made in the image of God, ruling over all other beings in creation (figure 9.34). Environmentalists consider the traditional interpretation of the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as anthropocentric, because in them, "man" is made in the image of God, with dominion over the animals, plants, and the planet (El Jurdi et al. 2017). White also sees this dominion in actions that lead to environmental degradation, such as overgrazing, building dams, irresponsible hunting, and cutting forests (White 1967).

Environmental Protection and Belief

The anthropocentrism of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism is a valid critique. At the same time, aspects of each of these religions represent the deep social change needed to heal our planet. In this way, they mimic other spiritual belief systems that integrate the physical and spiritual world in everyday life and see an inherent connection between humans and all that exists in the world. Let's look at a few of these aspects.

We Are Part of Nature

First, there are credos in some religions and spiritual belief systems that counter anthropomorphism. For example, sociologist Md Saidul Islam refers to what he calls an Islamic Ecological Paradigm (IEP). It's a growing eco-theology among Muslims that is rooted in classical Islamic traditions. In part, the IEP refers to humans' relationship with nature: "…human beings are a part of, and not above nature, and have the responsibility to preserve nature" (Islam 2012:72).

Watch the 2:42-minute video "Does Islam Care About the Environment?" [Streaming Video] (figure 9.35) to hear Saad Tasleem share some Muslim guidelines for protecting and preserving the environment. As you do, consider: How might the tenets of the Qur'an influence care for the environment?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=809#oembed-1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQk352E9uBU

Figure 9.35. "Does Islam Care About the Environment?" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

The principles that the IEP is built upon have been actively practiced since the 7th century. In the 14th century, Arab scholar Ibn Khaldun reflected these principles in his *Muqaddimah.* Khaldun is largely recognized as the founding father of Eastern sociology, and his worldview was informed by Islamic theology (Pišev 2019). Khaldun observed that man is not detached from the environment but is very much a creature of it. Man is equally an environmental animal as a social one, and our social motivations are shaped by our experience with nature (Khaldun 1967).

Some spiritual belief systems acknowledge an even closer connection to the natural world. Starting in the late 1800s, social scientists coined the term "animism" to lump together the spiritual perspectives of many complex societies that saw objects as being alive, having souls, and with those traits able to affect human life (Shriver-Rice 2009). Or, as anthropologist Justine Quijada describes, the term "classif(ied) religious practices through which human beings cultivate relationships with more powerful beings that reside in the world around us" (Quijada 2022). It was also a term used to distinguish the spirituality of other cultures from Judeo-Christian belief.

Since the 1960s, animism has been criticized as being part of the colonial framework that identifies others as "primitive." The term made it easy to overlook the biological and ecological scientific knowledge that communities with this worldview hold (Quijada 2022). Animism was almost removed from mainstream anthropology and the academic study of religion (von Stuckrad 2023).

However, the term began to be reframed at the turn of the 20th century. Social scientists and environmentalists started to recognize that Indigenous belief systems, as they hold a relational approach to the world, are important to healing the environment (Quijada 2022). Indigenous belief systems are also important in rewriting the cultural ways that destroy the environment. Some anthropologists now view animism as a way to challenge Western views (both Christian and secular) of what is thought to constitute the social world. (This new approach in anthropology is sometimes called the "new animism.")

Quijada points out that activities like those presented in the Chapter Story, political protection of the Ganges River in India, and the rights of personhood for the Klamath River are animism taking a legal form. This is evident especially in the story of the Klamath. As part of their restoration of the river, the Yurok people are reintroducing the critically endangered condor to the area. Their motivation is steeped in science and the importance of maintaining ecological balance in the region. It's also a story of the spiritual meaning of the condor and how its reintroduction is important to uphold generations-long traditions.

Watch this 2:16-minute video, "The Condor's Spiritual and Ecological Role Along the Klamath" [Streaming Video] (figure 9.36). As you watch, consider: What does Tania Williams, Yurok Tribe condor biologist, share about the spiritual and ecological importance of the condor for the Yurok Tribe?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=809#oembed-2

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhHbUp66xUQ

Figure 9.36. "The Condor's Spiritual and Ecological Role Along the Klamath" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Animism is now recognized as a more universal trait of the multicultural societies within which we live. Its main threads are present in many nature-based spiritualities around the world. Human activity is understood within a broader context of persons and their relationships; these persons may include visible beings such as humans, animals, plants, and rocks, along with non-visible beings such as spirits or ancestors.

The universe is seen as a web of relationships. As Quijada describes, "In all these instances, rituals establish relationships of obligation that tie humans to the land and the land to the humans who live on it. Instead of human dominion over the landscape, in Animist cosmologies, humans live under the dominion of the landscape around them" (Quijada 2022).

Sharing with a Long View

The second way that religions and spiritual belief systems reflect aspects needed to heal our planet is by taking a long view. The major world religions have lasted for centuries, in great part to keep societies safe and vital. Ancient spiritual belief systems do the same, connecting deeply to both ancestors and future generations. Woven into these belief systems is a sense of sharing and responsibility that considers current generations as well. For example, Md Saidul Islam shares more from the IEP:

> *…the earth is not for one generation but for every generation, past, present, and future, and that would include humans as well as other creatures on this earth. Accordingly, rivers, minerals, and other common goods are, according to IEP, the property of all. [They] should be distributed fairly and justly (Islam 2012:78).*

Similarly, the tenets of Judaism support environmental sustainability, ensuring that the planet and her resources will last for generations. In the Talmud, a sacred text paired with the Torah, a rabbi warns against conspicuous consumption. Jewish environmental studies scholar Manfred Gerstenfeld writes:

> *…classical Jewish texts frequently condemn conspicuous consumption and speak out against the culture of consumerism. It is written in the Talmud: "The rabbis said that the end of a sage who overindulges in elaborate meals everywhere will be that he destroys his house, turns his wife into a widow, makes his children orphans, forgets his studies, and quarrels abound around him" (Gerstenfeld 2001).*

This text is just one example of Jewish beliefs and practices that sustain Jewish eco-theology.

In North American Indigenous traditions, it is common to reflect on decisions based on the impact they will have in seven generations. Listen to the 2.5-minute video "What Do We Tell the Seven Generations?" [Streaming Video] to hear Jennifer Irving, a Lakota woman, share her thoughts on living in a way that cares for the seven generations (figure 9.37). As you do, consider how she links her ancestors, the seven generations to come, and our response to climate change. (Optional: Read more about the Lakota Dakota Nakota Nation [Website].)

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=809#oembed-3

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6mce09D4pU

Figure 9.37. "What Do We Tell the Seven Generations?" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Codes of sharing with a long view might help answer questions such as: How much fishing each year can sustain an ecosystem so it is healthy in seven generations? Or how should medicinal plants be cared for so they continue to support the community for those years to come?

Social Connection

Third, religions and spiritual belief systems encourage members to set codes of ethics related to how humans treat each other. This carries through to how we treat the natural world. For example, Buddhism teaches that all things are interconnected and interdependent. Because human existence is enmeshed with natural systems, damage done to the Earth is also harmful to humans. The Dalai Lama, the Buddhist spiritual leader of Tibet, shared thoughts on this in 1992:

> *Since I deeply believe that basically human beings are of a gentle nature so I think the human attitude towards our environment should be gentle. Therefore I believe that not only should we keep our relationship with our other fellow human beings very gentle and non-violent, but it is also very important to extend that kind of attitude to the natural environment (His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet 1992).*

Joanna Macy, a respected Buddhist teacher, connects the climate crisis and spiritual practice in a revolutionary way. Instead of examining how spiritual worldviews shape or transform the environment, she argues that the crisis serves as a means to deepen our spiritual practice. We deepen our social connection when we see our interdependence. She writes, “Planetary anguish lifts us onto another systemic level where we open to collective experience. It enables us to recognize our profound interconnectedness with all beings” (Cielita Flor and Miraz 2023).



Figure 9.38. Buddhist monks march to the Arang Valley to encourage Cambodian villagers to protect the environment.

Macy further expands on how responding to the climate crisis deepens our individual and collective spiritual practice using grief and joy. She calls this concept “active hope.” She says that our emotions around the climate crisis, our grief, and our fear are actually collective and social responses to the deep suffering of the world and its creatures. We can be energized to take action when we are awake to the pain of environmental devastation. Also, in our gratitude for the world and all its gifts and our joy in being alive, we fall in love with the world. Because we love so deeply, we are motivated to take actions that care for the planet and all its beings. Buddhist spiritual activists use these principles of mindfulness and community to take action for environmental protection (figure 9.38).

Going Deeper

For more on how followers of religions and spiritual traditions see combating climate change as integral to their belief systems, read and watch:

- “Culture, Spirituality, and Conservation” [Streaming Video] by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

- “Speaking to the Water” [Streaming Video], featuring Pat McCabe, a Navajo and Lakota activist.
- This video by Joanna Macy, “Climate Crisis as a Spiritual Path” [Streaming Video], and the web page of her project Active Hope [Website].
- *Bending the Curve: Climate Change Solutions*, Chapter 7 [Website]..
- “Do You Protect the Environment?” [Streaming Video] by the Imam Shatibi Institute.
- “Environment and Eid” [Streaming Video] by the United Nations Environment Program.
- “Climate Change Statements from World Religions” [Website] collected by Yale University.

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9.7: Conclusion

There is a complexity to the role of religions and spiritual belief systems in social change. Early sociological perspectives introduced the ways that humans construct what is sacred, noting that through symbols we share meaning and thus common belief. They introduced religion as a stabilizer and unifier of societies. Religion is also seen as a tool used in capitalist societies to perpetuate inequality and resist social change. More contemporary sociological perspectives are concerned with social roles and experiences based on gender and the importance of representing racial diversity and non-binary identities.

Religious beliefs and organizations can justify inhumane systems such as slavery, sustain racist beliefs, and uphold colonialist practices. They can support gender-based violence, repress expressions of gender and sexuality, and reinforce harmful dominion over the earth. At the same time, because religion and spirituality wrestle with deep questions of meaning, they hold core tenets that encourage the well-being of the Earth and all humans. They often but not always can offer beliefs and practices that provide a foundation for social resilience and resistance against unjust systems.

We began this chapter on the banks of rivers, beloved for both their life-supporting and spiritual importance. We wrote about committed efforts by communities to legally acknowledge the personhood of rivers and their rights to flow freely. The transformative visions for actions like these are often sustained by religious and spiritual beliefs that uphold the interconnectedness of all life, human and non-human alike. In this way, religion and spiritual belief systems can be a tremendous force for social change.

Review of Learning Outcomes

This chapter has offered you the opportunity to:

- Explain the relationship between religion, spiritual belief systems, and power.
- Compare and contrast how early sociologists explained religion and spiritual belief systems in society.
- Discuss how the contemporary feminist, critical race, and queer sociological perspectives view religion and spiritual belief systems in society.
- Describe how religion and spiritual belief systems can be used as a tool of oppression or to support social justice.
- Explain how religion and spiritual belief systems play a role in addressing our climate crisis.

Key Terms

anthropocentrism: the worldview that makes humans central to decisions about ethics and daily life. It is built from the belief that humans are the most important existence in the universe.

fundamentalism: a religious movement that requires a strict and typically literal interpretation of core texts and adherence to traditional beliefs, doctrines, and rituals.

feminist theology: the study of the nature of God and religious belief which centers the religious and spiritual experiences of women.

gender-based violence: harmful acts directed against a person because of their gender and expectations of their role in a society or culture (The United Nations Refugee Agency n.d.).

holiness code: a set of core laws or principles that define the key ideas for that organization.

institutionalized violence: a form of violence in which some social structure or social institution may harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs.

interspirituality: the idea that “beneath the diversity of theological beliefs, rites, and observances lies a deeper unity of experience that is our shared spiritual heritage” (Teasdale 2003).

liberation theology movement: a religious movement that combines Christian principles with political activism to enact social change.

religion: a communally organized and persistent set of beliefs, practices, and relationships that meet social needs and organize social life.

religious syncretism: the process by which the beliefs and practices of one religion are fused with or assimilated into another spiritual belief system.

social control: a way to regulate, enforce, and encourage conformity to norms both formally and informally.

spiritual belief system: a series of related beliefs and practices of a society that help members seek and express meaning and purpose.

spirituality: "the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred" (Puchalski et al. 2014).

theocratic government: a form of state leadership where religious leaders rule in the name of God or gods and interpret their holy texts as law.

Comprehension Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=811#h5p-9

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 10: Social Movements and the Environment

Learning Objectives

This chapter offers you the opportunity to:

1. Explain how sociologists identify the types and stages of social movements.
2. Discuss sociological perspectives on social movements.
3. Describe how environmental changes and our responses to those changes exacerbate inequity.
4. Examine how environmental movements reshape perspectives and improve lived experiences for members of societies.
5. Illustrate how environmental justice movements correct injustice and support social and environmental resilience.
6. Explain the role and importance of Indigenous-led environmental movements in promoting environmental justice.

10.1: Chapter Story
10.2: Types of Social Movements
10.3: Stages of Social Movements
10.4: Perspectives on Social Movements
10.5: Environmental Inequity
10.6: Shifts in Perspective and Practice
10.7: Environmental Justice Movements
10.8: Indigenous-Led Environmental Justice Movements
10.9: Making Connections- Regeneration and Collaboration
10.10: Conclusion
10.11: References

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10.1: Chapter Story

PROTECTING PEOPLE AND PLANET IN TANZANIA: THE POWER OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

One characteristic of studying social change is that we often see extraordinary solutions arise from seemingly impossible social problems. For example, as environmental changes force us all to explore new ways of being, interacting, and supporting our existence, we see many social movements responding to that need, from forest protection to anti-consumerism to carbon footprint reduction movements. But how skilled are we at navigating the complexity of these responses? To what extent are we considering the whole of our global society as we choose initiatives to protect both the environment and people (figure 10.1)?



Figure 10.1. For many years, Maasai communities have lived, farmed, and cared for their animals beside the Serengeti National Park in Kenya. In recent years, the Tanzanian government has forced their evictions. What is lost as they leave their ancestral territory?

Tania Roa is someone who has struggled with these questions. She began her studies in wildlife conservation, but one day she realized that to care for wildlife responsibly, she needed to better understand how humans, animals, and the health of our planet are connected. Watch Tania's 10:05-minute TED Talk, How to Protect People and Planet [Streaming Video] (figure 10.2), to hear her story and her thoughts. As you watch, please consider:

- What are some intersecting issues related to our environmental crisis?
- What intersecting institutions does Roa mention?
- What themes from previous chapters can you see reflected in her talk?



Figure 10.2. "How to Protect People and the Planet" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Roa presents the deep interconnections between climate and environmental protection. She also explains how efforts to protect biodiversity can lead to the exploitation of humans and animals. A key example Roa shares is the ongoing eviction of four Maasai village communities by the Tanzanian government, despite their having land ownership titles. (Optional: Read more about the Maasai here [Website].)

Before British colonizers arrived in East Africa in the early 1800s, the Maasai territory stretched 200,000 square miles across what is now known as Kenya and Tanzania (Meitamei 2010). Today, there are 12 subtribes of the community. While each is different politically and culturally, there are commonalities (Evangelou 1984). Distinctly, Maasai people depend on cattle to meet their food, clothing, and shelter needs. Cattle also represent their fundamental currency, with families seeking to accumulate large herds to demonstrate their wealth and status.

Ole Riamit, a leader of a Maasai community in Kenya, shares how integral cattle and the land were to his life as a boy:

> *Every time I had a break at school, I was herding cattle. I learned which pasture is healthy; which one is poisonous; which one helps cows produce more milk; which one is medicinal. So one of my identities is being connected to the landscape—the savanna pasture land of East Africa (Jones 2022).*

However, colonization by both Britain and Germany and the creation of game reserves and other protected areas have evicted many Maasai communities, restricting access to their land and traditional way of life ("The People That Made Ngorongoro a Very Good Place Is Us" n.d.).

In Tanzania, the Ololosokwan, Oloirien, Kirtalo, and Arash Maasai live, farm, graze, and tend their animals adjacent to the Serengeti National Park (figures 10.1 and 10.3). For many years, they have endured ongoing disputes with the government regarding the boundaries of their territory. In 2021, the Tanzanian government announced its interest in leasing the territory to a company based in the United Arab Emirates for wildlife trophy hunting and elite tourism (Sutherland 2022).

In 2022, hundreds of government security personnel demarcated 1,500 square kilometers within Maasai territory and began forcing them to evict. They shot and tear-gassed Maasai members who resisted, with many fleeing to Kenya to hide in the wilderness. At least 40 people were injured, one security officer was killed, and an 84-year-old Maasai member was found to be missing after being shot ("Tanzania: Authorities Brutally Violated Maasai amid Forced Evictions from Ancestral Lands" 2023).



Figure 10.3. Maasai communities face ongoing disputes with the Tanzanian government regarding the boundaries of their territory.

The Tanzanian government states they are concerned that the population growth of the Maasai communities, along with the impacts of their increasing herds, threatens wildlife in the park. Indeed, the number of Maasai living adjacent to the park now reaches more than 100,000 compared to 8,000 in 1959. Their livestock population has grown alongside them (Jeannin 2022).

However, core to Maasai culture is a remarkable way of existing in a symbiotic relationship with nature.

For example, Riamit shares that it's taboo to eat wildlife if one has a cow that is giving milk: "You cannot pride yourself on eating game meat. The girls will run away from you. You're not a respected warrior. Why go kill an antelope when you have an animal in the shed?" (Jones 2022).

Land and water are treated as common resources and shared equally among the Maasai people. This has traditionally allowed them to move freely across "Maasailand" and employ a rotating system for moving their herds.

This system is beneficial in several ways. It allows them to adapt to variable rain patterns. During severe droughts, grazing may be extended into marginal lands that would otherwise be rarely used. Rotational herding also creates areas of different kinds of pasture and habitat, reducing conflict between wildlife and livestock (Kleczka 2021; Parks 2019).

While the wisdom of Maasai pastoralism stands on its own, their healthy land management is noted by Western nature conservationists. Many credit the Maasai people for the growth of biodiversity under their stewardship and see no scientific basis to restrict Maasai land (Nelson 2012).

Must the solution to such conflicts be the displacement of communities from their ancestral way of life and the loss of such caretakers of the land? Must the solution involve leasing property to a foreign company that will offer access only to elite foreigners? Many concerned with human rights and social justice think otherwise, pointing to evictions like the Maasai experience as land grabs.



Figure 10.4. The Jaguar Friendly certification label is given to coffee growers who practice land management that provides habitat for jaguars and their prey. This program serves as an alternative to conservation at the expense of Indigenous Peoples (left). An aerial camera snaps a shot of a jaguar in Los Llanos, Colombia (right).

Along with many Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders, Roa encourages all voices in environmental-related strategizing to be heard. She calls us to design and implement solutions that don't prioritize corporations but that protect and benefit both people and the planet. The example she shared is a jaguar-friendly eco-label program available in Colombia and Costa Rica (figure 10.4) that is helping address threats to jaguars due to increased land use by farmers. It's a certification given mainly to coffee growers whose farms are in jaguar corridors. (Optional: See the 20-second clip of a jaguar in the Llanos region of Colombia in figure 10.4 [right].)

The certification identifies growers who are practicing land management that provides habitat for jaguars and their prey (Paz Cardona 2021). Once certified, the farmers gain access to new markets. They earn more because their products are recognized as directly related to the protection of biodiversity and the jaguar ("WHAT IS the Jaguar Friendly Coffee Eco-Label?" n.d.).

This social dilemma and these human rights concerns taking place in the Serengeti National Park are just one of many occurring around the world. They illustrate difficult shifts in our global society as population increases, globalization advances, and biodiversity comes further under threat. Groups with political and economic power respond with actions such as the eviction of the Maasai people, raising important questions about equity and rights. It's a seemingly impossible social problem.

However, around the world, individuals and organizations are working to creatively find solutions to these kinds of conflicts. Other solutions, like the jaguar-friendly coffee label, point to more thoughtful solutions that consider the rights of both people and nature to exist. These events and initiatives are part of a larger story of the environmental movement.

In this chapter, we'll examine social movements as the mobilization of large numbers of people working together to achieve a social goal or address a social problem. We'll discuss how sociology examines social movements. We'll discuss the persistent and organized efforts of members of social movements to either bring about what they believe to be beneficial social change or, in some cases, resist or reverse change viewed as harmful (DeFronzo and Gill 2020). This chapter will ultimately encourage you to ask questions about how social movements can protect both the well-being of humans and the environment.

- How do environmental changes, plus some environmental solutions, exacerbate inequity?
- With an equity lens, how can environmental social movements improve lived experiences for members of society?
- What are some specific movements that are responding to the environmental challenges of our time?

Going Deeper

To read more about the struggles and resistance of the Maasai, watch "Why Are Tanzania's Maasai Being Forced Off Their Ancestral Land?" [Streaming Video] and read "How Maasai Women Are Resisting Land Grabs" [Website].

For more about the jaguar-friendly eco-label program, see the organization's website.

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Figure 10.4. "The Jaguar Friendly Certification Label" is published on the website of Proyecto de Conservación de Aguas y Tierras ProCAT y Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network and included under fair use (left). Screenshot from, and video, "An Aerial Sighting of a Jaguar in Los Llanos, Colombia" is licensed under the Vimeo Terms of Service (right).

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10.2: Types of Social Movements



Figure 10.5. Participants protesting the human rights violations at Guantanamo Bay Prison wear hoods and prison jumpsuits to represent the prisoners. Suspected of terrorism, they had been held for over a decade without trial and without the rights of most people being held for suspicion of crimes.

Social movements are major drivers of cultural change and social progress. Large-scale institutional changes that advance freedom or move the dial forward on social justice are rarely initiated by institutional leaders or political elites. Most social progress is instead the result of pressure applied from the bottom up by ordinary people who insist on change. They organize and engage in collective action that creates disorder outside the bounds of mainstream institutions.

These bottom-up actions make the participation of ordinary people possible. As people join efforts, it also becomes more probable that their actions will matter. So in turn, more people want to participate. Eventually, masses of individuals and organizations are represented, carrying out robust strategies online or in the streets. They express a groundswell of urgency that makes it impossible to ignore their calls to action and demands. This groundswell allows movements to push for systemic, structural, and cultural change. These are the dynamics of all social movements. However, between them, there's a vast diversity that has been studied extensively by sociologists.

When considering social movements, the images that come to mind are often the most dramatic and dynamic. The Boston Tea Party; anti-war protesters putting flowers in soldiers' rifles; hooded men posing as Guantanamo Bay prisoners to protest conditions there (figure 10.5). Or perhaps more violent visuals: burning buildings in Watts, Los Angeles; protesters fighting with police; a lone citizen facing a line of tanks in Tiananmen Square. But social movements also appear as less obvious and less dramatic series of actions and events. They defy the cultural standards of the dominant culture because they are hard to define, not linear, and don't have one leader or spokesperson.

Sociologist David Aberle (1966) developed four categories that distinguish social movements based on what they want to change and how much change they want. He called them reformative, redemptive, revolutionary, and alternative.

Reform movements seek to change something specific about the social structure. Examples include antinuclear groups, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Human Rights Campaign's advocacy for marriage equality, and the DREAMers movement for immigration reform (figure 10.6). The DREAMers became prominent around 2000 when more than 1 million children and youths found themselves having migrated to the United States as children without any authorization and grew up without legal status. The name comes from the Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, national legislation proposed to provide a pathway to permanent residency and U.S. citizenship for qualified undocumented immigrant students.



Figure 10.6. The DREAMers reform movement aims to provide a pathway to permanent residency and U.S. citizenship for qualified undocumented immigrant students.

Revolutionary movements seek to completely change every aspect of society. These include the 1960s counterculture movement, anarchist collectives, Texas Secede!, and the revolutionary movement associated with the group the Weather Underground (figure 10.7). The Weather Underground Organization was a famous far-left Marxist militant organization founded at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Active in the late 1960s and early 1970s, their political goal was to create a revolutionary party to overthrow the U.S. government in protest of its aggressive and colonialist policies around the world.

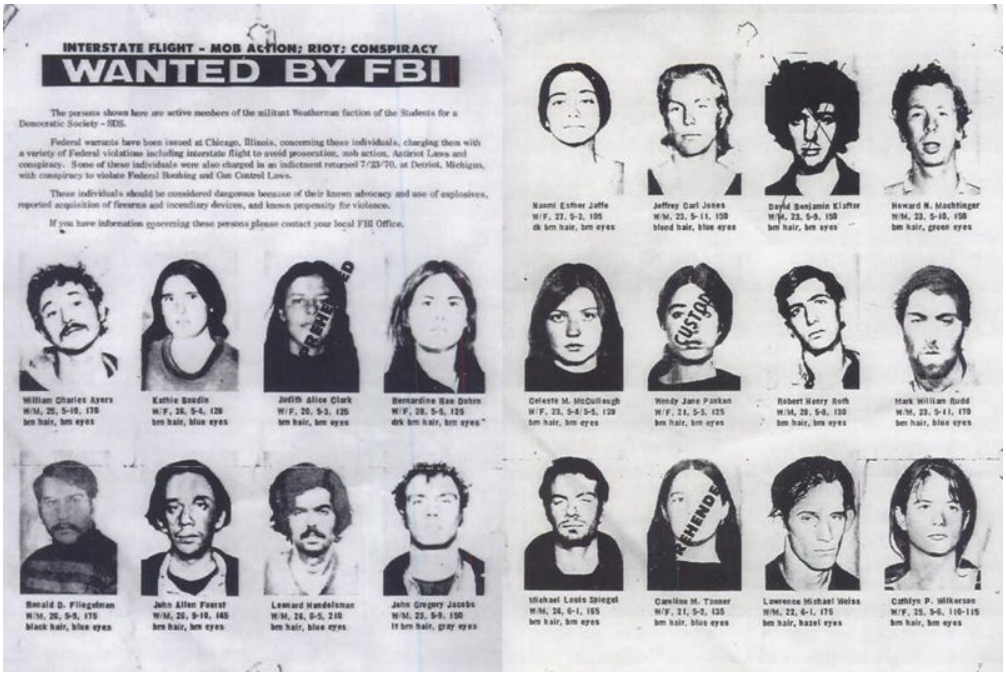


Figure 10.7. In the summer of 1970, members of the revolutionary movement, the Weather Underground, were first presented on FBI wanted posters hung prominently in every post office in the United States. They were wanted for organizing illegal protest activities, including a bombing campaign that targeted government buildings and several banks.

Redemptive movements are "meaning-seeking," and their goal is to provoke inner change or spiritual growth in individuals. Organizations pushing these movements include Heaven's Gate, the Branch Davidians, and the International Society for Krishna

Consciousness, known colloquially as the Hare Krishna (figure 10.8). The Hare Krishnas hold a unique form of monotheistic core beliefs that are based on Hindu scriptures, the practice of vegetarianism, and the practice of Bhakti yoga. There are around 10 million followers worldwide.



Figure 10.8. Members of the redemptive movement known as Hare Krishna walk in Moscow, Russia, in 2009. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is based on the Gaudiya Vaishnava Hindu religious organization, founded in 1966.

Alternative movements are focused on self-improvement and limited, specific changes to individual beliefs and behavior. These include trends like transcendental meditation, macrobiotic dieting, and participation in the activities of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) (figure 10.9). AA is a global peer-led organization that supports people in recovery from alcoholism.



Figure 10.9. Members of the alternative movement related to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) at a 1990 convention in Seattle.

Resistance movements seek to prevent or undo change to the social structure. The Ku Klux Klan, the Minutemen, the pro-life movement, and the American Indian Movement (AIM) fall into this category. AIM is an American Indian grassroots movement founded in 1968. Members work to resist systemic poverty, discrimination, and police brutality against American Indians. They also work on treaty rights, American Indian representation in education, and the preservation of Indigenous cultures. A more recently emerged Native American resistance movement is Idle No More. It started in 2012 as First Nations Peoples in Canada began to protest how the Canadian government was dismantling environmental protection laws (figure 10.10).



Figure 10.10. Members of the resistance movement AIM tore down the statue of Christopher Columbus outside the Minnesota State Capitol in June 2020 during the George Floyd protests (left). A member of the Idle No More movement at a Solidarity Gathering in Sacramento in 2013 (right). Both AIM and Idle No More are resistance movements.

Other helpful categories that sociologists use to distinguish between types of social movements include type of change, targets, methods of work, and range.

Type of Change: A movement might seek change that is either innovative or conservative. A conservative movement seeks to preserve existing norms and values, such as a group opposed to genetically modified foods, while innovative movements want to introduce or change norms and values, like moving towards self-driving cars. The movement for marriage equality is an example of a movement seeking an innovative type of change (figure 10.11).



Figure 10.11. This Marriage Equality Decision Day rally in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in June 2015 celebrates innovative change. The ruling allowing same-sex couples to marry legally prompted members of Indiana to push for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, allowing individuals, businesses, and other organizations to decide whom they will serve based on religious beliefs.

Targets: Group-focused movements focus on influencing groups or society in general—for example, attempting to change the political system from a monarchy to a democracy. An individual-focused movement seeks to affect individuals. The anti-Vietnam War movement targeted members of the U.S. government in an attempt to convince them to end U.S. involvement in the war (figure 10.12).

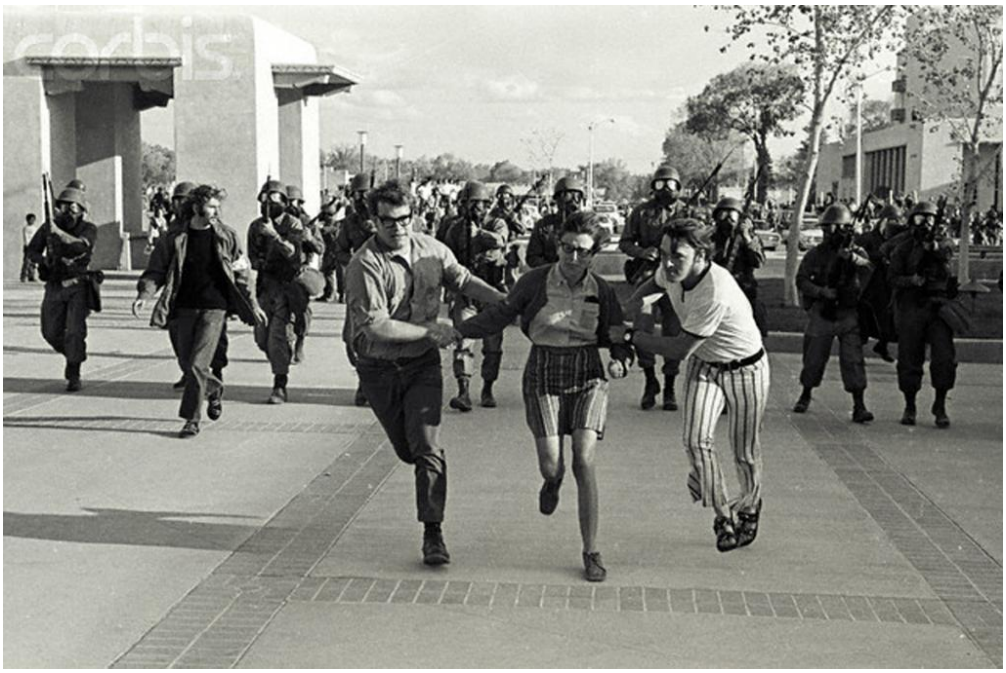


Figure 10.12. This photo was taken in May 1970 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, following the May 4, 1970, shooting of students by the Ohio National Guard at Kent State University during an anti-Vietnam War protest there. Here, students at the University of New Mexico took over the student union building to get the attention of lawmakers.

Methods of Work: Violent movements resort to violence when seeking social change. In extreme cases, violent movements may take the form of paramilitary or terrorist organizations. Peaceful movements utilize techniques such as civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance. Mahatma Gandhi is widely known for his nonviolent resistance, which garnered a mass following in the movements he led in Colonial India.

One campaign, known as the Salt March, protested laws imposed by the British government that were designed to support the monopolization of salt by the British East India Company. Taxation of salt and laws that made it illegal to collect and manufacture salt were a hardship for the poor of India. In 1930, Gandhi began a 24-day walking demonstration that included the breaking of those laws (figure 10.13).

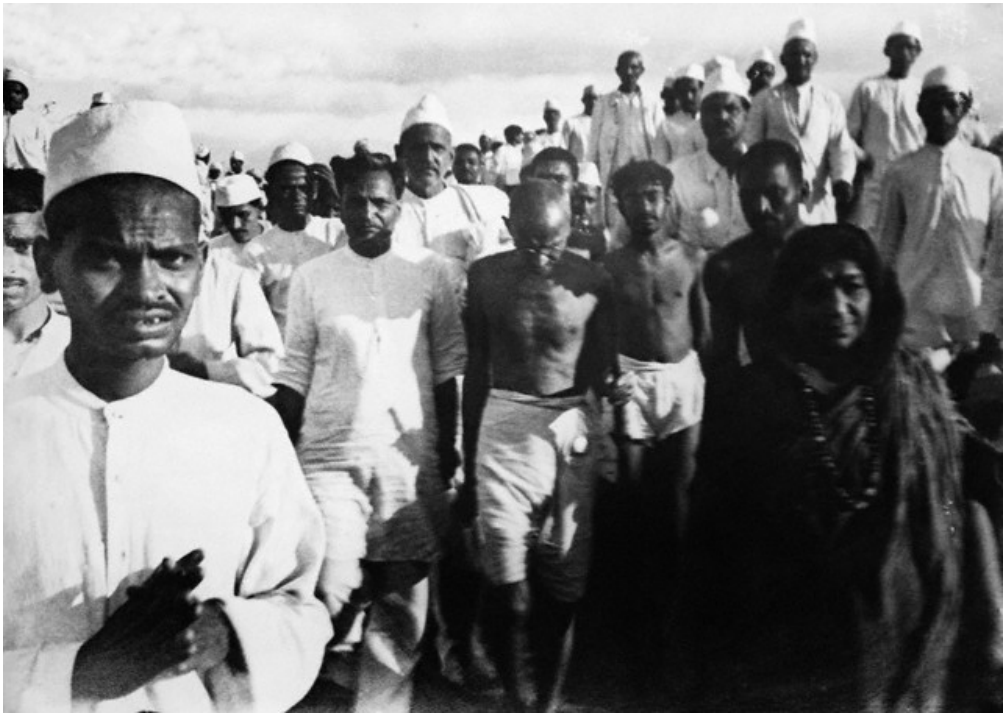


Figure 10.13. The Salt March in India (1930) was an impressive act of nonviolent resistance as a method of work. It began with Mahatma Gandhi and 78 of his volunteers. Indians joined them along the way. When he broke the laws imposing restrictions on the collection of salt, millions of Indians followed suit.

Range: Global movements, such as political uprisings throughout the Arab world, have transnational objectives. National-level movements such as the push to end drunk driving tend to focus on federal policy to make change. Local movements focus on neighborhood, town, or city-level objectives, such as preserving a historic building or protecting a natural habitat. For example, the urban regreening movement works at the local (town or city) level. Members take action as environmental stewards by improving the quality and quantity of green spaces and by recognizing and preserving nature and biodiversity in cities (figure 10.14).



Figure 10.14. The organization Depave (left) is part of the urban regreening movement; their range is specifically in Portland, Oregon. They work with communities to adapt to climate change by transforming overpaved places and creating green spaces (right).

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10.3: Stages of Social Movements

Sociologists also study the lifecycle of social movements—how they emerge, grow, and in some cases, die out. Each movement takes on a unique life cycle as strategies shift and the world responds. Herbert Blumer (1969) and Charles Tilly (1978) outline a four-stage process (figure 10.15). In the **emergence stage**, people become aware of an issue and leaders emerge. This is followed by the **coalescence stage**, when people join together and organize to publicize the issue and raise awareness.

In the **bureaucratization stage**, the movement no longer requires grassroots volunteerism: it is an established organization, typically with a paid staff. At this point, the movement can take several directions. It might successfully bring about the change it sought. Or it might result in failure to change the circumstances intended by members as people no longer take the issue seriously. It might be co-opted, it might meet repression, or it might go mainstream.

Beyond any of these five options, the movement will enter a **decline stage**, when people fall away and adopt a new movement, the movement successfully brings about the change it sought, or people no longer take the issue seriously.

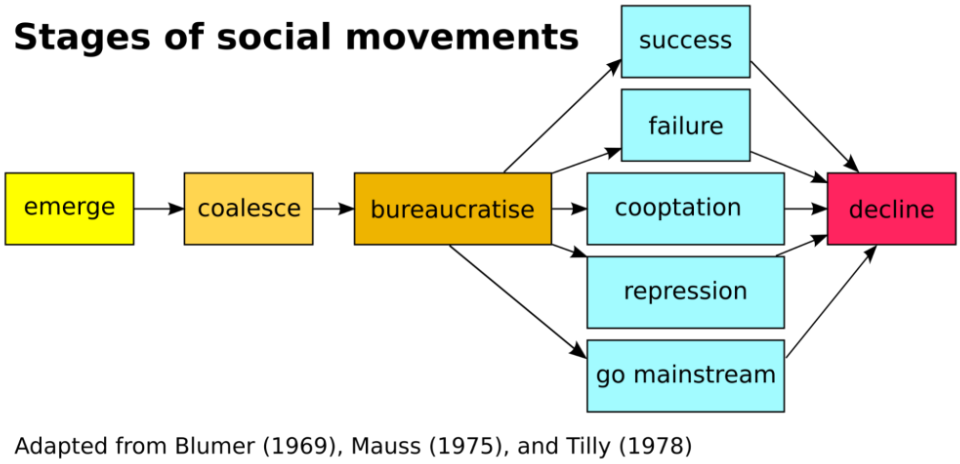


Figure 10.15. Each social movement has a unique life cycle, as outlined by Herbert Blumer and Charles Tilly. Image description.

Influence of Social Media

It is interesting to examine these stages by adding the role of social media to the analysis. Tarana Burke first used the phrase “Me Too” in 2006 on a major social media venue of the time, MySpace (figure 10.16). The phrase later grew into a massive movement when people began using it on Twitter to drive empathy and support regarding experiences of sexual harassment or sexual assault. Similarly, Black Lives Matter began as a social media message after George Zimmerman was acquitted in the shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, and the phrase burgeoned into a formalized (though decentralized) movement in subsequent years. Today, social media is a widely used mechanism in social movements.



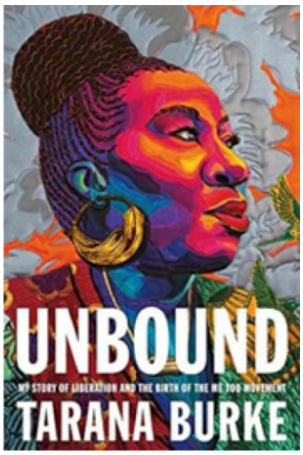


Figure 10.16. Tarana Burke, an activist from New York City, started the MeToo movement via MySpace in 2006 (left). MeToo is a global, survivor-led movement against sexual violence that helps other women with similar experiences to stand up for themselves. Burke then published a memoir, *Unbound*, about her journey in launching the movement (right).

Social media has the potential to dramatically transform how people get involved in movements ranging from local school district decisions to presidential campaigns. Compared to movements of 20 or 30 years ago, social media can accelerate the emergence stages substantially. Issue awareness can spread at the speed of a click, with thousands of people across the globe becoming informed at the same time.

During the coalescence stage, social media can amplify the movement's reach to find volunteers, publicize issues, and raise awareness. President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign was a case study in organizing through social media. Using Twitter and other online tools, the campaign engaged volunteers who had typically not bothered with politics. Combined with comprehensive data tracking and the ability to micro-target, the campaign became a blueprint for others to build on.

In some cases, once a movement reaches the institutionalization stage, a formal organization might exist alongside the hashtag or general sentiment, as is the case with Black Lives Matter. At any one time, Black Lives Matter is essentially three things: a structured organization, an idea with deep and personal meaning for people, and a widely used phrase or hashtag. It's possible that users of the hashtag are not referring to the formal organization. It's even possible that people who hold a strong belief in Black Lives Matter do not agree with all of the organization's principles or its leadership. And in other cases, people may be very aligned with all three contexts of the phrase.

Case Study: Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring



Figure 10.17. A protester affiliated with Occupy Wall Street (OWS) carries a sign that reads: "Tear down Wall Street greed before it tears down the world." OWS was a movement primarily against economic and social inequity, corporate greed, big finance, and the influence of money in politics.

Occupy Wall Street (OWS) (figure 10.17) was a unique movement that defied some of the theoretical and practical expectations regarding social movements. However, it provides a good case study to examine Blumer and Tilly's lifespan of social movements. Let's look at how it emerged and coalesced, how globalization and the media influenced its reach, and whether or not it was a success or a failure.

Manuel Castells (2012) notes that the years leading up to the OWS movement had witnessed a dizzying increase in the disparity of wealth in the United States, stemming back to the 1980s. Wealth inequality (as we learned in Chapter 4) had become severe. The top 1 percent in the nation had secured 58 percent of the economic growth in that period for themselves, while real hourly wages for the average worker had increased by only 2 percent. The wealth of the top 5 percent had increased by 42 percent. The average pay of a CEO was at that time 350 times that of the average worker, compared to less than 50 times in 1983 (AFL-CIO 2014).

Many blamed the country's leading financial institutions for the crisis. They were in trouble after many poorly qualified borrowers defaulted on their mortgage loans when the loans' interest rates rose. The banks were eventually "bailed out" by the government with $700 billion of taxpayer money and dubbed "too big to fail." According to many reports, that same year top executives and traders received large bonuses.

On September 17, 2011, the occupation began. About 1,000 protesters descended upon Wall Street, and up to 20,000 people moved into Zuccotti Park, only two blocks away, where they began building a village of tents and organizing a system of communication. The protest soon spread throughout the nation, and its members started calling themselves "the 99 percent." More than a thousand cities and towns in the United States had OWS demonstrations.

As in most movements, OWS was sparked once a significant number of people reached a point of intolerance toward the status quo. As sociologist James C. Davies explained, when formerly prosperous people begin to have unmet needs and unmet expectations, they become disturbed and motivated to protest. Thus, change comes not from the very bottom of the social hierarchy but from somewhere in the middle (Davies 1962).

Many of the protesters were young students burdened with student loans and high tuition rates, facing uncertain futures due to the economic situation. For generations, residents of the United States had been able to expect that getting a college education would allow them to meet or exceed the economic class of their parents. However, students and former graduates were finding that reality no longer true. They blamed policy decisions and the financial systems as contributors to that shifting reality. This group, as well as

others who had not attended college, found themselves in a new reality, working for very long hours for stagnating wages or subject to temporary work with no security.

While the nexus of the OWS movement occurred in the United States, globalization played a significant role in its inspiration, reach, and endurance. Once the movement was underway, protests resonated across the world, motivating thousands to voice their anger at financial and social inequality. Some protests merged with existing anti-government protests. In October 2011, demonstrations took place in more than 80 countries all under the name of a global "Day of Rage."

Globalization also played a part in the origins of the OWS movement. Before the protests, on July 13, 2011, the Canadian-based organization Adbusters posted on its blog, "Are you ready for a Tahrir moment? On September 17th, flood into lower Manhattan, set up tents, kitchens, peaceful barricades and occupy Wall Street" (Castells 2012). The "Tahrir moment" was a reference to the Arab Spring, a series of pro-democracy, anti-government protests, uprisings, and armed rebellions that began in 2010 in response to corruption and economic stagnation.



Figure 10.18. Over 6 million protesters in Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt, demanded the removal of the regime and for President Mubarak to step down.

The Arab Spring began after the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, a fruit and vegetable vendor in the town of Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia. Bouazizi had suffered extensive abuse by the local police because he was working without a permit. They would demand bribes, sometimes confiscating his merchandise or all he had earned in a day. On December 17, 2010, a police officer confiscated the scales he used to weigh his produce. He went to complain to the provincial government but was refused. Having reached a point of sheer desperation, as protest, Bouazizi set himself alight on the street outside, dying of his injuries two and a half weeks later (Lageman 2020).

Bouazizi's death sparked mass protests in Tunisia among a civilian population that had been experiencing extended economic hardship, lack of opportunity, and the corruption of their security personnel and government. The protests resulted in the then-dictator and Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali stepping down. Soon, protests spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa, including Bahrain, Yemen, Libya, Syria, and Egypt's Tahrir Square in Cairo (figures 10.18 and 10.19), with other rulers deposed.



Figure 10.19. As this 2020 map illustrates, protests spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa as part of the Arab Spring uprisings. Four out of the 17 countries involved have experienced leadership changes since the uprisings. Image description.

OWS was a reaction to the continuing financial chaos that resulted from the 2008 market meltdown; it was not a political movement. However, the Arab Spring was its catalyst, and there were similarities to the movements.

OWS baffled much of the public and certainly the media, leading many to ask, “Who are they, and what do they want?” Castells dubbed OWS “a non-demand movement: The process is the message.” Using Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and livestreamed videos, the protesters conveyed a multifold message with a long list of needed reforms and social change. They included addressing the rising disparity of wealth, the influence of money on election outcomes, our corporatized political system, political favoring of the rich, and rising student debt.

Both the Arab Spring and OWS were driven by mostly young, educated people whose promises and expectations were thwarted by corrupt, autocratic governments. The protesters exploited the power of social media to enhance communication. In an interview with the newsreel *Al Jazeera*, Ali Bouazizi shared that despite the evident dangers of criticizing the regime, he decided to publish a video on Facebook of protests in front of the provincial government building. “Of course, I was terrified when I posted that video.…But I felt I couldn’t back down now, for the sake of my children and family. This was a God-given chance, and I had to take it” (Lageman 2020).

Following the life cycle prediction of Blumef and Tilly, OWS did not bureaucratize. It did not become a formal organization with paid staff, widely respected and recognized by the dominant culture. However, during the weeks of the protests, a formidable and complex organization was formed within many of the camps (figure 10.20).

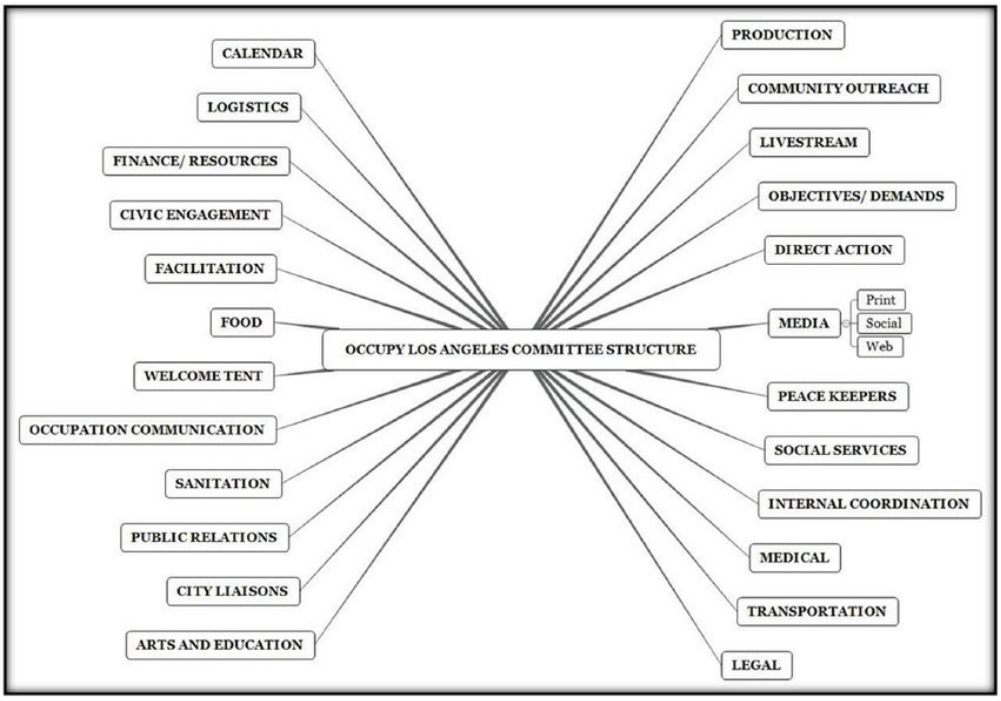


Figure 10.20. The committee structure of the Occupy Los Angeles General Assembly was detailed and complex. Image description.

What did OWS and the Arab Spring accomplish? Despite headlines at the time mocking OWS for lack of cohesion and lack of clear messaging, the movement is credited with bringing attention to income inequality and preferential treatment of financial institutions accused of wrongdoing. Many financial crimes are not prosecuted, and their perpetrators rarely face jail time. It is likely that the general population is more sensitive to those issues than they were before OWS and related movements made them more visible.

At first glance, from the lens of news and politics, the uprisings of the Arab Spring may appear to be a failure. But if we study the social changes experienced in Arab Spring-affected societies through a sociological lens, the story becomes more whole.

North Africa and Middle East Arab societies have redefined their political space since the Arab Spring. Protests emerged in Lebanon and Iraq. Largely peaceful mass demonstrations began across Algeria in 2019, opposing then-president Abdelaziz Bouteflika. They later demanded political reforms and further freedoms (figure 10.21).

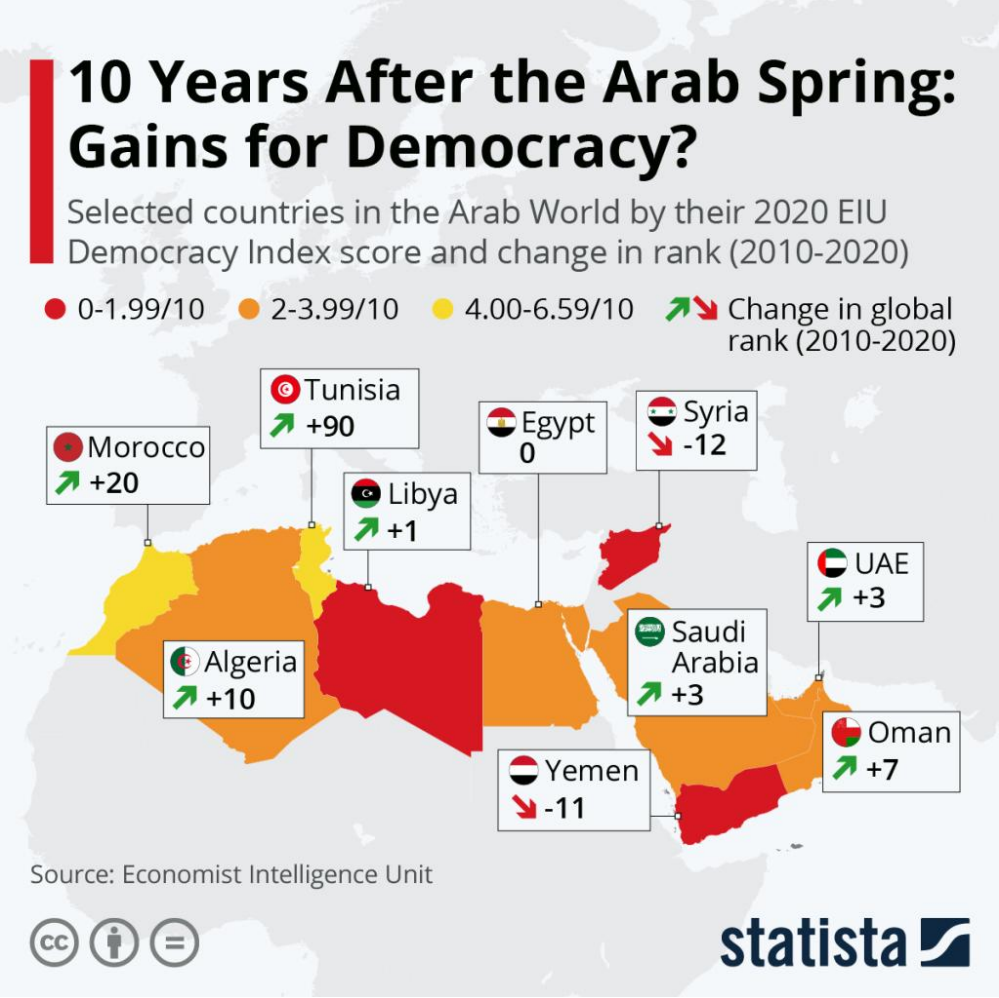


Figure 10.21. Ten years after the pro-democracy protests in the Arab Spring region, some countries have improved their scores on the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance's Democracy Index [Website]. Image description.

Even in Egypt, which saw a return to severe authoritarianism after 2011, is seeing more protests. A majority of citizens are now taking action with more hope that those in power can be removed. Authorities now view protests and public demonstrations as more than a challenge to their authority. They are indicators of another potential uprising, or even a revolution (Adraoui 2021).



Figure 10.22. Campaigns to address debt cancellation resulted from the OWS Movement. Members of OccupySF march through downtown San Francisco in October 2011, promoting forgiveness of student loan debt (left). Greece faced a debt crisis after the financial crisis of 2007–2008, forcing a series of sudden austerity measures that led to impoverishment and a small-scale humanitarian crisis (right). Debt relief for Greece became part of the focus of the Jubilee 2000 campaign.

Has the United States changed the way it manages inequality? Certainly not with any immediate policy. In the United States, income inequality has generally increased. However, looking closer, there are lingering shifts. Astra Taylor and Jonathan Smucker

believe that OWS helped usher in “a social-movement renaissance across a range of issues, including racial justice, climate change, debt cancellation, and organized labor” (Taylor and Smucker 2021).

They also point to the way OWS created space for a generation of organizers to develop strategic discipline and practice collective action. It also helped that generation better understand power within social structures and the importance of building institutions.

There are also evident shifts within some institutions. For example, a loan forgiveness initiative that became wide enough to be a movement focused on forgiving student loan debts for U.S. students (figure 10.22 [left]). And Jubilee 2000 was a campaign that led ultimately to the cancellation of more than $100 billion of debt owed by 35 of the poorest countries (Pettifor 2000) (figure 10.22 [right]).

The debt relief allowed countries to invest in poverty-reduction, health, and educational programs. The campaign also led to a global awareness of the immensity of the debt, helping activists challenge the corruption behind many debt-related practices (Pettifor 2000).

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10.4: Perspectives on Social Movements

A branch of the study of social movements is social movement theory. Thinkers in this field attempt to explain many phenomena, such as: Why does social mobilization happen? How does it manifest, and what are the potential consequences? Why do certain people form or become members of a social movement? And how do people behave within movements? The following three theories are but a few of the many classic and modern theories developed by social scientists to explain how social movements function.

Resource Mobilization

McCarthy and Zald (1977) define **resource mobilization theory** as a way to explain movement success in terms of the ability to acquire resources and mobilize individuals. Resources are primarily time and money, and the more there is of both, the greater the power of organized movements. Numbers of social movement organizations, which are single social movement groups with the same goals, constitute a social movement industry. Together they create what McCarthy and Zald (1977) refer to as "the sum of all social movements in a society."

An example of resource mobilization is the activity of the civil rights movement between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s. Social movements had existed before, notably the women's suffrage movement and a long line of labor movements. The civil rights movement had also existed well before Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man. Her arrest triggered a public outcry that led to the famous Montgomery bus boycott, which launched what we now think of as the "civil rights movement" (Schmitz 2014).

Mobilization had to begin immediately. Boycotting the bus made other means of transportation necessary, which was provided through carpools. Churches and their ministers joined the struggle, and the protest organization In Friendship was formed as well as the Friendly Club and the Club From Nowhere. A social movement industry was growing.



Figure 10.23. Members of the SNCC Freedom Singers, part of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Here they are performing live on air at a rally in Harlem, New York, in 1965, to protest "Bloody Sunday," when Alabama Highway Patrol troopers attacked civil rights demonstrators outside Selma, Alabama (left). SNCC was crucial to the civil rights movement. A mural in honor of civil rights hero John Lewis (1940–2020) was painted by artist Sean Schwab in Atlanta in 2012. John Lewis was one of the "Big Six" leaders of the movement, playing a key role in ending legalized racial discrimination and segregation. He was elected as the U.S. Representative for Georgia's 5th Congressional District in 1986 and served 17 terms (right).

Martin Luther King Jr. emerged during these events to become the charismatic leader of the movement, gaining respect from elites in the federal government. Mobilization was then aided by even more emerging social movement organizations, such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) (figure 10.23) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), among others.

With each of these steps, a social movement sector developed, and several social movement industries developed. Although the movement in that period was an overall success and laws were changed (if not attitudes), the "movement" continues. Several organizations that began in the 1950s and 1960s exist today. So do struggles to keep the gains that were made, even as the U.S. Supreme Court has recently weakened the Voting Rights Act of 1965, once again making it more difficult for Black Americans and other minorities to vote.

Political Opportunity Theory

Another influential perspective is political opportunity theory. According to this view, social movements are more likely to arise and succeed when political opportunities for their emergence exist or develop. For example, when a government that previously was repressive becomes more democratic or when a government weakens because of an economic or foreign crisis (Snow and Soule 2010).

When political opportunities of this kind exist, discontented people perceive a greater chance of success if they take political action, and so they decide to take such action. As Snow and Soule (2010:66) explain, "Whether individuals will act collectively to address their grievances depends in part on whether they have the political opportunity to do so." Applying a political opportunity perspective, one important reason that social movements are so much more common in democracies than in authoritarian societies is that activists feel freer to be active without fearing arbitrary arrests, beatings, and other repressive responses by the government.

New Social Movement Theory

New social movement theory was developed by European social scientists and attempts to explain the surge of postindustrial and postmodern movements. It's a perspective that revolves around understanding contemporary movements overall, as they relate to politics, identity, culture, and social change. The primary difference is in their goals, as the new movements focus not on issues of materialistic qualities such as economic well-being but rather on issues related to civil and human rights.



Figure 10.24. A parade during Transgender Day of Visibility in Melbourne, Australia, in 2023. The transgender rights movement in Australia works toward improving access to gender-affirming care and increasing the availability of healthcare providers trained in inclusive and gender-affirming medical and mental health care.

Some of these more complex interrelated movements include ecofeminism and the transgender rights movement. Ecofeminism is a branch of feminism that focuses on the patriarchal society as a source of environmental problems. Because both women and nature have been devalued, we are seeing harmful conditions for both the planet and women. The transgender rights movement promotes the legal status of transgender people and the elimination of discrimination and violence against transgender people (figure 10.24). Sociologist Steven Buechler (2000) suggests that we should be looking at the bigger picture in which these movements arise—shifting to a macro-level, global analysis of social movements.

The movement to legalize marijuana is an example of a phenomenon that new social movement theory examines. The marijuana legalization movement focuses on changing the culture of the United States by transforming the legality of a substance from something illegal into something people could legally use in their everyday lives. As marijuana is made legal, those actions create a new norm for what is considered deviant in society.

Social Movements in Theory and Action

Sometimes social scientists contribute to theories of change for specific movements. These theories are often based on observations of what makes social movements effective. For example, Innovation Network's *Social Movement Learning Project* outlines a map for creating change and for evaluating change through social movements. Take a look at their visual in figure 10.25. They describe how movement capacity, movement power, and movement vision are all necessary for change. Similarly, the map outlines how institutional power, influencer power, people power, and narrative power are all key elements of successful social movement-making:

- Institutional power is the power to influence who makes decisions and how decisions are made.
- Influencer power is the power to develop, maintain, and leverage relationships with people and institutions with influence over and access to critical social, cultural, or financial resources.
- People power is the power to build, mobilize, and sustain large-scale public support.
- Narrative power is the power to transform and hold public narratives and ideologies and limit the influence of opposing narratives.

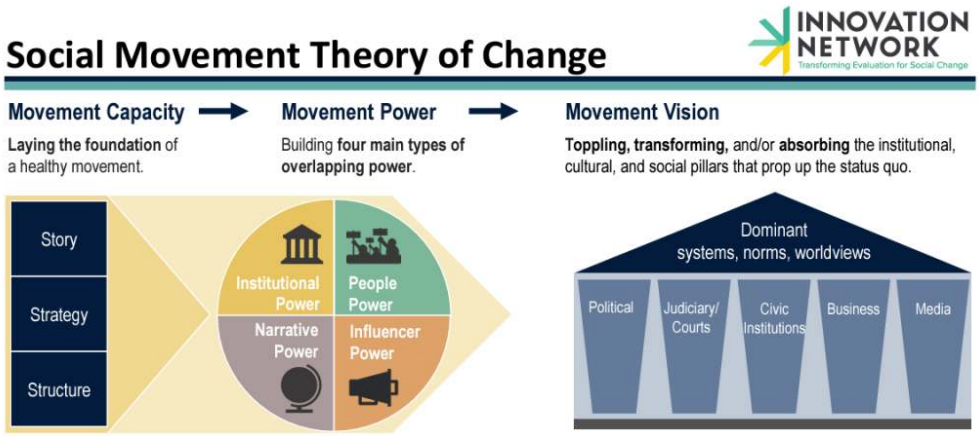


Figure 10.25. Innovation Network's *Social Movement Learning Project* proposes that movement capacity, movement power, and movement vision are all crucial for effective social change. Image description.

The basic sociology of social movements includes an examination of the types and stages of social movements and analyzes social movements through the lens of theoretical perspectives. The rest of this chapter will explore the social movements associated with the environmental crisis. We'll begin by exploring how sociology observes our environmental challenges so we can better understand the social response.

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10.5: Environmental Inequity

From an equity lens, there are two main ideas about the relationship between society and the environment. The first, as we described in Chapter 2, is the impact of human activity and decision-making. Environmental sociologists emphasize that environmental problems are the result of human decisions and activities that harm the environment. In the examples of environmental problems we've reviewed, the human factor is obvious: our personal behavior, the actions of corporations, and the weakness of government environmental regulation cause serious environmental problems that threaten the planet.

The second is the existence and consequences of environmental inequity. Recall from Chapter 3 that both globally and locally, our well-being is related to our social place (our intersecting racial, ethnic, and gender characteristics). Our social place influences our access to various environmental resources, including open spaces and nature (figure 10.26), clean water, and safe places during weather emergencies.

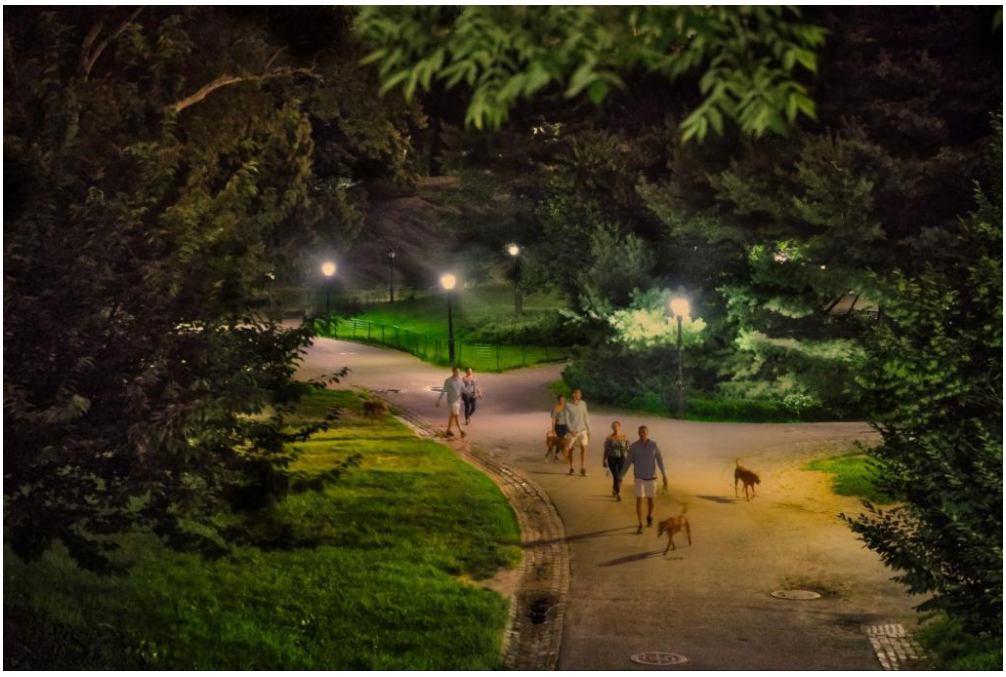


Figure 10.26. Photographer Rick Schwartz created this merged photo from images in Central Park, New York City. Access to open spaces and nature is crucial for well-being, but not everyone has access to them.

Inequity in Environmental Impact

Environmental inequity (also called environmental injustice) refers to the fact that low-income people and people of color are disproportionately likely to experience various environmental problems (Bullard and Johnson 2009; Mascarenhas 2009). They also experience inequity in environmental impact. These realities are due to unjust power imbalances in society that create an unequal distribution of resources. This unequal distribution is often the result of injustices against historically excluded groups of people.



Figure 10.27. Water has been a challenge for years in the San Joaquin Valley, California. A photo by Dorothea Lange documents the water supply at the American River camp in 1936 (left). Migrant workers' children are assigned to pull water from the pump. Vue Her is a Hmong farmer on a 10-acre field in Singer, California (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2019) (right). Water is still crucial for this agricultural area, but they have experienced the water table dropping over the past 14 years, preventing them from digging wells (Sacher 2021).

For example, in 2021, nearly 1 million Californians lived with unsafe drinking water from a failing water system; more than two-thirds of these were located in communities with significant financial need (Tilden 2022) (figure 10.27). To study this, we can ask: Which groups experience the impacts of environmental issues more than others? What are those impacts?

Human-Made Disasters

While human decision-making can harm the environment and therefore cause detriment to the human experience, human decisions made by people in power can also harm those with less access to resources. Sociologists McCarthy and King (2009) cite several environmental accidents that stemmed from reckless decision-making and natural disasters in which human decisions accelerated the harm that occurred.

One accident, the result of reckless decision making occurred in Bhopal, India, in 1984, when a Union Carbide pesticide plant leaked 40 tons of deadly gas. Between 3,000 and 16,000 people died immediately and another half million suffered permanent illnesses or injuries. A contributing factor to the leak was Union Carbide's decision to save money by violating safety standards in the construction and management of the plant. Most who died were the poorest members of Bhopal, living in settlements near the factory (Broughton 2005; Agarwal 2022). Because of the resulting health issues survivors experienced, the gas leak entrenched their poverty and marginalization for following generations ("The Bhopal Tragedy: 30 Years of Injustice for Victims and Survivors" 2014) (figure 10.28).



Figure 10.28. In Bhopal, 34 years after the leak, survivor groups come together to march in what has become a yearly torchlight rally. They demand justice and compensation for the loss of loved ones and their ongoing health issues.

Hurricane Katrina was another environmental and social disaster in which human decision-making resulted in a great deal of preventable damage (figure 10.29). After Katrina hit the Gulf Coast and especially New Orleans in August 2005, the resulting wind and flooding killed more than 1,800 people and left more than 700,000 homeless. McCarthy and King (2009:4) attribute much of this damage to human decision-making: "While hurricanes are typically considered 'natural disasters,' Katrina's extreme consequences must be considered the result of social and political failures."

Long before Katrina hit, it was well known that a major flood could easily breach New Orleans' levees and have a devastating impact. Despite this knowledge, federal, state, and local officials did nothing over the years to strengthen or rebuild the levees. In addition, coastal land that would have protected New Orleans had been lost over time to commercial and residential development.



Figure 10.29. Hurricane Katrina unleashed disaster in New Orleans in 2005, killing over 1,800 people and leaving more than 700,000 homeless. Much of this damage is attributed to human decision-making.

According to sociologist Nicole Youngman (2009:176), this development also "placed many more people and structures in harm's way than had existed there during previous hurricanes." All these factors led Youngman to conclude that Katrina's impact "demonstrated how a myriad of human and nonhuman factors can come together to produce a profoundly traumatic event." In short, the flooding after Katrina was a human disaster, not a natural disaster.

Hazardous Living Conditions

Outside of natural disasters, neighborhoods populated primarily by people of color and members of low socioeconomic groups are burdened with a disproportionate number of hazards, including toxic waste facilities, garbage dumps, and other sources of environmental pollution and foul odors that lower the quality of life.



Figure 10.30. Agbogbloshie, Ghana, is a settlement where war refugees and unemployed residents turn to scrap metal collection, including auto scrap, to supplement incomes. The method of waste processing emits toxic chemicals. Especially hazardous to children, they are known to inhibit the development of the reproductive system, the nervous system, and especially the brain (Kuper and Hojsik 2008).

All around the globe, members of minority groups bear a greater burden of health problems that result from higher exposure to waste and pollution (figure 10.30). This can occur due to unsafe or unhealthy work conditions where no regulations exist (or they are not enforced) for poor workers, or in neighborhoods that are uncomfortably close to toxic materials.

Research shows that in the United States, for many African-Americans, these inequities pervade all aspects of their lives. Examples include environmentally unsound housing, schools with asbestos problems, or facilities and playgrounds with lead paint. A 20-year comparative study led by sociologist Robert Bullard determined "race to be more important than socioeconomic status in predicting the location of the nation's commercial hazardous waste facilities" (Bullard et al. 2007). His research found, for example, that Black children are five times more likely to have lead poisoning (the leading environmental health threat for children) than their white counterparts, and a disproportionate number of people of color reside in areas with hazardous waste facilities (Bullard et al. 2007).

Environmental Racism

Much of the heightened exposure to hazardous living conditions and disasters that Black families face is related to a form of systemic racism: environmental racism. **Environmental racism** is the deliberate targeting of communities of color for residence in areas more vulnerable to disaster, and the targeting of those residences for toxic waste disposal and the location of polluting industries. This targeting is done through policies and practices and includes the exclusion of people of color from environmental public policy-making (Chavis 2022). Our definition of environmental racism is informed by the work of the Reverend Ben Chavis, the originator of the term. We'll learn more about Chavis in the Environmental Justice Movements section.

One example of environmental racism relates to the U.S. legacy of racist housing policies. The practice of redlining, the discriminatory housing practice we introduced in Chapter 3 and Chapter 8, has contributed significantly to segregating Black people in areas that incur lower levels of government support and protection than white neighborhoods.

Let's look again at Hurricane Katrina. Take a few minutes to view the 1930s-era redlined map of New Orleans [Website] on the Mapping Inequality website (figure 10.31). Then, on the site, explore the box on the left to see how neighborhoods were graded and described.

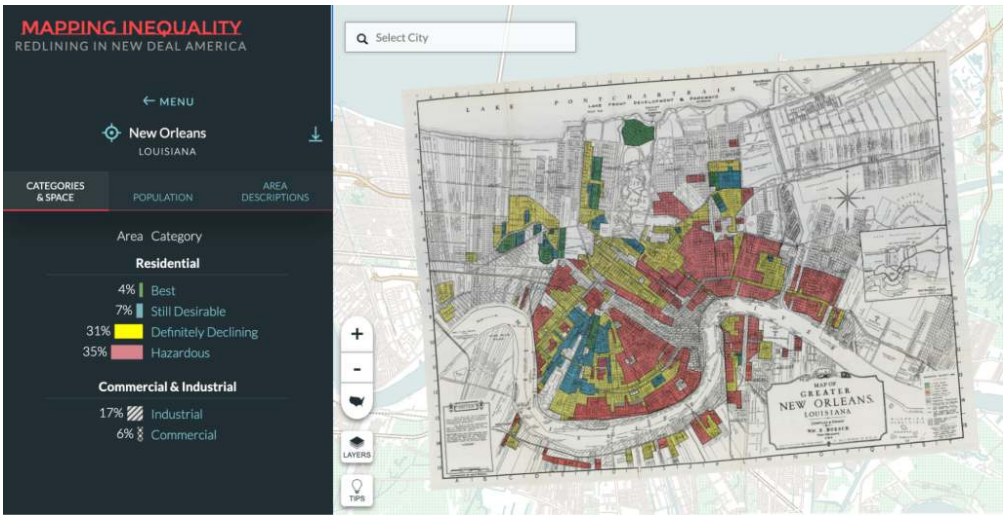


Figure 10.31. Screenshot of a redlined map of New Orleans, Louisiana [Website], from the Mapping Inequality website. Redlining reinforced unjust living conditions for minority residents nationwide.

Scientific American reports that "four of the seven zip codes that suffered the worst flood damage from Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans had Black populations of at least 75%" (Frank 2020). Sociologists Jean Ait Belkhir and Christiane Charlemaine add that people not living in poverty were able to escape due to their access to vehicles and credit cards.

However, the majority of Black and poor residents had no protection as the city had inadequate dikes, levees, and no evacuation plan. "Once the hurricane hit, the federal government was slow to respond. When it did, the saving of property was prioritized over the saving of people, and many people of color who were caught up in the evacuation decried the treatment they received." In short, "exposure to the hurricane's devastation was a function of place, race, gender, and class" (Belkhir and Charlemaine 2007:121).

This discrimination and the legacy of redlining have reinforced unjust living conditions for minority residents nationwide. A report conducted in 2021 by the real estate firm Redfin found that "formerly redlined neighborhoods have a larger share of homes endangered by flooding than neighborhoods that weren't targeted by the racist 1930s housing policy" (Katz 2021).

Watch the 5-minute video "How Climate Change Is Making Inequality Worse" [Streaming Video] (figure 10.32). As you do, take note of the inequalities associated with climate change presented.



Figure 10.32. "How Climate Change Is Making Inequality Worse" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

Taking a global view, we can peek into the work of the United Nations and its Sustainability Goal 10: reduce inequality within and among countries. The United Nations Environment Program focuses its work on Goal 10 with projects that reduce inequities related to the environment.

Pandemics and COVID-19

Consider what we've discussed about social place and our varied experiences with environmental change. What impacts do pandemics, as environmental issues, have on individuals in society, based on race, ethnicity, and gender?

The *New York Times* article "Virus Is Twice as Deadly for Black and Latino People Than Whites in NYC" reports that in 2020, the coronavirus was killing Black and Latino people in New York City at twice the rate that it was killing white people. The mayor of New York City reflected that this disparity matches the standard economic inequalities and differences in access to health care (Mays and Newman 2020).

Beyond New York City, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed many inequities and social issues. They include racism in health systems, segregated health services, xenophobia against people from China and other parts of East Asia, and a severe lack of data on the impacts of the disease among Native Americans. These inequities are mimicked by other pandemics.

Inequity in Environmental Transition

Inequity in environmental transition refers to uneven investment in environmental solutions based on social place. That is, based on our social place, we receive different access to environmental solutions, and we receive different protections from environmental issues. Many policies and initiatives established as solutions to environmental issues ignore or harm people of color or women.



Figure 10.33. Energy-efficient stoves are used with both charcoal and firewood in Lobule Refugee Settlement, West Nile, Uganda (left). A person in Rwanda cooks with a newer stove designed to reduce pressure on forest resources (right). Donations of the newer stoves were discontinued, despite their proven benefits to women's and children's health and safety.

For example, environmental policies such as expansions of public transport, carbon pricing, and taxes affect women and poorer households negatively because these policies often overlook their needs. To illustrate, a public policy transit route might serve the 9-to-5 commuter but overlook the needs of mothers who must arrange for their children to get to school.

In another scenario, environmentally friendly cooking stoves were discontinued from a program when organizers realized their impact on emissions was smaller than initially expected. However, the stoves have improved women's and children's health and safety (Gloor et al. 2022) (figure 10.33).

The Luskin Center for Innovation at the University of California, Los Angeles, notes that wealthier households are typically the first to adopt renewable energy installations, such as rooftop solar panels. However, as these installations reduce energy costs, lower-income households would receive a greater benefit from renewable energy at home (UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation n.d.)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change outlines the following three principles important in attaining equity in our environmental solutions:

> - *Distributive justice: striving for an equitable allocation of the burdens and benefits of solutions among individuals, nations, and generations.*
> - *Procedural justice: paying attention to who participates in decision-making about environmental solutions.*

- *Recognition: having respect for, engagement with, and fair consideration of diverse cultures and perspectives (IPCC 2022).*

Many thinkers and organizations are working on ways that equity in environmental transition can be improved. This collective goal is often called "Just Transition." For example, Marybelle N. Tobias is the founder and principal of Environmental Justice Solutions. She is helping the City of Oakland make equitable decisions for its 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (figure 10.34). (Optional: Watch this 4:10-minute video, "Oakland 2030: Equity at the Center" [Streaming Video], by Marybelle N. Tobias to learn more about her work).



Figure 10.34. A screenshot of an educational video by Marybelle N. Tobias. Tobias is a consultant working in equity in environmental transition. Optional: Watch her video, "Oakland 2030: Equity at the Center" [Streaming Video] to learn more about her work.

Our social place influences the degree of our exposure to harmful or dangerous elements in the environment. As societies build solutions to harmful environmental issues, our social place also influences our access to those solutions.

Going Deeper

- For more information on redlining, see Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America [Website].
- For a story on xenophobia in the time of COVID-19, listen to this 25-minute podcast by NPR: "When Xenophobia Spreads Like a Virus" [Podcast].
- For an overview of issues related to COVID-19 and inequity, browse through COVID-19 Racial Equity and Social Justice Resources [Website] at Racial Equity Tools.

Native American Tribes and Environmental Racism

Native Americans are unquestionably impacted by environmental racism. The Commission for Racial Justice found that about 50 percent of all Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans live in communities with uncontrolled waste sites (United Church of Christ 1987). There's no question that, worldwide, Indigenous populations are suffering from similar fates.

For Native American Tribes, the issues can be complicated—and their solutions hard to attain—because of the intricate governmental issues arising from a history of institutionalized disenfranchisement.

Unlike other racial minorities in the United States, Native American Tribes are sovereign nations. However, much of their land is held in "trust," meaning that "the federal government holds title to the land in trust on behalf of the tribe" (Bureau of Indian Affairs 2012). Some instances of environmental damage arise from this crossover, where the U.S. government's title has meant it acts without the approval of the Tribal government. Other significant contributors to environmental racism as experienced by Tribes are forcible removal and burdensome red tape to receive the same reparation benefits afforded to non-Indians.

To better understand how this happens, let's consider a few example cases. The home of the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians was targeted as the site for a high-level nuclear waste dumping ground amid allegations of a payoff of as high as $200 million (Kamps 2001). Keith Lewis, an Indigenous advocate for Native American rights, commented on this buyout after his people endured decades of uranium contamination, saying that "there is nothing moral about tempting a starving man with money" (Kamps 2001). In another example, the Western Shoshone's Yucca Mountain area has been pursued by mining companies for its rich uranium stores, a threat that adds to the existing radiation exposure this area suffers from U.S. and British nuclear bomb testing (Environmental Justice Case Studies 2004).

In the "four corners" area where Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico meet, a group of Hopi and Navajo families have been forcibly removed from their homes so the land could be mined by the Peabody Mining Company for coal valued at $10 billion (American Indian Cultural Support 2006). Years of uranium mining on the lands of the Navajo of New Mexico have led to serious health consequences, and reparations have been difficult to secure; in addition to the loss of life, people's homes and other facilities have been contaminated (Frosch 2009) (figure 10.35).



Figure 10.35. Paintings by Chip Thomas of the Navajo Nation. Thomas is a physician in northeast Arizona but is better known for his artwork structures on Tribal lands, such as in Cameron, Coconino County, Arizona. They often protest the displacement and toxic exposure experienced by his community. The image on the left reads, "Are they not waging nuclear war when miners die from cancer from mining the uranium."

In yet another case, members of the Chippewa near White Pine, Michigan, were unable to stop the transport of hazardous sulfuric acid across reservation lands, but their activism helped bring an end to the mining project that used the acid (Environmental Justice Case Studies 2004).

These examples are only a few of the hundreds of incidents that Native American Tribes have faced and continue to battle against. Sadly, the mistreatment of the land's original inhabitants continues via this institution of environmental racism. How might the work of sociologists help draw attention to—and eventually mitigate—this social problem?

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10.6: Shifts in Perspective and Practice

Movements for social justice and movements for protecting the environment have tended to exist independently of each other. However, more recently, as a result of our heightened environmental crisis, movements are arising that combine concerns of social inequity and the environment. This merging of movements represents a significant shift in perspective. In her TED Talk, Tania Roa expressed the values behind that shift this way:

> *When we separate humans from nature, we perpetuate the idea that we are…superior to other species, when in reality we are just as much a part of natural cycles and the Earth's ecosystems as every other creature. It's time we shift our mindset from compartmentalizing different causes to a more holistic perspective. Then, we can combine efforts to protect all people by addressing environmental injustices, and all living things ("How to Protect People and Planet" 2023).*

In this section, we'll look at some ways that perspectives are shifting to support social movements that encourage better care for the planet *and* better lived experiences for humans. But first, we'll look at the influence that Indigenous wisdom has on these shifts.

Indigenous Wisdom

The traditions, languages, and beliefs of Indigenous Peoples vary tremendously across the world. However, there is a common worldview among Indigenous communities: that all parts of our ecosystem are connected and that humans, animals, plants, air, and rocks are dependent on one another for survival and ecological health. Indigenous lifeways represent traditions of living in balance with the natural world by preserving nature, using nature's gifts in moderation, and respecting the interdependence of all living things.

For example, we can turn to the perspective of members of the Haudenosaunee nations. (The Haudenosaunee confederation consists of the five nations: Mohawk, Cayuga, Seneca, Onondaga, and Oneida. They follow the "Law of the Seventh Generation," which takes into consideration those who are not yet born but who will inherit the world. The Haudenosaunee Confederation [Website] explains:

> *In their decision making Chiefs consider how present day decisions will impact their descendants. Nations are taught to respect the world in which they live as they are borrowing it from future generations ("Values" 2023).*

Watch this 2-minute video, "The Relationship Between Humans and Nature" [Streaming Video] (figure 10.36). As you do, take note of a couple ideas: How do members of the Haudenosaunee Confederation view their relationship with the earth? And how did the Haudenosaunee people influence the U.S. Constitution? What teachings were omitted?



Figure 10.36 "The Relationship Between Humans and Nature" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

The holistic values and lifeways of the Haudenosaunee people and other Indigenous communities of North America have been conveyed via oral histories for centuries. They have been teaching those practices to the Western world since first encountering Europeans. The current shifts in the social-ecological perspectives of dominant North American culture reflect longstanding Indigenous values that hold society and nature as equal partners.

Biocentrism

One of those shifts relates to how humans interact in practice with the land and its offerings. Early European settlers in North America lived with an ethic that supported claiming land and rapidly consuming its natural resources (figure 10.37). After they depleted one area, they moved westward to new territory. This **frontier ethic** assumed that the earth has an unlimited supply of resources. If resources run out in one area, more can be found elsewhere, or it was assumed that human ingenuity would find substitutes. This attitude sees humans as masters who manage the planet. The frontier ethic is completely human-centered, for only the needs of humans are considered.



Figure 10.37. The 1872 painting by John Gast, *American Progress*, was widely distributed as an engraving called *Spirit of the Frontier*. It represents Manifest Destiny, the belief in westward expansion of the United States. Settlers are moving west, guided and protected by Columbia, the spirit of the frontier. They are aided by modern technology like railroads, and they are driving Native Americans and bison into obscurity.

Most industrialized societies have based their success on population and economic growth, assuming that infinite resources exist to support continued growth indefinitely. In fact, as we discussed in Chapter 4, it is common for economic growth to be considered as a measure of how well a society is doing. The late economist Julian Simon (1932–1998) suggested that (in his lifetime) life on earth had never been better and that population growth means more creative minds to solve future problems and give us an even better standard of living. In many ways, this ethic remains in dominant U.S. culture. However, now that the human population has passed 8 billion and few frontiers are left, many are beginning to question how well this supports society.

Aldo Leopold, a wildlife natural historian and philosopher in the United States (figure 10.38), advocated for a perspective in contrast to the frontier ethic. He introduced **biocentrism** to the conservation movement. It's a philosophy that extends equal and inherent value to all living beings. At its core, biocentrism mimics Indigenous teachings.

However, Leopold translated those teachings to the Western world of law and ethics. He suggested that humans have always considered land as property, just as ancient Greeks considered slaves as property. He believed that mistreatment of land (or of slaves) makes little economic or moral sense, much as today, the concept of slavery is considered immoral. All humans are merely one component of an ethical framework.



Figure 10.38. Aldo Leopold sits with a quiver and bow above the Rio Gavilan in northern Mexico in 1938. He encouraged the conservation movement to extend equal and inherent value to all living beings.

Leopold suggested that land be included in an ethical framework, calling this the “land ethic”:

> *The land ethic simply enlarges the boundary of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals; or collectively, the land. In short, a land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow members, and also respect for the community as such (Leopold 1949).*

Leopold maintained that our relationship with nature must be based upon more than just economic necessity. Species with no discernible economic value to humans may be an integral part of a functioning ecosystem. The land ethic respects all parts of the natural world regardless of their utility, and decisions based upon that ethic result in more stable biological communities.

Cosmocentrism

Another emerging shift in perspective is related to anthropocentrism, a concept we introduced in Chapter 9. Anthropocentrism is the belief that humans are the central and most important existence in the universe. There is a considerable change afoot with this paradigm, as many are encouraging it to be replaced by one that supports better care for both the planet and humans.

Cosmocentrism is a worldview that instead puts the planet at the center of our existence. It’s an acknowledgment that the world is a web of interrelationships among all beings (human, animal, plant, rock, etc.) that share the same level of hierarchy. Figure 10.39 illustrates the contrast between these two points of view.

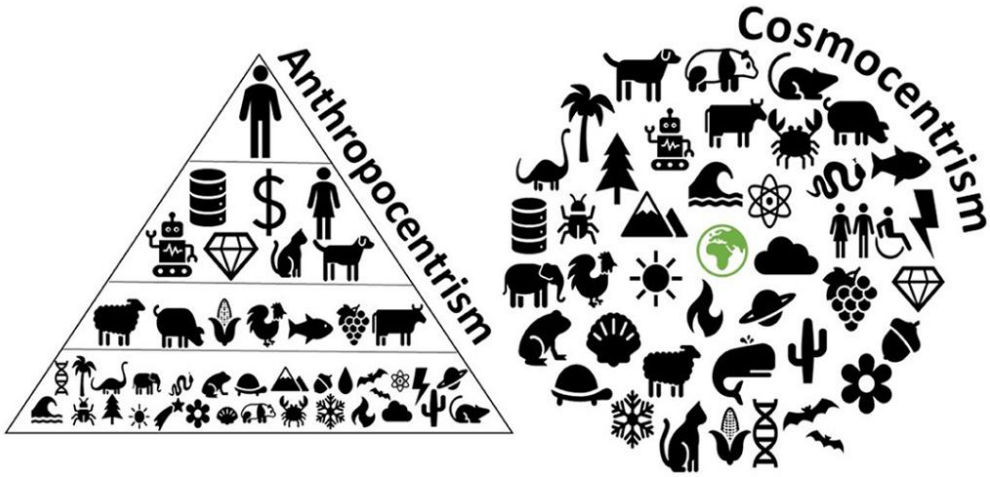


Figure 10.39. The anthropocentric view (humans as the central and most important existence) versus the cosmocentric view (life is built of interrelationships among all beings) is illustrated with symbols. Image description.

Robin Wall Kimmerer is a botanist, author, professor, and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation (Optional: Read more about the Potawatomi Nation [Website].) She adds more insight to this perspective in her book *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*:

> *In the Western tradition there is a recognized hierarchy of beings, with, of course, the human being on top—the pinnacle of evolution, the darling of Creation—and the plants at the bottom. But in Native ways of knowing, human people are often referred to as "the younger brothers of Creation."*
>
> *We say that humans have the least experience with how to live and thus the most to learn —we must look to our teachers among the other species for guidance. Their wisdom is apparent in the way that they live. They teach us by example. They've been on the earth far longer than we have been, and have had time to figure things out (Kimmerer 2103:9).*

Cultural historian Thomas Berry (1914–2009) was integral in introducing the concept of cosmocentrism to the field of conservation. According to his biography, he "urged humans to recognize their place on a planet with complex ecosystems in a vast evolving universe. He sought to replace the modern alienation from nature with a sense of intimacy [with other species] and responsibility [to protect and preserve them]" (The Thomas Berry Foundation, 2024).

Environmental Sustainability

A number of movements evolved from these shifts in ethics and perspective. One is centered around the notion of **environmental sustainability**. At its core, sustainability is a worldview that Indigenous Peoples have lived and practiced for centuries. It's estimated that from around 1000 BC to 1000 CE, Indigenous communities in North America have applied what we now call sustainable agriculture (Minderhout 2009).

Sustainability proponents see the Earth as having limited resources and strive to put limits on human activities (e.g., uncontrolled resource use) that may adversely affect the natural world. A sustainable ethic assumes humans must use and conserve resources in a manner that allows their continued use in the future.

This value system also assumes that we are affected by natural laws and exist as part of the natural world. We suffer when the health of a natural ecosystem is impaired. Therefore, it is best that we live as part of the Earth, share the Earth's resources with other living things, maintain the integrity of natural processes, and cooperate with nature rather than attempting to be managers of it.

Now, outside of Indigenous communities, sustainable and organic methods of farming have become an integral component of many government, commercial, and nonprofit research efforts, and it is beginning to be woven into agricultural policy. A recent

framework for sustainable agriculture is regenerative agriculture, a set of farming and grazing practices that reverse climate change by rebuilding soil organic matter and restoring degraded soil biodiversity. This results in both carbon dioxide removal from the atmosphere and improving the water cycle (figure 10.40). (Optional: Watch this 7-minute video, "What Is Regenerative Agriculture?" [Streaming Video]. What do you hear farmers share about its origins and what it means to them?)



Figure 10.40. Regenerative agriculture, like grazing practices that rebuild soil organic matter, is reversing climate change. (Optional: Watch the video "What Is Regenerative Agriculture?" [Streaming Video] to hear directly from farmers how regenerative agriculture supports humans and the environment.)

Going Deeper

For more information about the Haudenosaunee Confederation [Website], see their website and this 2:38-minute video, "The Haudenosaunee" [Streaming Video].

For more information on the value of restorative practices, read "Climate Healing: Allying with the Ecosystem to Restore Natural Hydrological and Atmospheric Cycles" [Google Doc].



Figure 10.41. *Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis*, "Chapter 4: Dreams" [Podcast]. Transcript.

In this final podcast, Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis, "Chapter 4: Dreams" [Podcast], Ben Cushing reflects on the dreams we have as a society and their consequences (figure 10.41). For example, the American Dream is built in the context of colonial settlement and capitalist exploitation. It has created many of our crises today. The solutions to our problems will have to come from outside the framework of modernity and capitalist Eurocentric culture.The good news is that there are multiple transformative dreams taking root and flourishing. OWS modeled a radically democratic process and invited people to understand themselves and others in another way. Black Lives Matter built networks of local community members and organizations and fostered community

ties. Indigenous-led social movements are focused on being in relation with one another and the earth. In this time of unprecedented crisis, how can we cultivate our capacity to dream for transformation? (Cushing 2021).

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10.7: Environmental Justice Movements

Our environmental circumstances have been influenced by economic, political, and social systems that focus on exponential growth and individualism—or, as we described in the last section, frontier and anthropocentric mindsets. We see the devastating consequences of climate change, from extreme wildfires to deadly hurricanes to health crises. These repercussions are not coincidental; they are related to the ways that we exploit natural resources.

As we described in the Environmental Inequity section, the use and benefits of these resources are unequally distributed. And while all of us will experience the aftermath of climate change, not all people will experience it equally. People of color, especially Black and Indigenous people, and other marginalized communities are often on the frontlines of climate change and experience the highest intensity of its effects.

As progress is being made to improve how we interact with nature, environmental justice movements are growing in potency and scope to address these inequities. **Environmental justice** is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income concerning the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Movements for environmental justice are based on the principles that all people have a right to be protected from environmental issues and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. They are also based on the assumption that environmental problems cannot be solved without unveiling practices that maintain social injustices.

Members of global environmental justice movements represent a multitude of roles and backgrounds. They include academics who have conducted hundreds of studies that demonstrate how exposure to environmental harm is inequitably distributed. They include members of organizations focused on training leaders and empowering activists to make change locally or globally. Often, the aim is to elevate the voices of color, including members of Indigenous communities. This builds more diverse, inclusive movements. It also makes them more effective and fair, as room is made for those who live with the bulk of the environmental impacts to identify ideas for solving them.

Issues that environmental justice actors address include environmental racism and discrimination associated with hazardous waste disposal. They also often work on human rights violations that leaders of companies commit as they remove or manipulate resources. Environmental justice actors will confront corporations involved in land grabs, noting the detriment to health and local economies and the loss of land-based traditions that occur as a result. They also seek to expand the scope of human rights law, which historically has not been able to adequately address the relationship between the environment and human rights.

Environmental Justice in the United States

It is widely recognized that a kickstart to the U.S. Environmental Justice Movement occurred in the early 1980s in North Carolina. In 1978 a local Transformer Company had begun an illegal scheme to dump toxic polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) near an African-American community in Warren County. PCBs are highly toxic and carcinogenic chemicals. Exposure could result in a suppressed immune system and may cause cancer, among other negative health impacts.

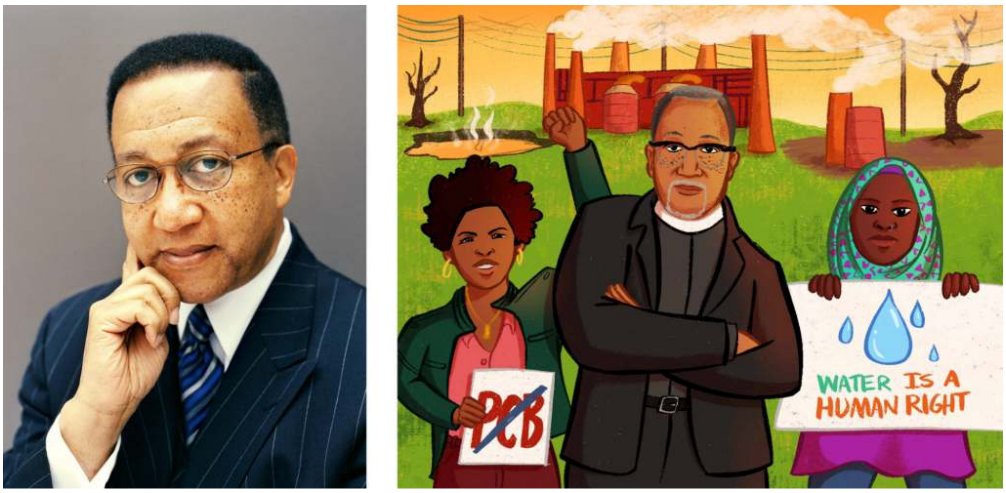


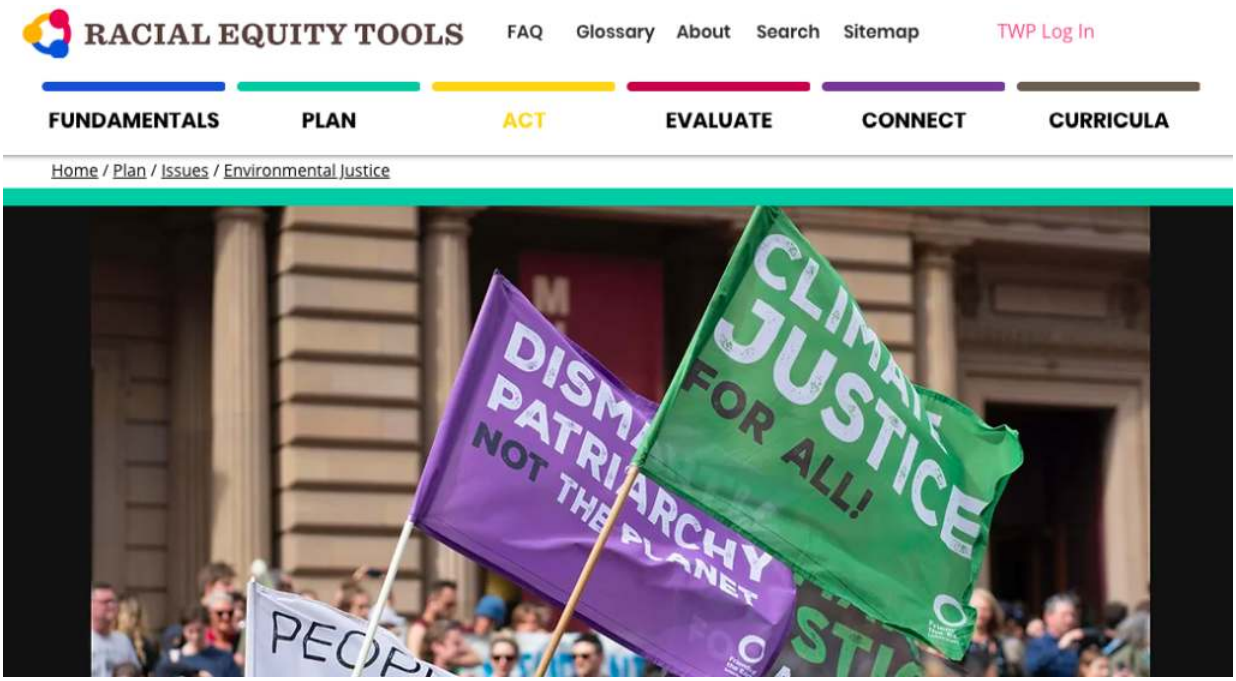
Figure 10.42. Dr. Reverend Ben Chavis played a significant role in the civil rights movement and then became known as the "godfather of the environmental justice movement" (left). *Reverend Ben Chaviz on Environmental Activism* by Keisha Okafor depicts his leadership in organizing a protest against the illegal dumping of toxic chemicals near an African-American community in North Carolina (right).

To avoid the cost of legally disposing of the chemicals, the company's owners discharged the toxic waste along roadsides after dark. They deposited it over a 250-mile stretch across several counties. By 1982, the local community had learned of the dumping and began to protest. Their actions were heavily influenced by the U.S. civil rights movement. They included civil disobedience, and a Baptist church provided a central organizing spot. Leadership in this protest included the Reverend Ben Chavis, who became known in the United States as the "godfather of the environmental justice movement" (Atwater 2022) (figure 10.42).

In 2022, Reverend Chavis spoke at Duke University in North Carolina and shared what developed after the protests:

> *…because over 500 people were arrested 40 years ago in one county—it brought national attention. And because it brought national media attention we discovered that what was going on in Warren County was not isolated. The same thing was happening…in other parts of our nation…*
>
> *So we not only had to allege racial discrimination, we had to prove it statistically. So we ordered the first study—every ZIP code in the United States. And in 1987 we published the report "Toxic Waste and Race in the United States," which was a landmark study that is still referenced today by the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] (Chavis 2022).*

Initially, the U.S. environmental movement focused on cases like Warren County, addressing the harm that toxins create for marginalized racial and ethnic groups. Then, topics expanded to include public health, worker safety, land use, transportation, and other issues. Exports of hazardous waste to the Global South escalated through the 1980s and 1990s and became part of this movement as well.



A good place to get information on issues surrounding environmental justice is the Racial Equity Tools site and the Environmental Justice Page [Website] found there (figure 10.43). Spend a few minutes browsing through the resources and projects there. In what ways do you see researchers, activists, and organizations addressing environmental justice?

Environmental Justice: Global

In many ways, the issues that are addressed by environmental justice advocates in other countries mimic those addressed in the United States. As we've discussed in several chapters of this book, colonization has been a fundamental method for Western countries to establish values across continents. They include the values we've discussed in this chapter that have led to environmental degradation. Colonization is an ongoing process that creates and emphasizes biases, such as environmental racism, sexism, homophobia, and xenophobia. All of these biases intersect with climate-related and resource-use issues.

Currently, just one-fifth of the global population is consuming three-quarters of the Earth's resources. If the remaining four-fifths were to exercise their right to grow to the level of the rich minority, it would result in ecological devastation. So far, global income inequalities and lack of purchasing power have prevented poorer countries from reaching the standard of living (and also resource consumption and waste emission) of the industrialized countries.

Countries such as China, Brazil, India, and Malaysia are, however, catching up fast. In such a situation, global consumption of resources and energy needs to be drastically reduced to a point where it can be repeated by future generations. But who will do the reducing? Poorer nations want to produce and consume more. Yet so do richer countries: their economies demand ever greater consumption-based expansion. Such stalemates have prevented any meaningful progress towards equitable and sustainable resource distribution at the international level. These issues of fairness and distributional justice remain unresolved.

The Environmental Justice Atlas [Website] (figure 10.44) is a tool developed by professors in Spain that documents and catalogs social conflict around environmental issues around the world. It's a resource for teaching, networking, and advocacy around concerns and action related to environmental justice. Take a few minutes to browse the atlas to get an idea of the kinds of environmental conflicts and issues they are tracking.

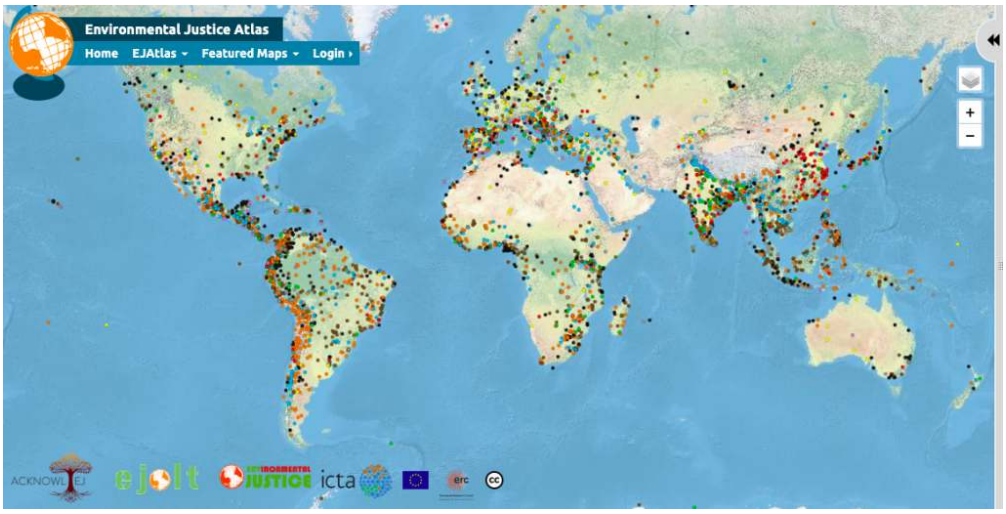


Figure 10.44. Screenshot of the Environmental Justice Atlas [Website]. It documents and catalogs social conflict related to environmental issues around the world.

For example, the map illustrates a conflict in Iran. Members of Iran's government have prioritized dam development near the Hawizeh Marshes, which is negatively affecting Indigenous Peoples who make a living there through fishing and agriculture. This conflict has larger consequences as the effects of the dam include the drying of wetlands, at times affecting a third of the country.

Going Deeper

The U.S. Navy, Hazardous Waste, and Hurricane Katrina in Puerto Rico



Figure 10.45. Islanders of Culebra, Puerto Rico, confront the Navy to protest the island being used as a military testing ground (left). A rusting carcass of an M4 Sherman tank was left behind by the U.S. Navy on a beach on Culebra (right).

The island of Culebra in Puerto Rico was allocated to the U.S. Navy in 1901 to use for test landings and ground maneuvers, then later for bombing practice. Many armaments were moved there, and bombing practice lasted for decades. The U.S. Navy has since deposited many contaminants in the form of exploded and unexploded artillery on beach areas in Puerto Rico.

Locals protested nonviolently with marches and civil disobedience campaigns in the form of sit-ins and blockades, especially when the military attempted to evacuate the entire population in 1970 (figure 10.45 [left]). However, military exercises were also being conducted on the nearby island of Vieques, Puerto Rico. After more years of efforts of social movements and individuals across the political spectrum, the Navy agreed to phase out its use of the island as a testing ground.

After the base was closed, Vieques was designated a Superfund cleanup site. A Superfund site is a location designated by the U.S. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to receive special environmental funding to protect communities from hazardous substances. Environmental groups and residents of Vieques expressed that the Navy caused "more damage than any other single actor in the history of Puerto Rico" (Herbert 2001:23). A 1977 survey by the Puerto Rico Health Department revealed that the cancer rate in Vieques was 27 percent higher than mainland Puerto Rico (Pelet 2016).

In 2021, the U.S. Government Accountability Office reported that the Department of Defense continues to clean the munitions and hazardous substances that have been left in Vieques and Culebra, with significant work still to be done. They estimate that by the time they have completed the cleanup, they will have spent nearly $800 million (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2021).



Figure 10.46. On October 9, 2017, naval aircrewmen and local volunteers unload water as part of relief efforts to Vieques, Puerto Rico. Hurricane Maria devastated the island and its residents, who were already struggling.

In addition to being a case study of social movements, Puerto Rico is a case study of environmental inequity of impact. The island was hit hard by Hurricane Maria in 2017 (figure 10.46). Residents had already been struggling due to crumbling infrastructure; outside investors purchasing property, land, and resources; and less access to opportunities for women (Babic 2022). Poverty in Puerto Rico is high. The 2021 U.S. Census measured the island's poverty rate at 42 percent. In comparison, this is much higher than the U.S. national rate of 13.1 percent ("The United States Census Bureau Quick Facts: Puerto Rico" n.d.).

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10.8: Indigenous-Led Environmental Justice Movements

The environmental justice movement is creating possibilities for some dramatic shifts in perspectives, and action toward addressing global environmental injustice. We are now forced to solve environmental challenges with more global coordination. Priorities include living sustainably with our natural resources, preserving wilderness areas, and maintaining or restoring biodiversity. Those priorities have inevitably led to a focus on the ways of life and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples.

As a result of colonization, Indigenous Peoples make up only 5 percent of the population worldwide. But they manage and support 80 percent of global biodiversity (Raygorodetsky 2018). While the traditions, languages, and beliefs of Indigenous Peoples vary tremendously across the world, there is a common value that is seen in Indigenous cultures: the emphasis on protecting and stewarding of their environments.

For centuries, most Indigenous Peoples across the world have been stewarding the land of their ancestors while simultaneously creating complicated and developed cultures, civilizations, and traditions. These societies and ways of life coexisted and continue to coexist with the natural world around them. As a result, many Indigenous cultures have intimate connections to the land, water, and ecosystems they live with. They prioritize the ability for future generations to live in prosperity, preserving their cultures and traditions. This leads to a deep understanding of their environment and their own impacts on the systems that they rely on.

At the same time, as we discussed in Chapter 1, Indigenous Peoples are often impacted by climate change and harmful environmental actions more profoundly. Today there are thousands of resistance mobilizations led by Indigenous people to protect the ecosystems where they reside.

In response, many organizations recognize that an effective way of actualizing environmental justice is to support the many Indigenous-led environmental justice movements that exist today. For example, the organization Amazon Watch supports and promotes Indigenous-led alternative solutions to climate change, natural resource extraction, and industrial development.

Watch the 1:53-minute video "Achuar of Peruvian Amazon Say NO to GeoPark" [Streaming Video] (figure 10.47). It describes the leadership of the Achuar people in Ecuador as they stand up to the extraction of oil in their territory and how Amazon Watch is getting involved. What do you notice about the values around well-being that the Achuar express?



Figure 10.47. "Achuar of Peruvian Amazon Say NO to GeoPark" [Streaming Video]. Transcript.

As the Achuar take the lead in defending the health of their environment, and as they are supported by Amazon Watch, they have a better chance of remaining on their territory. If they can remain in their territory, they can maintain their ways of life: ones that provide for their health and well-being in ways that are meaningful to them.

Initiatives like these exist throughout the world, with regional and global coalitions organizing rapidly. As Indigenous land rights are protected, it also gives Indigenous Peoples a platform to share their values of living as stewards of the natural world.

Participants in these movements are making crucial shifts in institutions such as education, politics, law, and the market system. Let's look at four main ideas to illustrate the transformative nature of Indigenous-led environmental justice movements. They can be categorized as values, knowledge, rights, and action.

Values

Indigenous communities are increasingly voicing their values around living as part of nature's living systems. As they do, they are sparking shifts in how we think and shape many of our systems. Those shifts include questioning how our global economy operates and the ways we are encouraging development. They include re-evaluating dominant meanings attached to development, such as progress, poverty, and well-being. As Indigenous-led environmental justice movements advance, these values become woven into the priorities of social institutions (figure 10.48).



Figure 10.48. Participants in a meeting during a session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, 2006. While there's much work to be done toward granting equal access to political spaces for Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous-led environmental movements have played an important role in global environmental politics.

Professor Kyle Whyte, a member of the Potawatomi Nation, explains that Indigenous-led environmental movements have played an important role in global environmental politics. (Optional: Read more about the Potawatomi Nation [Website].) They "open important intellectual spaces for thinking about the function of environmental governance institutions in addressing complex environmental issues." They provide an alternate perspective on how institutions should be run in relation to nature.

Instead of basing decisions on market interests, such as the sale of timber, they encourage that institutions function to reflect the "reciprocal responsibilities across relatives as diverse as humans, non-human beings such as plants, entities such as water, and collectives such as forests" (Whyte 2016).

For example, the government of Australia is required by law to produce a "State of the Environment Report." It is designed to help shape environmental policy and action and influence behaviors. The 2021 report was created in partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and Indigenous voices are prominent throughout. In one section, the authors explain how they value heritage:

> *Australia's heritage tells our story and is irreplaceable. Our heritage is those aspects of the natural and cultural environment that we wish to look after and pass on to future generations. This means that decisions that might damage or destroy Australia's heritage need to be made with the greatest of care and with a clear understanding of their impact (McConnell 2021b).*

Natural heritage includes significant landforms and features, and significant plant and animal populations and habitats. Cultural heritage can be data collected from Indigenous communities, songs, stories, rituals, visual art, dance, knowledge of traditional food and medicine, or environmental and ecological knowledge (McConnell 2021a; "Cultural Heritage in Australia." n.d.). The

contribution brought forth by the Indigenous partners in the drafting of Australia's "State of the Environment Report" points to the value of protecting both natural and cultural heritage.

Knowledge

As Indigenous Peoples coexist intimately with the natural world around them and determinedly pass knowledge through generations, they obtain deep knowledge of ecological systems. As a result, Indigenous communities are uniquely equipped to understand the impacts of climate change, and they are especially prepared to forge solutions.



Figure 10.49. Faced with rising seas and increased salinity of their farming areas, members of the Guna communities are finding solutions to mitigate the effects of global warming. (Optional: To hear more from Guna people about their experiences, watch the 4-minute video "Between the Forest and the Sea, Pt. 1: Life and Climate Change in Guna Yala" [Streaming Video]. Parts 2 and 3 of this series are linked in the Going Deeper section.)

For example, in Panama, members of the Bundorgan Women's Network have used their ancestral knowledge to reduce soil salinity. They are members of the Indigenous Guna community and understand clearly that too much saline in soil destabilizes its chemical balance, decreasing the production of most crops. Soil salinity is a major problem in coastal areas where they live, and it is becoming exacerbated as seas rise due to planetary warming (figure 10.49). Members of the network created a solution that included cultivating eucalyptus and planting them in conjunction with medicinal plants (Athar 2023). (Optional: Read more about the Guna [or Kuna] people [Website].)

This soil restoration project exemplifies the actions of a widespread Indigenous-led environmental justice movement focused on Indigenous food system restoration. Indigenous people have always valued their ancestral foods. Their food systems have been in place over countless generations, in some cases for millennia, and have supported relatively dense populations, especially along the Northwest Coast of North America (Suttles 1990).

Complex social and ceremonial systems were developed over time, helping to assure equitable distribution of food, as well as sustaining and enhancing the food species and their habitats (Ksan, People of 1980; Atleo 2004; Deur and Turner 2005; Turner et al. 2013b; Joseph 2020). Potlatches are an example of a ceremonial complex in which the serving and distribution of nutritious, culturally valued food has always been a central element (Brown and Brown 2009).

However, their access to ancestral foods has not always been easy or available. The arrival of Europeans in the region, beginning in the late 1700s, initiated significant changes in the lifeways of First Nations, including the introduction of new foods. Soon, colonial forces instigated a systematic dismantling of Indigenous Peoples' food systems through banning access to important cultivation and harvesting landscapes, imposing restrictions on fishing practices and on landscape burning to maintain particular habitats, privatizing land, and, ultimately, through food-related abuses carried out through residential schools and Indian hospitals (Turner and Turner 2008).

These actions were similar to those experienced by Indigenous Peoples worldwide as their homelands were taken over by colonial forces. The new wage economy impacted Indigenous seasonal harvesting rounds and resulted in the loss of learning opportunities for children and youth (Thomas et al. 2016). The decline in harvesting and use of Indigenous foods, both regionally and worldwide (Kuhnlein et al. 2009), has been generally detrimental to people's health and has also resulted in significant cultural losses (Turner et al. 2008a).

The targeting and appropriation of Indigenous foods created what Simpson (2017) calls an "imposed poverty," where culturally important foods exist but are either not accessible to Indigenous Peoples or are being commercially exploited, raising their monetary value to the point where Indigenous people are unable to afford their own ancestral foods.

The health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples throughout the world, including their ability to access healthy Indigenous food, is not only a recognized right, it is essential to their lives. As Kwakwaka'wakw cultural expert Kim Recalma-Clutesi (pers. comm. to NT 2002) stated, "It's very hard to practice the culture accurately and properly without proper food… we are not going to survive as a People if we do not have access [to traditional foods]. Our bodies have not adapted yet to this new food… the culture and the food are linked hand in hand."

Over the last few decades, there have been many initiatives throughout the region to restore and revitalize these original foods, and to re-learn Indigenous methods of processing and harvesting them. These initiatives are often connected with language revitalization and cultural resurgence programs. Led by Indigenous communities, they are undertaken with the support of academic, government, and other partners. In all, they have resulted in stronger, more vibrant cultures and generally healthier communities.

Authors Swiderska and Ryan point out two more benefits of indigenous food systems restoration. First, our western and modern farming systems contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, as well as the degradation of water and soil, making agricultural production difficult to sustain. The foundations of our food source under this system are increasingly vulnerable to climate change as air and water temperatures rise, as sea levels rise, and rainfall patterns shift. Second, as control of modern agricultural production is primarily held by a few large corporations, our modern food systems are very inequitable (2020).



Figure 10.50. A farmer and children in the Potato Park, Peru. The Potato Park—a Quechua biocultural heritage territory—donated a ton of potatoes to people in need in Cusco City during the COVID-19 crisis.

In comparison, the food systems of the world's 476 million Indigenous People are highly productive, sustainable, and equitable. They preserve rich biodiversity and are low carbon emitters. Many Indigenous People are reviving their agroecological food systems because they are more resilient to climate change and provide more nutritious diets than modern food systems. Quechua communities in the high Andes are able to ensure food security despite climate change and sustain exceptionally high potato diversity. This is due to their ancestral values of reciprocity, solidarity, and maintaining balance (both in society and with nature) (Swiderska and Ryan) (figure 10.50).

Research by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has shown that Indigenous food systems are already achieving zero hunger for many Indigenous Peoples (Kuhnlein et al. 2013). As indigenous food systems are restored, and as they are built from a worldview that considers generations to come, they are better equipped to ensure food security.

Rights and Action

There are challenges to the survival of Indigenous Peoples' food systems. Swiderska and Ryan note some key examples. In northern Thailand, Indigenous Karen farmers risk imprisonment for their practice of rotational farming. (Optional: Read more about the Karen people [Website].) In Northeast India, Lepcha people are subject to policies that restrict their use of ancestral forests. (Optional: Read more about the Lepcha people [Website].)

Due to land sales, pastoralists in Chad are becoming displaced from their territories that have traditionally served their highly resilient and biodiverse food systems. The essential food culture surrounding hunting and fishing in Russia's Arctic region has been almost destroyed due to industrial development (2020).

Indigenous rights are threatened beyond those related to practicing their food systems. Due to their direct reliance on nature to survive and their spiritual connection to lands, most Indigenous Peoples are especially threatened by environmental degradation. As they are displaced due to land grabs, their ways of life, cultures, and languages are under threat. Social cohesion is extremely difficult to maintain among these communitie,s already experiencing marginalization and racial discrimination.

As the Chapter Story of the Maasai introduced, the conservation movement has also been damaging to Indigenous Peoples. Professor Kyle Whyte relays that national parks, ecological restoration projects, and conservation zones have all created violations in the form of forced displacement of Indigenous communities, economic marginalization, or denial of their cultural and political rights. "Almost every environmental achievement in the United States—such as the Clean Air or Clean Water acts—has required Indigenous Peoples to work hard to reform these laws to gain fair access to the protections" (Whyte 2018).



Figure 10.51. This horseback rider observes the Standing Rock Sioux camp in protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2016. The grassroots power generated by the Standing Rock camps turned the tide in favor of the Tribe for a time period. In 2016, under the Obama administration, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers effectively denied the pipeline's water permits and began the environmental review that the Tribe was seeking.

Indigenous-led movements respond to all these circumstances and violations. As Indigenous Peoples are largely left out of policy discussions, key to most of these movements is insisting that governments uphold or expand treaty responsibilities. Indigenous activists also organize for Indigenous rights in politics and law, or through direct action, resisting destructive development, pollution, or extraction projects.

One good example is the #NoDAPL movement we introduced in Chapter 7 that opposed the Dakota Access Pipeline (figure 10.51). In legal challenges and public demonstrations, members of the Tribe and their supporters have argued that they were not adequately consulted about the route. Running the pipeline under a Missouri River reservoir called Lake Oahe, members say, would jeopardize

the primary water source for the reservation, and construction would further damage sacred sites near the lake, violating Tribal treaty rights. NoDAPL paved the way for many contemporary Indigenous resistance movements in North America.



Figure 10.52. This image from the web page of the National Association of Indigenous Women Ancestral Warriors [Website] gives notice of the Third March of Indigenous Women: Biome Women in Defense of Biodiversity through Ancestral Roots held in Brazil in 2023.

Another example of an organization related to Indigenous-led environmental movements is the National Association of Indigenous Women Ancestral Warriors. They are an association of Indigenous women from all over Brazil who organize to guarantee Indigenous rights. In 2023, they hosted the Third March of Indigenous Women: Biome Women in Defense of Biodiversity through Ancestral Roots (figure 10.52). Part of their manifesto reads:

> *We, Indigenous Women, are in many struggles at national and international level. We are seeds planted through our songs for social justice, for the demarcation of territory, for the standing forest, for health, for education, to contain climate change and for the 'Healing of the Earth.' Our voices have already broken silences imputed to us since the invasion of our territory (Manifesto of the First Brazilian Women n.d.).*

Indigenous Peoples tend to reside in territories that are coveted for their natural resources. As a result, they are targeted for harassment and killing by people with economic interests (often miners and loggers operating illegally). Sometimes those actors have the support of members of the government. Making matters worse, Indigenous Peoples often reside in remote areas with little legal oversight or law enforcement to prevent or prosecute human rights violations.

As they stand up for the rights of nature and for their own rights, Indigenous Peoples become even more vulnerable to violations. The London-based NGO Global Witness released a report in 2021 revealing that at least 1,733 murders of environmental and land-defense activists had occurred in the decade since 2012. That equates to about one murder every two days (Hines 2022).

All of these issues apply to the practice of environmental justice, and they are further exacerbated due to climate change. Indigenous knowledge, the protection of Indigenous rights, and the defense of natural ecosystems are integrally connected. Therefore, Indigenous-led environmental movements, as they center the struggles and values of Indigenous Peoples, are crucial for creating a world that is environmentally just.

Going Deeper

To read more about Professor Kyle Whyte's perspective on decolonizing the environmental movement, read "White Allies, Let's Be Honest About Decolonization" [Website].

To learn more about Indigenous knowledge and climate change, read "To Share or Not to Share? Tribes Risk Exploitation When Sharing Climate Change Solutions" [Website].

To hear more from Guna people about their experiences with climate change, watch these videos:

- "Between the Forest and the Sea, Pt. 1: Life and Climate Change in Guna Yala" [Streaming Video] (previously listed in this chapter).
- "Between the Forest and the Sea, Pt. 2: The Yarsuisuit Collective" [Streaming Video].
- "Between the Forest and the Sea, Pt. 3: Passing Down Traditions" [Streaming Video].

To learn more about Indigenous food sovereignty, read "HARVESTING Is an Act of Indigenous Food Sovereignty" [Website].

To read more about Indigenous struggles mentioned in this chapter, follow these links:

- Deforestation [Website]
- Anti-fossil fuel extraction [Website]
- Food sovereignty [Website]
- Language revitalization [Website]
- Land rematriation [Website]

See Australia's entire "State of the Environment Report" [Website] to read how the Indigenous perspective was included.

For more information on Indigenous food systems, see the report "Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems and Well-Being" [Website].

To read about other Indigenous-led environmental justice projects, watch these 2-minute videos: "Conselho Indígena de Roraima (Brasil), Climate Change Adaptation, Equator Prize 2019 Spotlight" [Streaming Video] and "Comunidades Nativas de Nuevo Saposoa y Patria Nueva de Mediación Calleria (Peru), Equator Prize 2019" [Streaming Video].

For more information on land and environmental activism worldwide, see this report by Global Witness [Website].

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Figure 10.51. horseback rider observes a Standing Rock Sioux camp is on Flickr and licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.

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Figure 5.47. “Achuar of Peruvian Amazon Say NO to GeoPark” by AmazonWatch is licensed under the Standard YouTube License.

Figure 10.52. Image of the Third March of Indigenous Women: Ancestral Women: Healing Minds for the Healing of the Earth is a screenshot from the web page of National Association of Indigenous Women Ancestral Warriors and is included here under fair use.

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10.9: Making Connections- Regeneration and Collaboration

Let's make some connections between sustainability, regenerative agriculture (both covered in this chapter), and environmental sociology, covered in Chapter 2. Environmental sociology acknowledges that environment and society can only be understood in relation to each other (McCarthy and King 2009:1). This area of sociology also acknowledges that people are responsible for the world's environmental problems. Therefore, we have both the ability and the responsibility to address them. The sustainability movement emerged as an expression of that responsibility, and regenerative agriculture is one activity of that movement.

As we explored in the previous section, Indigenous worldviews have always acknowledged our environmental responsibility. The "modern" concepts of sustainability and regenerative agriculture are simply the ways that Indigenous systems have operated for millennia. But Indigenous belief systems take an understanding of our relationship with nature further. They express an intimate, interconnected worldview that allows humans to carry out our ecological role as part of the whole. As Tania Roa describes in the Chapter Story:

> *Because we are only one species of many on this planet, we cannot carry natural cycles on our own. And so we know that we have to connect with other species to carry out the balance of earth's ecosystem ("How to Protect People and Planet" 2023).*

Watch the 5-minute video from Tania Roa (figure 10.53) to hear more from her about our ecological role, projects that are demonstrating this role, and how we can participate. She introduces the ecosystem restoration movement, which aims to prevent, halt, and reverse the degradation of ecosystems.

Roa also introduces some very recent examples from Colombia. It's a country challenged by ecological changes, like rapidly increasing deforestation, but it hosts an extraordinarily committed civil society working to address them. As you watch, consider: Why is eco-restoration an important strategy for our environmental concerns? How might eco-restoration address climate injustice?



Figure 10.53. In "Tania Roa, Climate Justice Advocate" [Streaming Video], Tania shared ideas about our ecological role as humans, the ecosystem restoration movement, and people and projects in Colombia working toward eco restoration. Transcript.

Licenses and Attributions for Making Connections: Regeneration and Collaboration

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Figure 10.53. Tania Roa, Climate Justice Advocate by Aimee Krouskop is licensed CC BY 4.0.

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10.10: Conclusion

Social movements reflect responses to a myriad of social problems. This chapter first provided a broad introduction to social movements in the United States and how sociologists examine them. We turned our focus to some specific social problems related to our increasing ecological challenges, such as environmental racism and environmental inequity. Then we examined the worldviews and actions that are currently shaping environmental social movements.

Figure 10.54 gives a summary of that discussion. There, you can see the current, dominant, worldviews and the worldviews that members of social-environmental movements encourage us to develop. They encourage us to replace an "ego" mindset with an "eco" mindset. They encourage us to replace frontier ethics with a sustainability worldview. Added to figure 10.54 is the anthropocentric view of life that was introduced in Chapter 9, which is encouraged to be replaced by a cosmocentric worldview. There are similarities among these calls for shifts in worldview. How would you describe the similarities that you see?



Figure 10.54. Review the perspectives represented in this figure: Manifest Destiny (Figure 10.37), anthropocentrism vs cosmocentrism (figure 10.39), and Tania Roa's video (figure 10.2).

Finally, we took a close look at Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous-led environmental protection movements. Indigenous knowledge has greatly influenced the development of the Encouraged worldviews in figure 10.55. Indigenous-led environmental movements are protecting the natural world and, in turn, Indigenous ways of life that support human existence as environmental changes advance.

Current worldview		**Encouraged worldview**
frontier ethic: assumes that the earth has an unlimited supply of resources. If resources run out in one area, more can be found elsewhere or alternatively human ingenuity will find substitutes.	→	*sustainability:* living within the means of the earth without significantly impairing its function.
ego mindset: allows us to create hierarchies whether between humans and other species or humans and other humans	→	*eco mindset:* we see ourselves as part of a whole
Anthropocentric mindset: the belief that humans are the central and most important existence in the universe.	→	*Cosmo-centric mindset:* holds in highest importance the universe or nature, and sees all in existence as connected in equilibrium.

Figure 10.55. Current worldviews are problematic for health ecosystems and societies. Worldviews that are encouraged by sectors of the social-environmental movement include sustainability, an eco mindset, and a cosmocentric mindset. Image description.

Review of Learning Outcomes

This chapter has offered you the opportunity to:

1. Explain how sociologists identify the types and stages of social movements.
2. Discuss sociological perspectives on social movements.
3. Describe how environmental changes and our responses to those changes exacerbate inequity.

4. Examine how environmental movements reshape perspectives and improve lived experiences for members of societies.
5. Illustrate how environmental justice movements correct injustice and support social and environmental resilience.
6. Explain the role and importance of Indigenous-led environmental movements in environmental justice.

Key Terms

alternative movements: the mobilization of large numbers of people focused on self-improvement and limited, specific changes to individual beliefs and behavior.

biocentrism: a philosophy that extends equal and inherent value to all living beings.

bureaucratization stage: a phase of social movements when the movement no longer requires grassroots volunteerism: it is an established organization, typically with a paid staff.

coalescence stage: a phase of social movements when people join together and organize to publicize the issue and raise awareness.

decline stage: a phase of social movements when people fall away and adopt a new movement, the movement successfully brings about the change it sought, or people no longer take the issue seriously.

emergence stage: a phase of social movements when people become aware of an issue and leaders emerge.

environmental inequity: the fact that low-income people and people of color are disproportionately likely to experience the impacts of environmental problems.

environmental justice: the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income concerning the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

environmental racism: a form of systemic racism created by policies and practices that deliberately target communities of color for residence in areas more vulnerable to disaster. It also includes the targeting of those residences for toxic waste disposal and the location of polluting industries.

environmental sustainability: the sociopolitical, scientific, and cultural practice of living within the means of the Earth without significantly impairing its function. Additionally, the conservation of natural resources and protection of global ecosystems are crucial for supporting health and wellbeing.

frontier ethic: a worldview that assumes that the earth has an unlimited supply of resources. If resources run out in one area, more can be found elsewhere, or alternatively, human ingenuity will find substitutes.

redemptive movements: mobilization of large numbers of people who are “meaning-seeking.” Their goal is to provoke inner change or spiritual growth in individuals.

reform movements: mobilization of large numbers of people who seek to change something specific about the social structure.

resistance movements: mobilization of large numbers of people that seek to prevent or undo change to the social structure.

resource mobilization theory: a perspective that explains movement success in terms of the ability to acquire resources and mobilize individuals.

revolutionary movements: mobilization of large numbers of people that seek to completely change every aspect of society.

Comprehension Check

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/socialchange1e/?p=835#h5p-10

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Figure 10.55. “Current Worldview and Encouraged Worldview” by Aimee Samara Krouskop is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Key terms, resource mobilization theory and revolutionary movements are taken from “Key Terms” in “Introduction to Social Movements and Social Change” of Introduction to Sociology 3e.

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Glossary

1 percent | the people at the top of the income and wealth distributions in the world

90/10 income inequality ratio | the wage or salary income earned by individuals earning more than 90 percent of other workers, compared to the earnings of workers earning higher than the bottom 10 percent.

achievement gap | any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between groups of students with different social locations.

agency | the capacity to actively and independently choose and to affect change

agents of socialization | the significant individuals, groups, or institutions that influence our sense of self and the behaviors, norms, and values that help us function in society.

alternative movements | the mobilization of large numbers of people focused on self-improvement and limited, specific changes to individual beliefs and behavior.

anarchism | a philosophical and political tradition advocating the abolition of all or most forms of hierarchy, including the state.

anthropocene | the most recent geological epoch of time, beginning around the industrial revolution, in which humans have fundamentally transformed the living systems of the Earth.

anthropocentrism | the worldview that makes humans central to decisions about ethics and daily life. It is built from the belief that humans are the most important existence in the universe.

apartheid | a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race

assembly line | a way for employers to increase economic efficiency by breaking the production process down to a series of small actions performed repetitively by workers.

banking model of education | a critical term for a type of education in which "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (Freire 1970).

biocentrism | a philosophy that extends equal and inherent value to all living beings.

Buen Vivir | a set of ethics that balance quality of life, democracy, giving inherent value to all living things, and collective well-being.

bureaucratization stage | a phase of social movements when the movement no longer requires grassroots volunteerism: it is an established organization, typically with a paid staff.

calling | a Christian concept for work that is assigned to a person by God and that provides meaning and purpose to a person's life.

capitalism | a type of economic and social system in which private businesses or corporations compete for profit. Goods, services, and many beings are defined as private property, and people sell their labor on the market for a wage.

civil society | the communities, groups, and organizations that function outside of government to provide support and advocacy for certain people or issues in society.

civilization mission | a perspective that frames colonized people as backward and in need of some "superior" society to intervene to improve their lives.

class conflict | the structural antagonisms built into economic relationships.

coalescence stage | a phase of social movements when people join together and organize to publicize the issue and raise awareness.

colonialism | the military, economic, and ideological conquest of one society by another. It results in one society settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area.

colonies of rule | colonies governed by a relatively small population of colonial administrators, usually for the purpose of extracting resources and wealth.

colonies of settlement | colonies in which the colonial power sends a large number of its domestic population to settle the colony, thus displacing the Indigenous population.

colonization | the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area.

communism | a philosophical and economic ideology within the socialist framework that advocates for public rather than private ownership, especially of the means of production.

community | a group of people that share relationships, experiences, and a sense of meaning and belonging.

community accountability | a community-based strategy, rather than a police/prison-based strategy, to address violence within communities.

community cultural wealth | "the interdependent overlapping forms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and networks possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist racism and other forms of subordination"

credentialism | the assumption of social superiority or inferiority based on formal educational attainment.

cultural capital | the cultural knowledge and items that help one navigate a society.

cultural hegemony | "dominance of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class that shapes the culture of that society …so that the worldview of the ruling class becomes the accepted cultural norm."

cultural lag | the period of time between the introduction of new technological developments into a culture or society and the acceptance of the developments by institutions.

cultural universal | concepts, ideas, or patterns of behavior that are common to all human cultures.

culturally responsive education | "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes."

culture | the shared beliefs, values, and practices in a group or society. It includes symbols, language, and artifacts.

de facto segregation | segregation that occurs without laws but because of other social influences.

debt regime | a system of global governance which empowers wealthy countries, through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, to impose economic and social policies on indebted nations.

decline stage | a phase of social movements when people fall away and adopt a new movement, the movement successfully brings about the change it sought, or when people no longer take the issue seriously.

decolonization | "the mechanism that will allow for restoration and conciliation of colonized groups who have had their power stolen."

decolonization of knowledge | the process of examining and undoing colonial ideologies that frame Western thought and practices as superior.

decolonizing education | the process of confronting and challenging the colonizing practices that have influenced education in the past, and which are still present today.

democracy | a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives.

Digital Divide | uneven access to technology due to inequalities between different social, cultural, and economic groups; often caused by location.

doughnut economics | an economic model that balances essential human needs with planetary boundaries.

economy | a system for the production, distribution, and consumption of the goods and services within a society.

education debt | the cumulative impact of directing social-political harm toward students of color, including allotting fewer resources toward their education.

emergence stage | a phase of social movements when people become aware of an issue and leaders emerge.

enculturation | the gradual process of an individual or group adapting to the norms and values of a culture in which they are immersed

environmental inequity | the fact that low-income people and people of color are disproportionately likely to experience various environmental problems.

environmental justice | the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, concerning the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

environmental racism | a form of systemic racism created by policies and practices that disproportionately force communities of color to live near toxic waste and airborne matter, burdening them with health hazards.

environmental sociology | the study of the interaction between human behavior and the natural and physical environment.

environmental sustainability | the sociopolitical, scientific, and cultural practice of living within the means of the Earth without significantly impairing its function. Also: the conservation of natural resources and protection of global ecosystems to support health and wellbeing.

equilibrium model of social change | the observation that society is always in a natural state of equilibrium, defined as a state of equal balance among opposing forces.

equity lens | recognition that we do not all receive the same power and resources in society. This informs action to identify and dismantle systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

Eurocentrism | a worldview, mindset, or communication that centers white European ways of knowing as sole, central, or superior to all others.

fair trade | a movement and alternative way of trading goods that emerged to respond to the negative economic effects of globalization on people in poorer nations. It means buying goods at a fair price from people who produce them.

feminist theology | the study of the nature of God and religious belief which centers the religious and spiritual experiences of women.

feminization of poverty | the longstanding trend in almost all societies, for women to have higher rates of poverty than men.

forced cultural assimilation | a process by which a community with a dominant culture forces members of other groups to adopt their language, national identity, norms, customs, values, ideology, and way of life.

foreign assistance | aid given by a national government to countries in need.

frontier ethic | a worldview that assumes that the earth has an unlimited supply of resources. If resources run out in one area, more can be found elsewhere or alternatively, human ingenuity will find substitutes.

fundamentalism | A religious movement that requires a strict and typically literal interpretation of core texts and adherence to traditional beliefs, doctrines, and rituals.

gender based violence | violence directed against a person because of his or her gender and expectations of his or her role in a society or culture.

general strike | a strike of all workers within a society, not just the workers at one workplace or in one industry.

genocide | the systematic and widespread extermination of a cultural, ethnic, political, racial, or religious group.

Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) | a tool that holistically measures our collective, socioeconomic welfare by including overlooked social and environmental costs and benefits to economic activity.

global stratification | the unequal distribution of economic and social resources among the world's countries.

globalization | the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations due to cross-national exchanges of goods and services, technology, investments, people, ideas, and information.

government | the institution by which a society organizes itself and allocates authority to accomplish collective goals and provide benefits that a society needs.

Green Revolution | an initiative to increase the global food supply and reduce world hunger by the use of chemicals and engineered crop varieties.

gross domestic product (GDP) | the total value of all goods and services produced by a nation's citizens.

Gross National Happiness (GNH) | a philosophy that guides the government of Bhutan. It includes an index used to measure the collective happiness and well-being of a population.

gross national income (GNI) | the total amount of money earned by a nation's people and businesses. It is used to measure and track a nation's wealth from year to year.

health | the extent of a person's physical, mental, and social well-being.

healthcare | the system of norms, rules, and organizations established to provide medical services.

hidden curriculum | the implicit social and cultural expectations, designed by dominant culture, that inform the educational process.

historical materialism | a perspective that emphasizes the economy in explaining just about everything in society, and sees economic class conflicts as main drivers of social change and progress.

holiness code | a set of core laws or principles that define the key ideas for that organization.

human capital flight | emigration of highly trained or intelligent people from a particular country.

Human Development Index (HDI) | a measure that combines a nation's GDP with many other important quality of life considerations such as life expectancy, security, literacy, and the effects of environmental degradation people experience.

humanitarian aid | aid to alleviate suffering and mitigate the effects of disaster provided by governments and non-governmental organizations for a short-term period until longer-term help can be provided by local governments or other institutions.

imperialism | the practice of a nation forcefully imposing its rule or authority over other nations

inclusion | the laws and practices that requires disabled students be included in mainstream classes - not separate rooms or schools.

indigenization | a process of making Indigenous knowledge systems evident, prevalent, and available.

inequity | differences in access to resources or opportunity between groups that are the result of treatment by a more powerful group; this creates circumstances that are unnecessary, avoidable, and unfair.

institutionalized violence | a form of violence in which some social structure or social institution may harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs.

institutions | large-scale social arrangement that is stable and predictable, created and maintained to serve the needs of society.

international development | the government agencies, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic private businesses, individuals, and their actions, working to address poverty and inequality at a global scale.

International Poverty Line | the amount of money a person needs to consume or earn per day to avoid living in extreme poverty.

intersectionality | the idea that inequalities produced by multiple and interconnected social characteristics can influence the life of an individual or group. This suggests that we should view gender, race, class, or sexuality not as individual characteristics but as interconnected social situations.

interspirituality | the idea that beneath the diversity of theological beliefs, rites, and observances lies a deeper unity of experience that is our shared spiritual heritage.

land grabs | land acquisitions that are in violation of human rights, without prior consent of the preexisting land users, and with no consideration of the social and environmental impacts.

liberation theology movement | a religious movement that combines Christian principles with political activism to enact social change.

life expectancy | a statistical estimate based on averages, of the number of years a person can expect to live in a certain region.

localization | a process of decentralization—shifting economic activity into the hands of millions of small and medium-sized businesses instead of concentrating it in mega-corporations.

measures | figures, extents, or amounts of phenomena that we are investigating.

medical sociology | the study of how humans manage issues of health and illness, disease and disorders, and healthcare for both the sick and the healthy.

modernization | a complex set of changes that take place in societies that move from traditional to modern practices as their economies become industrialized.

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) | an indicator which measures severe poverty across low-income countries with three dimensions: health, education, and standard of living.

neocolonialism | a newer form of colonialism in which colonial powers maintain their economic and political dominance over former colonies through debt, trade agreements and corporate influence but without formal political control.

neoliberalism | a political and economic ideology that emphasizes free trade, benefits of globalization, and a minimal government role in the economy, including spending.

normalization | a process that constructs specific behaviors, presentations, and ideas as the idealized norm through correction.

norms | the informal rules that govern behavior in groups and societies.

oppression | the systemic and extensive nature of social inequity and harm woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness.

patriarchy | a society, system, or group in which men dominate women and have the power and authority.

Protestant ethic | a set of cultural and religious beliefs that value hard work, thrift, and efficiency in one's worldly calling. It was theorized by Max Weber to have laid the groundwork for the rise of capitalism in modern Western society.

racial bias | preconceived beliefs, attitudes, and expectations about racial group members.

redemptive movements | mobilization of large numbers of people who are "meaning-seeking." Their goal is to provoke inner change or spiritual growth in individuals.

redlining | the discriminatory practice of refusing loans to creditworthy applicants in neighborhoods that banks deem undesirable.

reform movements | mobilization of large numbers of people who seek to change something specific about the social structure.

religion | a communally organized and persistent set of beliefs, practices, and relationships that meet social needs and organizes social life.

religious syncretism | the process by which the beliefs and practices of one religion are fused with or assimilated into another spiritual belief system.

resistance movements | mobilization of large numbers of people that seek to prevent or undo change to the social structure.

resource mobilization theory | a perspective that explains social movements' success in terms of their ability to acquire resources and mobilize individuals (3e)

revolutionary movements | mobilization of large numbers of people that seek to completely change every aspect of society.

roles | patterns of behavior that we recognize in each other that are representative of a person's social status.

segregation | the physical separation of two groups, particularly in residence, but also in workplace and social functions.

social capital | the social networks or connections that an individual has available to them due to group membership.

social change | the way human interactions and relationships transform cultural and social institutions over time.

social class | the set of people who share similar social circumstances based on factors like wealth, income, education, family background, and occupation.

social control | a way to regulate, enforce, and encourage conformity to norms both formally and informally.

social facts | the laws, morals, values, religious beliefs, customs, fashions, rituals, and cultural rules that govern social life.

social identity | the set of characteristics by which a person is recognizable or known by the society in which they live.

social inequality | the unequal distribution of valued resources, rewards, and positions in societies.

social justice | a state where "everyone has fair access to the resources and opportunities to develop their full capacities, and everyone is welcome to participate democratically with others to mutually shape social policies and institutions that govern civic life."

social location | the social position an individual holds within their society. It is based upon social characteristics of social class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, and religion and other characteristics that society deems important.

social mobility | an individual's or group's (e.g., family) movement through the class hierarchy due to changes in income, occupation, or wealth.

social movements | the mobilization of large numbers of people to work together to achieve a social goal or address a social problem.

social status | the rank, honor, or prestige attached to one's position in society or a group.

social stratification | the categorization of its people into rankings based on factors of power, access and resources, (such as wealth, income, education, or occupation) as well as social identities (like, race, ethnicity, or gender).

social structure | the complex and stable framework of society that influences all individuals or groups. This influence occurs through the relationship between institutions and social practices.

socialism | an economic system in which the means of production and natural resources are collectively owned, usually controlled by the government.

socialization | the lifelong process of an individual or group learning the expected norms and customs of a group or society through social interaction.

socialized medicine | a healthcare system that is owned and run by the government

socioeconomic status | a combination of a person's or family's economic and social position in comparison to others.

sociology | a science guided by the understanding that the social matters: our lives are affected, not only by our individual characteristics but by our place in the social world, not only by natural forces but by their social dimension.

spiritual belief system | a series of related beliefs and practices of a society that help members seek and express meaning and purpose.

spirituality | the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred.

stigmatization | the labeling or spoiling of an identity, which leads to ostracism, marginalization, discrimination, and abuse.

strike | a form of collective action when workers in a given workplace refuse to work until owners meet their demands.

structural racism | the system of racial bias that exists across institutions and society.

subaltern groups | groups that are made subordinate by powerful groups because of their class, caste, gender, nationality, or any other dimension of difference.

system | a group of two or more related parts that interact over time to form a whole that has a purpose, function, or behavior.

The Capitalocene | the geological epoch in which capitalism has reordered Earth's natural systems.

the global majority | Black, Indigenous, and other people of color and typically (though not all) with origins in Africa, Central and South America, and Asia who constitute approximately 85 percent of the global population.

the New Deal | a series of government initiatives under Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency, during the Great Depression. They focused on strengthening the economy by employing workers for public works and creating a social safety net with programs such as social security.

theocratic government | one where religious leaders rule in the name of God or gods who interpret their holy texts as law.

tracking | a formalized sorting system that places students on "tracks" (advanced versus low achievers) that perpetuate inequalities.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) | the wisdom and intelligence, innovations, and practices of indigenous and local communities that have been handed down through generations. TEK focuses on the relationship of living beings with one another and with their environment.

transformative justice | a political framework and approach for responding to violence, harm, and abuse. It seeks to respond to violence through harm reduction, or without creating more violence.

union | an organization of workers who work together to improve their wages and working conditions.

universal healthcare | a system that guarantees healthcare coverage for everyone.

wealth | the financial assets or physical possessions which can be converted into a form that can be used for transactions.

white man's burden | a framework for interpreting colonial expansion - framing colonized people as simultaneously childlike and dangerous, while framing agents of colonial power as stern and wise parents.

white supremacy | the belief, theory, or doctrine that white people are inherently superior to people from all other racial and ethnic groups, and are therefore rightfully the dominant group in any society.

worldview | a particular philosophy of life or conception of the world or universe held by an individual or group.

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Image Descriptions

4

Description for Figure 1.1

This short film clip originally did not include sound, but is now set to a contemporary soundtrack of winter holiday music with sleigh bells. It features about 15 light-skinned people in a snow-filled urban street lined with bare trees. The people are dressed in dark, late 1800s men's and women's clothing, wearing black top hats and white aprons over long skirts. The original film has been colorized, adding tints of green, blue, and pink to the buildings, snow, and people in the scene. The people laugh and throw snowballs at each other with their bare hands. A bicyclist slips and falls in the middle of the group. Everyone pelts the bicyclist with snowballs before the person manages to ride away.

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Description for Figure 3.5

A colorful inverted triangle shows Society at the top, then Culture, then Social Institutions (including Economics, Politics, Education, Family, and Work), then Social Inequality (including Race, Gender, and Class), then Groups, then Roles, then Socialization, then Interaction, and at the very bottom, Self. Text and highlighting on the side of the pyramid indicates that Society, Culture, Social Institutions, and some aspects of Social Inequality are studied at the macro level of analysis. Self, Interaction, Socialization, Roles, Groups, and some aspects of Social Inequality are studied at the micro level of analysis.

Description of "Levels of Analysis: The Micro-Macro Continuum" by Jennifer Puentes and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources, is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

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Description for Figure 3.6

A colorful circle indicates social identities and positions, relationships of power and marginalization, and social processes of discrimination, oppression, privilege and power.

Around the edge of the circle, there is a list of social processes. These include ageism, ableism, ethnocentrism, transphobia, xenophobia, classism, colonialism, racism, sexism, homophobia, and heterosexism. Within the circle, social identities and positions are arranged in three concentric rings.

The outermost ring lists sixteen social identities and positions. These include age, culture, disability, education, ethnicity, geography, gender, immigration status, income, indigeneity, language, marital status, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

Moving inwards, the second ring lists sixteen categories that fall under the social identities and positions described in the outermost ring. These categories are typically more marginalized in society. A text box along the edge of this second ring reads "Marginalized."

The innermost ring lists sixteen categories that again fall under the social identities and positions described in the outermost ring. This time, the categories listed are ones typically associated with power in society. At the center of the circle, a text box reads "Power."

Thus, the sixteen portions of the circle can be broken down as follows:

- Age: Older adults, youth (marginalized ring), middle-aged (power ring)
- Culture: Non-Western (marginalized ring), Western (power ring)
- Disability: Disabled (marginalized ring), able-bodied (power ring)
- Education: No formal education (marginalized ring), post-secondary (power ring)
- Geography: Rural (marginalized ring), urban (power ring)
- Gender: Trans and nonbinary (marginalized ring), cis-woman (middle ring), cis-man (power ring)
- Immigration status: Immigrant (marginalized ring), citizen (power ring)
- Income: Low (marginalized ring), high (power ring)

- Indigeneity: Indigenous Peoples (marginalized ring), settler (power ring)
- Language: English and French (marginalized ring), Other languages (power ring)
- Marital status: Widowed, divorced, single (marginalized ring), married (power ring)
- Race: Racialized (marginalized ring), white (power ring)
- Religion: Non-Christian (marginalized ring), Christian (power ring)
- Sex: Intersex (marginalized ring), female (middle ring), male (power ring)
- Sexual orientation: LGBTQ+ (marginalized ring), straight (power ring)

Below the circle, an arrow goes from the "Trans and nonbinary" text in the gender portion to a text box that reads: "Some gender identity terms include: agender, bigender, genderfluid, genderqueer, gender neutral, non-binary, transgender man, transgender woman."

Adapted from Sylvia Duckworth's Wheel of Power/Privilege.

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Description for Figure 3.13

A multicolored wheel that visualizes an individual's or group's relationship to power and privilege. From a center that says power, two intersecting lines with arrows at each end point outwards and are labeled *marginalization*. There are 16 slices or segments in the wheel. Each segment represents categories of identities or social locations. Social locations near the center of the wheel experience more power. Social locations near the edge of the wheel experience more oppression and are more marginalized. Gray words outside the circle indicate forms of oppression and discrimination directed at people with those social identities.

Please keep in mind that as we try to describe the relationships between socially constructed power and identity, the categories we use can be imprecise, overlapping, and unstable.

Category descriptions and social identities/locations

- Race/Ethnicity: Black and Indigenous People of Color are the most marginalized identities, white passing is in the middle, and white is closest to the center of power. Racism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Skin color: Dark is the most marginalized identity, medium shades in the middle, and white closest to the center of power. Colorism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Indigeneity: Indigenous is the most marginalized identity, and Settlers are closest to the center of power. Colonialism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Citizenship: Undocumented is the most marginalized, documented non-citizen is in the middle, and citizen is closest to the center of power. Nativism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Language: Non-English speaking is the most marginalized identity, English speaking is in the middle, and native English is closest to the center of power. Xenophobia is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Geography: Rural/inner city is the most marginalized identity, suburb is in the middle, and city is closest to the center of power. Classism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Social class: Poor/working poor is the most marginalized identity, middle class is in the middle, and wealthy is closest to the center of power. Classism also affects people in this category.
- Housing status: Houseless is the most marginalized identity, sheltered/renting is in the middle, and property owner is closest to the center of power. Classism also affects people in this category.
- Education: Elementary education is the most marginalized identity, high school is in the middle, and college or university is closest to the center of power. Credentialism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Neurodiversity: Significant neurodivergence is the most marginalized identity, some neurodivergence is in the middle, and neurotypical is closest to the center of power. Ableism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Physical and mental health: Vulnerable is the most marginalized identity, mostly stable is in the middle, and robust is closest to the center of power. Ableism also affects people in this category.
- Ability: Severe disability is the most marginalized identity, mild disability is in the middle, and able-bodied is closest to the center of power. Ableism also affects people in this category.

- Body size: Overweight or obese is the most marginalized identity, average is in the middle, and slim is closest to the center of power. Sizeism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Gender identity: Trans/intersex/nonbinary is the most marginalized, cisgender women are in the middle, and cisgender men are closest to the center of power. Sexism and cisgenderism are forms of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Sexual orientation: Lesbian, bi, pan/asexual are the most marginalized identities, gay men are in the middle, and straight is closest to the center of power. Heterosexism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.
- Marital Status: Single/nonmonogamous are the most marginalized identities, engaged/partnered are in the middle, and married is closest to the center of power. Heterosexism is a form of oppression marginalized people in this category experience.

Attribution

Based on the work of Patricia Hill Collins, Kimberlé Crenshaw and Allan Johnson, and the visual images of Sylvia Duckworth and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. This version designed by Kimberly Puttman, Michaela Willi Hooper, and Lauren Antrosiglio, Open Oregon Educational Resources, CC BY 4.0.

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Description for Figure 3.24

Two pie graphs show percentage of U.S. households by race with percentage of U.S. wealth shared by race.

Share of U.S. Households

White	63.8%
Black	14.2%
Hispanic	10.0%
Other/Multiple Races	12.0%

Share of U.S. Wealth

White	82.0%
Black	4.5%
Hispanic	3.1%
Other/Multiple Races	10.4%

This information comes from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

Sources: Distributional Financial Accounts and Institute for Economic Equity calculations.

Note: Racial and ethnic groups are mutually exclusive; they are based on the primary race or ethnicity of the survey.

Return to Figure

Description for Figure 3.26

Four tables shows percentage of U.S. adults who say they have or own the following:

Percent of U.S. adults who say they have home broadband

Year	Suburban	Urban	Rural
2000	1	1	0
2021	79	77	72

Percent of U.S. adults who say they have a smartphone

Year	Suburban	Urban	Rural
2000	0	0	0
2011	37	38	21
2021	84	89	80

Percent of U.S. adults who say they have a tablet

Year	Suburban	Urban	Rural
2000	0	0	0
2011	3	4	1
2021	54	55	44

Percent of U.S. adults who say they have a desktop/laptop computer

Year	Suburban	Urban	Rural
2008	78	73	61
2021	78	80	72

Source: Pew Research Center. Survey conducted Jan. 25 – Feb. 8, 2021

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Description for Figure 3.37

An infographic with the principles of Critical Race Theory.

The center circle contains the title Critical Race Theory. The outer circle is a dashed line representing the connections of the principles. There are 6 smaller circles connected by the dashed line with the six principles. Race is socially constructed, Racism is normalized, Interest convergence, Differential Racialization, Intersectionality, Voices of color thesis.

On the right of the infographic is a table that contains the six principles and a brief explanation.

- Race is socially constructed, not a fixed biological reality.
- Racism is normalized and often covert and sometimes unintended, thus hard to identify.
- The laws and other elements of life that negatively impact PoC tend to only change when there is an interest convergence between what white people and PoC want.
- Over time, racism changes to describe races differently through a process of differential racialization.
- Intersectionality ees all elements of identity as interacting forces.
- The voices of color thesis states that PoC can speak best on their own experiences.

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Description for Figure 4.4

Pie chart shows world regions by total wealth in trillions USD. Africa has the smallest share and North America has the greatest.

World Region	Total Wealth (trillions USD)
Africa	$5.8
India	$14.2
Latin America	$12.6
China	$85.1
Asia Pacific	$81.3
Europe	$106.3
North America	$158.2

Data source: Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report 2022, Table 1

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Description for Figure 4.5

Map of the world shows countries by greatest income inequality using the top 10/bottom 50 ratio. 19-50+ is the category with the greatest inequality. It's prevalent in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and southern Asia. 16-19, the next level, includes the United States and a handful of countries in Africa and southeast Asia. The next most equal level, 13-16, includes Canada, most of Asia (including China and Russia), Argentina, and parts of Africa. The next level, 12-13, includes parts of west Africa and central Asia. The most equal level, 5-12, includes most of Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Cuba, and some parts of South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

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Description for Figure 4.7

Map of the world shows countries by income bracket (Gross National Income per capita, calculated using the World Bank Atlas method).

- Low income economies are those with a GNI per capita of $1,085 or less in 2021
- Lower middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between $1,086 and $4,255
- Upper middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between $4,256 and $13,205
- High-income economies are those with a GNI per capita of $13,205 or more

Countries with high-income economies

Andorra, Greece, Poland, Antigua and Barbuda, Greenland, Portugal, Aruba, Guam, Puerto Rico, Australia, Hong Kong SAR, China, Qatar, Austria, Hungary, Romania, The Bahamas, Iceland, San Marino, Bahrain, Ireland, Saudi Arabia, Barbados, Isle of Man, Seychelles, Belgium, Israel, Singapore, Bermuda, Italy, Sint Maarten (Dutch part), British Virgin Islands, Japan, Slovak Republic, Brunei Darussalam, Korea, Rep., Slovenia, Canada, Kuwait, Spain, Cayman Islands, Latvia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Channel Islands, Liechtenstein, St. Martin (French part), Chile, Lithuania, Sweden, Croatia, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Curaçao, Macao SAR, Taiwan, Cyprus, Malta, Trinidad and Tobago, Czech Republic, Monaco, Turks and Caicos Islands, Denmark, Nauru, United Arab Emirates, Estonia, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Faroe Islands, New Caledonia, United States, Finland, New Zealand, Uruguay, France, Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands (U.S.), French Polynesia, Norway, Germany, Oman, Gibraltar, Panama

Countries with upper-middle income economies

Albania, Fiji, Namibia, American Samoa, Gabon, North Macedonia, Argentina, Georgia, Palau, Armenia, Grenada, Paraguay, Azerbaijan, Guatemala, Peru, Belarus, Guyana, Russian Federation, Belize, Iraq, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jamaica, South Africa, Botswana, Jordan St. Lucia, Brazil, Kazakhstan, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Suriname, China, Libya, Thailand, Colombia, Malaysia, Tonga, Costa Rica, Maldives, Türkiye, Cuba, Marshall Islands, Turkmenistan, Dominica, Mauritius, Tuvalu, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Equatorial Guinea, Moldova, Ecuador, Montenegro

Countries with lower-middle income economies

Angola, India, Philippines, Algeria, Indonesia, Samoa, Bangladesh, Iran, Islamic Rep, São Tomé and Principe, Benin, Kenya, Senegal, Bhutan, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Bolivia, Kyrgyz Republic, Sri Lanka, Cabo Verde, Lao PDR, Tanzania, Cambodia, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Cameroon, Lesotho, Timor-Leste, Comoros, Mauritania, Tunisia, Congo, Rep., Micronesia, Fed. Sts., Ukraine, Côte d'Ivoire, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Djibouti, Morocco, Vanuatu, Egypt, Arab Rep., Myanmar, Vietnam, El Salvador, Nepal, West Bank and Gaza, Eswatini, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria, Haiti, Pakistan, Honduras, Papua New Guinea

Countries with low income economies

Afghanistan, Guinea-Bissau, Somalia, Burkina Faso, Korea, Dem. People's Rep, South Sudan, Burundi, Liberia, Sudan, Central African Republic, Madagascar, Syrian Arab Republic, Chad, Malawi Togo, Congo, Dem. Rep, Mali, Uganda, Eritrea, Mozambique, Yemen, Rep. Ethiopia, Niger, Zambia, Gambia, Rwanda, Guinea, Sierra Leone

Note

GNI measures are expressed in United States dollars (USD), and are determined using conversion factors derived according to the Atlas method.

Data source

World Bank country classifications by income level, 2021. Interactive map [Website] with more detail.

Attribution

Design by Aimee Samara Krouskop and Michaela Willi Hooper, Open Oregon Educational Resources, CC BY 4.0.

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Description for Figure 4.9

Land-grabbed countries (green disks) are connected to their grabbers (red triangles) by a network line. The pattern shows that most land grabbers are spread throughout the world, though especially in Europe and coastal nations, while most grabbed land is in Africa and the southern hemisphere.

Based on data in table S1 but considering only 24 major grabbed countries (as in Table 1). Relations between grabbing (red triangles) and grabbed (green circles) countries are shown (green lines) only when they are associated with a land grabbing exceeding 100,000 hectares.

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Description for Figure 4.12

A world map with a key that indicates "share of total %." Darker colors indicate that women have less share of total income. The countries where women have 1-22% of total income include India and much of the Middle East and Saharan Africa. The next level is countries where women have 22-30% of income. This includes much of Africa and smaller countries throughout Asia. The next level is 30-36%. This includes China, Mexico, and some smaller countries in Asia, East Africa, and Latin America. The next level is 36-39%. This includes Australia, Canada, some European countries, and much of South America, including Brazil. The next level is 39-45%. This includes Russia, the United States, Greenland, much of Europe, and some countries in southern Africa and Asia.

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Description for Figure 4.13

Region	1950	2000	Absolute Change	Relative Change
East Asia	63 points	71 points	+8 points	+13%
Eastern Europe	72 points	73 points	+1 points	+1%
Latin America and Caribbean	62 points	71 points	+9 points	+15%
Middle East and North Africa	54 points	60 points	+6 points	+11%
South and South-East Asia	55 points	62 points	+7 points	+13%
Sub-Sahara Africa	60 points	66 points	+6 points	+10%
Western Europe	66 points	77 points	+11 points	+17%
Western Offshoots	68 points	75 points	+7 points	+10%

"Historical Gender Equality Index, 1995-2000" [Website] by Our World in Data is licensed under CC-BY. Based on data from: OECD (2014).

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Description for Figure 4.19

Country	Percent
Malawi	73.5
Angola	49.9
Uganda	41
Guinea	23.2
Honduras	14.8
Laos	10
Bolivia	4.4
Kyrgyzstan	1.1
United States	1
Dominican Republic	0.8
Chile	0.7
Iran	0.6
Australia	0.5
Ukraine	0

Living in poverty is defined as living below the international poverty line at $1.90 (international dollars) per day. Percentages reflect data from either 2018, 2019, or 2020. Source: Our World in Data.

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Description for Figure 4.20

Hierarchical representation of the three dimensions of poverty:

- Dimension 1: Health
- Nutrition
- Child Mortality
- Dimension 2: Education
- Years of Schooling
- School Attendance
- Dimension 3: Standard of Living
- Cooking Fuel
- Sanitation
- Drinking Water
- Electricity
- Housing
- Assets

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Description for Figure 4.21

The map shows life expectancy in 2021 on a continuum. Canada, Western and Northern Europe, Australia, and Japan have the highest life expectancies of 85 to 90 years. Most countries in Central and Southern Africa have the middle range life expectancy, or the lowest life expectancies of 45 to 50 years.

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Description for Figure 4.22

An illustration with the Human Development Index in the middle. Spiraling out from the center are three other indexes. One index is the GNI Index, measured by GNI per capita (PPP$). This index approximates people having a decent standard of living. A second index is the Education Index, measured by mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling. This index approximates people's access to knowledge. The third index is the life expectancy index, measured by life expectancy at birth. This index approximates people's ability to have a long and healthy life.

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Description for Figure 4.23

The regions that rank very high on human development include the United States, Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and Western and Northern Europe. China, Mexico, South Africa, Northern Africa, and Northern South America, Cuba, Ukraine, Iran, Mongolia, and much of Latin America and the Middle East rank high on human development. Regions that rank medium on human development include Morocco, Namibia, India, Iraq, Syria, and much of Cental America. Regions that rank low on human development are more likely found in Africa and include Chad, Sudan, Niger, Afghanistan. These regions also include Haiti and Yemen.

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Description for Figure 5.3

The indigenous person is presented as living in good health with simple tools and Mezoamerican art, surrounded by trees, wearing a bird-like headpiece, with the moon overhead. They are offering a bowl to the conquistador. The conquistador is depicted on the other half of the canvas, which has darker, duller colors. The conquistador's body is a skull with diseased skin on arms and legs. There is trash on the ground, modern symbols, and a lightbulb hangs above. The conquistador wears a helmet, and extends a spear towards the indigenous person.

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Description for Figure 6.4

The Vampire

The image to the left is called, “The Vampire,” and is a dramatic black-and-white illustration of a gaunt looking man with a beard and mustache and wearing a vest, long sleeve shirt, and pants, common for what would be considered poor working-class in the early 1900s. The man is hunched over a manual sewing machine pulling thread with one hand and feeding material with the other. Above and behind the worker is a large man with giant bat wings representing a vampire. The wings create a barrier around the worker. The vampire has no shirt and jewelry dripping from his wrist, several necklaces around his neck, and rings on every finger. One hand rests on his large belly, and the other holds a long straw that is inserted into the back of the worker’s neck.

The Old Story

The image to the right is a detailed black and white cartoon illustration of a wolf dressed in a top hat and disheveled coattails, standing in the road talking to a girl dressed in a cloak. A book peeks out of the wolf’s pocket with the word, “poverty” readable. Behind them are bare trees. Below, is a poem titled The Old Story.

Return to Figure

Description for Figure 6.5

A five-layer pyramid of the capitalist system shows laborers with shovels, aprons, and overalls. A thin child lays on the ground. Text in English and French says “we work for all” and “we feed all.” The laborers are holding up the layer with the middle class, who sit at a fancy table and drink wine. The text says “we eat for you.” The next layer shows soldiers with cannons and bayonets. The text says “we shoot at you.” Pillars hold up the next layer, which shows clergy and says “we fool you.” The top layer shows the king and top government officials. It says “We rule you.” Above the rulers is a bag of money.

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Description for Figure 6.7

Line chart represents real family income between 1947 and 2018, as a percentage of 1973 level. Three lines start out about 50% in 1950 and then begin to diverge around 1980. The 95th percentile has gained 180% by 2018, while the median has gained about 110%, and the 20th percentile has gained a little less than 100%. The breaks in the 95th percentile line indicated implementation of a redesigned questionnaire in 2013 and an updated data processing system in 2017. The source is The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities using U.S. Census Bureau Data.

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Description for Figure 6.8

Line chart represents relative growth of after-tax-and-transfer income (United States, normalized to 1970 levels). Lines overlap between 1970 and 1980, with a very gradual increase over 100% for all groups. Between 1980 and 2010, lines for the top categories increase the most, and then increase more gradually between 2010 and 2018, with greater gains for the 90-98%. In 2018, the low 50%’s income had grown to around 130%, the 50-90% had grown to about 175%, the 90-98% had grown to about 210%, the top 1% had grown to about 350%, the top 0.1% had grown a little over 500%, and the 0.001% had grown to about 660%. The data source is Gabriel Zueman and Emmanuel Saez.

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Description for Figure 6.12

Data show that union membership declined from just under 30% to just over 10% between 1970 and approximately 2020. At the same time, the top 10% income share increased from 31% to 47%, and the top 1% increased from 8% to 18% (numbers are approximate). The notes indicate the source is the author’s own analysis of Current Population Survey data compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Union Membership and Coverage Database, and income tax records compiled by The World Top Incomes Database.

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Description for Figure 6.19

A Venn diagram (with overlapping circles) is shown with three circles. One reads, “Preservation and promotion of a free and resilient culture.” Another reads, “Sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development,” and the third reads, “Good governance and equality before the law.” There is a center circle that rests above all three that reads, “Ecological Sustainability.”

Return to Figure

Description for Figure 6.21

A circle is shown with three. In the inner ring are components of the social foundation: water; food, health, education, income & work, peace & justice, political voice, social equity, gender equality, housing, networks, and energy. The middle ring is the safe and just space for humanity – a restorative and distributive economy. The outer ring is the ecological ceiling. Components include climate change, ocean acidification, chemical pollution, nitrogen and phosphorus loading, freshwater withdrawals, land conversion, biodiversity loss, air pollution, and ozone layer depletion. An arrow shows that we can overshoot the ecological ceiling or have a shortfall of what is needed for the social foundation.

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Description for Figure 6.23

This indigenous reimagining puts the ecological foundation at the center, denoting that it is Ranginui (the sky, the father of all things) and Papatūānuku (the earth, the mother of all things). Text is provided in both Maori and English.

The inner ring is Hā Tuamātangi (our last breath, or the Ecological Foundation). It includes biodiversity loss, air pollution, ozone layer depletion, climate change, ocean acidification, chemical pollution, nitrogen and phosphorus loading, freshwater withdrawals, and land conversion.

The middle ring is Oranga Iho Nui, or the safe and just space for humanity to thrive and ecology to regenerate. It is a regenerative (circular) and distributive economy.

The outer ring is Tūāpapa o te Ora, or the spring of social wellbeing. It includes networks, energy, water, food, health, education, income and work, peace and justice, political voice, social equity, gender equity, and housing. A url on the image says projectmoonshot.city.

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Description for Figure 7.4

This is a bar graph with four sections representing the years 2010, 2015, 2020, and 2022. Each section contains 5 bars representing race and ethnic populations: Latino, American Indian, and Alaskan Native (Ai/An), Black, Asian-American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander (AAHNPI), and White.

In 2010 the uninsured rates were

Latino 32.7%

AI/AN 32.1%

Black 20.9%

AAHNPI 16.6%

White 13.1%

In 2015 the uninsured rates were

Latino 20.8%

AI/AN 23.5%

Black 12.2%

AAHNPI 8.5%

White 7.9%

In 2020 the uninsured rates were

Latino 18.6%

AI/AN 22%

Black 12.8%

AAHNPI 6.9%

White 7.8%

In 2022 the uninsured rates were

Latino 18%

AI/AN 21%

Black 10.8%

AAHNPI 6.3%

White 6.8%

Return to Figure

Description for Figure 7.16

Ethnicity	Rate
Asian American/Pacific Islander	16%
Black	20%
Latinx	27%
Multiracial	36%
Native /Indigenous	44%
White	27%

Return to Figure

Description for Figure 8.17

The black and white illustration shows two young people dressed with annotations on what they cannot wear.

On the right is a male with a bandana on his head, a tank top with the picture of a can and the text beer, loose-fitting pants worn below the waistline with a portion of undergarment visible. The pants extend past the wearer's feet, with the fabric resting on the ground.

The illustration has the following notes:

- No do rags or bandanas
- No tank tops
- No overly tight and improperly fitting garments
- No tobacco, alcohol or drug logos
- No visible underwear
- No baggy pants that drag the floor

The left illustration is a female with a cap turned to the left, a tank top that ends above the navel with visible straps of an undergarment showing, shorts and open-toed slide on shoes.

The illustration has the following notes:

- No hats
- No exposed underwear
- No halter tops or shirts with spaghetti straps
- No bare stomach or backs
- No short shorts
- No slippers

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Description for Figure 8.19

The following characteristics are listed:

- Cognitive ability
- Non-cognitive traits (“grit”)
- Socio-economic status
- Education itself
- Education by-products
- Educated spouse
- Incentive to become
- financially savvy

Arrows show that these characteristics increase income and financial decision making, which both increase wealth.

Return to Figure

Description for Figure 8.24

Table shows the percentage distribution of students in each racial/ethnic group by % of that racial/ethnic group in the 2018-19 school year.

Race/Ethnicity	More than 90%	75-89%	50-74%	25-49%	10-24%	Less than 10%
White	17.6	29.4	31.6	78.7	–	–
Hispanic	16.1	15.7	24.2	55.9	–	–
Black	13.2	11.1	17.8	42.0	–	–
American Indian/Alaskan Native	12.8	4.7	6.6	24.1	–	–
Asian American	–	–	11.0	14.3	–	–
Pacific Islander	–	–	5.7	7.2	–	–
Two or more races	–	–	–	–	0.1	–

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Description for Figure 8.26

A chart lists the percentages that Black Deaf, Black hearing, white Deaf, and white hearing people attain a high school diploma/GED, some college, an Associates Degree, a Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, and a PH.D., J.D. or M.D. The overall educational attainment is highest by those who are white and hearing. The lowest attainment is by those who are Black and deaf. The differences between attainment among White deaf and Black hearing people is minimal.

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Description for Figure 8.35

This activity is designed to help you identify the resources you have available to you to empower you to achieve your educational goals. Please rate your satisfaction with each of the areas listed below:

SCALE: 1- not at all satisfied to 10- completely satisfied

- Goals/Dreams
- Language/Communication Skills
- Family Support
- Support from Peers/Community
- Navigating college systems
- Advocating for your needs

Examples:

- Goals/Dreams (Aspirational capital) – "hopes and dreams" that motivate you
- Language/Communication Skills (Linguistic capital) – various language and communication skills you bring with you
- Family Support (Familial capital) -social and personal resources you have from your family
- Support from Peers/Community (Social capital) –support from "peers and other social contacts"
- Ability to navigate College system (Navigational capital) -skills and abilities to navigate "social institutions," including educational spaces.
- Advocating for needs (Resistance capital)– ability to advocate and secure your rights to education

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Description for Figure 9.7

Pie chart showing % of world population

Religion	Percent
Christians	31.2
Muslims	24.1
Unaffiliated	16
Hindus	15.1
Buddhists	6.9
Folk religion	5.7
Other religions	0.8
Jews	0.2

Bar chart showing number of people in 2015, in billions

Religion	Number in billions
Christians	2.3
Muslims	1.8
Unaffiliated	1.2
Hindus	1.1
Buddhists	0.5
Folk religion	0.4
Other religions	0.1
Jews	0.01

Attribution

Pew Research Center demographic projections. See methodology for details. “The Changing Global Religious Landscape.”

Return to Figure

Description for Figure 9.9

Globe in the center says “The Golden Rule” and is surrounded by images and definitions from world religions

Buddhism

Image of the Buddha (a person in robes sitting crosslegged) and a quote from Udana-Varga 5.18: “Treat not others in a way you yourself would find hurtful.”

Confucianism

An image of Confucius, who has a long beard, and a quote from Analects 15:23: “One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct . . . lovingkindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself.”

Taoism

An image of the yin yang symbol with a quote from T’ai Shang Kan Ying P’ien, 213-218: “Regard your neighbour’s gain as your own gain, and your neighbour’s loss as your own loss.”

Sikhism

An image of the Khanda (three symbols in one: a sword, throwing weapon, and two daggers). A quote from the Guru Granth Sahib, pg. 1299: “I am a stranger to no one, and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all.”

Christianity

An image of a cross and a quote from Jesus in Matthew 7:12: “In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.”

Unitarianism

An image of a lamp within a leaf and the Unitarian principle: “We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

Native Spirituality

An image of a circle dissected into four parts with a circle in each part. A quote by Chief Dan George: “We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive.”

Zoroastrianism

An image of a bird with a bearded person where the head would be. A quote from Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29: “Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself.”

Jainsim

An image of a hand with a mandala-like circle in the middle. A quote from Mahavira in Sutrakritanga: “One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated.”

Judaism

An image of a menorah (candles) with a quote from Hillel in Talmud, Shabbat 31a: “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary.”

Islam

An image of a crescent moon and star with a quote from the Prophet Muhammad in the Hadith: “Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.”

Baha’i Faith

An image of a nine-sided star with a quote from Baha’u’Ilah in Gleanings: “Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself.”

Hinduism

An image of the Om symbol with a quote from Mahabharata 5:1517: “This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.”

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Description for Figure 9.13

Symbols of world religions and spirituality in black and white, arranged in a circular pattern

- A lotus flower with a flame symbolizes Ayyavazhi.
- A yin and yang symbol represents Taoism.
- A smaller circle inside a larger circle. Two lines intersect to create a cross through both circles. This is the symbol of the Isese spirituality of the Yoruba people.
- The om symbol, which is Sanskrit, symbolizes Hinduism.
- The six-sided star of David symbolizes Judaism. A menorah (candles) also symbolizes Judaism.
- A nine-sided star symbolizes the Baha’i faith.
- A stylized E and K symbolizes the Eckist religion.
- An eight-spoked Dharma wheel symbolizes Buddhism.
- A hand with a wheel on the palm symbolizes Ahimsa in Jainism. A swastika is also an ancient symbol of Jainism.
- A pentagram, or five-sided star, in a circle symbolizes Wicca.
- A flame within a chalice (a cup with a stem and foot) symbolizes Unitarian Universalism.
- The Khanda (a double-edged sword, circular throwing weapon, and two single-edged daggers) symbolizes Sikhism.
- Two versions of a cross symbolize Christianity.
- A star and crescent symbolizes Islam.
- A hexagram symbolizes Thelema.
- A five-petal plum blossom in a circle symbolizes Tenrikyoists.
- A traditional Japanese gate (torii) symbolizes Shintoism.
- Three interlaced crescents represent neopaganism.
- A bearded person with wings, Ahura Mazda, symbolizes Zoroastrianism.
- A six-sided script-like symbol symbolizes Confucianism.
- A cross with a five-sided comb-like symbol at the end of each line symbolizes the Slavic Native Faith.
- An atom symbolizes atheism.

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Description for Figure 10.15

Stages of social movements begin with the emerge stage, moving into coalesce and bureaucratize. From bureaucratize there are five possible next steps: success, failure, cooptation, repression, go mainstream. The final step is decline.

This image is adapted from Blumer (1969), Mauss (1975), and Tilly (1978).

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Description for Figure 10.19

Illustration of a map of the 17 countries in the Middle East and North Africa including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen, Sudan, and South Sudan.

Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen are in a darker color to represent leadership changes since the uprisings.

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Description for Figure 10.20

The Occupy Los Angeles Committee Structure includes:

- Calendar
- Logistics
- Finance/Resources
- Civic engagement
- Facilitation
- Food
- Welcome tent
- Occupation communication
- Sanitation
- Public relation
- City liaisons
- Arts and Education
- Production
- Community Outreach
- Livestream
- Objectives/Demands
- Direct action
- Media (print, social, and web)
- Peacekeepers
- Social services
- Internal communication
- Medical
- Transportation
- Legal

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Description for Figure 10.21

Ten Years After the Arab Spring: Gains for Democracy? Selected countries in the Arab World by their 2020 EIU Democracy Index score and change in rank (2010-2020).

Country	Democracy Index Score	Change in Global Rank (2010-2020)
Morocco	4.00-6.59/10	Increase by 20
Algeria	2-3.99/10	Increase by 10
Tunisia	4.00-6.59/10	Increase by 90
Libya	0-1.99/10	Increase by 1
Egypt	2-3.99/10	No change
Syria	0-1.99/10	Decrease by 12
Saudi Arabia	2-3.99/10	Increase by 3
Yemen	0-1.99/10	Decrease by 11
UAE	2-3.99/10	Increase by 3
Oman	2-3.99/10	Increase by 7

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Description for Figure 10.25

Infographic by the Innovation Network.

Beginning at the Left is the subheading Movement Capacity—Laying the foundation of a healthy movement. Under the subheading are three boxes stacked vertically with the text Story, Strategy, and Structure.

Arrows point to the next column with the subheading Movement Power – Building four main types of overlapping power. Below the subheading is a circle divided into four equal sections. The yellow section has an icon of a building and contains the text Institutional Power. The green section has an icon of people with protest signs and the text People Power. The purple section has an icon of a globe and the text Narrative Power. The Orange section has an icon of a bullhorn and the text Influencer Power.

Arrows point to the third column with the subheading Movement Vision – Toppling, transforming, and/or absorbing the institutional, cultural, and social pillars that prop up the status quo. Under the subheading is an illustration of a building. In the section representing the room are the words Dominant systems, norms, and worldviews. Underneath are five pillars: politics, judiciary/courts, civic institutions, business, and media.

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Description for Figure 10.39

Anthropocentrism is visualized as a human (likely representing men) at the top of a pyramid. The next level down is money, technology, pets, a person in a skirt (likely representing women), and luxury goods, symbolized by a diamond. The next level down are living things that humans often use, like grapes, cows, sheep corn, chickens, pigs, and fish. The bottom level is crowded with representations of all other types of life and natural phenomena, like cactuses, crabs, the ocean, DNA, mountains, frogs, astral bodies, etc.

Cosmocentrism is visualized as a circle with the earth at the center and living beings and natural phenomena radiating out from it. Humans are not in a special place. People with disabilities (represented by someone in a wheelchair) are visible in this image, while in the pyramid they are not.

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Description for Figure 10.55

This infographic demonstrates how current ideologies can move to new worldviews with a social-environmental shift.

Current Worldview	Worldview Possible with Social-Environmental Shift
Frontier Ethic: Assumes that the earth has an unlimited supply of resources. If resources run out in one area, more can be found elsewhere or alternatively human ingenuity will find substitutes.	*Sustainability:* Living within the means of the earth without significantly impairing its function.
Ego Mindset: Allows us to create hierarchies whether between humans and other species or humans and other human	*Eco Mindset:* We see ourselves as part of a whole
Anthropocentric mindset: The belief that humans are the central and most important existence in the universe.	*Cosmo-centric Mindset:* Holds in highest importance the universe or nature, and sees all in existence as connected in equilibrium.

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Transcripts

5

Transcript for Figure 1.15, People Under the Northern Lights

[Karen Anna Lodje Gaup, Sami Reindeer Herder, translated]: When you want to get the herd of reindeer to graze, you have to check the grazing land. To do that, you have to dig your way down to the ground.

Then, you have to check if there is ice in between or near the ground. You need to know this if you are herding in the winter.

That bit is important. This is in the spring. We were shipping reindeer from the mainland to the Arnøya island. I was born into reindeer husbandry.

I was born in a desolate place in the mountains. And I have spent all my life in the mountains. The best thing is to work with reindeer.

You get to decide for yourself. And you think only of reindeer, day and night. I know these places like my own living room.

I have made all of this myself. This is moccasins. That is the best kind of shoes in the winter. And the "pesk" coat is much better than the snowmobile suits.

You can move freely and do everything. Throw a lasso into the herd, even with the coat on. Sometimes you have to be really strong.

But then we have a dog that can help. And in these new times, since 1960, we have the snowmobile.

Now, I will talk about the old days, when I was little and lived in a small turf hut all year round. We didn't have a house.

When the campfire went out in the hut and I looked through the smoke hole, I could see the northern light, the stars, and the moon.

And, also, the northern light seemed very scary. You didn't want to look for too long, when it danced above the trees.

Attribution

Transcript for "People under the northern lights | Sami reindeer herder Karen Anna" by Visit Norway is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 1.16, Indigenous Activism in Sweden

[Caption: Natural resource exploitation in Sápmi threatens the survival of the Sami people. Sami activists demand that it be stopped.]

[Music.]

[Maxida Märak, musician and activist, speaking in Sami]: I belong to a people that wanders between worlds. A people following the wind, the water, the reindeer. I come from a culture totally dependent on a functioning, natural cycle. But our way of life, in harmony with the forests and mountains, no longer has a place in the society of today.

For centuries the Sami have been subjected to violations by the Swedish state. Not only because they've stolen our lands and exploited our territories. They have also forcibly converted us to Christianity. Placed us in so-called nomadic schools. Forcibly removed us. Measured our skulls. Burned our sacred drums. The list of violations is long.

To me, the violations are the same as they were 400 years ago. Only that they've been modernized. We, the Sami, don't count. Our way of life, it doesn't count. Today, over 1000 mining explorations take place in Sweden, the majority of which are in traditional lands of the Sami. Our appeals are rejected. Our protests ignored. Our voices are not heard.

But now, winds will turn.

[Caption: International law provides that indigenous peoples, including the Sami, have the right to self-determination over their lands. Amnesty International fights for indigenous rights all over the world.]

Attribution

Transcript for "Indigenous Activism in Sweden" by Amnesty International Sverige is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 2.5, Elevator Psychology – Social Influence (Candid Camera)

[Allen Funt, Show Host]: The gentleman in the elevator now is a Candid star. These folks who are entering – the man with the white shirt, the lady with the trenchcoat, and subsequently, one other member of our staff – will face the rear.

And you'll see how this man in the trenchcoat [audience laughter] tries to maintain his individuality, but little by little [laughter]…. He looks at his watch, but he's really making an excuse for turning just a little bit more [laughter] to the wall.

Now we'll try it once again. Here's the Candid subject. Here comes the Candid Camera staff – three of them, at least. And this man has apparently been in groups before. [Laughter as the man turns to face the back wall as others are doing.]

Here's a fella with his hat on in the elevator. First he makes a full turn to the rear and Charlie closes the door. A moment later, we'll open the door – everybody's changed positions. [Laughter as the door opens and the man has turned with the group.]

Now we'll see if we can use… now we'll see if we can use group pressure for some good. Now, in a moment, on Charlie's signal, everybody turns forward. [Laughter.] Notice, they take off their hats. [Laughter as the man takes off his hat.] And now, do you think we could reverse the procedure? Watch. [Laughter as the man replaces his hat.]

Attribution

Transcript for "Candid Camera (Elevator)" by ATW Training is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 2.7, The Sociological Imagination

[Narrator]: One of the most important things to learn in sociology class isn't a fact about the history of sociology or political analytical method. Rather, it's a state of mind. The state of mind that is at the core of sociological practice is called the sociological imagination.

The best way to understand what this is and what this mindset entails is to look at a particular example. Let's imagine you lose your job – sucks, right? Now you're focused on thinking of how can you pay for all the things that you require in order to live your life. How are you going to find a new job in order to sustain yourself? What a sociologist would ask in this situation is this question: Is your experience of losing your job here personal trouble or is it a social issue? In other words, is this something that is idiosyncratic and individual about the particular choices that you made, or is it rather the consequence of broader social patterns and contextual factors?

Through the sociological imagination, we make connections between your personal experiences

and the broader economic, political, cultural, familial, educational, and environmental forces that influence the world that you see and experience. The opportunities that are available to you and the challenges that you face by adopting the mindset of the sociological imagination – you go from seeing yourself as an atomized individual whose decisions are entirely responsible for everything that happens to you to seeing yourself as a part of a network of other people who influence one another.

With this mindset, you begin to realize all of the opportunities and freedoms that you have for agency and all of the constraints and restrictions that prevent you from doing anything that you would like. Through the sociological imagination you begin to teach yourself to see the world.

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Transcript for "The Sociological Imagination" by Andrew Reszitnyk is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 2.11, Prezi illustraction of Social institutions

Economy: The social institution that organizes a society's production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

Functions

Economy directly affects the prosperity of a society; a growing economy means a growing society. An economy must increase income while decrease expenditures of goods and services.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Economy has a significant effect on the development of its society. An economy helps to create job opportunities, this will lead to higher incomes for individuals and families.

Many economies go through periods of rise and decline; greatly impacting its community. Many factors can easily trigger an economic decline. When in decline there are less job opportunities, lower income for workers, and businesses are unable to obtain a required revenue.

Politics: The social institution that distributes power and sets a course of actions for a society.

Functions

Government is based on politics, it is a way to authorize a select group of people to direct and control individuals to gain stability among the community. This institution is what creates and enforces laws to produce a safer environment.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Politics is responsible for a safe community as well as social programs that can further develop its society. Education and job opportunities can be seen as a product of politics.

The political hierarchy clearly separates those directly involved in the government and those who are not, creating a clear sense of inequality. There are high chances of corruption between politicians. Rebellion is commonly seen in societies where inhabitants do not agree with the views of those working with the government.

Health & Welfare: Health is the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. Welfare is the good fortune, health, happiness, prosperity of a person, group or organization.

Functions

A society aims to have high standards of health and welfare and for its individuals to meet the criteria. The standards of health and welfare can be interpreted by socially-constructed views and norms. These standards are needed to work towards a healthier and happier society.

Strengths & Weaknesses

The institution of health and welfare allows individuals to stay healthy and get medical help when necessary. It has taught societies when it is necessary to seek help.

Emotions and socially-constructed meanings are commonly used to interpret a societies standards in health and welfare. This can be problematic in societies that have far different views on health and welfare norms compared to medical facts.

Family: A social institution found in all societies that unites people in cooperative groups to care for one.

Functions

Families evolve faster than any other social institution. The family continues to develop a society by passing on beliefs, traditions, and cultural/societal norms. A family shares an intimate bond, it creates a sense of identity, this ultimately affects social interaction.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Without the institution of family a society would fail. Family is responsible for socialization, social placement, and material and emotional security within society.

In many cultures it has become common for families to be seen as patriarchal and endogamous, between a man and wife. This has caused separation and discrimination towards families who do not meet these ideas.

Religion: Religion is a social institution involving beliefs and practices based on recognizing the sacred Faith.

Functions

Religion has played a role in changing a society's culture throughout history. In a society there are often subgroups that have certain religious beliefs and practices. Every religion holds different beliefs, values, practices, and symbolisms. Religious groups aim to make their beliefs more wide spread and accepted.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Within a society, religion provides a sense of unity between a group of people. It helps to mold and develop a society. Practicing a religion can provide a sense of significance and reason for life.

Many religions commonly practiced across the world have been established for centuries. Their beliefs follow an "old-fashioned" mindset. Many traditions involve a patriarchal lifestyle further enabling gender discrimination.

Education: Education is the social institution that allows society at large to pass its knowledge, including basic facts, job skills and cultural norms and values, on to the next generation.

Functions

A society may use many different forms of education in order to pass on standard knowledge, specific skills, societal norms, and cultural beliefs to the next generation. The different forms of education are classified as formal or informal. Schooling is considered to be formal, while cultivating knowledge through conversation and experience would be informal.

Strengths & Weaknesses

There are countless ways to spread and obtain knowledge, because of this it can be very easy for those in a society to educate one another. Education has led to socialization, cultural innovations, and job opportunities.

There are still many factors preventing a large portion of people to acquire an education level that meets one's societal standards, primarily due to the formal schooling system. Students will often drop out of school before graduating or are not able to afford formal schooling at all.

How Social Institutions Affect Each Other

All six social institutions play a key role in developed societies. If one institution were to disappear it would cause another to collapse due to its direct dependence on the former. The other institutions would soon fail in a chain reaction inevitably leading to the downfall of the society affected.

Examples of Social Institution Affects on Each Other

Economy and Education directly affect each other when it comes to jobs. The economy is responsible for creating jobs for individuals to help further boost the economy. The education system is responsible for teaching individuals valuable and special skills that meet the requirements needed to obtain jobs.

Religion plays an important role by helping to mold societal norms, traditions, and beliefs. Families help to pass these values onto their children, allowing the religious practices to be spread through future generations.

Science: A Potential Social Institution

Although science can be seen as a part of the social institution of education, it plays a large role in any society. Without a strong scientific field it would be impossible to further the understanding of how the universe works- specifically how the earth, human body, and even societies work. There would be a lack of understanding valuable information, setting back societal progress greatly.

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Transcript for Figure 2.12, The Family Equation

[Dr. William Lynn Weaver]: My father was everything to me. And it's actually kind of difficult talking about him without becoming very emotional. Up until, you know, he died, every decision I made, I'd always call him. And he would never tell me what to do, but he would always listen and say, "Well, what do you want to do?" And he made me feel that I could do anything that I wanted to do.

I can remember when we integrated the schools, that there were many times when I was just… Scared. And I didn't think that I would survive. And I'd look up, and he'd be there. And, whenever I saw him, I knew that I was safe.

You know, I always tell you that your momma is the smartest person I've ever met, but I think my father ranks right up there as brilliant. When I was in high school, I was taking algebra, and I was sitting at the kitchen table trying to do my homework. And I got frustrated, said, "I just can't figure this out. I'm just…"

So my father said, "What's the problem?" He came by and said, "What's the problem?"

And I said, "It's just algebra."

And he said, "Well, let me look at it."

And I said, "Dad, they didn't even have algebra in your day." [Laughs.]

And I went to sleep.

And around 4 o'clock that morning, he woke me up and he said, "C'mon son, get up." He sat me at the kitchen table, and he taught me algebra. What he had done is sit up all night and read the algebra book, and then he explained the problems to me so I could do them and understand them.

And to this day, I live my life trying to be half the man my father was – just half the man. And I would be a success if my children loved me half as much as I love my father.

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Transcript for "The Family Equation" by StoryCorps is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 2.13, My Aunties: Father Figures

[Stefan Lynch Strassfeld]: My family were mostly gay guys, who were my babysitters and the guys who you know, took the pictures at my birthday parties. And I felt like I had this amazing family. I called them my aunties. And it was a really wonderful, amazing world that came crashing down.

Starting in '82, the first person I knew, died of AIDS. Um, a young guy named Steve.

[Beth Teper]: And how old were you at the time?

[Stefan]: I was ten when he was diagnosed. I remember, I was on the beach on Fire Island and he was covered in these purple spots and I remember asking my dad, like what's wrong with Steve? And my dad said, "Oh he has this skin cancer called Kaposi's sarcoma." And I said, well what is that? And my dad said, "Well nobody really knows, but there are some gay men that are getting it." And within I think 2 months, Steve was dead.

And it was pretty much a succession of deaths of my family throughout the next decade.

My step dad Bill died in '87. My dad died in '91, after a really grueling six months of me taking care of him. You know, I was 19 and I was on a break from college and was really at my wits end and exhausted from taking care of my dad I called up my auntie Eddie and I said, "Can you help?" And within a week, he'd organized 40 people to do round the clock shifts.

He was the only other person in the room with me and my mom when my dad died. At that point, everyone had died except for a handful of stragglers who I now hold near and dear to my heart. My aunties.

It was a powerful family. There was a lot of love. And they modeled for me how to survive an epidemic, even if you were dying while doing it.

Attribution

Transcript for "My Aunties: Father Figures" by StoryCorps is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 2.14, Fritjof Capra Speaks to the Heart of the Matter

[Dr. Fritjof Capra]: In the coming decades, the survival of humanity will literally depend on our ecological literacy on our ability to understand the basic principles of ecology and to live accordingly.

[Music.]

None of our global problems – energy shortages, environmental degradation, climate change, economic inequality, violence and war – none of these problems can be understood in isolation. They are systemic problems, which means that they're all interconnected and interdependent. What we need is systemic solutions. Solutions that do not deal with any problem in isolation, but always within the context of other problems.

In fact, the systems approach is a powerful tool that can make all the difference. This is the profound lesson we need to learn from nature. The way to sustain life is to build and nurture communities from local to global levels. If we have all the knowledge and the technology to build a sustainable world, why don't we do it?

[Music.]

Attribution

Transcript for "Fritjof Capra Speaks to the Heart of the Matter – Trailer" by Films for Change is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 2.18, What is meant by kinship?

[Colin Jones]: Kinship is very – you can do a PhD on that in our culture. Kinship represents who we are within our family group, our kin group, our whole clan group or tribal group, so kinship is very important. The European term today, what do you have? People who are unemployed, housing problems, and problems within the family, we have a support mechanism called Centrelink. In our culture, our support mechanism was our family, our kin, so our kinship was your relationship to.

Now, for instance, a little girl grows up, she gets married, she has a little child. That first little child is the daughter. Now she is the mother and the father is the father but the father's brothers

will also become the father. The mother's sisters will also become the sister and to the Europeans that sounds very confusing, but my little grandchildren, they talk about their grandmothers, their mothers, mum Debby, mum Wilma, mum Gina, and we know who their real mum is but we know that structure of line who the other mothers are within that family group. So that young mother if she is needing a break or whatever and feeling a little bit stressed she has the other mothers – her family line – to take over from that kinship to help within that structure.

A young boy growing up, he learns to track, to hunt, to make weapons. Where does that come from? His father's brothers. His uncles in our culture, but in his culture they're also fathers, so they take that role of training and helping as well. So kinship within our culture is very, very important and that's why we talked before about the missions [inaudible] and we know we have families sent to all those areas. We may not have seen them but once you mentioned the name we know who they are, what line they are.

And that's why in our culture we'd say if I said to you, hey brother, will you come from [inaudible] growing up we were founded in the [inaudible]. Where do you come from, who has raised you, what's your family history in your background and your mixture, who you are. What are we doing? We've shown respect, because we're not only talking to you, we're referring to your forefathers as respect, so we know your line of kinship, where you come from. So we can relate to that [inaudible] and we know where you fit within that structure – very important in our culture.

Attribution

Transcript for "What is meant by kinship ?" by Rural Medical Education Australia is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 2.23, Stockholm, 1972 – When Environmental Protection was Born

[Narrator]: In 1972, global leaders came together in Sweden for the first ever United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. It was unlike any previous event, bringing together 113 governments to discuss humanity's impact on the natural

world.

[Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, speaking to the UN Conference]: It is clear that the environmental crisis which is confronting the world will profoundly alter the future destiny of our planet. No one amongst us, whatever our status, strength, or circumstance, can remain unaffected.

[Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden]: The human environment will always change. Development will continue. There will be growth. This cannot and should not be avoided. The decisive question is in which direction will we develop, by what means shall we grow, which qualities we want to achieve, and what values we wish to guide our future.

[Maurice Strong, UNEP's first executive director]: I think the lasting message of the Stockholm conference will be the realization that man has come to one of those seminal points in his history where his own activities are the principal determinants of his own future.

[Narrator]: Now, 50 years after that Stockholm meeting, we face a triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. As well as other planetary ills that are affecting our current and future well being.

[Speaker]: This triple crisis is our number one existential threat. And we need an urgent, all-out effort to turn things around.

[Narrator]: An unhealthy planet threatens human health, prosperity, equality, and peace, as we have seen only too clearly in COVID-19. It also threatens the achievement of SDGs. In this moment of truth, we need to urgently work to transform our economies and societies. The science is clear. The solutions are known. We need whole-of-society action for a whole-of-society problem. We know it can be done. The world came together to fix the ozone layer, phase out leaded fuel, and stop endangered species from going extinct.

With this in mind, the UN General Assembly has decided to convene an international meeting entitled, "Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all–our responsibility, our opportunity." It will be held in Stockholm, Sweden, from the 2nd to the 3rd of June, 2022. It will commemorate the 50 years since that 1972 watershed moment when the environment took center stage for the first time.

There is only one earth and the stakes have never been higher. Join us.

Attribution

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Transcript for Figure 2.28, It's Time to Bail Out the Planet

[George Monbiot, narrator]: The COVID-19 pandemic has been a nightmare for all of us. As vaccines are deployed across the world, many hope we'll soon be able to return to our previous lives. But before we rush to resume 'business as usual', we should pause to consider where COVID came from.

Like many infectious diseases, COVID-19 has its origins in the encroachment of human activity

into the natural world as countries have sought to grow their economies. Activities like logging, mining, road building, farm expansion, and urbanization cause massive habitat destruction.

This, in turn, has brought people into ever closer contact with wild animal species, many of which carry dangerous pathogens and diseases. When humans venture into ecosystems and

destroy the habitats of wild species, these diseases can jump from animals into the human population. Around three-quarters of new diseases [that] infect humans come from other

Animals. COVID-19 was not a random event. It's a symptom of a global economic system that's destroying the living planet and killing off our magnificent wildlife.

COVID-19 may be the first pandemic many of us have experienced, but unless we change course, it will almost certainly not be the last. So before we spend billions of dollars reinstating the status quo, perhaps it's time for a rethink in order to prevent future

pandemics and tackle ecological and climate breakdown. Governments must take a different path.

What would this look like? It means investing to decarbonize the global economy as fast as possible and shrinking our environmental footprint. It means bringing an end to destructive activities like deforestation and intensive mining. And it means ending our addiction to economic growth and putting the needs of people in the planet first.

After the financial crisis in 2008, we bailed out the banks. In 2021, we need to bail out the planet.

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Transcript for Figure 2.30, Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis, Chapter 1: Systems

Just down the hill from where I sit, Oregon's first newspaper *The Oregon Spectator,* promoted the virtues of the expanding American empire. In 1850, they wrote: "The Indian retreats before the march of civilization and American Enterprise; the howling wilderness is fast becoming fruitful fields."

What can we learn from a statement like this? Why did settler culture frame both indigenous peoples and the land as "wild" and in need of "civilizing"? What are some ways that Chinookan and other indigenous communities in this place responded, resisted and survived 200 years of colonialism? And if, as the Oregon Spectator claimed, American Enterprise set out to tame a wild world and remake it into fruitful fields, what kind of world did it actually build? What kinds of fruits have we all inherited?

My name is Ben Cushing. I'm a sociology instructor at Portland Community College in Portland OR. This podcast is an attempt to ask questions about the social and ecological crises that we currently face. Over the past couple years, the oppression and violence that is so deeply rooted within this society has been laid bare. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly impossible to deny that the living systems of this world are unraveling all around us. Too often, we discuss these twin horrors separately. But more and more, folks are beginning to connect the dots between the violent exploitation of the land and the violent exploitation of people.

So, this podcast is an effort to examine some of the root causes of the climate crisis. But, maybe surprisingly, we won't spend very much time talking about the climate crisis itself. Instead, we'll examine the ways that climate change grows from the same root as other crises we face, including racial and gender injustice and economic exploitation and precarity. In each of the four chapters of this podcast, we'll explore the roots of the climate crisis from different angles – ranging from a discussion of the consequences of the capitalist economic system, to an examination of the cultural stories that justify colonialism, genocide and slavery. And throughout, we'll try to keep sight of our own agency to resist systems of power and to co-create alternatives to the way things currently are.

We'll be exploring big questions, and we won't do them all justice. But my hope is that this series will offer one place among many to think them through.

So where to begin? I'd like to begin by thinking about systems.

The sociologist C Wright Mills is helpful here. Mills argued that sociology can offer us some tools to understand how our own experiences fit within larger social and historical contexts – how our lives are tangled up in systems. All of us, he suggests, are embedded in systems that shape the lives we live and the people we become. So, any meaningful examination of the climate crisis, and of our own experience of it, is going to have to consider how certain social systems produce certain outcomes for people *and* the land – how corporations, for example, impact workers *and* wildfires, or how settler colonialism provides the ideological framework for the oil industry.

So we need to think about systems.

One of the most powerful tools that Mills offers us, as we try to think in terms of systems, is the ability to distinguish between two kinds of problems we may face. The first kind, individual problems, are just the everyday problems that we all experience from time to time: maybe I stayed up too late watching tv, and slept through my alarm, and missed an important meeting. Individual problems are caused by something in our own private lives, and by extension, their solutions will take place within our private lives. Maybe I need to go to bed earlier, or turn up the volume on my alarm.

But the second kind of problem that Mills points our attention to are what he calls “social problems.” Social problems are larger public issues, which impact our lives. For example during an economic crisis like the COVID-19 recession, losing one’s job or home isn’t just an individual problem, it is a social problem. It is caused by something within the larger social system, and its solution must be at the scale of that system.

Too often we make a terrible mistake when we experience a social problem (like unemployment or housing insecurity) and we think of it as an individual problem. Sometimes I imagine two people sitting at their table after they’ve put their kids to bed. They have bills and foreclosure notices spread out in front of them. They’re stressed to the limit, and arguing. And the story that runs through their minds is something like this: “How did we let this happen? Why can’t I get my act together?” Now we zoom out, and we can see into the house next door, and someone is sitting at their table alone, asking themselves “how did I let this happen?” If we zoom out farther, we see that half the homes on the block are having that conversation, and the ¼ of the households in the state… and so on. These folks are experiencing a social problem and the scale of the global economy. Asd yet they feel alone. They’ve been given the wrong story. When we mistake social problems with systemic root causes and systemic solutions for individual problems with individual causes and solutions, we take on too much blame. We also let systems, and powerful players within those systems, off the hook.

Mills suggested that this skill, the ability to see our own experiences within a larger social and historical context, is crucial for understanding our own lives. Even more, he argued that it is a prerequisite for democratic self governance. If we don’t understand the systems we’re a part of… If we can’t see how policy impacts our lives, how can we meaningfully participate in creating policies that will benefit us? The individualism of this culture undermines not only our understanding of our own experiences but also our ability to democratically improve them.

What does all of this have to do with the twin crises of social injustice and ecological unraveling?

On the one hand, it can help us get clear eyed about root causes. Just as it would be wrong to blame someone who lost their job or their home in the context of the COVID-19 recession, it would also be wrong to blame a coal miner or commuter for the climate crisis. The climate crisis, and the ecological crisis more generally, has very deep roots. We’ll be exploring some of them – from the corporate structure to particular definitions of race and gender – in future chapters. The climate crisis is the predictable outcome of a certain kind of social system. It is the fruit of a certain kind of “fruitful field.”

On the other hand, being attentive to systems can help us get real about solutions. If our social systems have created the climate crisis and the larger ecological crisis, solutions will have to be at the scale of the system itself. No amount of green consumerism and lifestyle change is likely to get us out of this mess. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this fact comes from the experience of the global lockdowns in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2020, at the height of pandemic lockdowns around the world, global Co2 emissions fell by 17%, down to 2006 levels. That was remarkable to see. And yet, given the scale of these “lifestyle changes” and the pain that they caused, still, 83% of emissions remained. Mass lifestyle change without system change can only get us so far. And it places the onus of change on the individual. Again, letting systems and powerful players off the hook.

More and more, climate justice organizers have begun using a decidedly sociological framing in their slogans. All over the world, people have been carrying signs reading “system change not climate change.”

The ecological crisis isn’t just the result of individual misbehavior or unethical business practices – those easy culprits with simple solutions. Much more troublingly, it is the entirely predictable outcome of the system working as (and for whom) it has been designed to work.

If we hope to prevent the worst impacts of climate change, there will be other things that may have to change: Economic systems. Belief systems. Systems of domination.

C. Wright Mills suggested that sociological thinking can be “a terrible lesson, and a magnificent one.” It can reveal to us that we are in fact trapped within systems. But it can also reveal those systems to be made by people, and subject to change. Subject to system change.

This has been chapter one of Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis. I’m Ben Cushing. If you found this discussion to be helpful, check out the other chapters in this series. And please consider sharing it with a friend.

In this chapter we emphasized the importance of interrogating systems. In the next chapter, we turn our attention to this economic system: capitalism.

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Transcript for Figure 3.4, A Deadly Peace in Colombia as FARC Disarms

[FARC Commander, speaking in Spanish]: Our commitment is clear. In the next six months, during the transition, we are going to put down our weapons. But, implementing the [peace] agreement will be much more complicated than coming to the agreement. Communities are worried. Social activists are being murdered. People are saying the paramilitaries are here, waiting for us to disarm, so they can finally take control of the area.

[Narrator]: The leaders of Columbia's largest rebel groups signed a peace deal in late November with Colombia's government that puts an end to one of the world's longest-running conflicts. Under the deal, thousands of FARC guerrillas have marched to temporary zones where they'll stay before joining Colombian society.

But as these fighters move toward a new life, they're leaving behind a vacuum. Paramilitary organizations, drug cartels, and other rebels are already moving in to seize the territory that guerrillas once controlled. The locals living here are left to wonder whether the central government can, for the first time, establish control of this rugged country of jungles and mountains.

There's reason to worry. During peace talks last year, nearly 120 human rights activists and leftists were killed across Colombia. Few cases have been resolved. Activists accused the

guerrillas' longtime foes, the far-right paramilitaries.

Maria [last name unintelligible] attends mass to hear her brother's name read. He had spoken up for locals forced from their land by paramilitaries. A week earlier, he was killed as he walked with his partner and her daughter. He left behind a 24-year-old son.

[Maria, speaking in Spanish]: Five hooded men approached him and his partner, who were with their daughters, and the men killed him.

[Narrator]: This is a rare outing for Maria. She's also an activist and she's afraid she'll

be targeted next.

[Maria, speaking in Spanish]: We've always been scared of the post-conflict because we knew it was going to be even harder than the conflict itself. We still want peace. But the price of this peace will be many more deaths.

[Narrator]: The root of all this violence lies here in these lush hillsides. They're dotted with fields of coca, the main ingredient in cocaine. FARC's rebellion has been financed by these plants. Other groups are hoping to cash in once the guerillas move out.

[Resident of farming area, speaking in Spanish]: For many years, the peasants of Northern Cauca have had to grow the coca leaf because of the hunger and poverty of the rural communities. Coca farming brings violence to the community because it means money. But not for the peasants. The money is for the big drug traffickers.

[Music.]

[Narrator]: The last guerillas have moved into temporary camps like this where they will stay during the transition.

[Man sings in Spanish.]

[Narrator]: They live in limbo: not at war, not quite at peace. Some have trickled back into the jungles, hoping to return to work in the drug trade, but most cautiously prepare for a new quieter life.

[Lorena Jimenez, radio operator for FARC, speaking in Spanish]: I joined six years ago.

[Narrator]: Lorena Jimenez didn't want to end up like other women she knows – a poor housewife stuck in the countryside. She dreams of the new opportunities a peaceful Colombia may bring.

[Jimenez, speaking in Spanish]: "Give me an eternal day by your side so that you can see how much I want to make you happy." We are actually really romantic. We are normal people, just like any other civilians. We also fall in love.

[Narrator]: Her days as a radio operator for the FARC's battle-hardened 6th front are coming to an end.

[Carlos Antonio Acosta, FARC soldier, speaking in Spanish]: War…. It's a …. It's a mud pit. It's a swamp that no one wants to be in. Soldiers don't want war. The police don't want war. No one in this country wants war. After 26 years of war, I'm ready for peace.

[Jimenez, speaking in Spanish]: I would go home to my family. To see them again…. To be able to tell them the experiences I've seen with the FARC. And little by little, build my life as a civilian. A new Colombia. A Colombia without war. A Colombia without misery. This is my hope.

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Transcript for Figure 3.7, Are We Who We Think We Are?

In the age of social media, people increasingly get to have a sense of authorship over how they present themselves to the world. Your carefully curated Instagram feed, your Facebook profile pictures – these are ways in which you essentially get to dictate, you get to construct, the way that other people perceive you. And this raises all kinds of questions about the fluidity of our identity, about how we interface with other minds, with other people – and it raises all kinds of questions about authenticity, authentic exchanges, right? Who am I, right?

And so the philosopher by the last name of Cooley, he wrote, he was a sociologist and he wrote about Looking Glass self theory, and basically what he said is that we come to be through the interactions that we have with other people, by making models of the other person's mind. In other words, he says I am NOT who I think I am, I am not who you think I am, I am who I think you think I am. In other words, we make renderings of what other people think of us and actually play the role of becoming we think they think we are.

But in the end, we never actually get to know other people's minds. All we get to know is our

modeling of their modeling of us. So at the end of the day, we live inside of a construct of our own making. I guess perhaps what we should do is come clean about this fact and stop asking questions about authenticity in the ways that we present ourselves artfully on social media and instead accept the fact that identity is a fluid act of improvisation, and that the self is not a solid thing and never has been, you know.

Again, I am NOT who I think I am, I am NOT who you think you are, I am who I think you think I am. Wrap your head around that one.

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Transcript for Figure 3.14, Kimberlé Crenshaw at Ted + Animation

Many years ago, I began to use the term "intersectionality" to deal with the fact that many of our social justice problems, like racism and sexism, are often overlapping, creating multiple levels of social injustice.

Now, the experience that gave rise to intersectionality was my chance encounter with a woman named Emma DeGraffenreid. I actually read about Emma's story from the pages of a legal opinion written by a judge who had dismissed Emma's claim of race and gender discrimination against a local car manufacturing plant. She applied for a job, and she was not hired, and she believed that she was not hired because she was a black woman. The argument for dismissing the suit was that the employer did hire African-Americans and the employer hired women. The real problem, though, that the judge was not willing to acknowledge was what Emma was actually trying to say, that the African-Americans that were hired, usually for industrial jobs, maintenance jobs, were all men. And the women that were hired, usually for secretarial or front-office work, were all white.

Only if the court was able to see how these policies came together would he be able to

see the double discrimination that Emma DeGraffenreid was facing. But the court refused to allow Emma to put two causes of action together to tell her story because he believed that, by allowing her to do that, she would be able to have preferential treatment. She would have an advantage by having two swings at the bat, when African-American men and white women only had one swing at the bat.

But of course, neither African-American men or white women needed to combine a race and gender discrimination claim to tell the story of the discrimination they were experiencing. Why wasn't the real unfairness law's refusal to protect African-American women simply because their experiences weren't exactly the same as white women and African-American men? Rather than broadening the frame to include African-American women, the court simply tossed their case completely out of court.So first of all, black women weren't allowed to work at the plant.

Second of all, the court doubled down on this exclusion by making it legally inconsequential. And to boot, there was no name for this problem. And we all know that, where there's no name for a problem, you can't see a problem, and when you can't see a problem, you pretty much can't solve it.

Many years later, I had come to recognize that the problem that Emma was facing was a framing problem. The frame that the court was using to see gender discrimination or to see race discrimination was partial, and it was distorting.

For me, the challenge that I faced was trying to figure out whether there was an alternative narrative, a prism that would allow us to see Emma's dilemma, a prism that would allow us to rescue her from the cracks in the law, that would allow judges to see her story.

So it occurred to me, maybe a simple analogy to an intersection might allow judges to better see Emma's dilemma. So if we think about this intersection, the roads to the intersection would be the way that the workforce was structured by race and by gender. And then the traffic in those roads would be the hiring policies and the other practices that ran through those roads.

Now, because Emma was both black and female, she was positioned precisely where those roads overlapped, experiencing the simultaneous impact of the company's gender and race traffic. The law — the law is like that ambulance that shows up and is ready to treat Emma only if it can be shown that she was harmed on the race road or on the gender road but not where those roads intersected. Heterosexism, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, all of these social dynamics come together and create challenges that are sometimes quite unique.

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Transcript for Figure 3.28, Van Jones on Education and Equity

It's good to see everybody here today. I'm standing up here calling for change. You're calling for change.

One of the best ways we can fight for a positive future is to open up access to education, especially around technology. My whole family got out of poverty on a bridge called my father's back and it was largely because my dad had access to quality education. That's a ticket out of poverty for everybody, especially when we focus on preparing young people for the jobs of the future.

Young people and people of color need to be able to participate and design what's coming in technology. This is not about fighting to get in the back of the line for the last century's jobs, it's about putting underestimated young people in the front of the line for the new century's jobs – and making sure that the change that is coming works for everybody.

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Transcript for Figure 3.35, Donna Maxey, Founder of Race Talks

[Music.]

Race Talks is unique. You never know who's coming through the door. We've had all different ages be a part of the discussion. We've had people who were 100 who came. My mother lived to be 101. We've had people who were newborns who came. We had

speakers that were in fourth grade. Some of the most amazing discussion groups were third and fourth grade students who came to Race Talks with their parents. What makes it a success is the environment in the room.

I was inspired to start Race Talks because there was so much racism going on in the world. It's not a new thing; it's been going on for forever. There was a factoid that caught my attention: That by the year 2040 there would be more people of color than there were white people in the United States. I know that there's a lot of fear that white people have around the issue of people of color and are people of color going to do to white people what has been done to them in the past? And I've never heard anyone say that they would like retribution. What I hear people say is they want equity. And so I thought the best way to make sure that people understood this on all sides that they were being heard and they were being listened to was to have conversations around issues of race.

The first hour we have speakers and the second hour we have facilitated discussions. And we encourage folks when they come to not sit with the people that they know. Go sit with somebody you don't know. Each discussion is totally different. We crack jokes, we laugh. I think having food is really important. It gives them something to talk about. You know, somebody's food is wafting over towards you, you're going to go, "Oooo, what is that? Oh man, that smells really good" and the next thing you know you're in a conversation with the person. It's just a safe environment.

So what it does is it gives people practice talking to folks they don't know. Talking about difficult topics that they normally would not talk about with other people. Once people leave Race Talks they've gotten encouraged to speak about topics. Basically the whole idea is to give people a chance to be heard. To have difficult conversations. How to talk, but also how to listen.

George Floyd brought in a new era. As someone said, the Holocaust was the first racial catastrophe that was recorded. George Floyd was the first time that it was recorded and sent out over and over and over again to people over the news and so it gave white people an opportunity to see what people of color have known has gone on for decades, for generations, for centuries, in this country and across the world and ever since you've seen discussions happening about it and white people who are allies, I like to think of them more as, I like them to be co-conspirators as opposed to allies. Allies kind of on the periphery, co-conspirator you're all caught up in it, you're you're working on it, to help make a change.

Race Talks is definitely a part of a larger movement to change the discussion, the complexion, the racial scene here in this country and in the world. People are starting to realize through exposure to other folks that we want the same things. So I think structures change by individuals changing. And individuals change by having experiences. Race Talks makes a change in people's lives in that they are brought into a community as a whole. And they're having an experience together that makes them connected. That's what all of us do out in the world every day is we have experiences, we make friends with people we don't know, and that's all Race Talks is. It's a place for people to gather and and be themselves and to speak their truths.

[Music.]

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Transcript for Figure 3.42, Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis, Chapter 3: The Wall Built in Our Minds

You're listening to Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis. Chapter 3: The Walls Built in Our Minds.

The town I grew up in, Veneta, Oregon, sits at the foot of Oregon's coast range, where the hills meet the southernmost part of the Willamette Valley.

At the corner of Territorial Rd and Hwy 126, there used to be a diner that served as a bit of a hub for the community. Folks – like loggers, farmers and many others – would gather for breakfast and chew the fat with their neighbors. As a place of gathering, Big's reinforced the patterns of solidarity that tethered our community, but it also fortified our dividing lines.

In the parking lot of Big's Hi-Yu-He-He, as the diner was called, was a moc totem pole, topped with a carved Cleveland-Indians-style image of a native man, grinning.

So there, on Kalapuya land, stood a faux-Haida Pole upon which a caricatured 'Indian' smiled down at over-burdened log trucks that seemed always to drive in the same direction. This 'Indian' statue tells us almost nothing about the indigenous peoples of that land, but it tells a troubling story about my community. He was our creation, after all, and he was invented to be our mirror image. He is one important construction that justified the subordination of this land and its ancestral peoples. My whiteness is another.

I'm Ben Cushing. Welcome to Chapter 3 of "Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis."

This week we'll ask questions like: What is the relationship between the walls in our minds and the walls between our communities? Where do those walls come from? What purposes do they serve? And whose?

Sometimes I ask the folks in my classes whether or not Wednesday exists. They usually look at me funny for a second, then look at each other, and start talking. There's often some debate, but they usually come to a very important conclusion, pretty much on their own. Someone will say, "No, it's not real. Somebody just made it up." Somebody else will respond, "Just cuz they made it up doesn't mean it isn't real."

It turns out that lots of things are like this: not real, and yet really real. Made up, but consequential. Money is made up, but anyone who's faced hunger or eviction knows it's real. Nations are made up, but anyone facing a border wall or a tank knows they matter.

Wednesday is an example of what is sometimes called a social construction. That term has gained some traction in the last couple of years. A social construction, like Wednesday, is a category. It's part of our language, and we use it to make sense of the world around us. In this case, it helps us organize our sense of time. When pressed on it, we can certainly see that there's no essential Wednesdayness of one day, or Thursdayness of the day after. But since we all basically agree on what day of the week it is, the social construction we call "Wednesday" shapes how we see the world and how we behave – like whether we go to work or gather with our friends. Social constructions matter because they organize our shared sense of reality. To borrow a phrase from the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, they give us patterns of "vision and division" – shared ways of seeing, and dividing into categories, the world around us. And since social constructions are made by people, and arbitrary, that means that our sense of reality is also made by people, and arbitrary. And that matters.

Actually, all aspects of culture, from our values to our big stories to our social constructions like Wednesday, are made by people. And all of us participate in that process. In a sense, we're all co-creators of our shared worldview. But it's not like we all sit in a circle and come to consensus on our culture. This isn't an especially democratic situation.

Do all people in this society have equal power? If not, do those groups with more power have more influence over the culture? More influence over beliefs, language, stories, representations of other, less powerful, people? If they do, do those powerful groups shape the culture in ways that benefit them?

If the answer to this last question is yes, that's pretty troubling. That would mean that our own beliefs could be hurting us. That my own sense of reality could be manipulating me.

In this chapter, and the next, we'll be exploring some of the ways that culture can function to legitimize systems of power. It can even make those systems feel natural and inevitable – as "just the way the world works."

We'll also ask questions about how culture might be a site of our resistance. If beliefs and stories can justify oppressive systems, can we not also use beliefs and stories to challenge those systems and call into being alternative ways of living together – ways that do justice to our past and present and allow us to build the worlds we want and need?

But that's a very big subject. So where should we begin? Let's start by thinking about division. Or more specifically, about Dichotomy.

I began by talking a bit about Big's Hi-Yu-He-He, the diner in a white rural community with a racist native mascot. In that case, we can think of the social construction of the "Indian" and the social construction of the "white man" as a dichotomy. Both categories – Indian and White – are made by people – like Wednesday. And in this case the so-called Indian and the so called "white man" are presented as opposites – as profoundly different and mutually exclusive. That's how dichotomies work. They're two socially constructed categories, which are defined as mutually exclusive and profoundly different – often as opposites.

So, we need to try to get our heads around the socially constructed dichotomies that have played an important role in justifying and naturalizing the systems of power that we've inherited. These dichotomies are not only crucial to understanding our past, they are

key to understanding and dismantling the systems of violence and exploitation we face today. They also help us see how interwoven various systems of power are, from gendered violence, to institutional racism to the fossil fuel industry.

In what follows I'm going to name some pretty painful elements of this culture, including racist and sexist stereotypes. To understand this culture, and how it erases, justifies and normalizes all kinds of violence and exploitation, we have to take a clear eyed look at some devastating ideas. What makes that worse, is that if we're honest, most of us will find that these ideas have made their way into our own thinking about the world. And for many listeners, they may be just one more reminder of the daily indignities of living in this society.

Sometimes, when I'm teaching, I'll put a T-chart up on the board – like a big cross. On the top left side, I'll write "human" and on the top right I'll write "Nature." Human and Nature are a classic dichotomy. Students then brainstorm some of the cultural meanings associated with each. It doesn't take them long to see that this culture frames them as opposites. We end up creating a list that usually looks about like this.

Humans: Civilized

Nature: Wild

Humans: Dominant

Nature: Submissive

Humans: subject, or actors

Nature: objects, acted upon

Human: Rational

Nature: Irrational, unthinking

Human: Owner

Nature: Property

Human: Master

Nature: Wild and in need of taming

The list goes on. Safe/Dangerous. Ordered/Chaotic. If you wanted, you could begin to build your own list. There's a lot more to be added.

Remember, this list that we're building isn't about naming what's true. Most of us know on some level that this stuff isn't true. It's about noting the cultural meanings that function in the background of our minds, and which may actually influence how we think and behave.

Note how much of this is about defining relationships. Dominant/Submissive. Owner/owned. Master/tamed. These ideas call into being certain ways of relating to the non-human world. And they make those relationships feel inevitable….natural.

This human/nature dichotomy is so powerful that we even apply it to ourselves, dividing our being into opposing parts. We have a mind which we frame as human and a body that we frame as natural. Many of us spend a good deal of time and money trying to tame our bodies. Perhaps even more powerfully, many of our religious traditions draw a hard line between our souls – which are sacred and not of this world – and our bodies – which are profane and worldly, the source of our sins. As Wendell Berry wrote: "Perhaps the greatest disaster of human history is one that happened to or within religion: that is, the conceptual division between the holy and the world, the excerpting of the Creator from the creation." The dichotomy of the holy and the profane devalues the world, and all the living beings that constitute it, including, I'd argue, us. We're left with, in the words of the theologian Matthew Fox, a deep "cosmological loneliness."

I'll then put another T-chart on the board, for another dichotomy – another division grounded in this culture. On the left side, I write masculine, and the right, feminine.

At this point, you could probably hit pause, and fill this in on your own. But these are some of the meanings we often write down:

Masculine: Strong

Feminine: Weak

Masculine: Dominant

Feminine: Submissive

Masculine: Rational

Feminine: Irrational, emotional

Masculine: Protector, provider

Feminine: Vulnerable, dependant

Masculine: Active Subject

Feminine: Passive Object

Of course the list could go on and on. And of course it would vary at different times and places. These are, after all, cultural creations, subject to constant change. And they've certainly changed over time. Still, they persist in U.S. society today.

These are not just meanings. Importantly, they are also roles. It's as if we're all actors in a kind of play, and, given the masculine or feminine roles, we're all expected to read our scripts as written, and relate to one another as such. And of course most of the institutions of our society have been historically (and often still are) organized according to these roles and the power relations they imply: Husband/wife. Doctor/Nurse. Dentist/Hygienist. Pilot/flight attendant. Boss/Secretary. Principal/Teacher. And so on. Each are gendered roles in gendered institutions, and each concentrates power in predictable ways. These meanings matter because they don't only shape our thinking. They shape our behavior and organize our institutions. They organize power.

Interestingly many scholars have argued compellingly that these definitions of gender were created for the purpose of organizing unequal relations of power – determining who serves whom and how. In just one example, the social scientist Silvia Federici argues in her remarkable book Caliban and the Witch, that the rise of capitalism required the fragmenting of the communal aspects of medieval peasant life and particularly women's power within it. The Witch Hunts that spanned the 16th-17th Centuries, she argues, were actually a form of class war waged by European elites against poor and working class women. The result, she argues, was the redefinition of femininity along the lines we just outlined, framing women as irrational and dangerous – shews in need of taming. The centuries long campaign of public torture and terror that goes by the name "the witch hunts" attempted to brake women's communal ties, their economic independence and the peasant uprisings they often led. Despite this continuous assault, various groups of women in all kinds of contexts have been resisting these forces ever since.

Federicci's argument is far more complex than we can tackle here. But the point, for our purposes, is that this culture's ideas about gender aren't just wrong or cruel (which of course they are). Even more, they're functional to a specific system of power. They call into being certain relationships of domination and exploitation, which get branded as natural. It's just human nature, we're told. Just the way things are.

The last T-chart to go up on the board is labeled with the words "white" and "black."

Like "human" and "nature," and like "masculine" and "feminine," "white" and "black" are social constructions – dichotomies invented by people. Historians have a pretty clear understanding of when, where and why racial categories were invented. And, perhaps by now, you can guess the gist of the story. Racial categories function to legitimize various forms of power, historically and today. They tell a story about who can enslave whom. About whose land can be taken by whom. And whose voice – and indeed whose life – really matters within this society.

So my students and I begin the ugly task of filling in our T-chart. It usually ends up looking something like this.

White: Civilized

Black: Savage

White: Safe

Black: Dangerous

White: Clean

Black: Dirty

White: Rational

Black: Irrational

White: Moral

Black: Perverse

White: Human

Black: Not fully human

We could go on. But you get the picture.

Over a century ago, the sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois pointed out that the act of representation was an act of power. One of the powers of dominant groups in a society – in this case, white people – is to represent themselves and to represent others. In other words, white folks have had the power to define "whiteness" for themselves and "blackness" for black people.

More recently, the black feminist sociologist Patrical Hill Collins built on this insight, arguing that racial stereotypes aren't just generalizations about a racial group – which would wrong because they erase individual differences. Rather, she suggests that racial stereotypes were strategically developed by white elites to justify specific forms of exploitation and violence. So for example, when white slavers framed the black men they enslaved as dangerous – especially to white women – they justified a whole regime of violent repression to maintain black men's subordination and punish anyone who fought back. Even more, Collins argues that white slavers developed gender specific and class specific stereotypes, which were applied to people according to the specific types of labor they were forced into on plantations. For example, enslaved men who worked in the fields were framed as strong but dangerous, and enslaved women who worked in the master's home were framed as maternal and safe – the mammy stereotype. She called these representations controlling images. Images that function to maintain a certain kind of race class and gender hierarchy.

There's much more to Collin's argument than we can address here, but the point, for our purposes, is that these socially constructed categories aren't just bad ideas. They're tools of power. And they've functioned to erase and legitimize some of the most horrific things that we humans have ever done to one another.

Some listeners might be wondering what all of this has to do with the climate crisis. These seem like very different issues. And indeed, in many respects they are.

But consider the remarkable similarities between each of these socially constructed dichotomies: Human/Nature, Masculine/Feminine, White/Black. They aren't exactly the same, for sure. But they sure do rhyme.

Note how each creates roles and calls into being certain kinds of relationships: Relationships of domination of subordination. Relations that frame the dominant groups as rational (humans, men, white people) and the subordinate groups (nature, women, black people and other people of color) as irrational and wild. They frame that encourage the dominant groups to tame and use the subordinate groups. They frame the dominant groups as active subjects, while framing the subordinate groups as passive objects; things to be used.

Modern systems of power, from settler colonialism to capitalism to imperialism, rest upon socially constructed categories. These categories serve a purpose. They justify violence and exploitation and erase the harm they cause, at least in the minds of those perpetrating the violence.

What does it mean that patriarchy, white supremacy and extractive capitalism all rest upon such similar ideological foundations? Can this insight offer us clues about how to dismantle these systems? Given how interwoven these systems are, can we really tackle the roots of the climate crisis if we don't also tackle white supremacy and patriarchy?

On the one hand, this can feel really overwhelming. How do we go up against such massive interlocking systems of power?

But on the other hand, as Audre Lorde and many others have pointed out, when we see how intersecting these systems really are, we don't only see the size and power of the system, we also begin to see our many potential partners in its dismantling.

Maybe this is overly simplistic or trite. But I'm going to say it anyway because I feel it's true. If the question is, "How do we go up against such a massive interlocking system of power? A system so effectively built on division…" Maybe the answer is "together."

In this episode, we've explored some of the walls in our minds. Next episode, we'll examine how the stories we tell shape the lives we live.

If you've found this podcast to be helpful, consider sharing it with a friend. Thanks for listening.

Attribution

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Transcript for Figure 4.1, Tourists In Colombia Can Now Take Jungle Hikes With Ex-FARC Guerrilla Guides

[Mary Louise Kelly, Host]: Colombia is home to snowcapped Andean peaks and lush Amazon jungle, an ideal vacation destination. But drug violence and a long-running guerrilla conflict has kept tourists away for decades. In 2016, Colombia's largest guerrilla group disarmed, and now some ex-combatants are guiding tourists through former war zones. For our international travel series Wish You Were Here, reporter John Otis takes us into the jungle with former militants.

[Crosstalk in Spanish.]

[John Otis, Reporter]: I'm with a small group of tourists preparing to rappel down a canyon in southern Colombia. It's a 150-foot drop next to a massive waterfall, but we're with a couple of pros.

[Jairo]: (Speaking Spanish).

[Otis]: Our guides, the husband-and-wife team of Jairo and Daisy are intimately familiar with this jungle terrain. For years, they patrolled here as members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, a Marxist rebel group known as the FARC.

[Daisy]: (Speaking Spanish)

[Otis]: To escape from army troops, Daisy tells us, the rebels sometimes had to rappel down cliffs with just tree vines – though, for us tourists, they've provided ropes and safety harnesses.

[Daisy]: (Speaking Spanish)

[Otis]: These were things you had to do during the war to save your life, she says.

[Crosstalk in Spanish.]

[Otis]: When the war ended five years ago, 13,000 FARC guerrillas laid down their weapons, but many lacked skills to secure jobs in the cities. So with funding from the Norwegian government, about 30 of them set up a tourism business in Mesetas, a town that used to be in rebel territory.

[Unidentified Person 1]: (Speaking Spanish).

[Otis]: They attract a lot of tourists from Bogota, a six-hour drive away. The most popular activity is rafting, here on the Guejar River, which features swimming holes, waterfalls and plenty of rapids.

[Sound of rafters yelling.]

[Otis]: Despite the thrills, sightseeing with former guerrillas does feel a bit odd. Though it claimed to be waging war on behalf of Colombia's poor, the FARC also trafficked cocaine, carried out massacres and kidnapped civilians for ransom.

[Felix Sanabria]: (Speaking Spanish).

[Otis]: Former rebel Felix Sanabria, who heads the tourism agency, insists that the FARC fought for a just cause and claims its war atrocities haven't scared away visitors.

[Sanabria]: (Speaking Spanish).

[Otis]: Tourists want to hear directly from us why we went into the hills to fight and what we're up to today, Sanabria tells me. No one has said they don't want to be with us because we used to be guerrillas. Indeed, the whole idea is to give tourists a taste of what their lives are really like.

[Unidentified Person 2]: (Speaking Spanish).

[Otis]: Rather than a fancy hotel, for example, we bunked down at a resettlement camp deep in the jungle, which is home to 80 former FARC rebels. Alongside them, we eat rice, beans and chicken stew in a rustic mess hall. The guerrilla experience costs about $125 per person.

[Crosstalk in Spanish.]

[Otis]: At night, we sit around a campfire as Marcos Alvis, a former FARC commander, fields our questions about the war.

[Marcos Alvis]: (Speaking Spanish).

[Manuela Jimenez]: (Speaking Spanish).

[Otis]: One member of our group, Bogota high school student Manuela Jimenez, asks if Alvis has ever killed anyone.

[Alvis]: (Speaking Spanish).

[Otis]: He explains that amid the chaos of combat, it was usually impossible to tell. Then comes another tough question – why did the FARC kidnap so many people?

[Alvis]: (Speaking Spanish).

[Otis]: Rather than explaining, Alvis, who now has tears in his eyes, apologizes to us and asks our forgiveness for the abuses the rebels committed during the war. Under the peace process, former rebels have been carrying out similar acts of atonement with war victims throughout Colombia. Afterwards, Manuela, the high school student, reflects on the emotional evening.

[Jimenez]: It's really weird. Like, I've heard all my life, FARC did this, FARC did that, they kidnapped people. And now you see them asking for forgiveness and wanting to make up for everything they've done. And I don't think they can make up exactly, but I think if they continue to do this tourism, that it's really nice. They want to share paradises that have never been seen because of war.

[Sound of waterfall.]

[Otis]: One hidden patch of paradise is that cliff next to the waterfall we're about to rappel down.

[Crosstalk and laughter.]

[Otis]: Manuela's mother, Margarita Martinez, had never rappelled before. But after she makes it safely to the bottom, she points out that the former guerrillas guiding her down have been surviving in the wilderness all their lives.

[Margarita Martinez]: So, actually, you gave me much more confidence than just, like, a regular guy who does – you know, who does a little training. So, actually, it was better to be in their hands.

[Cheering.]

[Otis]: And with that, she starts back up the cliff to do it all over again.

For NPR News, I'm John Otis in Mesetas, Colombia.

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Transcript for Figure 4.2, If The World Were 100 People

[Music.]

Text on screen reads:

If the world were 100 people….

- 50 are Women | 50 are Men
- 14 Americas | 11 Europeans | 15 Africans | 60 Asians

- [Circles represent age groups:] Age 0-14 | Age 15-24 | Age 25-54 | Age 55-64 | Age 65+
- 31 Christians | 23 Muslims | 15 Hindus | 7 Buddhists | 16 Unaffiliated
- 12 Mandarin | 6 Spanish | 5 English | 4 Hindi | 3 Arabic – and the rest speak 6,500 other languages!
- 86 Can Read & Write | 14 Cannot
- 15 People make less than $2 Per Day | 56 People make between $2-$10 Per Day | 13 People make between $10-$20 Per Day | 9 People make between $20-$50 Per Day | 6 People make between $50-$90 Per Day | 1 Person makes more than $90 Per Day
- 1 Person Controls 50% of all the money
- 21 Overweight | 63 Healthy | 15 Malnourished | 1 Starving
- 87 Have Clean Water | 13 Do Not
- 77 Have Shelter | 33 Do Not
- 44 Have Internet | 56 Do Not
- 75 Have a Mobile | 25 Do Not
- 7 Attended College | 93 Did Not

If the world were 100 people….

Would we all fight harder for equality?

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Transcript for Figure 4.3, What Is Globalization? Understand Our Interconnected World

Every day, we knowingly or unknowingly experience globalization, the worldwide movement of people, ideas, money, goods, data, drugs, weapons, computer and biological viruses, greenhouse gases and more.

This isn't new. People and goods have always moved around the world. The Silk Road, a network of trade routes stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to East Asia, facilitated the spread of fabrics, spices, art, weapons, technology, ideas and disease over thousands of years.

What is new, however, is the scale, velocity and range of these flows across borders. Think about the speed at which an infectious disease like Ebola or Zika can spread around the world, or the reach of a financial contagion like the crisis of 2008. Look at your smartphone and think about the global coordination it took to produce. The interconnectedness of the modern world

allows ideas, behaviors, styles, products and news to spread more quickly and broadly than during any other period of history.

But globalization's effects are complex. What represents an upside for some people might represent a downside for others. Technology, for example, allows billions of people to contact friends and access news from around the world. International supply chains, the networks that turn raw materials into finished items, produce and distribute goods more quickly and cheaply than ever. But the pace of technological innovation has also led to the automation of manufacturing processes, which eliminates jobs.

Trade is another example. Between 1970 and 2015 global exports and imports of goods each multiplied more than 50 times more. Imports lead to increased consumer choices and reduced prices and more trade can strengthen ties between trading partners and promote peace, security and growth. But more trade opportunities and technological advances mean many corporations choose to ship their operations to countries where the labor and natural resources are cheaper, and individuals and companies that can take advantage of international resources experience outsized gains, which widens the growing gap between the rich and the poor.

The effects of globalization, both negative and positive, are a reality. No one can opt out entirely, but governments have many options for responding. They can choose how open or closed they want to be towards trade investment. Visitors, immigrants, refugees, Internet traffic and more.

Governments can also contend with globalization through collective rather than national responses. A set of international institutions and other arrangements has emerged

to manage globalization.

Although some countries view globalization as a threat to local identity, culture or social and political norms, no country can be entirely self-sufficient. The challenge is for individual governments and the world collectively to promote globalization's benefits while effectively helping the individuals and countries that globalization hurts the most.

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Transcript for Figure 4.6, How The Term 'Third World' Is An Outdated Term

[Jay Cameron, narrator]: Do you say, "Third World," when you describe impoverished countries or conditions? Well, I've got good news: Today's the day you learn that the term is offensive and outdated.

For years, many historians and commentators have been screaming from the rooftops to erase "the Third World" from our vocabulary. The phrase, however, persists.

[Montage of speakers using the term "Third World"]: "We look like the Third World. I mean, honestly, we look like the Third World. This is stuff that you see in another country."

"It's a Third World."

"Third World."

"Third World country."

"Third World country."

[Cameron]: So what gives? Why is the term so contested? Well, for starters, it has a very specific, long expired context. The term originated in the 1950s to map out Cold War alliances. The First World consisted of the capitalist block, led by the U.S. The Second World was the Communist bloc, led by the Soviet Union. The Third World encapsulated the non-aligned countries, which the

superpowers competed to influence. So a Third World originated around now defunct political alliances.

Today the term is stripped of its nuance and loaded with offensive connotations. It's used to invoke images of extreme poverty, civil unrest, and crumbling infrastructure, producing a false sense of superiority as if those issues aren't happening in the so-called First World. A quick glance at several indicators shows just how unfettered from reality a First World versus Third

World dichotomy really is.

Take income inequality. According to the World Bank, the United States is the 51st most unequal in the world, sandwiched between Djibouti and Cote d'Ivoire. Australia is 93rd, right between Romania and Syria. If you peruse The Economist's Democracy Index, you'll find so-called Third World countries like Uruguay, Mauritius, and Costa Rica listed under full democracy, and on the flawed democracy list, the United States, Belgium, and Italy.

Or how about responses to the Covid-19 outbreak? Surely the richer, more developed countries handled it much better. Not quite. In 2020, Vietnam tallied 1,465 cases and 35 deaths. The United Kingdom: 2.4 million cases and over 73,000 deaths. Oh, and Vietnam has 30 million

more people.

The key takeaway here is that every country has the capacity to fail miserably in certain areas and thrive in others.

If Third World is demeaning, what's a suitable alternative? Some have adopted terminology like

developing or low-income and middle-income countries. Others opt to divide the world between

the global south and global north. Even better, just compare apples with apples. If it's education systems you want to contrast, simply stick to that.

Remember, the world is not black and white, so stop dumbing it down.

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Transcript for Figure 4.10, Land Grabbing in Mali

[Narrator]: Mali, in West Africa, is one of the world's poorest nations. In a practice known as land grabbing, land which has been cultivated by local farmers for generations has been earmarked for development, removing entire communities in the process.

[Boubakary Sidy Coulibaly, dispossessed farmer, speaking in unknown language]: They came unexpectedly and took our land. They beat up the elders, they beat up the women… even the pregnant women.

[Narrator]: Libyan multinational Malibya has been given 100,000 hectares of farmland here in the Ségou region in a 25-billion-dollar project to produce food for export. It's part of a World Bank strategy to build economies in the developing world through foreign investment. But the reality for Mali's subsistence farmers – 80 percent of the population – is very different.

[Subsistence Farmer, speaking in unknown language]: They told us they wouldn't give us the full value of the houses…. They would only be giving us a small amount.

[Narrator]: Women are particularly hard-hit when their land is taken away, making it difficult for them to feed their families. As food prices rise, UNICEF has warned a million children's lives are at risk.

[Aimina, dispossessed farmer]: Us women depend on farming. If we cannot make our living from farming, we cannot take care of our children, or take care of ourselves.

[Narrator]: Land grabbing has become an increasing problem in the developing world. Since 2008, an area the size of France has been snapped up.

[Renée Vellvé, food security specialist]: The World Bank actually did a report which said that the UK and China lead the land grab race. Africa represents perhaps half of the land grabbing that's going on right now.

[Narrator]: With land grabbing thought to be a cause of the current food crisis and of increasing instability in countries like Mali, campaigners are calling on the World Bank to stop encouraging this sort of development. For the people of Ségou, the struggle continues.

[Aimina]: We cannot leave our land… we will not leave our land. Because we are farmers and cultivating our land is the only thing we know. It is the only thing we have ever known in all our lives.

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Transcript for Figure 4.11, Globalization theories [clipped at 4:05] | Society and Culture | MCAT | Khan Academy

All right. Let's take a look at globalization and some of the theories and different perspectives about it. In general, globalization is the sharing of culture and money and products between countries that is happening because of international trade and advances in transportation and communication.

You might think that globalization is a recent development but really International Trade has influenced changes across borders for centuries. Silk and spice trade routes through East Asia that began as early as the first century BCE introduced different cultures and linked the economies of different nations. As did the English and Dutch shipping empires in the 16th century. Globalization is also a social process where people become more and more aware of other cultures and peoples across geographical political and social borders. The economic interdependence of different countries as well as advancements in communication technology and the progress of technology in general have all contributed to globalization.

There are many theories of globalization. Let's look at World Systems Theory first. World Systems Theory focuses on the importance of the world as a unit rather than looking at individual countries. It divides the world into three regions: core countries, periphery countries, and semi-periphery countries.

Core countries include areas like Western Europe and the United States. These countries have a strong central government with enough tax to support it. They are economically Diversified, industrialized, and relatively independent of outside control. They have strong middle and working classes and focus on higher skill production of material goods rather than raw materials.

Periphery countries are those in Latin America and Africa and tend to have a relatively weak government. They tend to depend on only one type of economic activity like extracting raw materials. There's a high percentage of poor and uneducated people as well as a small upper class which controls most of the economy and this creates a huge inequality in the population. These countries are greatly influenced by core countries and transnational corporations which can harm the future economic potentials of the periphery countries.

Semi-periphery countries like India and Brazil make up the middle ground between core and periphery. They are often not dominant in international trade but they have a relatively diversified and developed economy. These semi-periphery countries can come either from periphery countries, moving up towards the industrialized core countries, or from core countries, declining toward periphery status.

The World Systems Theory is a fluid model but it is criticized for being too focused on the economy and the core countries and forgetting about culture or even the class struggles of individual countries.

Then we have Modernization Theory, which proposes that all countries follow a similar path of development from a traditional to a modern society. It assumes that with some help traditional countries can develop into modern countries in the same way that today's modern countries developed in the first place. It looks at the internal social dynamics as the country adapts to new technologies and the political and social changes that occur.

Dependency Theory was a reaction to Modernization Theory and uses the idea of core and periphery countries from the World Systems Theory to look at the inequalities between countries. Basically it is the idea that periphery or third world countries are poor and export resources to the wealthy core or First World countries not because they are in an earlier state of development but because they have been integrated into the world system as an undeveloped country. They have their own structures and features not seen in developed countries and will not accelerate to become a developed nation. They are in an unfavorable economic position that means they don't even have the opportunity to improve and develop. They'll remain poor and dependent on wealthier nations.

These are just a few of the theories of globalization. There are lots more that look at culture or social networking, economy, politics, or even goods. The world is now a busy and bustling place where events and things can have an effect around the globe.

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Transcript for Figure 4.15, Apartheid Architecture

In South Africa, the first thing you come across is apartheid architecture – what that did and what impact it has today. So I think apartheid architecture is arguably one of the most genius

architecture that has ever happened, because it has orchestrated not just building but how people live, in people's lives, far beyond the regime of apartheid architecture.

So what they did was, they came up with this thing called the 40/40 rule so where they would build a 40-square-meter home which would be a labour camp for the majority of the people – black people in South Africa. Place it 40 kilometers away from town, where sort of the white masters lived, and then devoid those communities of economic opportunities and gathering places because those will have political implications with them. And what this did was it forced people to spend 40 percent of their income

commuting 40 kilometres to go work in town where only, that's where the jobs and economic opportunities were. So that's what back in the 1960s when that was felt and about it in the 25 years ago.

I'm 25 – just when I was born it ended – but the laws might have changed, but the architecture didn't. So people are still spending 40 percent of their income commuting to work in town today, which then renders them incapable of developing their own homes and their own communities.

And this wasn't just apartheid architecture. We started looking at different housing projects around the world and we realized the majority of social housing projects around the world have failed. And they have failed because of three reasons. One, for some reason when people are designing for low-income communities they think that they shouldn't consult them in the designing of their own home. It's failed because whenever people design low-income communities they seldom put them away from economic opportunities which is ironic because the only reason why you have slums and shanty towns is because people are trying to move closer to work. Three, people design these social housing projects in a box, which is almost impossible to add on as the family grows in number and in economy so it practically forces people to stay within that low-income bracket.

So I partnered with Andrews University masters architecture class to do the opposite of what every social housing project has done and that way we did our first pilot project in a bungalow with Ubuntu Design Group.

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Transcript for Figure 4.26, The 'Cost' Of Globalization

[Narrator]: You've been waiting in line for hours to get your hands on the newest version of your smartphone, promising quicker access to information while featuring quick and intuitive on-the-go banking, a built in GPS to help you get to that concert you've been so desperately waiting for, and of course, the easiest tools to help you share that cute cat video on your social networks.

The world is at your fingertips. While our smartphones can easily connect us to the rest of the world, the processes and resources involved in manufacturing, distributing, and selling smartphones to customers are not so simple. iPhones for example are the direct result of over hundreds of thousands of people spanning over nineteen countries and three continents. From concept and design to the different components and phases involved in the development of the iPhone, these components each have a different development process and are often sourced from a variety of countries. From semiconductors then accelerometers, to memory chips and application processors, these parts are all eventually sent to China where factory workers follow a meticulous one hundred and forty one step process to assemble an iPhone in less than 24 hours. By the end of 2014, over 70 million iPhones were assembled and shipped to stores across the world. The cross-border production of the iPhone represents just one of the processes of globalization.

International communities, organizations, corporations, and individuals are becoming increasingly interconnected through economics, politics, culture, and the environment. The increase of countries opening their borders has promoted substantial proportions of global trade. In economically developing parts of the world, lower wages relaxed laws, and reduced taxes have made it more profitable for multinational corporations like Apple to manufacture products overseas instead of in their home countries.

Undeniably, globalization has helped consumers access and create a diversity of products

and services at a lower price and at a quicker pace. Although the idea of increased international trade and faster technological development seems like a pretty good thing, is globalization beneficial to everyone? What is the true cost of achieving that lower price point? Sourcing cheaper labor often results in hiring overseas workers that migrate thousands of miles in search of employment, like the many who migrate to Shenzhen, China to work for the Taiwanese owned technology company Foxconn. These deprived workers struggle to feed their families and difficulty obtaining adequate health care because they pull in less than a living wage, earning as low as an equivalent of $1.78 US an hour. Foxconn is frequently in the spotlight for their unethical factory conditions, and strenuous work hours, and their unbearable working conditions resulted in fourteen workers committing suicide in 2010.

Similar work conditions have been documented in mineral mines around the world. The quest to obtain minerals has not only contributed to harsh mining conditions and increasing environmental degradation, but has also supported the funding of the

ongoing civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo through the illegal mining and selling of conflict minerals to technology companies around the world. As technology allows us to connect with one another on a global scale, this awareness has mobilized individuals around the world to campaign against these injustices, encouraging companies to become more transparent and share information about their products' origins. These companies are taking action by mandating safer work conditions, enforcing fines for in-compliant suppliers, and even threatening to move business elsewhere. New companies are also following suit in response to the ongoing criticism of the technology industry. Fairphone, a Netherlands based smartphone company is employing these standards by committing to ethics based production and sourcing methods.

Where do we go from here? It's easy to point the finger at corporations and blame them for the negative social and environmental impacts of smartphone production, but is there something more we can do as consumers? What is our responsibility as part of the global supply chain? The next time you pickup your phone to check out that cute cat video, remember the combined efforts of the people around the world who worked to make your phone. The world is truly held at our fingertips.

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Transcript for Figure 4.27, Hans Rosling's 200 Countries, 200 Years, 4 Minutes

[Hans Rosling]: Visualization is right at the heart of my own work – I teach global health. And I know having the data is not enough. I have to show it in ways people both enjoy and understand.

Now, I'm going to try something I've never done before: animating the data in real space. With a bit of technical assistance from the crew. So here we go.

First, an axis for health: life expectancy from 25 years to 75 years. And down here an axis for wealth: income per person, four hundred four thousand and

$40,000. So down here is poor and sick, and up here is rich and healthy.

Now I'm going to show you the world 200 years ago in 1810. Here come over countries Europe, brown; Asia, red; Middle East, green; Africa South of Sahara, blue; and the Americas, yellow. And the size of the country bubbles showed the size of the population and in 1810. It was pretty crowded down there, wasn't it? All countries were sick and poor. Life expectancy were below 40 in all countries and only the UK and the Netherlands were slightly better off — but not much.

And now I start the world. The Industrial Revolution makes countries in Europe and elsewhere move away from the rest, but the colonized countries in Asia and Africa, they are stuck down there. And eventually the Western countries get healthier and healthier.

And now we slow down to show the impact of the First World War and the Spanish flu epidemic. What a catastrophe. And now I speed up through the 1920s and the 1930s, and in spite of the Great Depression, Western countries forge on towards greater wealth and health. Japan and some others try to follow, but most countries stay down here now.

After the tragedies of the Second World War, we stop a bit to look at the world in 1948. 1948 was a great year. The war was over. Sweden topped the medal table at the Winter Olympics, and I was born. But the differences between the countries of the world was wider than ever. The United States was in the front, Japan was catching up, Brazil was way behind, Iran was getting a little richer from oil, but still had short lives, and the Asian giants – China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia – they were still poor and sick down here.

But look what is about to happen here. We go again in my lifetime. Former colonies gained independence, and then finally they started to get healthier and healthier and healthier. And in the 1970s then, countries in Asia, Latin America started to catch up with the Western countries. They became the emerging economies, some in Africa. Follows some Africans were stuck in civil war and others hit by HIV.

And now we can see the world today in the most up-to-date statistics. Most people today live in the middle. But there are huge differences at the same time between the best of countries and the worst of countries, and there are also huge inequalities within countries. These bubbles show country averages, but I can split them. Take China. I can split it into provinces. There goes

Shanghai. It has the same wealth and health as Italy today, and there is the poor inline province Guizhou, it is like Pakistan. And if I split it further, the rural parts are like Ghana in Africa.

And yet despite the enormous disparities today, we have seen 200 years of remarkable progress. That huge historical gap between the west and the rest is now closing. We have become an entirely new converging world and I see a clear trend into the future. With aid, trade, green technology, and peace, it's fully possible that everyone can make it to the healthy, wealthy corner.

Well, what you have seen in the last few minutes is a story of 200 countries, shown over 200 years and beyond. It involves plotting 120,000 numbers – pretty neat.

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Transcript for Figure 5.1, In the Colombian Amazon, Peace Has Environmental Consequences

[Narrator]: A […] peace deal brought big changes for one of Nicaragua's southern neighbors, Colombia. The peace deal ended a half-century-long conflict between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or the FARC – a conflict that killed more than 220,000 people and created one of the worst crises of internally displaced people in the world.

The peace deal also opened up parts of Colombia that were considered too dangerous to venture into for decades, and that's had some side effects for the environment. Forests in former FARC territory are being chopped down and burned at record rates now that there's a power vacuum in remote parts of the country. Reporter Gena Steffans is based in Colombia and recently reported on this from deep in the Amazon rainforest.

[Gena Steffens, reporter]: When you go down these rivers during the burning season, the atmosphere is just filled with a thick, yellow smoke. And as you're going down the river you see these towers of smoke just billowing up into the sky.

[Narrator]: Steffans says the area being deforested grew by 44% in the year after Colombia's peace deal was finalized.

[Steffens]: We're talking almost 360,000 American football fields. I mean, the scale of the deforestation is just something that nobody has ever really seen before in this region.

[Narrator]: And who is responsible for felling all these trees?

[Steffens]: There's two main groups that are responsible. One is just average campesinos, or, you know, rural peasants, who are taking advantage of the fact that the FARC aren't there to increase the land that they use for agricultural production or raising cattle. But also there's been, apparently, individuals with a lot of economic resources who are sponsoring groups of workers to go into the most isolated reaches of the forest and cutting down more than 100 hectares at a time, which is huge. So it's basically related to this land grab where these individuals are taking advantage of the power void to take control of land that essentially doesn't belong to anybody.

[Narrator]: So, bad for the environment, but obviously this land represents an opportunity for cattle ranchers, then, doesn't it?

[Steffens]: Yes, absolutely. One guy who I visited has only a few hectares to his name and the only way that he can support his family is to cut down a few hectares more of trees and put a few cows on there in order to sell the milk, because no other crops grow on the soil. And so, the only economic opportunity that he sees in his life is cattle ranching. And the other opportunity would be to cultivate coca, which is illegal.

[Narrator]: So you're really describing a crisis, Gena. Take us back, if you would, to how the FARC protected the forest in [area]. Were they environmentalists by default because people were too scared to go into the jungles, or did they actually have a real strategy for environmental protection?

[Steffens]: Well, I think a lot of people will say that the FARC enacted environmental controls because they were, you know, these great environmentalists, but – and, OK, I think that there is some truth to that – but probably more so, I think it was a tactical necessity. Because, this is a guerilla army whose survival depends on not being detected by the Colombian military. So, I mean, if you're flying over the forest in a helicopter, and you see a patch of deforested land, you're immediately going to think, oh, somebody's there. I think that more than anything, limiting deforestation was a strategy the FARC used to protect themselves.

[Narrator]: So, if you were on the ground in the 80s, how was the FARC actually protecting the jungle – these trees?

[Steffens]: Basically, the FARC would tell everybody, okay, if you're going to cut down trees, you can only deforest an area of up to five hectares per year. And then, to go further, they basically drew a line in the ground and said, anything beyond this line, don't touch it. This land's off limits. And they're the only authority figures and nobody is going to argue against them.

[Narrator]: I mean, the villagers and campesinos obey because, because FARC, right?

[Steffens]: Yeah, exactly.

[Narrator]: It's ironic that the Colombian government today doesn't have that same kind of reputation and force to say, don't cross this line.

[Steffens]: Yeah, exactly. They are extremely underfunded. And they just don't have the resources or the personnel to tackle this type of thing. And, also, it's important to note that the bulk of the damage that's occurring is happening in areas that are so isolated. They're just… they've always been out of reach to the Colombian state.

[Narrator]: You also alluded to new farmland for coca. I'm curious, does it look like things are going to get worse before they actually improve?

[Steffens]: I think so. Colombia – until recently – had a plan to basically reach zero net deforestation by year 2020 and the Colombian Minister of the Environment recently came out and said, sorry, we're not going to be able to reach that plan. So, I think it's definitely going to get worse. And until somebody tells the people that they can't continue doing this, people are going to keep doing it.

[Narrator]: Gena Steffans is a reporter and photographer based in Florencia in southwest Colombia. You can read her story at PRI.org and see her photos at our Instagram. You can follow us at PRI The World.

[Steffens]: Thank you.

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Transcript for Figure 5.6, (Jamaica) IMF Decimating One Country After Another

[Michael Manley, former prime minister of Jamaica]: First of all, you go to the private banking system and you say, well, can I get a private banking loan, because I'm strapped for cash and I need some support, and I am having trouble paying my overseas bills.

[Stanley Fischer, Deputy Director, International Monetary Fund]: When the private banks won't lend to you, then you got to do something if you're leader of a country. And typically what you've got to do is to cut back your spending in some way, and try and get more money so that the impact of those cutbacks are not as severe as they otherwise would be. And it's at that point that you generally come to the IMF.

[Manley]: What you really need is to sit down with them and say, look, can I work out a 5-year program? And in the meantime, I'm strapped for some cash, so can you help me up front get out of the cash bind? And then put it in the context of a long-term development plan? And they say, no. Long-term development is your problem. We are here only to see who do you owe the money to? Why are you in a bind? And we lend you some money in a very short time frame at full interest rate to get you out of the bind. And they then impose upon you tremendous restrictions in what you can spend.

[Fischer]: And then we reach agreement on a set of measures on the budget, on the exchange rate, on monetary policy, on interest rates, on banks, on maybe privatization, and say, yep, we think this could solve your problems.

[Manley]: And you said to them, but if I do it that way, when I finish repaying you, I'm going to be in the bind all over, because this can't solve my problem. This is not our problem.

[Dr. Michael Witter, Professor of Economics, University of West Indies]: The whole idea was to set conditions which the government could not meet, and when the government failed to meet them, you would have to renegotiate a new loan in which the conditions became tighter. So the IMF didn't say, cut out this education program or cut out this health program. What the IMF said

is, you must spend only so much money on health and education and the implication of that was that you had to cut out some programs.

[Witter, speaking in a classroom]: Essentially what the IMF wanted us to do was to devalue our currency. That's the first thing, to make our dollar cheaper.

[Fischer]: They needed to expand their exports and diminish their imports, and the best way of doing that is to make foreign currency more expensive.

[Witter]: And since our society is so heavily dependent on imported food, imported fuel, imported books to go to school, imported medicine, when we devalue, the cost of those things we import go up to the citizens. And as a result, the economy today is much more under the control of foreigners – not necessarily through direct ownership, but through the mechanism of debt. In the 1970s, we owed $800 million. By the end of the 1980s, we owed $4 billion. Nowadays we owe $7 billion. So the debt is rising and all the time the debt is rising, our capacity to export to produce is getting less.

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Transcript for Figure 5.10, How Junk Food Is Transforming Brazil

[Music.]

[Indigenous Speaker 1, translated to English]: We depend on the river to live. You live a calm life. You can eat everything fresh. Whether it's açaí, or vegetables, or shrimp, or fish. But it's changed a lot now.

[In text on screen]: Multinational food companies are searching to expand their markets for processed foods. In Brazil, sales of these products have more than doubled in 10 years – and have reached the most remote parts of the country.

[Carlos Monteiro, Public Health Professor, University of São Paulo]: Ultra-processed foods – soft drinks, salty and sweet snacks, and a lot of ready meals – are actually not foods, they are formulations.

[Sean Westcott, Head of Global Product and Technology at Nestlé]: I'm a big believer in what we do at Nestlé, where we use science and technology to enhance nature, not to replace nature. We're in this almost utopian period where food's abundant. It's cheap. We solve the problem of food security, but in doing that, we didn't anticipate what the impact would be. Now we focus on things like reducing salt and reducing saturated fat.

[Monteiro]: In epidemiology, we see the vector of disease. So, mosquitoes are the vector of malaria. The vector of obesity is ultra-processed foods. Obesity is increasing all over the world. In Brazil, every year we'll have 1 million new cases of obesity.

[In text on screen]: For the first time in modern history, there are more obese than underweight adults in the world. The spread of high-calorie, low-nutrient food parallels a rise in chronic disease. Critics say this phenomenon is fueled by aggressive marketing in developing countries.

[Monteiro]: When you see marketing in the U.S., it's trying to change people from brands. In Brazil, it's to make people change from traditional diets to ultra-processed foods. What Nestlé and other companies are doing is they go to these small villages to get these new clients.

[Westcott]: As consumers climb up the economic ladder, they get to a point where their lifestyles change. We provide a very good choice for them. It's all about taste at the end. But not taste at any cost. We know that if we don't make a product that tastes good, it doesn't matter how nutritional or how good for you it is. If it's not being consumed, it's not having an impact on the diet.

[Monteiro]: The success of these big food corporations will be the destruction of dietary diversity.

[Indigenous Speaker 2, translated to English]: Nestlé products are tastier. They have more nutrients, vitamins. They're good. If we could afford it, we'd buy Nestlé for everybody.

[Monteiro]: We are in a transition in Brazil. When the transition is over, it will be much more difficult to go back.

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Transcript for Figure 5.16, The Grameen Model: Technology + People

[Narrator]: By 2021, 150 million people could be living below the extreme poverty threshold of less than 1 dollar and 90 cents a day, due to the economic downturn caused by the Coronavirus. When we measure those who lack basic shelter or clean water, and children who go hungry, the ranks of the poor will swell by 240 to 490 million this year.

Since 1997, Grameen Foundation has worked to empower the poor, especially women, to create a world without poverty and hunger, because we know people living in poverty have the strength and ingenuity they need to build better lives. What they lack is opportunity, and they have never needed it or us more.

Experience tells us the best way to deliver opportunity is with a technology plus people approach. We start by designing human-centered digital solutions to connect the poor with resources and information. Then we train local Grameen community agents to bring those solutions to women and families, regardless of whether they have Internet, smartphones, or the ability to read. It's a model that works to help the poor build assets, survive crises, and increase resilience. It's a model that works. Because as powerful as tools like digital technology and mobile phones are in our fight to end poverty, none are more potent than the human to human interaction of neighbor helping neighbor.

When we recruit, train, and equip a local agent, she becomes a micro entrepreneur herself, ready to offer her neighbors solutions aimed at eradicating two systemic causes of poverty: lack of financial empowerment and poor crop productivity. When an agent brings financial inclusion

to her clients, she delivers more than relief from long and costly trips to a distant bank. She delivers the ability to collect, send, save, and borrow money. When an agent works with smallholder farmers on data-driven farm plans, she delivers more than best practices to improve crop yields, she delivers a business plan that helps ensure lasting success.

In every case the Grameen agent empowers her client with agency to make decisions, an opportunity to unleash her own capacity. The result is a chain reaction of measurable outcomes including increased income, food security, educational opportunities, and sustainability. On average, a Grameen community agent directly impacts 150 beneficiaries, each typically living in a five-member household. This means each agent indirectly impacts about 750 people. And like ripples on a pond, the economic impacts of each agent's influence benefit entire communities.

Underlying our model is a deep understanding that agents and the poor women they serve do not live in a vacuum. That's why we work to strengthen women's ecosystems with programs that promote gender equity, peer support, market engagement, health, and nutrition. Since 2016 we've reached nearly 13 million people, and we will keep reaching because our goal is to support as fully as possible every woman who has the courage to break free from poverty. To show her that Grameen Foundation, its partners, and donors believe in her. Will you believe too?

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Transcript for Figure 5.17, After the Green Revolution

[Music.]

[Dr. Tarak Kate, Director, Dharametra]: In the last two decades, the cost of production has gone so high and the farmers are getting so much indebted, more than 275,000 – remember the figure, more than 275,000 – farmers committed suicide in this country.

After independence, the country was facing a food crisis. The government decided to become self-reliant in food production and so they decided to adopt the Green Revolution technology.

Green Revolution promotes a package of Technology, a use of holding crop varieties, use of chemical fertilizers and chemical pesticides. And, of course, there has been a very positive impact in the sense that our grain production has increased four times in

the last 50 years and we can boast that we can produce enough food for the ever-growing population. But at the same time, the soil has been degraded, the soil and water has become volatile, even the food has become poison.

The farmers, they-they borrow money from the moneylenders at a very exorbitant price. They borrow all the inputs from the agro business centers, so it has just become the cash economy. They have [unintelligible] significantly very high number of farmer's suicide. This is very pathetic to note and this is the gift of Green Revolution technologies.

[Sonali Phate, Microbiologist]: The traditional farmers very well know how to keep the soil productivity over the years, so some innovative farmers came up with the solution.

Sanjeevak is a fermented product of cow dung and cow urine. It is the aerobic fermentation process. The beneficial microflora grows inside the [unintelligible]. It requires only 10 kg of cow dung. Even if the farmer is not having the cattle, you can collect the 10 kg of cow dung from a neighboring farm.

[Bapu Mahajan, Farmer, translation into English]: Although I got good yields for the first few years, the use of fertilizers degraded the soil quality, and over the years the yields decreased a lot.

[Kate]: Generally what happens that the scientists they consider to be belonging to the elite class and they don't want to interact at the same level with a local [unintelligible] researchers so they want to pass on knowledge to the farmers. They are not in position to learn from the farmers.

[Phate]: The conventional research approach is not directly related to the problems faced by the farmers, especially growing the farms organically.

[Mahajan, translation into English]: I believe that experience is the best 'Guru.' The scientist does a scientific study of a problem and finds a solution in the laboratory. The farmer works on the farm to find a solution based on first-hand experience.

[Jeevansingh Pakal, Farmer, translation into English]: I believe a farmer can also be a very good scientist. He applies his mind to the problem he is facing on the farm.

[Kate]: Whatever problem they face, they follow those problems and they try to evolve their own solutions. And their solutions – whatever solutions they come out – they are true to the ground reality.

[Mahajan, translation into English]: It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. It used to take almost a whole day to apply Sanjeevak, and the smell and Sanjeevak spilling on the worker's clothes made them reluctant to do this job. Eventually I developed a tank automation system, which automatically applies Sanjeevak to the fields – after searching for an alternative for almost a year.

[Kate]: I feel that scientist and village scientists, they should consider themselves to be an equal level, and both can learn from each other.

[Phate]: Traditional knowledge has to be validated scientifically and modified or improved so that it is acceptable and applicable everywhere. So we prepared the Sanjeevak with five formulation, different ingredients, to test its effect on productivity and growth of crops. We found out there is up to 43 percent increase in their yield over the chemicals and up to 53 percent increase over the control without addition of any fertilizer to the Sanjeevak, saving over the inputs of cost is up to 75% with this NGO over chemical fertilizers.

[Pakal, translation into English]: There is a language problem when talking to the scientists. They use complicated language and sometimes it is hard to communicate.

[Phate]: These organic techniques – they have to do it on their farms, hard work is required. We have to keep their inspirations at high level so that they keep on working with organic inputs.

[Ganesh Birajdar, Researcher]: Part of the trouble we find when we go to promote it is the kind of system right now is there because of that farmer's attitude, that nothing is in our control. We don't feel like we can change it, so before how I had to talk about we can actually do it and that is actually a big problem.

[Mahajan, translation into English]: Farmers are committing suicide in this region because of low crop yields, and I am getting record-breaking yields. So this innovation is like 24-carat gold, which is always pure and precious wherever it is used in the world.

[Phate]: I joined Dharametra to use my knowledge for society. I learned how to identify the problems of organic farmers and how to work on that. Socially, I am attached to the society as well as I am academically attached with the scientific community, and

that's great.

[Kate]: A scientist is like a honey bee. By identifying one technology at one place, passing it to another place, and from another place for the third place, fourth, like that – you are actually enriching nature. You are working for the rural poor, we are changing their life so these are the aspects that are very, very satisfying.

So here I want to caution Africa not to repeat the same mistakes that we have committed in India. Ecological agriculture, which is very sound ecologically and economically viable, should be followed and that could be the future not only for South Africa but the whole African continent.

[Music.]

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Transcript for Figure 6.10, The Fight to Make Bad Jobs Better

[Narrator]: When politicians talk about workers, they tend to focus on certain types of jobs.

[Political ad 1]: "Bernie Sanders stood for American workers."

[Political ad 2]: "It's American workers that remake this country."

[Narrator]: But in the U.S., retail workers have outnumbered manufacturing workers since 2002.

And food service workers aren't far behind. These jobs are in every community – they're the base of the service economy. So with the recession in the rear-view mirror, it's worth asking: can these jobs be good jobs?

[Music.]

[Striking workers]: What do we want?

Contract!

When do we want it?

Now!

[Narrator]: These Kroger workers are rallying outside a grocery store in West Virginia because their employer wouldn't meet their demands, stalling negotiations for a new union contract.

[Fred Hogan, Kroger employee]: It's not like we're asking for the sun, the moon and the stars.

We want a modest living wage and we want the maintenance of our medical benefits.

[Narrator]: Kroger eventually agreed to a new 3-year contract for over 4,000 workers. It includes pay raises and zero cuts to their benefits.

By negotiating collectively, service workers can secure an hourly wage that is six dollars higher on average than nonunion wages. But they are a small minority. Private sector union membership in the U.S. has fallen to 6.4% of all workers. It's even lower in the retail and food service industries.

The decline of unions in the U.S. was caused in part by larger trends that have shifted

the types of jobs available, especially for those without a college degree. During the 80s, 90s and 2000s, several occupations that used to provide a stable middle-class income grew more slowly than both higher-wage and lower-wage jobs. That's partly due to new technologies: robots in factories, computer software in offices.

[David Autor, Labor Economist, MIT]: The decline in the middle has been steep. A lot of that has been growth at the top, which is good. People have moved out of the middle and into professional, technical and managerial jobs. But, the bottom section of the labor market, which comprises maybe 17-18 percentage of jobs, is about a third larger than it was in 1980. And if you look just among people without a college degree it's much larger still. And that's the group we should be concerned about.

[Narrator]: The great recession intensified those longer-term trends. Since 2010, the economy has added millions of jobs, but not evenly. The biggest area of growth was in high-skill occupations, mostly for people with 4-year college degrees. Meanwhile workers with a high school diploma were pushed out of middle-skill occupations. And in low-skill jobs, they're increasingly competing with those who have some college.

[Autor]: We're adding lots of jobs. The concern is that, many of the jobs that are being added are not good jobs, in terms of offering a reasonable standard of living and job security. And many of the good jobs that are being added are not accessible to typical workers.

[Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Connecticut, at Congressional hearing]: Thank you for joining us today to discuss the importance of predictable schedules and incomes for workers.

[Kingia Phillips, at Congressional hearing]: Hello my name is Kingia Phillips. I am a former worker at South Philadelphia Walmart."

[Phillips]: The juice pallets were the most hard to do. And when you're pregnant, you're not supposed to lift above your head, but I had to.

[Narrator]: Kingia came to DC to speak in favor of a federal bill that would regulate work schedules for retail, with the aim of increasing stability in hours and income.

[Phillips]: After I had the baby I asked them could I have my schedule adjusted, a tiny bit. And they told me that we all have kids and they have a job to do, a company to run. And it turned out that they cut my schedule down to 8 hours a week. I was doing 32 hours.

[Narrator]: It's a common complaint among part time retail workers: that to get enough hours you have to be available to work at any time the store is open, which is especially hard for parents, students, and people with a second job. So after a month, Kingia quit.

[Phillips]: I knew they were just going to tell me to re-open my availability, and that would be the only way for me to make more money and be able to sustain myself and my child.

[Narrator]: The federal proposal faces an uphill battle in a Republican Congress, but since 2014, six cities and the state of Oregon have passed scheduling policies. The details vary from place to place but most of them apply to fast food and retail workers, they require two weeks advance notice of work schedules, with extra pay for subsequent changes that are initiated by the company. Most of the measures also require employers to offer hours to existing employees before hiring more people.

[Carrie Gleason, Director, Fair Workweek Initiative]: So what it does is, a lot of these policies start to balance out the burden of doing business, so that the people who are getting, who are getting paid the lowest aren't the only ones bearing the cost.

[Narrator]: Policymakers have also moved to increase the minimum wage and require paid sick leave in certain cities and states. It's a response to the fact that not only are middle-class jobs moving out of reach for non-college workers, but a lot the remaining jobs have also gotten worse since the recession hit.

[Gleason]: In 2005, you could walk into a JC Penney, and it was a stable workforce. People had full-time hours, and health insurance, and even commission. It was a workforce that knew each other, and felt like they could make their job better. By 2008, that workforce was completely contingent. People's hours were changing from one week to the next. Nobody knew each other.

[Narrator]: The number of involuntary part time workers — those are people working part time who would prefer full-time work — that jumped up during the recession. And the increase was greater for both the retail sector and for leisure and hospitality, which includes restaurants and hotels. This is part of a much broader trend.

A 2016 study found a significant rise in "alternative work arrangements" across the economy. That includes temp workers, contract firm workers and freelancers. And it makes sense: Salaried and full-time workers are fixed costs for employers. Whether revenue is up or down, you have to pay them and fund their benefits. But if you have a pool of more flexible workers whose hours you can dial up and down to match your sales, you can save money, at least in the short term. Those cost-cutting strategies have been enabled by new technologies.

[Gleason]: Today, a lot of big employers are using workforce scheduling technologies, and so it's an algorithm that's setting the schedule. And when you do an analysis of when the peak hours are, it's easier to slot people in for four hour shifts and then rotate it out. But there's very few companies have systems that basically say, 'My goal is to try to give people some stability in their hours from one week to the next, and I'm gonna try to match people's schedules from one week to the next.'

[Narrator]: What this has meant for some workers is schedules and paychecks that change from week to week. A Gallup poll of hourly workers with varying hours found that one out of three said their schedules cause them financial hardship.

[Madison Nardy, Target employee]: Instead of giving me two 8 hour shifts and a 4 hour shift, they would give me 5 4-hour shifts. So I would have to go to school and go to work 5 times a week, instead of working 3 days a week.

The amount of hours they give out is based on sales, which I believe is horrible. One week I'll have 13 hours, the next I'll have 25, the next I'll have 30, then back down to 15. And that — that shows on my paycheck.

[Narrator]: Target and Walmart already post schedules at least a week and a half in advance. Both companies have also raised their minimum wages in recent years. And several retailers have announced an end to the controversial practice of on-call scheduling.

[News Anchor]: On-call shifts require employees to call employers the day before or the day of the potential shift to find out if they'll be needed to work. If employees aren't needed, they don't get paid.

[Narrator]: But they're a long way from a model like Costco's which guarantees a minimum amount of weekly hours for both full and part- time workers. The union model for including workers' input in business decisions has not really moved with the economy into these low-wage service jobs. And it hasn't been replaced with something else. So if workers feel like they can't find a voice at their jobs, they'll likely keep looking for one in the law.

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Transcript for Figure 6.15, Inside Amazon Labor Union: How Workers Took on Amazon and WON

[Music.]

[Cheers.]

[Chris Smalls, president, Amazon Labor Union, to group]: To the first [Amazon] union in American History.

Damn, two years ago, my life changed forever.

[News Anchor 1]: As many as 100 employees at Amazon.com's Staten Island fulfillment center in New York City plan to walk off the job.

[Smalls]: You know when Covid-19 came to play, Amazon failed us. They dropped the ball. They lied to the public, saying they're doing all these things. None of that was the reality of our situation.

[Smalls in TV interview]: We're not provided with anything. We are using scarves. We're recycling masks. I've seen people put garbage bags over themselves.

[Smalls, to group]: I led a walkout – that walkout led to my firing. Then a week after that, a couple weeks after that, maybe a week or two, that memo that came out calling me not smart or articulate. Ironically they also said to make me the face of the whole unionizing efforts which I had no intention.

[Smalls, at rally]: The chief union buster Jeff Bezos ain't gonna beat us, right? He's not gonna beat New York, right?

[Smalls]: We traveled the country. We protested in front of every Jeff Bezos mansion and penthouse that you can find on Google. We went down to Alabama last year. They had their first campaign. We saw some things that we thought that we could do better.

[News Anchor 2]: Vote count is in and Amazon has won enough votes to beat the union effort in Alabama.

[Smalls, to group]: We decided to come back home to Staten Island and start unionizing JFK8.

[Smalls, at rally]: We all know what happened in Alabama but let me tell you what also happened in Alabama. They sparked a fuse all across the world.

[Derrick Palmer, VP, Amazon Labor Union]: The lessons that I'll say that we learned is just to be more interactive with the workers. With Amazon, you know, they like to spend a lot of money on union busting campaigns. So we don't – if we're not out there every day, if we're not consistent, then Amazon can capitalize over that.

[Smalls, at rally]: This is a union town, right? We union strong, right?

[Smalls, to group]: I spent the last 11 months – the folks behind me spent the last 11 months as well – inside, outside the building at the bus stop, earning the trust of these workers, building relationships, raising money, creating GoFundMes for people that was fired, people that was homeless, people living in shelters, paying bills, cable bills, phone bills, feeding them.

[Smalls, outside, talking to workers]: Park on up, come on over! It's free food!

We had over 20-some barbecues, giving out food every single week, every single day, giving out books, literature.

Got 'em! I'm fishing. I got you, brother!

[Music.]

[Palmer]: You cannot be fired for signing a union card, you know. That is actually illegal. So me explaining to them what Amazon can do and what they cannot do is very important.

[Smalls, to employees]: We out here every day. You can give you legal representation if you need it. And you're working what? The 10-hour shift or the 12-hour shift?

[Employee]: 12 hour.

[Smalls]: Yeah, I used to be on RT, too.

[Smalls, to group]: We did whatever it took to connect with those workers, to make their daily lives just a little bit easier, a little bit less stressful. We were at that light at the end of the tunnel when they got off that S40 and that S90. They got off. They saw us right there at that bus stop, having a bonfire, lighting up s'mores, whatever it took. We were right there for them every day and I think that resonated with the workers.

[Karen Ponce, Organizer, Amazon Labor Union]: I joined the Amazon Labor Union a few months after they started, and part for that is because I was brainwashed by Amazon's propaganda. I didn't have any prior knowledge to unions. However, the Amazon Labor Union answered all of my questions, doubts, and concerns.

[Music.]

[Palmer]: At the end of the day, Amazon workers, like myself, you know – I've been employed with the company six years, so i know the ins and outs, I know what workers want and, um, standing up in those captive audience meetings, you know, showing the workers that we're not backing down, and that's – you know, you got to show the workers how strong a union is. And I feel like that's what, you know, that's what really helped out a lot.

[Smalls, to group]: They paid – how much money was it? $4.5 million in consulting lawyers and firms, the same lawyers i just shook hands while we kick their ass. They already got me arrested – what more can they do?

[Smalls, to officers]: You don't have to do this. I heard you. I'm gonna try to get my phone now.

[Officer]: Don't come close folks! Do not come close.

[Angelika Maldonado, Organizer, Amazon Labor Union]: Kind of backfired on Amazon a little bit because they said that they're supposed to be one team and one family, but they're arresting employees.

[Smalls, to group]: They called us a bunch of thugs, you know? We a bunch of thugs. You know, racist stuff. They tried to spread racist rumors, they tried to say, you know, I want to buy a Lamborghini. It's not about me, Amazon tried to make it about me, and I never said it was going to be Amazon versus Chris Smalls. It was always going to be Amazon versus the people and today the people have spoken and the people wanted the union.

This right here, this is going to be the catalyst for the revolution. That's exactly what this is, ya'll just witnessed that.

We already got interest in 18 different buildings in several different states. Workers reaching out to us. We want to help every single person we could.

[Palmer]: They start from the bottom like we did, start organizing in their facility and then we go from there.

[Smalls, to group]: Thank you all! Appreciate it.

[Applause.]

[Music.]

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Transcript for Figure 6.16, Alicia Flores and Starbucks Workers United

[Alicia Flores]: It was never about me. It was about us, the workers.

What brought me to union organizing was working during the pandemic. Specifically, during the peak of 2020 during the lockdown. All that really radicalized me when I realized that workers were not essential but expandable to big corporations.

I was working at Starbucks during the time and at first we were like essential heroes. They'd get us catering, you know, they'd offer us food. Fast forward to the end of the year when it's announced that Starbucks made record profits and then that's when I was like, "okay."

Why I believe that organizing matters in the workplace is because that's where you have the true voice and that's something that I've learned within the last two years honestly is that workers hold so much power. Specifically when someone goes on strike and withholds their labor.

We decided to organize because just like everyone at the time, we were facing, like, inconsistent schedules, short staff. Obviously a lot of us don't get paid enough to survive, so we – a lot of us – had like second jobs.

Reading about what a union can do for us was a big motivator for petitioning to organize honestly. It is universal in every food industry workplace that are facing these issues: short staffed, not consistent schedule, not getting paid enough, doing more than one person's job sort of thing. Like if you were to go to a drive-thru at McDonald's or any fast food restaurant, you will see the person at the window doing more than one person's job and people should be compensated for that.

The way that Starbucks management reacted to my organizing was really weird because when another store in my district filed for a union, they won their election so I went in the next day. It was my day off so I go in and I'm clapping my hands, I was like, "congrats guys!" My district manager wanted me to get a write up while I was off the clock, I'm not salary, for quote unquote "disruptive behavior."

So then I was like, okay, so they're slowly going to try to find any little thing to fire me over. Which

at the time I can see why it was hard because in my entire Starbucks career I had never had, uh, any sort of documentation of, like, either be a verbal or coaching or anything, like clean slate

up until recently. After we won our Union election, it's really sad that they're policing the smallest

things just to be able to get rid of employees. Organizers really. It's kind of like when you get pulled over and a cop enforces the power they have over you. A lot of people are getting fired for being 5 minutes late, 2 minutes late, or wearing a graphic t-shirt. And they probably lost their health benefits and, like, a way to pay for their rent so it is really something that's disheartening to see across the country.

I'm actually a co-chair of the labor working group so that's really awesome, you know, talking to workers at the picket lines, getting to know their struggle and their fight. So my organizing is focusing on that and still fighting for a contract and fighting for my job back with Starbucks and then I guess we'll just see where that takes me, you know. Hopefully we can make some changes.

So anytime I hear Starbucks Workers United inspires other workers that's really cool because I guess I don't see it that way, but when I look at it as a bigger picture like SBW, not that it's they started the labor movement but a lot of the people that work at Starbucks are young folks. It's really cool to see young people taking a stand and fighting for what they believe is right and going with it.

One thing that's really important with me, with my experience with Starbucks Workers United, is meeting organizers across the country, that we share a lot of the same values and at the core of it we are all Starbucks workers. None of us get paid to do any of the things we do, so the fact that a lot of us do this on our spare time is really inspiring to me and makes me keep on going, keep on fighting the fight, because comrade in Chicago who's not going through the same thing as you but like essentially is and there's that solidarity, and when they win, I win, and when I win, they win, and it's just really cool honestly. That's one thing that I really appreciate about Starbucks Workers United and just unions. Union organizing in general is the solidarity.

For my long-term hopes for the labor movement is that every food industry job starts organizing. Every job should start organizing, honestly, like start having those conversations with your co-workers. I know it's easier said than done but once you do it and you accomplish that I guarantee you it gets easier.

My advice to any worker that is looking into organizing the workplace is, don't take the fight by yourself. I made that mistake. Um, get yourself an organizing committee. What makes a great organizer is being able to spot out leaders. A great comrade of mine told me that. You never want to make it about you, you want to make it about them. There's nothing more liberating than knowing that you own your labor. So go out there, just get involved somehow, start with your community. Start with your workplace. Make those changes you want to see.

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Transcript for Figure 6.17, Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis, Chapter 2: Capitalism

How do we, as a society, want to make the big decisions that end up shaping the kind of world in which we live? How do we want to make decisions about whether mountains are mined, on whose land and whose water gets fouled? Decisions about who comes home from work filthy, and who gets filthy rich? While it's hard to imagine questions that are more important, these questions aren't often discussed. That's probably because, for the most part, they aren't up for debate. And we've accepted the answers as a kind of common sense.

I'm Ben Cushing, Sociology faculty at Portland Community College in Portland OR. Welcome to Chapter 2 of our series, "Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis." This week: Capitalism.

Capitalism is an extremely important part of the structure of this society. Every society has a certain way of being "set up," and these "set ups" vary enormously from one society to the next. Some societies are governed by monarchs. Some are governed by elected officials. Some are organized around agriculture on communal land, while others concentrate power in urban centers with privately held industries. Sociologists refer to this kind of "set up" of a society as the "social structure."

So why does that matter? Well, the way a society is set up will actually determine a huge number of things, including what kinds of lives will be lived by the members of that society. For example, no one can be a peasant or a nobleman or a wage worker, or a boss, unless they live in a society organized around those categories.

I don't live in a feudal society, so I don't know any peasants or nobleman in my community. I live in a capitalist society, so my community is made up of, among other groups, workers and owners. So if I want to try to understand my life and the lives of the people around me, I need to get a sense of how our lives are shaped by the capitalist system we're embedded in.

Capitalism is the dominant economic system of the world today. If you ask an economist, they might tell you that capitalism is a way of organizing the production and the distribution of resources based on competitive and at least ostensibly free exchange. Maybe I sell my labor as a retail employee, so that I can rent an apartment and buy food. Or maybe I start a business. This, in brief, is the economic system that you and I live in. And while capitalism shapes the lives we live, we're often pretty unaware of it. We're like fish swimming in a sea of capitalism. We are completely immersed in this sea, but we may not have a very clear understanding of the water, or of the currents that push us around.

Many people who look upon capitalism fondly will point out that capitalism – and the profit motive that comes with it – has driven remarkable innovation. They'll also suggest that capitalism encourages individual liberty, since it tends to leave major decisions to private individuals and business, rather than the government. There is certainly a good deal of truth to these claims.

Yet for well over a century, various sociologists, and many others, have expressed deep concern about the effects of capitalism on society. What happens to a society when more and more of the relationships between people are reduced to cold calculated business transactions? What happens when we redefine the value of nearly everything, so that it can be reduced to a number of dollars and cents?

From its beginnings, capitalism has relied upon forced seizure (or expropriation) of wealth and labor. Between the 16th to 18th centuries, European elites seized (or enclosed) the European commons, the shared land which was the foundation of peasant life and communal economic security. In doing so, they simultaneously privatized land ownership and forced peasants into a new exploitative wage labor system – sometimes hiring people to work the land they had once held in common with their neighbors. Those same elites also seized land in the Americas and elsewhere in their colonial conquests. They also seized people (particularly in Africa) and forced them to work that land. This kind of naked expropriation is central to how capitalism has always worked.

Today, capitalism looks very different. But while much has changed, much has also stayed the same. The power dynamics forged in the colonial era continue to shape where wealth and power are concentrated, who works for whom and who reaps the benefits.

We began with the question: "How do we, as a society, want to make the big decisions that end up shaping the kind of world in which we live?" Of course there is no simple answer to a question this big. But if, instead, we asked, how do we currently make those decisions, a major part of the answer has to be this: we make those decisions based on profit. In a capitalist society, major decisions are made for the sake of the profit interests for the ruling class. In fact, under US law, corporations are required to prioritize profit for shareholders over any other competing interests; Competing interests such as the health of the land or the wellbeing of workers or communities.

This argument- that profit motivates a good deal of the decision making that shapes our world – is actually less controversial than it might appear. Many apologists for capitalism would agree. The economist Milton Friedman, for example, argued that the profit motive encourages innovation, which is good for everyone, and enables decision making among private citizens without government interference, making us all more free.

But as it happens, the freedom of powerful corporations to act according to their profit interests can sometimes conflict with the freedom and interest of others.

Let me offer one example. In 2015, PBS's Frontline and InsideClimateNews revealed that Exxon – the oil giant – actually conducted some of the first high quality scientific research into the relationship between Co2 Emissions and global warming. As early as the late 1970s, Exxon's own scientists understood most of what we need to know about the climate crisis: that burning fossil fuels will raise global temperatures, leading to more powerful storms, the melting of the polar ice caps, sea level rise, drought and flash flooding, increasingly destructive wildfires, species extinction, spread of infectious diseases, crop failure, famine and mass refugee crises. Knowing that this research could lead to increased public regulation and decreased profits, Exxon buried the research and invested in a decades-long PR campaign to cast doubt on climate science. Frontline and InsideClimateNews won multiple awards for their reporting, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Exxon is still doing what Exxon does.

Profit motive is a powerful thing. Exxon had a choice that very few people in human history have ever had to face. They could choose, with a pretty clear understanding of the implications of their choice, between the short term profit interests of their corporation and the long term survival of their civilization and innumerable species around the world. They chose profit.

Did Exxon make the right business decision? This question is crucial. I want to suggest that they did. And that's really the crux of the issue.

The corporation is an institution designed to make profits for its shareholders, not to act upon the public good. And as I stated before, corporate leaders are bound by law to prioritize profit over any other competing interest.

I want to suggest that we'd be wrong to focus our energy on the moral failings of Exxon's leadership. Rather than ringing our hands at the bosses, I think we can ask some much deeper and more troubling questions about the system itself.

What are the consequences of an institution designed to prioritize profit over everything else? What kind of world will such an institution create? What kinds of human behavior is it likely to encourage? Is this kind of institution compatible with a thriving and just community? Is it even compatible with a survivable future?

Since the 1980's the dominant version of capitalism around the world has emphasized minimal public regulation of corporations and the transfer of public services to corporate hands. This version of capitalism – which is often called neoliberalism – has been remarkably lucrative for the ruling class, and largely devastating for working people in the US and around the world, as well as the living systems of the planet.

Two of its effects are worth noting here.

First, the emphasis on deregulation, privatization and massive cuts to social spending (sometimes called austerity) became so powerful and bipartisan that the kinds of regulations and public initiatives that may be necessary to address the climate crisis – policies that may have made perfect sense in the New Deal era – became politically unimaginable. At a time when global regulation of corporations and large public projects may be necessary to avert a climate catastrophe, political elites accepted deregulation and privatization as the political orthodoxy. As Naomi Klein says in her book This Changes Everything, it's bad timing. Today, for the first time in a generation, cracks have emerged in this political consensus. Whether it breaks, and something approximating a Green New Deal becomes possible, remains to be seen.

Secondly, the culture of this particular version of capitalism undermines social solidarity and the democratic process. With its emphasis on individual self interest above all else and its contempt for any project based on cooperation for the common good, the neoliberal worldview undermines democracy itself. It undermines the very notion that we can make decisions together to shape our society in the ways we choose. As Wendy Brown argues in her new book, In the Ruins of Neoliberalism, this worldview ultimately leads to the rise of authoritarian movements around the world, from the US to Brazil to Turkey and beyond.

All of this raises difficult questions, for which we may not have sufficient answers. Is the climate crisis, and the ecological crisis more broadly, the predictable outcome of a certain economic order? If so, how do we go about dismantling such a dangerous system. And how do we go about building an economy that attends to the needs of human and non-human communities?

This has been chapter two of Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis. I'm Ben Cushing. If you found this discussion to be helpful, check out the other chapters in this series. And please consider sharing it with a friend.

In this Chapter we've explored our economic system. In our next episode we'll examine our belief system.

Thanks for listening. And take care.

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Transcript for Figure 6.20, What Is 'Gross National Happiness'?

[Music.]

[Morten Sondergaard, Narrator]: The Simple Show explains Gross National Happiness.

This is the fourth dragon king of Bhutan, a beautiful country at the Eastern end of the Himalayas. He became king at the age of 17 in 1972. It was then when he had to decide what should be the philosophy behind his reign. He looked at other countries and noticed in most of them the government and the people strive for economic wealth. And those few who achieve this goal usually live a comfortable life, but on the downside, many other people live in misery, poverty, or social isolation. Also, in the ruthless hunt for money, huge parts of the environment are often destroyed. This couldn't be the right path for Bhutan. The concept of Gross National Happiness was born.

The primary idea of GNH is that every human being aspires for happiness, and a country's development should also be measured in its citizens' happiness. The Fourth Dragon King's challenge, therefore, was figuring out how to balance economic development with the emotional and spiritual well-being of his people. Although economical growth can't be the only goal, a flourishing

economy gives the government the funds needed to provide a working health and education system, as well as certain living standards.

Because being healthy, having opportunities for the future, and knowing that security, a steady income, housing, or well-balanced time use are guaranteed is crucial for people to be happy. But furthermore, people get a lot of positive energy from being with others and sharing interests. Participating in cultural life and to hold up local traditions and cultural heritage lead to a stronger community feeling. Healthy family relationships, advocating community activities and religious aspects are factors for achieving happiness. It gives the Bhutanese people a strong sense of values and identity.

The Fourth Dragon King reigned 34 years, basing his decisions on all factors of gross national happiness, asking himself what makes Bhutan's people happy? And the fourth dragon king lived by example, leading a very simple life. In fact, he believed so strongly in the concept of GNH he even decided to hand over sovereignty to the people. In 2006, he retired as king at the age of 52,

and changed the course of history. Two years later, in 2008, Bhutan elected its first representative Parliament.

Since then, the idea of gross national happiness has taken quite some momentum outside of Bhutan with other countries and people around the world thinking about adopting the GNH approach to strive for development with values and to make the world a happier place.

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Transcript for Figure 6.22, How the Dutch Are Reshaping Their Post-Pandemic Economy

[Kate Raworth, Author, "Doughnut Economics"]: This is the doughnut. The goal of the doughnut is to meet the needs of all people within the means of the planet. Sometimes when I present the ideas of doughnut economics, people say, "Mmm, is this capitalism or is this communism or is it socialism?" and you think, "Really? Are these the only choices we have? The isms of the last century? Can we not come up with some ideas of our own and create new names for them and see new patterns?"

[Text on screen: The essentials for a good life. Economist Kate Raworth is trying to shake up … what economic success looks like in the 21st Century. Her revolutionary 'Doughnut Economics' … is aimed at ending inequality.]

[Raworth]: Governments in every country are almost addicted to citing GDP figures, as if this was proof of success. And yet it's so clearly not, because we have climate breakdown and Covid lockdown and financial meltdown. We have to pursue something far richer to move from this pursuit of endless growth, which we can now see as hitting us with crisis after crisis. Moving to a goal of thriving. And the doughnut is absolutely possible to turn not into a single number but into a dashboard. We could hold policymakers to account and say every year, "You need to talk about how you are making progress on these different dimensions of the doughnut."

[Text on screen: The inner ring of the Doughnut represents … 12 basic human needs or the social foundation. The outer ring is an ecological ceiling … under which humanity should live.]

[Raworth]: The outside of the Doughnut is created by leading earth system scientists just a decade ago. These are the nine life supporting systems of planet Earth to have a stable climate,

to have healthy oceans, to have recharging fresh water. And they drew these and called them the planetary boundaries and they said, "We must stay in the circle in the middle." I thought, but if we go to the center of the circle where we use hardly any of Earth's resources, that's not thriving. That is actually death and destitution for billions of people. We need to convert Earth's lands for food, for water, for housing, for energy. So I drew this inner circle and said just as there is an outer limit of humanity's pressure on the planet so, too, there must be an inner limit.

So the hole in the middle is a place where people are left falling short on the essentials of life. It's where people don't have the food, water, energy, healthcare, housing, education, political voice that every person has a claim to meeting. We want to leave nobody in this hole. Get everybody into the green ring of the doughnut itself.

[Text on screen: The green ring represents a safe and just space for humanity.]

[Raworth]: Ever since the doughnut was first published in 2012, people have been wanting to downscale it to the scale of a city or a neighborhood or a nation, and Amsterdam is the first place where we've actually downscaled it. And I've worked together with an organization called Circle Economy, who have been helping the city devise their strategy.

[Text on screen: Amsterdam is the first city to commit to the model … as part of its financial and climate recovery plan. The project is bringing together a coalition … of change-makers in the city.]

[Ilektra Kouloumpi, Circle Economy, Senior Strategist]: Amsterdam is having a very ambitious vision of becoming a fully circular city by 2015.

What happens with the doughnut is that because it brings all these themes together of the social aspects and the environmental, you need to start the conversation with everybody in the room. We invited all different departments, but they were not used to being part of this conversation. How can we create housing in Amsterdam that is available for all different incomes at the same time? It's supporting the well-being of people who live in the house and how does this construction is made with materials that reducing the the global emissions and the climate.

With the city doughnut, we suddenly see in the portrait of the city, the impact that Amsterdam has in, let's say, Bangladesh, and people's life there that the work in producing the clothes that we wear in Amsterdam and how a city can start thinking about all this and creating strategies that are taking this into account.

[Raworth]: The doughnut does not give us answers. You don't plug in a calculation and it tells you how to do it. What it does is provide a space for people to come together. In fact, in Amsterdam the policymaker said, we now realize that if we're aiming to get into the doughnut, that's we need to change our own internal organization so that we're more holistic and connected in our planning and policy. And I think smart policymakers realized that they don't need a solution to financial crisis and a different one to climate crisis and a different one to health emergencies. They need a paradigm that no longer pushes for endless growth but instead focuses on thriving, on resilience, and on well-being within communities.

[Text on screen: The Doughnut Economics Action Lab has so far received … 400 messages of interest from across the world. They are launching an online platform to allow ordinary … citizens to participate in creating 'the economy of the 21st century.']

[Raworth]: We began with this downscaling in rich cities in high-income nations because they are the ones that have the greatest obligation to transform, to come back within planetary boundary. But I believe the framework that we've created can absolutely be adapted and used in low-income countries and cities. In fact, in Costa Rica they've just launched an initiative called Regenerate Costa Rica. They have an ambition to become one of the world's first regenerative nations and they are using the donor as a framework for guiding them to that goal.

[Text on screen: Researchers from the University of Leeds have applied … the Doughnut Model to some 150 countries.]

[Raworth]: It always looks like transformation is going to take many, many decades and one thing I think we've seen in many countries from this Covid pandemic is that actually policies can happen [snaps fingers] almost overnight when governments decide to make them happen. Change is absolutely possible if we transform the political values and interests and the mindset.

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Transcript for Figure 7.6, Answering the Healer's Call

[Text on screen: Fifteen years ago, Malidoma Some wrote an article entitled, "What a Shaman Sees in a Psychiatric Hospital." Later, the article was renamed, "The Pain of Being Called." The following Q and A between Malidoma Some and Zayin Cabot sheds light on the pain of being called to heal oneself, the role of community in this process, and the emergence of life purpose that is revealed on such a journey. Thousands of people have heard this call, and thousands more have shared Malidoma's words with friends and family around the world. In response to the incredible outpouring, Malidoma and Zayin will be hosting the first "Answering the Healers Call" intensive in the Bay Area this August, 2015. To find out more, or join in the conversation @ www.WestCoastVillage.org.]

[Malidoma Some]: There's a phenomena that begins with the other world having its way of dialing your number, as if somehow inside of you, you have a, you have a phone system that only the other world can dial. When they, when it is dialed, you feel like shit. And as long as you don't pick up the phone, you're in hell.Then you run around like a, like a crazy person. This society labeled you crazy. You wound up being institutionalized or at least chemicalized, all of that in the interest of shutting down the phone that can't stop ringing. And so what happened in the end, what happened in the end is that you become completely lobotomized by a culture that doesn't know what really the hell is going on with you. And since they cannot just sit back and watch you, they try this way, that way, this way, and every way seemed to be damaging you more for some reason.

I went to a psychiatric hospital to – I was accompanying somebody and as I looked at every room I realized this, these people are all healers. In this culture they imprisoned healers keeping them away from the, from the industry. Something is really weird about civilization. But in Diger land when uh somebody goes nuts, goes crazy, people are really happy. They realize we're going to have another healer, we're going to have an additional expert to help us.

Meanwhile, the person is going really crazy, is having a lot of trouble, is showing symptoms of self endangerment and endangerment to others. It takes a circle of other people who have been through this process and have wound up each having their healing office complete with successful addressing of various issues brought to them by the village to form a circle around this person.

But before that it takes all kind of consulting to find out what is the specificity of the calling and what does that specific calling demand from those who knows this type of issue to do. Once they find that out, they go through a series of ritual – to the mountain, to the water spirit, to the ancestors, to the Earth spirit, before they bring the person into the Highlight. Where at that time the whole village is there in celebration because in order to prepare for the anointment of such a person, there's a whole choreography that has to be set in place, centered around celebration. That's why, to celebrate, you got to take some time to prepare for it. When you're ready, they bring, they bring the whole village together to witness the return of the Healer, the homecoming of the Healer, after a rather long journey of turmoil, pain, and disruption of all, all that is familiar to the, to the person.

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Transcript for "Answering the Healers Call – Short" by Zayin Cabot is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 7.11, Racism seen as root of Jackson water crisis

[Sound of water from a tap running.]

[Text on screen: The ongoing water crisis in Mississippi's capital exposed a problem advocates and experts say is happening in other American cities. They blame Jackson's water issues on a combination of government neglect, aging water infrastructure and racial discrimination.

[Jordyn Jackson, student, Jackson State University]: We know that the water issue is not a new subject. It just actually failed this time.

[Maisie Brown, Student, Jackson State University]: Nobody else has to have this fight, but nobody else is as black as us and has the socio-economic level that the city is at. So that's why we've been running into the issue we have.

[Text on screen: Experts told The Associated Press that communities of color and poor communities are more likely to experience water scarcity or contamination.]

[Female speaker 2, running water]: There it is. That's better than it's been.

[Text on screen: They say that over time there's been less money invested in maintaining the infrastructure in those communities. Majority-Black Flint, Michigan, struggling to remove lead from its water since 2014, is an infamous recent example. Other areas where some people lack reliably safe drinking water include Baltimore, Honolulu, Las Vegas, New Mexico and Benton Harbor, Michigan. Jackson's mayor says fixing the city's water system could cost billions of dollars the city doesn't have.]

[Chokwe Antar Lumumba, Mayor, Jackson, Mississippi]: From my vantage point, I see a community that has often been left out of the equation, that has been treated disproportionately in terms of the equity of resources, right, and so I believe that it is imperative that someone stand up for them, that someone speaks to those issues.

[Text on screen: Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves has not said how much money the state should spend to help Jackson solve its water problems.]

[Tate Reeves, Governor, State of Mississippi, at a press conference]: Yesterday, we now have seven state-run water distribution sites up and running throughout the city of Jackson.

[Text on screen: Many in the city don't have hope they'll see consistent access to clean water since it's unclear where the money is going to come from.]

[Brown]: There's a huge disabled community here. There's a huge elderly community here and there are a lot of people here who don't have vehicles to actually go and get it. And so we just kind of want to help fill that gap.

[Text on screen: Jackson State University student Maisie Brown is part of the Mississippi Students Water Crisis Advocacy Team. The group of about 30 students delivers cases of bottled water to Jackson residents who can't get to water distribution sites.]

[Mya Grimes, Student, Jackson State University]: We're really just stuck here in, like, this cycle of political mistreatment and mistrust that is no fault of the residents of this city.

[Text on screen: Jackson has restored water pressure throughout much of the city and residents are no longer under a boil-water notice. Residents say that even though water is coming out of their taps, in many cases it's cloudy or discolored and smells like raw sewage.]

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Transcript for Figure 7.14, Mass Incarceration, Visualized

[Bruce Western, Narrator]: Mass incarceration means that we've got a very high rate of incarceration historically, comparatively, and the other thing is the rate of incarceration is so high, so socially concentrated, we're no longer incarcerating the individual, but we're incarcerating whole social groups.

The rate of incarceration now is about five times higher than it was historically. Historically it was a hundred per hundred thousand. Now it's about five hundred per hundred thousand. If we look at prison, if we add jail to that, it's about seven hundred per hundred thousand.

Nowhere in the world incarcerates as much as we do. We've seen extremely high rates of exposure to the criminal justice system for African-American men with very low levels of schooling. So if we think about Black men who were born in the late 1970s, who are growing up through the American prison boom of the 1980s and the 1990s, the chances that they're going to serve time in state or federal prison, if they dropped out of high school, is about 70 percent. So going to prison for that group of Black men with very low levels of schooling, that's become a

normal life event. That's really only happened in the last 10 years.

We're at this point now where – it's about 1.2 million African-American children with a parent who's incarcerated – that's about one in nine. The research shows the kids who experience parental incarceration have diminished school achievement, they have behavioral problems, depressive symptoms, acting out. And there's also evidence that these kinds of negative effects associated with parental incarceration are concentrated more among boys than among girls. And there's a very real risk here that incarceration becomes an inherited trait.

The underlying issue is, we've chosen prison as a way to respond to that problem of crime and there are a whole variety of ways that we could have chosen to respond to that problem of crime. We've chosen the response of the deprivation of liberty, and we've chosen the response of the deprivation of liberty for a historically aggrieved group whose liberty in the United States was never firmly established to begin with.

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Transcript for Figure 7.17, A Road to Home – Trailer

[A Road to Home tracks the lives of six homeless LGBTQ young people over 18 months. Their lives typify the experience of the 500,000 homeless youth on American streets every night, 40% of them LGBTQ.]

[Music.]

[Youth 1]: I came out in November of last year as transgender to my parents, and it didn't go well.

[Youth 2]: As I told my mother, I didn't choose this, you know. I didn't wake up one day and decide to be gay.

[Youth 3]: My dad's a Baptist pastor and very strong religious beliefs. No tolerance for homosexuality.

[Youth 4]: He didn't want to talk to me, didn't want me in the house, so I had to find other ways to support myself.

[Carl Siciliano, founder of the Ali Forney Center for homeless LGBTQ youth]: I have been working with homeless youth since 1994. There were thousands of homeless youth in New York City, and the LGBT kids in specific had nowhere safe to go, and they were just out on the streets.

[Youth 1]: I can tell what people are thinking by the way they look and the way they stare. I always think the worst is going to happen.

[Youth 4]: I'm going to show you where I used to sell drugs. Percocet, weed, even beer at one time. Just anything to make ends meet, you know, to have somewhere to stay for the night.

[Youth 5]: Everything is getting better. Slowly, gradually, and with a lot of effort, everything is getting better.

[Youth 4]: I'm going to do a lot of big things. You're going to see my face places, I'm telling you.

[Youth 2]: I want to be remembered as someone. I want to make a difference.

[Youth 6]: To be out there by yourself in the cold, in the dark, that's when you face your demons, harder than any other time. That's when you feel hardest, being abandoned by your family.

[Carl Siciliano]: I don't feel like my work is done, as long as there are kids who don't have beds at night.

[Music.]

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Transcript for Figure 7.19, Spirit of Birth

[Sound of fetal heartbeat. Music.]

[Marie Anderson, Traditional Elder and Knowledge Keeper]: As soon as I was born, she said they wrapped me up in a blanket and then covered me in cedar. They cleaned me up, they wrapped me in cedar again, cedar was all over me. She said your first bath was in cedar water. She said it was a very good experience for her. And my mother said when she was very young, she said, she remembers sitting under a shaded tree with the grandmother and she was telling her grandchildren that when their babies are going to be born, it's going to be a white man to hold a baby. And she said it's not going to be good because raking in there some of that baby's heritage is being pulled away from him.

[Text on screen: By the mid-20th century the government of Canada had dismantled cultural identity and midwifery practices by forcing Indigenous women to have their babies outside their communities.]

[Maria Campbell, Knowledge Keeper]: We're not supposed to be healthy. We're all supposed to be – we all should have disappeared. We were supposed to disappear and we didn't disappear, and the reason we didn't is because those grandmothers kept those stories alive. A birthing center can birth and make possible that kind of cultural knowledge to be there so that they can take that and find a way to use it.

[Sara Wolfe, Founding Midwife, Seventh Generation Midwives in Toronto]: We've had a really long time vision for a birth center. We've been dreaming about this for, you know, since we started Seventh Generation Midwives. We really, we knew we wanted a space for our women to have their babies in but we really wanted it to be midwife-led and we had this really strong vision that it was going to be like an indigenous led and, you know, Aboriginal Focus space that was going to be really like warm, welcoming, culturally safe for everyone to come to.

The way that we approach health care, the way that we use that indigenous philosophies, that world view that we have is just, it's unique, it's different. We think of really special, it's really

sacred, but it's really – it's a good approach.

[Allysha Wassegijig, Mother-to-be]: Baby's growing every week.

[Diane Simon, Allysha's Midwife, Seventh Generation Midwives Toronto]: Has your elder shared any, any other ceremonies or teachings with you that you wanted to incorporate?

[Allysha Wassegijig]: Well, not yet, we haven't had anyone really in the family do a traditional birth, so it's all brand new to me. I'm at that point in my life where I'm trying to get closer to the culture and then be able to provide the baby with all the knowledge that I have and more, you know.

[Simon]: I really believe that creating that, that kind of basis for baby to come in to, come into the world, all this knowledge that you're passing on to, to the baby. It's our identity to be born into that and grow having that connection of where we come from, I think is really powerful and amazing.

[Allysha Wassegijig]: I was so nervous, I was so scared, but at the same time I've always wanted to be a mom. And then to find out that it's happening right now, that I'm gonna be a mom and I'm gonna have a baby, was just the most exciting thing that's ever happened to me in my whole life.

Aboriginal Midwives just felt like such a natural choice because that's who I feel like I can connect right away with, and I couldn't think of a better group of women to ask to help me through the journey of, of having my baby.

[Dr. Janet Smylie, Indigenous Health Research Scientist and Consultant Family Physician, Seventh Generation Midwives Toronto]: The relationships between a service provider and their client could be as important as the prescriptions that I write or the importance of the relationship that a midwife has with that new baby that she touches, in terms of them being a mentor and an auntie to that baby for the rest of their life.

[Simon]: When you're in labor it's a very powerful time but it's also a very vulnerable time and to have someone kind of make funny faces at you or question why you want to do something or not under – not have that understanding – of why maybe you want to keep your placenta when normally they would regard it as medical waste.

I think Aboriginal Midwifery can really create that safe space for people to be able to create the ceremony that they want and recognize it as a ceremony rather than just something that's happening.

[Shelley Charles, Traditional Elder guiding Allysha]: As a woman, then, we become the Creator, so we're carrying that sacred Spirit to walk on the Earth. Our creation story of course is before man so it's the stars and the sun, the moon, and the four directions, and the seeds, and so when we think about woman and life that's how far back we're thinking.

[Dr. Billie Allan, Indigenous Health Researcher]: We know that identity matters in terms of our health and well-being and that if I want to take the opportunity to re-engage with my knowledge, my history, and I think for our people it's extra important because it's linked to our healing. So having support, not having to explain why it's important to have a lot of family with us, for example, or if we're disconnected from our family because of things like child welfare intervention, or residential schools, or all of the kind of colonial violences that happen to us that we're not going to be judged for it. That we're going to be received with care and kindness is a big deal. To have that experience of being received as a whole person, I think it does amazing things for a family.

[Allysha Wassegijig]: I love you, mom.

[Donna Wassegijig, Allysha's Mother]: I love you, too.

[Donna Wassegijig]: I come from both parents who had gone to residential school. I didn't feel that it was instilled into our generation, to pass on, to keep, to grab on to any part of the language.

[Allysha Wassegijig]: I'm trying to learn my language and learn more about where I come from, who my family is, my traditional culture, and if anything, the baby is just strengthening that need to find those things and to learn.

I think it's an extremely sacred time, the baby is making its journey from the spirit world, and what I've been taught is that children pick their parents and I've been chosen to be a parent right now, and that means the world to me. I feel so honored and I feel a huge responsibility coming up.

So I've been getting ready, getting my, my space ready. I have started to smudge every morning and that's a part of me discovering who I am. My little benojis growing up so fast, baby.

[Speaker]: What does benoijis mean?

[Allysha Wassegijig]: Baby.

[Allysha Wassegijig]: Because this is my first baby, I worry about whether I'm gonna be able to be a good mom. I have no idea what to expect.

It was really nice going to the birth center. I saw Diane's face and I instantly felt some relief because she's been that, that person for me, that safe person to talk to and put my trust in.

Labor was hard and fast. I had originally planned to be at the birth center for the whole time, but the hospital was always an option, and I felt really comfortable going to the hospital with Diane.

[Nurse]: We're a boy.

[Allysha Wassegijig talks to baby.]

[Allysha Wassegijig]: It was a beautiful birth. Diane was right there the whole time. My mom was there, my sister was there, and that's what mattered. So I had those supports.

On Sunday, we're having a naming ceremony, so we're really excited for that.

[Dr. Smylie]: They're also going to be able to bring their families in to bond with that baby in a way that they might not have otherwise and, you know, give that mother and baby all the support the community can and their family can. If we pour all of that into that next generation of babies then my hope is that we're going to have a healthier next generation and that that next generation is going to do the same and have another healthier generation, and we're going to heal a lot of the the hurt that we have in our communities and make our families and our nations stronger.

[Allysha Wassegijig, talking to baby]: … Through the night and your midwife Diane worked so hard and she did so much for us making sure that you came safely. You did, my baby.

[Text on screen: Elder Shelley Charles led a special naming ceremony for Caleb Wassegijig-Diakiw. "Geewaydinoog, The One who sits in the North." And… Allysha Wassegijig. "ZhabowayKwe, The One That Pierces Through."]

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Transcript for Figure 7.22, The Black Panthers' Overlooked Health Programs

[Cleo Silvers, Former Black Panther]: I've been going around and talking to young students from fourth grade all the way through to PhD's and usually the questions that people ask me was, "Where did you guys keep your guns?" "Why didn't you like white people?" I think still in schools we're still recognized as a black nationalist hate movement and there was never hate. As a matter of fact one of the things that, that drew me to the Black Panther Party is that they loved the people so much. That, in order to do that kind of work, in order to be that focused, you had to really love the people.

[Narrator]: The Black Panthers are one of the most misunderstood civil rights groups in American history. Started in 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale as a way to protect Black communities against police brutality, the Panthers are often depicted as a violent organization.

But many of their contributions to the communities they served, especially in terms of health care, are left out of history textbooks.

[Adam Sanchez, High School Teacher and Contributor to Teaching for Black Lives]: I think the dominant message from from almost every textbook I've seen is putting the Panthers in what Civil Rights scholars have called the declension narrative, which is basically this idea that, you know, once the Black Power movement starts, but really after King's death in 1968, the Civil Rights movement declines and you get these Black radicals who are just demanding too much and nonsensically turning to violent tactics. I don't think I've seen a single textbook that mentions the 100 or so social programs that the Black Panthers ran.

[Jakobi Williams, Associate Professor, Indiana University]: They're anti-capitalists, they're socialists, and they work with all poor people. In fact they saw themselves as continued model of Dr. King's work. People forget when King was assassinated, he was leading what he called the Poor People's Campaign. King advocated as a Democratic Socialist against what he called the exploiting tenants of materialism and capitalism.

[Silvers]: The goal of the Black Panther Party was to expose the problems in society and then show that they weren't static, that they didn't have to be that way, but that there were ways in which to make those changes that were necessary. In particular, free, quality healthcare was one of the key elements of the program of the Black Panther Party.

[Narrator]: Cleo Silvers came to the South Bronx in the 60s as a health care volunteer and later joined the Harlem branch of the Black Panthers.

[Silvers]: Now you know the South Bronx is the congressional district in the United States with the lowest income per capita. It was then and continues to be today. So the conditions in the South Bronx were something that I had never seen before.

[Narrator]: The area's main hospital was known for its horrendous treatment of its predominantly Black and brown patients. In fact, conditions were so bad that in 1970, Silvers took part in a protest where community activists, including the Panthers, occupied the hospital for one day.

[Silvers]: Lincoln Hospital was known as the butcher shop. Those conditions were really horrible. People were waiting for 72 hours to get seen. There was no heat in the emergency room. There's really bad stories about Lincoln Hospital and what could happen to you if you had to go to Lincoln Hospital.

[Mary Phillips, Assistant Professor, Lehman College, CUNY]: When we talk about the impact of racism and the healthcare system, I mean, there is a long history of medical discrimination. We can think of the history that involves Black bodies being used as guinea pigs, Black women and women of color going to the doctors and getting illegally sterilized, and so this has caused a lot of mistrust.

And then your zip code matters. Black communities that are in disenfranchised areas, we have a history of not being protected. And so, part of that history of medical discrimination is what the Panthers were trying to fight. Everything from first aid, they had a free ambulance program, they had sickle cell anemia testing. They had gynecological exams, optometry services, I mean, physical exams. There are tons of services that the Black Panther Party offered when we talk about health care.

[Silvers]: We designed a program to go door-to-door and really test for diseases like tuberculosis, anemia, diabetes, these are preventable diseases. We'd go in and we there would be an elderly person in some apartment who really needed to see a doctor, but they were afraid to go the doctor, and that's how we would be able to refer them to a place where, where they would be seen and be helped before the illness, whatever illness they have, got too difficult for them.

[Phillips]: They were in the community educating, offering tools to medically empower the Black community and much of that understanding of the Black Panther Party has been written out of the public perceptions of the organization. It has a lot to do with the FBI and COINTELPRO.

[Narrator]: COINTELPRO, which stands for counterintelligence program, was the FBI's Illegal surveillance scheme.

[Phillips]: They looked at the Panthers as a threat, and so they did everything you can think of from infiltrating the organization to pushing lies in the media.

The Panthers were actually about restorative care, they were actually about healing the community, mind, body, and soul. And that's placed on the margins of the history of the Party.

[Narrator]: The Party disbanded in 1982, but the legacy of the Black Panthers continues to this day.

[Williams]: Many of the Party programs were community-based and community-run, so the Party would start them, they would establish them, and then before long the community takes them over and the community runs them.

So you can point to community clinics, health clinics, food programs, food banks, free busing to prison programs, the list goes on, that are still alive and well today, as extensions and continuations of programs that the Party started.

[Video continues.]

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Transcript for Figure 7.28, What Is Transformative Justice?

[Adrienne Maree Brown]: So, when I'm trying to explain transformative justice to people, I usually back away from, I don't go straight at, "Okay, this is transformative justice." I usually actually go back to punitive justice. I start out with, like, what we're used to and what we've been socialized into is punitive justice, and then I ask people, if I'm in a room full of people, even, you know, a room full of friends, I'd be, like, "How many of you grew up in an experience where you were punished when harm happened?" And I give examples. "You were expelled, you were put in detention, you had suspension, you were put in time out, but the main move was you were removed from community in some way because you've done harm." And people are, like, "Oh, yeah," you know, either everyone either has that experience or they were a part of spaces where they saw that experience, and then I'm, like, "You know, we age, we grow that up so that then, you go into prison or you get the death penalty, or you get canceled from your community, right? That same, it's the same process.

So, we live in, that's what we're swimming in. And then I talk about restorative justice as a step in the right direction, right? It's, like, harm has happened. How do we restore ourselves back to that relationship that existed before the harm happened? So, I'm like, someone stole your purse. You get an apology. They do some community service. Hopefully we return to, like, where we were, but for me, I always say that doesn't go far enough because if the original conditions were unjust, then returning to those original conditions is not actually justice, right? You're just gonna have someone who's, like, "Great, now I returned everything to you. I still don't have anything, and I'm still hungry, and I still need something." So, I'm like, so we need to go further.

So, to me, transformative justice, the first aspect of it is that it goes all the way down to the root system of the harm and says, "How do we change, heal, transform, pull this up? What do we need to do at the root system so that this harm is no longer possible?" Like, what we're trying to do is stop this harm from ever being possible again. And then how do we understand that the state is so committed to punitive justice? So, the state is not gonna be able to engage in transformative justice with us. So we don't go to the state to do this kind of deep work.

And then how do we turn towards each other to hold this space, and in that turning to each other, we have to say, "I believe you can transform."

[Mia Mingus]: The bare bones way I describe transformative justice to just anybody that I meet randomly is that it's a way of responding to violence and harm without creating more violence and harm. That's bare bones.

[Video continues.]

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Transcript for "What Is Transformative Justice?" by Barnard Center for Research on Women is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 7.31, Gathering Medicine | Tending the Wild

[Kat High, Hupa, Cultural Educator]: What the Spaniards came and saw in California they described as looking like a well-tended garden. It looked like that because it was. The people had lived with the plants, had lived with the animals, and had evolved in ecology based on bringing what they needed close to their home villages to maximize the growth of that through our land management techniques, to keep it growing in close to the village, to bring game in close to the village so they didn't have to go

farther and farther afield. That's our ecological knowledge – what plants are used for food, what plants are used for tools, what plants are used for medicine.

[Traditional singing.]

[High]: It means I'm coming in a good way, it means I'm coming with a song in my heart, and if you don't have that song in your heart, don't go gather. If you don't have that song in your heart, don't go cook. And it brings that spirit of happiness and joy into what you're doing.

So I take this little tobacco, I leave it down here, I say I'm coming and you're gonna help me make medicine, you're gonna help me make some tea.

My name is Kat High and I'm a descendant from the Hupa tribe in Northern California. I grew up in Redondo Beach, Palos Verdes, and learned about plants from my father and my mother down in Southern California. This is mugwort, it grows in a moister area. It's used for ceremony in Northern California. It's also used as a medicine, you can make a tea out of it, or you can make a tincture, which you would put externally. What I'm gonna do is boil up some water with some mugwort leaves in it for a tincture for mosquito bites, to decrease the itch and the pain from them. I have learned from elders and from others that if you're out in the woods and you get the poison oak, the mugwort is a really good antidote for it. And you can see the color has gotten dark green. The mugwort can be used as an antiseptic, sage can be used as an antiseptic,

[Richard Bugbee, Kumeyaay, Cultural Educator and Ethnobotanist]: White sage is medicinal. You take a couple liters and make a tea to get rid of colds, stuffed up sinuses and stuff. It relieves mucuses, so the only person that shouldn't drink white sage tea is pregnant and nursing women.

So we eat the seeds, toasted seeds and kind of like chia seeds. One of the most important uses of this plant was, it was our toilet paper because it's soft and it smells good and it's actually astringent.

My name is Richard Bugbee and [unintelligible].

I was apprenticed for a teacher named Jane Dumas and her first lesson was how do I gather plants, and she taught me the first thing I do is to say a prayer to the plant. The second thing is to ask permission and the third thing to do is to give the plant intent, what you're gonna use it for. Because plants have lots of different purposes and they need to have a little direction sometimes.

[Sage LaPena, Nomptipom Wintu, Traditional Native & Western Herbalist]: Traditional ecological knowledge is a body of science that encompasses all sciences. If you're a people living in the same place, the same region, for a thousand years, you've watched the turn of the seasons, the migrations of animals, birds, insects, fire regimes, and how they move through plant life. All of those things together – how we hunt and fish, how we gather our plants, how we are able to subsist, all of that – encompasses tech.

My name is Sage LaPena. I am [unitelligible] from Northern California and I am a ethno botanist and certified medical herbalist.

We're at one of the villages on the American River that was part of this whole river corridor villages, which is [unintelligible] my new territory or southern [unintelligible]. There's at least three or four plants just in this small area that are very useful.

So this is Artemisia and it is one of the plants we use a lot for either women's medicine but also for protection. It's made into a tea and it's drank to help regulate your moon cycle or your menstrual cycle. The main constituents of the oils that it has in it are very bitter in nature, and that bitter action helps balance all your systems in a row, so there's a domino effect or a cascade. When you intake of bitters, your digestive system is working better because then your gall bladder and your pancreas talk to each other, they work in unison. The tonic has to do with tonification, so you're toning those walls, which and then is also going out through that cell wall and helping that tone through both the blood – digestion and then that's getting into your blood system – and then actually going out through your intestinal walls, is helping to tonify your overall system.

Herbalism is so much more than just "here's an herb, go ahead and take it." The way I was trained to be an herbalist was starting actually sitting in the woods, going with the person who was my mentor.

I started as a child working with Mabel McKay. She is well known as a basket weaver and also as a doctor and she had me sit for periods of time out there and just be observant, be conscious. I learned a completely different type of understanding of herbalism as a whole in nature, as opposed to just how herbs affect individual body systems.

[Bugbee]: For tens of thousands of years, Indian people have had a reciprocal relationship with plants and it's been good for the people and been good for the plants. Everybody's been healthy and happy. For the last 500 years, that relationship has been severed. Plants aren't being gathered anymore. The plants are not happy. That's why they're kind of growing wild. In Indian there is no word for wild.

[LaPena]: I really want people to understand we as native Californians, as traditional people, are utilizing the same medicines they are and we're trying to harvest these things traditionally on our own or public lands that are in our tribal territories. And when people learn about herbs and how wonderful they are, and then they go out and gather all of them, we don't have access to our medicine.

[High]: I firmly believe that Native people and all people ought to be establishing their own gathering areas in their own homes or communities. Gardening in your own home is something

that we've been developing here. We developed our dogbane forests and we turned our gray water into a grey water marsh so that we could grow tule. We could grow the [unintelligible], we could grow the [unintelligible]. A lot of the plants that require more water without us having to water it using the grey water.

I wouldn't be teaching about our culture and our environment and the way we do things without the belief that this is open to all people to not only learn but understand, to adopt, to take on as their understanding of this.

So many people are relocated and we have terms for that – it's called rootless. And what I am hoping will happen is that all of those people will find a way to sync their roots into this Earth and get nourishment from it and get an understanding of it and be able to get back to it.

[LaPena]: We've been trained a long term generationally, particularly in this country, to react a certain way to our environment or not react at all, to just have more consciousness about what we're doing on a regular basis. The biggest misconception is you take humans out of nature, that nature comes back and that's not true. You take humans out of nature and there's something missing out of nature.

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Transcript for "Gathering Medicine | Tending the Wild | Season 1, Episode 5 | KCET" by PBS SoCal is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 8.3, Hernando Chindoy – Two Questions

Interview with Hernando Chindoy, Chindoy leader of the Inga people of Columbia Mocoa, Putumayo, January 2021.

[River sounds.]

[Why is it important to have a University committed to Indigenous thought?]

[Hernando Chindoy, speaking in Spanish]: The vast majority of us, Inga citizens, we learn and reproduce that which is not ours, from preschool on, all the way up to our doctorates. By doing that, we are contributing to deepening a crisis that the world is experiencing in terms of knowledge generation. It is a route imposed as something that is the most true, the scientifically proven. This has obscured all other avenues to access knowledge, which in this case are mainly those of the Indigenous people themselves. Of all these epistemologies of the south that are being talked about now. It is like with the territory. The Indigenous supports all these layers that have been mounted on top of it. And this has been a violent thing. But we are still here. Sooner or later, these imposed layers will have to be dismantled, they will have to be transformed, because they appeared under principles of violence. And in this sense, today it is important that imposed knowledge and our own knowledge practices have a space for dialogue today. And I don't see this dialogue in another context than what is called university, although with time this will also have to change its name. But for now, to be a little more comprehensible, the message in terms of what is there, I'm going to say that it is a university. Later on you can say that it is a pluriversity, una lachaiwuasi for example, whatever. But that's what we're going for at the moment. And that has to be a meeting point for knowledge, to reflect on how to support each other, on what they are going to return to, and where they have to reposition themselves in more proper, less violent, more sacred impulses, in such a way that, above all, dignity can be respected. That dignity of the difference that everyone is.

[What is the function of the University?]

[Chindoy]: In principle, to unite the people. I believe that we must unify the people in principle. That is the great task of the university. It also becomes a backbone of the existence of the people as such. Because first of all it will have two functions, or two paths, two space times. On the one hand, we have to reaffirm ourselves as Inga. The issue of languages, for example. We are going to be Inga that in 100 years, we are speaking better Inga than we do now. Empowered by our language, making the language part of our daily life, and that we have to share it also with others who want to learn. But at least us, very firm in the language. The language is going to allow us to strengthen governance, economies, justice, everything in our world. But we also have to be Ingas who, in other contexts, argue for how we have to live there. Because we are not going to let ourselves be humiliated there either. Nor are we going to remain silent or tell lies. We have to argue there in the formulas that we have been taught about knowledge, about how we have to share life in that context. And if I am given a responsibility, and be it in administrative, political, legal, whatever, I can defend myself. So, the Inga will also feel proud, just like when you as a professional feel proud to be a Colombian citizen, but if you have to work in the U.S., in Venezuela or Ecuador, you are up to the task. On the other hand, the university has the challenge of dignifying us in spirituality. Because after more than 500 years of being violated in what is our essence of life, our science, the challenge is that this science becomes more comprehensible to humanity, to enable encounters with other ancient universities in the world. That will enable dialogues at a high level. This will be a space for that.

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Transcript for Figure 8.6, What Does Education Mean to You?

[Music.]

[Child, speaking in Spanish]: I like to learn about history and science at school.

[Child 2]: Languages…and drawing.

[Child 3]: My favorite is maths.

[Child 4]: Sums…multiplication…

[Child 5]: My parents work hard and I want to repay them with good grades.

[Child 6, in English]: When I see Ebola I feel very sad. That is why I say I want to become a medical doctor.

[Child 7, in another language]: I want my school to prepare me so I can find work so I can become a respectable lady.

[Child 8, in another language]: When people ask me "Why should girls go to school?" I just answer: "Why not?"

[Child 9, in English]: I do not think about my leg. I feel free.

[Give #EveryChild a Fair Chance to Learn.]

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Transcript for Figure 8.34, Boarding Schools Healing Voices

[Narrator]: They changed their motto from "The only good Indian is a dead one" to "Kill the Indian, but save the man." When they forced us to go to boarding school, they told us to "Let all that was Indian within us die." The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition was formed to bring truth, justice, and healing for boarding school survivors and descendants in the United States. The time for healing is now.

[Patricia]: I was placed in the boarding school, or I ended up at the boarding school one night when I was about six years old. The boarding school was St. Joe's Academy, in 1968.

[Mitch]: I actually thought I was going to be free, but the Bureau of Indian Affairs lady and her husband were right there to pick me up. Aside from having a place to sleep and having three meals a day, I don't have a whole lot of good things to say about the

boarding school.

[George]: Being in boarding school really affected my self-esteem, not wanting to know the language, not really involved in the ceremonies and just being proud of who I was.

[Patricia]: You know, we're taught, we're not supposed to do certain things, but I ask myself, Where did that come from? Why are we fearful sometimes? Those kinds of teachings come from the military part of our experience. But I've had to take myself to places beyond some of those borders that I've been taught weren't good. When I was able to do that, It was just a sense of relief.

[Mitch]: I think the coming generations have a lot of responsibility. It was our generation that became aware of the need for healing. They tried to make us into white people by cutting our hair and then taking our language and all of the horrific things that happened in other places, but it's in here, it's still here and as strong as ever, and I'm going to pass it on.

[Pam]: It's important to educate the people on what you do know. In all areas, not just the history and the trauma that our people went through, but how beautiful our people were.

[Mitch]: The boarding school experience made me very angry, and I stayed angry, but the context in which I pass that anger into the future. I want it to be better.

[George]: What I'm happy about is my grandchildren won't be able to experience some of the things that I've witnessed, a lot of the people that I grew up with witnessed.

[Patricia]: When I think about healing and once we are able to put aside, you know, some of these major issues that have impacted us in Indian country. To me, it's about being more in control of who we are as Indigenous people of this land.

[Mitch]: Go on and heal fast. You know, do something because all of those, all of those things that the boarding school was put in place for to take away, to strip us of our culture. You failed. With me, you failed.

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Transcript for "Boarding School Healing Voices" by Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 8.38, Dr. Christopher Emdin: Hip Hop Ed in the Classroom

[Christopher Emdin, Physicist Lyricist]: I'm a physicist lyricist spitting this ridiculousness so witness the ignorance I dismiss. Newton's laws of motion is the topic up the course because things in motion stay in motion unless they had an unbalanced force. When next steps the second law situation and summation, force equals mass times acceleration, that's the second law, Newton force, or if you want more than the third law's in store.

I'm Christopher Emdin, a science educator. You know, we spit bars, you spit lyrics, but we also drop science facts and then bring that to young people. If somebody were to take hip hop away from me tomorrow, I couldn't breathe. Hip hop is everything, right? I mean, hip-hop is pedagogy in motion.

You go to any rap concert, you know the way the person who's on that stage has a command of that audience, it's almost the exact same way that you want a teacher to be able to sort of hold the students in their hand and make them learn. The call and response, the frenetic energy that builds up to this crescendo, you know, the aha moments—all those things are what you want to see happening in the classroom. So, hip-hop gives us the perfect pedagogical model.

Youth are always in search of something to sort of strike them in a way that makes them see that there are new possibilities for life. I work with kids who are from very, very low socioeconomic status, high incarceration rate communities, and so they're just looking for an outlet and something to look forward to. So if a teacher can show that the concept that they're teaching is a path towards a different possibility for their future, they tune right in.

We're teaching kids to be able to remember what they learned. They're putting it on paper to rhyme, they're trying to make connections where connections didn't exist before, developing a curiosity for the subject matter. And then they're learning that the only assessment for knowledge is not just some stupid test where you have to write everything down, but you have to go out there

and present the information just like scientists go out today and present the information to their colleagues and peers when there are conferences.

The thing about water is that it changes, like a person, from the color to the taste, but the water's never perfect, seeping through the layers like you're moving through a crowded train, hard to find the purity of water in the acid rain.

Teaching essentially is about meeting the person who you want to share information with on their own cultural turf. Where is it that they're embedded? What are the examples that mean something to them? And the educator has to be able to enter the learner's mind and be aware of how they view the world.

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Transcript for Figure 9.3, The Novel Legal Concept to Protect Sacred Rivers

[Narrator]: Several times a year toxic foam covers this river in India. Experts say the suds come from detergent dumped upstream by textile factories. They're one of many sources that pollute

the river. Everywhere in the world sacred rivers are in trouble. Now there's a global movement to protect them by treating them less like sewers and more like people.

The Mighty Wangani

[Narrator]: In New Zealand the mighty Wangani flows past active volcanoes and rugged hill country before it empties into the sea, and it was the first river in the world to have a legal right to do what rivers are supposed to do.

[Grant Wilson, Executive Director, Earth Law Center]: The idea that rivers have a right to be healthy and to be renewed, a right to conservation has been recognized in a growing number of places. A right to flow. The idea that rivers have a right to flow with sufficient water, to flow freely.

Right to Flow

[Narrator]: For over a hundred and fifty years, Maori activists fought to protect their sacred river. That fight ended in March 2017. That's when dozens of tribe members gathered in the country's parliament to celebrate the legal recognition of the river as a living being.

[Wilson]: There's a phrase that the Wanganui use that says, "I am the river and the river is me."

[Legislator speaks in native language.]

[Wilson]: Which basically acknowledges that they are indistinguishable from the river and to protect the river's rights is to protect their own rights and vice versa.

Rights of Nature

[Narrator]: Just a few months later, the rights of nature movement had another win. The high court of Uttarakhand state ruled that the Ganges and the Yamana rivers are living entities that deserve protection under the law. The court was catching up to what many Indians already believe. According to professor David Haberman, Hindus consider the Ganges both as a deity and as a family member.

[David Haberman, professor of religious studies at Indiana University]: One river worshiper who regards the Yamuna river as his mother said that it just gives him such anguish in looking at what has happened to his mother, but he also goes on to say that when your mother is sick, you don't kick her out of the house, but you try to help her.

Religion

[Narrator]: Other experts say that religious communities are key to the protection of sacred waters.

[Rita D. Sherman, Associate Professor, Graduate Theological Union]: It's time for religious leaders to act boldly. Since saving the biosphere is a moral, ethical and spiritual issue because without the equal sphere we cannot survive. We need that level of

mobilization. Religion has that power, that moral authority.

Challenges

[Narrator]: The rights of nature movement is gaining steam but using this legal concept to protect polluted waters faces a number of challenges. Most laws on the books appoint legal guardians to speak on behalf of the river.

[Wilson]: I would say, overall, hundreds of rivers have rights across the globe at this moment.

[Narrator]: Now the struggle is how to put teeth into these protections.

[Wilson]: How do we enforce it? What's the practicality? That's one of the big things that's coming next.

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Transcript for Figure 9.19, What Does "Two-Spirit" Mean?

[Geo Neptune, Narrator]: Though the label has only been used since the 90s, the concept of the two-spirit is something indigenous groups have identified with for centuries. But what does two-spirit actually mean and where does it come from?

What is Two-Spirit?

[Narrator]: Two-spirit is an umbrella term that bridges indigenous and Western understandings of gender and sexuality. You may recognize it as the "two" that sometimes appears at the end of LGBTQ+. There are many definitions and understandings of two-spirit, and each is nation-specific. The term was intentionally introduced by Native people with the goal of finding common ground and helping educate about traditional teachings in a contemporary context.

The Two-Spirit Society of Denver offers the following definition: Two-spirit refers to another gender role believed to be common among most, if not all, first peoples of Turtle Island (North America), one that had a proper and accepted place within native societies. This acceptance was rooted in the spiritual teachings that say all life is sacred.

How Did the Term Two-Spirit Come About?

[Narrator]: In 1990, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, at the third annual Native American gay and lesbian gathering, the term "two-spirit" was proposed and affirmed by consensus. The Lakota word was a potential solution to what native scholars and activists called the problem of naming or making the many different sexual and gender identities that fall under the two-spirit umbrella legible across native and non-native cultures alike.

For example, to illustrate the diversity of meanings that two-spirit contains, consider the following: In Lakota, the word "winkta" means "to be as a woman" and refers to Lakota people who transgress boundaries of gender from what may be considered male to female. In Diné, "nádleehi" means "those who transform" and refers to one of four separate genders: masculine feminine, masculine masculine, feminine masculine, and feminine feminine. Each gender has its own word in the Diné language.

Those are just two nation-specific examples and there are so many more. Each nation's understanding of gender and sexual diversity is different and grounded in specific spiritual beliefs. Although all nations don't have a concept of two-spirit people across those indigenous nations that do, two-spirit people were historically held in high regard and often considered sacred or divine, holding important positions like matchmakers, medicine people, or warriors on the front lines of battle. Many two-spirit people perform roles traditionally assigned to both men and women. We'wha a famous two-spirit of the Zuni Ori hamana was known to take part in masculine tribal matters and feminine tribal matters and was even sent as an official Zuni delegate to Washington DC.

Two-Spirit History

[Narrator]: Part of the reason "two-spirit" was adopted at the 1990 conference was because much of the written record on the indigenous nations of North America begins with European contact. For instance, the writings of Jesuit priests from the 1600s contain references to "berdaches," which means "kept boy" in French, to refer to those who embodied both male and female genders. These writings often focus negatively on perceived cross-dressing among the Anishinaabe. The term is not only inaccurate in that it projects a European understanding of gender but is widely considered pejorative by natives.

Two-Spirit Today

[Narrator]: Two-spirit was an attempt at self-determination across linguistic barriers because the existing language—foreign and imposed violently on the indigenous peoples of North America—was both offensive and deeply colonial in its gaze. European colonizers imposed homophobia, rigid binary gender roles, and misogyny under the guise of civilizing indigenous people through the Christian tradition in residential schools and beyond. As a result, indigenous people were robbed not only of their land but of their spiritual traditions and way of life regarding two-spirit people.

Many nations came to forbid and punish two-spirit unions and self-expression as recently as 2004. Kathy Reynolds and Dawn McKinley, two Cherokee women in Tulsa, Oklahoma, attempted to marry under tribal law, setting off a convoluted legal battle with serious political and social implications. The two were thrust into the spotlight against their wishes and became instant public symbols of the battle for two-spirit rights under tribal law.

The Cherokee tribe is the second largest in the US. Although they were granted the the right to marry. The decision to issue them a marriage license was soon challenged and led to a tribal law declaring that a union was to be between a man and a woman, eventually the law was overturned in 2016. By that time, a wider cultural shift had taken place both outside of and within the Cherokee Nation. In recent years, many Native people are returning to their two-spirit traditions as a way to heal from the injustices the American colonial project has visited upon their ancestors and traditions.

In 2011, the first known U.S. two-spirit powwow was organized by the Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits. Since then, powwows honoring two spirits have been held in Montana and Kansas, and in March of 2017, the largest powwow in the US, the Gathering of Nations, honored two-spirit people during its grand entry. Two-spirit identity is resilient and precious; it has survived centuries of colonial violence and prejudice. These sacred ways of knowing live on amongst Native youth seeking to know more about themselves, elders who have kept the traditions alive in spite of the odds, and anyone in between.

It should go without saying but two-spirit is not a poetic way for non-native LGBTQ people to express themselves. We're looking at you Jason Mraz. It is however a sacred tradition among the first peoples of this land we call Turtle Island that all of its inhabitants should know about and respect.

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Transcript for Figure 9.23, The Role of the African-American Church in the Civil Rights Movement

[Manning Marable, History Professor, Columbia University]: To understand the role of the Black church during the civil rights movement in the 50s, you need to go back about a century. During slavery, the only institution that white racists – the slaveholders – would permit people of African descent to have as their own was the church. The church was the only place where Blacks could congregate together in prayer but they also used that site of faith as a place of gathering resistance, of plotting rebellion. And after the Civil War was over the church became the only institution where you had a leadership cast, usually of Black men who could authentically represent the interest of the Black community, because their salaries were paid for by Black folk.

Thus, the Black church in the 1940s and 50s was an institution that had resources, it had a leadership elite of Black ministers, and it had the institutional ability to help fund long-term protests that were being waged by working-class and low-income people. The Black church provided the institutional means for carrying out the campaigns that were waged in the small towns. But at the same time, as a historian, it must be noted that the majority of Black churches in major cities did not engage in civil disobedience or in the campaigns led by Dr. King and the

Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Congress of Racial Equality. Most Black ministers stood on the sidelines. So if you look at, say, in Montgomery, perhaps 10 to 15 Black churches were actively involved in the campaign in 1955-56 to end the racial segregation on public buses. In Birmingham in '63, perhaps 25 or 30 out of the more than 200 Black churches

in the city. But the vast majority of churches, while their members participated to a great extent, the ministers themselves tried to stand on the sidelines. And part of the reason for that is that there was a split in African-American faith communities around the proper role of Black ministers in social protest. The Baptists actually divided in 1961 between the National Baptist Convention and the progressive Baptist Convention, which sided with Dr. King and argued

that the role of the Black clergy was as social activists in challenging racial segregation and fighting for progressive social change.

But the vast majority of Black Baptist ministers said that that was not the role of the church, and so there was a tension within the church at a national level. Nevertheless, there would not have been successful civil rights organizations had there not been the financial and the political support of key Black denominations.

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Transcript for Figure 9.33, Iran Protests: Why is Cutting Hair an Act of Rebellion?

[Abir Al-Sahlani, Swedish MEP, standing at EU-branded podium]: Until the women of Iran are free, we are going to stand with you. Jin, Jiyan, Azadi. Women, life, freedom!

[Abir Al-Sahlani, a Swedish MEP originally from Iraq, cut her hair during a debate in the European Parliament on the repression of women's rights protestors in Iran.]

[Crowd chanting.]

[The same gesture has been repeated in demonstrations around the world in solidarity with Iran. But what does the gesture mean and where does it come from?]

[Music.]

["Gisoboran" (hair cutting) is one of the most famous mourning rituals in Iranian culture. It's a way to express anger and sadness together. Traces of this tradition can be found in classical Persian literature.]

[In ancient Iranian mythology, women's hair was seen as a symbol of fertility and blessing.]

[Hair cutting is now becoming a global movement against gender inequality and to show solidarity with protesters in Iran.]

[Crowds cheering.]

[Woman on phone video]: For freedom.

[Famous French actresses like Juliette Binoche and Marion Cotillard recently took part in the movement. The slogan "women, life, freedom," originally used by female Kurdish fighters against the terrorist group ISIS, is now used to show solidarity with protesters in Iran.]

[Music.]

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Transcript for Figure 9.35, Does Islam Care About the Environment?

[Saad Tasleem]: Does Islam care about the environment? This may seem like an odd question because caring about the environment seems like a recent issue, and Islam appeared more than 1400 years ago. So did Islam really legislate laws to protect the environment from all that time ago?

Well, when God sent the father of humankind, Adam, peace be upon him, to Earth, he sent him to be a successor. So according to Islamic principles this means that we as human beings are agents and guardians on Earth, and it is our responsibility to use the Earth's resources with care and humility, to preserve and protect the environment, and this is exactly what was stated in the Islamic Declaration on climate change. Islam affirms that the use of the resources is the right and privilege of all people, and therefore it instructs us as human beings to take the utmost precaution to ensure the interests and rights of everyone because we are all equal partners on Earth. Human beings must not misuse and ruin natural resources, as every generation has the

right to benefit from them. No one person or even generation owns them in the absolute sense, and this is how the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon Him, lived. He showed a great deal of care and concern for the environment and gave guidelines for taking care of it. For example, he said if any Muslim plants trees or seeds, and then a person, bird or animal eats from it, it is considered charity.

Here are some specific examples of what is found in Islam to protect the environment: laws to combat land waste by desertification by encouraging the reconstruction of land reclamation and afforestation; the prohibition of cutting down trees; the removal of corruptive and toxic materials from land so that it remains clean; keeping one's own living environment clean; the preservation of water, so in Islam it's forbidden to waste water, and hunting is prohibited at certain times and in specific places in order to allow for animals to reproduce and prosper.

[Music.]

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Transcript for Figure 9.36, The Condor's Spiritual and Ecological Role Along the Klamath

[Chris West, Yurok Tribe Senior Wildlife Biologist]: The Yurok tribe see things from a cyclical perspective and more of a holistic ecosystem approach where everything's part of the system, everything's used, nothing's really waste. Condors can be part of that, bringing those nutrients to those more terrestrial upland ecosystems.

[Tiana Williams, Yurok Tribe Condor Biologist]: Because our entire lives are supposed to be dedicated to keeping the world in balance. It means that we're, we're praying and working towards restoration of our entire world. All of the tribes in this area find Condor to be deeply spiritually significant, so from both the spiritual and the ecological standpoint we've, we've had a very large hole in our world since condors disappeared.

[Music.]

[West]: At the time of Euro-American arrival here there were a lot of big bad predators and people were trying to start up, you know, bringing in livestock. They wanted to get rid of the grizzly bears, they wanted to get rid of the wolves. There were a lot of carcasses put out that were intentionally laced with strychnine and other toxins so condors, turkey vultures, eagles all took major hits at that time.

[Williams]: Another one of the big impacts on condor was the introduction of the use of lead ammunition, and of course lead is well-established as being a toxic material. We got it out of our

lead paint, leaded gasoline, got rid of all those things, but it's still the most commonly used ammunition type for most hunters. Some statistics indicate the use of lead ammunition is actually the number one reason that condors are dying in the wild even today.

Condor reintroduction ties very deeply to our world, and all ceremonies, to our reason for being. All of the tribes in this area find Condor to be deeply spiritually significant. We do continue with our dances, but we no longer have condor providing us our feathers, which we use that feather in our regalia and in Yurok belief that feather carries the condor spirit with it. We don't have condor here to gift us his feathers. Condor traditionally would carry our prayers to the heavens, which he's no longer in our skies to carry our prayers to heavens and of course his ecological role has been non-functioning as well. He serves as the ultimate and the cleanup crew, the ultimate in the world renewal, as he goes across the landscape breaking into these particularly large carcasses like whales, seals, sea lions, bears, that other smaller scavengers can't break into. He actually breaks into them, opens them up for more bioavailability, and provides more food to the ecosystem that normally would have been there.

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Transcript for Figure 9.37, What Do We Tell The Seven Generations?: Jennifer's Story

[Jennifer Irving, narrator]: As a Lakota woman I've been taught that with every decision, with every action, we need to consider the seven generations to come. That what we do impacts each of those generations and we need to preserve our way of life so that they can enjoy what we have today. This is especially true for the medicines and plants we use in our ceremonies, our traditional foods, our art and our overall well-being.

Climate change has begun to impact the manner in which some of these medicines grow. We've all seen the news reports of extreme weather and warmer than average temperatures. We've all experienced earlier springs, hotter summer days, deadly winter storms, and record snowfall.

I've heard stories of other tribes and how their way of life is being impacted by climate change. How herds they've hunted are moving further and further away from their homelands because herds can't find food where they used to. My family and I have already seen changes in our community and the growth period of some of our medicines locally.

My heart is heavy thinking of the generations of Lakota children that may miss out on the beautiful experiences of berry picking, of timpsila gathering, of picking sage for ceremony, of gathering and processing cansasa for our traditional tobacco. What do we tell these children? Do we tell them we knew things were changing, but we did not think of you? Do we tell them these ceremonies, these medicines, this way of life was a beautiful one? Do we tell them that we're sorry it's not there for them? Or do we tell them we stood up, we cried out, we protested, we wrote laws, we passed laws, we prayed, we cried, that we did all we could for you. We did all we could to protect these resources for you.

We're taught as Lakota to be good relatives, and the responsibility of being a good relative is to act now and to become engaged in protecting Mother Earth. We have to do our part in our homes, in our work, in our communities and engage with the lawmakers that govern where we live. I think about what our relatives and our ancestors did for us, how hard they fought for us, what they sacrificed and endured for us. And I want to know I did all I could for the seven generations who will come after me.

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Transcript for Figure 10.2, How to Protect People and the Planet

[Music.]

[Tania Roe]: I changed my career path the day I cried in public. I was listening to Alex Blanchette, an associate professor of anthropology, at Tufts University, discuss his work with factory farms. He witnessed firsthand the mistreatment of pigs and migrant workers.

He explained how some workers would wear diapers to work because they were denied

bathroom breaks. This is one of many examples of how large corporations maximize their profits by requiring non-stop labor from vulnerable, in this case largely

undocumented communities, and how our health is so connected to the health of the planet and animals. Before that day I had planned to embark on a career in wildlife conservation and while I still advocate for animals, I realized that day that I could not advocate for animals without advocating as well for marginalized communities, because again our health goes hand in hand.

This really hit home to me and I cried right in the middle of class, as you can imagine, not something that I wanted to do, because my parents were undocumented at one point in their lives, in this country. Those workers falling ill due to inhumane and unhygienic work conditions could have been them.

My family is from Colombia. Colombia is the second most biodiverse country in the world, and per square mile we're actually the most biodiverse. We're right behind Brazil. Colombia, we love nature, we rely on the Andes Mountains. Our valleys, our rivers, the Amazon rainforest–we have the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean on our coast. We rely on all these different ecosystems for peace, for livelihoods, for food, water for everything. For many of us nature isn't simply nice to have, it is needed and it's magic. We feel the connection to Nature because we rely on it so much, and also because we know what it's like to have it when it's lost.

When so many foreign policies from the United States, from European National policies, they–they come to monopolize their food and water sources. They pass policies like Plan Colombia which is a U.S.-backed practice of spraying glyphosate, a pesticide, over at campesinos, our rural farmers so they can continue their policies at the expense of our people, our wildlife, our biodiversity. We know what it's like to not have nature and we also know that restored nature restores our communities. [Speaks in Spanish.]

The reason that we have this disconnection to Nature is because we are building systems in the ego mindset and we need to switch to the eco mindset. The ego mindset allows us to create hierarchies, whether between humans and other species or humans and other humans based on race, class, gender, etc. But with the eco mindset we see ourselves as part of a whole, and that's when we carry out our ecological role because we are merely one species of many on this planet. We cannot carry natural cycles on our own, and so we know that we have to connect with other species to carry out the balance of Earth's ecosystems.

The ego mindset or the egotistical mindset drives us to create systems based on that hierarchy and that's what we are seeing here now, today, all over the world. That is what is ultimately leading to our downfall. But we can switch to an ecological mindset again when we see ourselves as part of nature, because when we do that everything changes. A whole world of possibilities comes about, and we start to create climate solutions that work for all species and all people. To do that we can adopt three values. In the ego mindset we can see ourselves all as equal, all humans. As equal, we can coexist with other species and we can live open-hearted, meaning we live empathetically and compassionately, because at the end of the day this is out of love. Out of love for each other, out of love for our blue and green home, the only one we have and know, and out of love for every other animal, insect, every other living being, because we realize we all want the same thing: to live abundant healthy lives.

But we need action. We all know that change does not happen on its own. Adopting the values is the first step. We actually need to make those into action, so we can see that play out in real life, play out in our daily lives, to change the way that we govern, transform society as a whole. So to do that, we can adopt three principles: we can educate one another, collaborate with one another, and with other species and we can organize their efforts. We've seen so many social justice movements like the Civil Rights Movement do that before. We can do it again and we can do it together because that's the only way it's going to get done.

I believe that we can do this and I believe that because I see it, and I also see the alternative. We have no other option. When we separate humans from nature we tend to create solutions that actually don't work for us or other species, like in the name of conservation many Indigenous peoples have been evicted from their homes, their ancestral homes, so we can build national parks, not just in the U.S but around the world. That is not conservation. We cannot harm people in the name of conservation.

You can just ask the Maasai people in Tanzania, who earlier this year were ruthlessly evicted from their homes just so our foreign company can come in and set up a trophy hunting reserve. We need to switch our mindset so we can create solutions that actually work and that are actually sustainable and long-term wildlife corridors, and we are already doing this. We can build wildlife corridors so people and animals can travel safely.

In Colombia we have the Jaguar friendly seal. The Jaguar is a keystone species, meaning we need it to maintain the balance in our ecosystem, and it's also endangered,

meaning it's threatened and we need to make sure that we restore the populations and fast. The Jaguar friendly seal helps Jaguars by working with farmers, with those campesinos, and the way that they do that is a farmer is certified under the seal when

they set a part of their land to biodiversity. They plant native species again, they welcome the return of biodiversity in the mountain ecosystem, and we see Jaguars are coming back to that range. They're restoring their habitat, and this helps all of their wildlife because if you have jaguars you have their prey as well and you have the plants as well. It's a whole system that's coming back. This actually helps the farmers as well

because when they have that jaguar friendly seal they receive a premium on their products. They're paid more for that same coffee, and the coffee is actually way better because the soil-friendly practices that they're using are benefiting, again, the whole system. These are what we call win-win solutions. This is what we call coexistence.

I'm here today because I believe that we can Implement these solutions, and so that we can actually benefit one another and actually see the world that we want to create happen. I believe it because I see it everywhere. I see it in tree planting initiatives, especially in urban communities where tree canopy has just been lost due to racist policies in the past, like redlining, that still affect us today. This creates wildlife habitat right in the middle of the city as well, where it's most needed. So it's benefiting, again, the communities in the area and the animals. I see it in beach cleanups, where we reduce the effects of pollution and we welcome the

return of nesting sea turtles. I also see change in urban farms. This is right in the middle of the city. It's a regenerative farm where we create pollinator habitat. We restore the soil again, and we uplift and value our workers. This also increases access to healthy foods, because many communities, as you may know, do not have quick access to that healthy food, and we all deserve that. But I'm just one person. If I believe that we can do this, I mean what will that do? I want all of you to believe it as well. So I want us to do an exercise. I want us all to close our eyes, trying to fall asleep, and I want you to Envision the world that you want to create, the world that you want to live in. If climate change were a thing of the past, if all people were truly treated equally, and if coexistence was a norm, what do you see yourself doing? Maybe gathering organic vegetables from your backyard garden, or if you're like me, you see yourself swimming with turtles and manta rays and crystal clear waters, or maybe you're taking a walk in the woods. Whatever that vision is of that world, whatever you want to see, whatever world you want to help create, really grasp on to that and once you have, open your eyes. We can create all of our visions a reality, but to do so we have to first recognize our rightful place in nature: not above other species, but working in harmony with them. Not above other humans, but working together and realizing that again, we all want the same thing. So I hope the next time I cry in public it's not because of despair and frustration or confusion, but from the sheer joy of seeing all of us come together and create those different worlds, those different realities, that we all want to see and create that sustainable, equitable future that we all deserve. Thank you.

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Transcript for Figure 10.32, How Climate Change is Making Inequality Worse

[Music.]

[Stephanie Hegarty, Population Correspondent]: Climate change is already making poverty worse.

[Woman, Resident of Qabayyat, Lebanon]: We're left to care for ourselves.

[Woman, Resident of Zhengzhou, China]: I lost my house. I lost everything.

[Man, Resident of Tizi Ouzou, Algeria]: It's unbelievable.

[Hegarty]: The World Bank says it could push 130 million people into poverty in the next 10 years.

The richest half of the world are responsible for 86% of greenhouse gas emissions and the poorest half for just 14%, but poorer communities are already worse affected by the climate change caused by those emissions in many ways that aren't that obvious, like extreme heat.

[Yolanda Lee, resident of Yonkers, New York, U.S.]: Everything is exposed. The sun is beating down directly on you and it's just unbearable.

[Hegarty]: During the June heat wave in the United States, scientists found that streets in poor areas were up to 3 to 10 degrees Celsius hotter.

[Lee]: And many people take medication here and they can't sustain themselves outside for any length of time.

[Hegarty]: And that's because of too much asphalt, concrete and the lack of trees.

[Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone]: Trees are life. They, the role they play in this, in our ecosystem, can't be overstated.

[Hegarty]: Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr is the mayor of Freetown in Sierra Leone and has plans to plant a million trees in the city. Trees create shade, and plants pull moisture up from the ground, which has a cooling effect. Research suggests that people in areas with less vegetation have a five percent higher chance of dying of heat related causes. It's holding whole countries back. Scientists at Stanford University estimated that Nigeria's economy is 29% smaller than it would be without climate change. Brazil's is 25% and India's 31%.

Extreme heat, weather and fires mean people are already on the move.

[Man, resident of Oregon]: Having a safe place to sleep at night is, right now, is like a godsend.

[Hegarty]: After the campfire in Paradise, California, people moved to the city of Chico. Rents surged, pushing poorer people out, and in places like Sierra Leone it's destroying livelihoods.

[Aki-Sawyerr]: Over six percent of our national population are farmers, subsistence farmers. With the effects of climate change, means it rains when it shouldn't and it doesn't rain when it should and people's crops fail, and because their livelihoods disappear, they flock to the city looking for a better life.

We don't have the infrastructure to absorb those people, so what you see happening is massive deforestation of our hillsides.

[Hegarty]: Mary Vonn has planted 250,000 trees so far and it's not just extreme heat that they manage. They can also prevent flooding.

[Resident of Zhengzhou, China]: I really don't know what to say. I lost my shop. I lost my house. I lost everything.

[Hegarty]: Yolanda's community was also hit recently by floods in New York.

[Lee]: After the rain or any, anytime we have any kind of storm, the backyard completely floods.

[Hegarty]: Nearby in Queens, they killed a young family from Nepal who were living in a basement.

[Aki-Sawyerr]: The poor are definitely disproportionately impacted.

[Hegarty]: Researchers at the University of Brussels have found the children born in high-income countries will see twice as many extreme weather events as their grandparents did, but for children in low-income countries, it'll be worse. They'll see three times as many.

[Prof Wim Thiery, Climatologist]: Today you have a much higher chance of being born in a low income country or lower middle income countries. About two thirds of all children born today are born in low, lower and middle income countries, and these are exactly those regions which are hardest hit by climate change.

[Aki-Sawyerr]: And they play the least role in many ways in contributing to this crisis.

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Transcript for Figure 10.36, The Relationship between Humans and Nature | Native America: Nature to Nations

Final segment of a video about the first democracy in North America and the Haudenosaunee (in French, the Iroquois) people's connection to nature.

[Sounds of people greeting each other.]

[Robbie Robertson, Narrator]: Today the Haudenosaunee gather on the shore of Lake Onadoga. The place where their journey from war to peace began.

[Syd Hill, Chief of Chiefs]: All these leaders would work together to come up with a solution.

[Narrator]: They build their confederacy based on profound lessons and symbols from nature.

[Tom Porter, Mohawk spiritual leader]: Mother Earth never lacked nothing, did a perfect world.

[Narrator]: But like a treaty between nations, they believe they owe nature something in return. To take care of all living things.

[Tom Porter]: Water and air and all the natural things that make the world that we live in is held sacred by all indigenous people – and every human being comes from an indigenous people.

[Narrator]: This ceremony is an appeal to honor that responsibility to nature. For Onadoga Lake, the birthplace of democracy in America, is among the world's most polluted.

[Syd Hill]: Everybody is concerned these days about the condition of the waters, the condition of Mother Earth. It's a concern throughout the world. That was put there for everybody to use and nobody has the right to take that away from anybody.

[Tom Porter]: It's not just the water, it's not just made out of chemical elements. It's real. It's our life blood.

[Narrator]: Over two hundred years ago, the framers of the U.S. Constitution learned lessons of governance from the Haudenosaunee. But the founding fathers leave out a core principle. People have a responsibility to take care of the Earth.

[Ducks quacking.]

[Narrator]: Native America's profound respect for nature is relevant now as much as ever.

Attribution

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Transcript for Figure 10.41, Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis, Chapter 4: Dreams

This is Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis. Chapter 4. Dreams.

There's this line in a Nina Simone song that runs through my head quite a bit these days. The song, at least in part, is about drugs and addiction. She says:

The dealer takes a nickel lord

And sells you lots of sweet dreams

And lord knows we need lots a sweet dreams

This line hits me, I think, because of its empathy. We do need sweet dreams, God knows. But not all dreams are equal. Some dreams, to borrow another line from the song, put tombstones in our eyes.

I'm Ben Cushing. Welcome to the 4th and final Chapter of "Tracing the Roots of the Climate Crisis."

In this chapter, I want to reflect on our dreams. What kinds of dreams have we inherited? What are their consequences? And what kinds of dreams do we need, in order to survive the future, and heal?

Let's start by thinking a bit about some of the dreams that have built – or at least legitimized – major parts of the world as we know it.

Take, for example, the very seductive and reassuring dream of progress. A product of the European enlightenment, "progress" tells a story that claims to explain all of the human past, present and future.

It's a triumphant story. Human's, it tells, are forever developing new and better technologies and forms of social organization. In the dream of progress, the future is bright and civilized and the past is mostly dark, backward and irrelevant.

As Teodor Shanin describes the progress story: "all societies are advancing naturally and consistently 'up', on a route from poverty, barbarism, despotism and ignorance to riches, civilization, democracy and rationality…."

As listeners of the last chapter might notice, the narrative of progress relies on the 'civilized / savage' dichotomy that is so central to the ideologies that have justified settler colonialism and racial capitalism. In fact, the story of "progress" was and is exceedingly useful to power holders. It can justify everything from enslaving and commodifying people (read: progress through the civilizing mission) to seizing native land by force (read: progress through taming and harnessing the wilderness) to global imperialism (read: progress through the white man's burden).

The story of progress even provided the moral foundation for the neocolonialism that took hold after WW2. So, for example, when the former colonial powers used institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to impose their economic policies on the former colonies, they framed it as development – a kind of economic, technological and political progress.

Poor countries, we're told, aren't poor because of centuries of violence and extraction. And rich countries aren't rich because of their exploitation of poor countries – because of centuries of stolen riches. Rather, some countries are just more developed than others. And it's out of benevolence and good will that the developed countries teach the poor countries how to develop.

So it shouldn't be any surprise that, today, we still used the language of childhood and adulthood to explain global inequality. Some economies are mature, we're told, and others are developing.

Today, we live in the world that progress made. And as we face the existential threats that progress brought about (from the climate crisis to nuclear war), techno-capitalists dream about escaping this world and colonizing Mars. Jeff Bezos dons a white cowboy hat and mounts his white phallic steed. It's absurd. Progress is such a powerful story that many of us are convinced that the only solution to the crises caused by yesterday's progress, is to just double down.

I'm reminded of something the Anthropologist Arturo Escobar wrote. 'There are no modern solutions to our modern problems.'

Don't get me wrong here. I'm not advocating that we "go backward" or return to some romantic past, and neither is Escobar. Even that criticism rests on the framework of the progress story. Rather, I'm suggesting we jetosen the whole idea. Stick it in one of Bezos's rockets and fire it into the heavens. It isn't that there are no solutions to our modern problems. It's that solutions will have to come from other frameworks.

Progress is a dream, alright. And God knows we need sweet dreams. But maybe not this one. This one has put too many tombstones into too many eyes.

The American Dream is one of the most salient stories in US society over the past century. This is a deeply held – and deeply felt – belief not only about American freedom of opportunity but about what constitutes a good life, and how one should go about living it.

To criticise the American Dream, is to commit a kind of blasphemy in US culture. And while I'm more than happy to attack false idles, I also want to acknowledge that the American Dream can be a source of hope for a lot of people. And hope is precious in this world.

Many Americans assume that the American dream – the dream of lifting oneself from rags to riches through hard work and perseverance – is as old as the country itself, or older. Many of us were taught that the so-called pilgrims came on the Mayflower seeking religious liberty – framed as the first chapter in a national tale of American dreams. We're invited to imagine European Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island seeking freedom and opportunity. And we're asked to play the protagonist of our own American dream story.

But like most national myths, it has never been very true. And it isn't even especially old. It dates back to the late 19th century, when the American economy was rapidly industrializing, and the wars of colonial settlement were coming to a close. That was indeed a time when a minority of the population – namely white men – did enjoy significantly better economic opportunity and upward class mobility compared to their counterparts in Western Europe. Western Europe, at the time, had a rigid class structure, with roots in the feudal system. And the US offered, among other things, freshly seized indigenous and Mexican land for white settlement and booming new industries. But the time of relative opportunity – as unjust as it was – has long passed. For about the last half century, in the context of neoliberal economics and the consolidation of corporate power, the US has offered less and less opportunity. Today, Canadians experience 3-times higher rates of class mobility than Americans. So, if the US ever was a land of opportunity, it was in the context of colonial settlement and capitalist exploitation, and it isn't much of one today.

So the hope offered by the American dream is at least in part false. But there's something even more dangerous about the American dream. Embedded in the notion that the US is a land of opportunity is a belief that inequality is simply the result of some people taking advantage of those opportunities and others failing to. This is often called the myth of meritocracy – the idea that people earn their place in the economic hierarchy based on their merit – their skills and work ethic. This is a remarkably powerful ideology, since it implies that people basically deserve their lots in life. The rich are rich because they earned their wealth. The poor are poor because they deserve to be. All coercion is hidden away, and justified.

The myth of meritocracy makes no room for an accounting of colonialism, slavery, class exploitation, gendered power structures or extractive imperial economies. So, for example, if we believe the myth of meritocracy, and then look around to see that white folks have about 20 times more wealth than black folks – which they do – the story slips quickly into white supremacy. One is left with the idea that white folks must be 20 times harder working than their black counterparts. It's no wonder that this story is so popular among the same political forces that seek to repress black and brown movements for liberation.

Overall, this national myth can cause us to blame ourselves for suffering the consequences of systems that are hurting us, while letting the system off the hook. It keeps us from understanding the world we inhabit – and from understanding our own lives and

the lives of the people around us. And, I'd suggest, it even keeps us from dreaming better dreams.

Not all dreams are equal. Some dreams, even dreams that give us hope, can hurt us. They can even be weapons deployed against us, and that we deploy against each other.

As the social theorist Slavaj Zizek put it: "The first step is not to change reality to fit your dreams, but to change the way you dream."

Or better, from James Baldwin: "…it is only when one is able, without bitterness or self-pity, to surrender a dream one has long cherished, or a privilege one has long possessed, that one is set free…that one has set oneself free, for higher dreams, for greater privileges."

I don't know what dreams we need. But when I look at progress and the American dream, I feel pretty confident that these aren't them.

It seems to me that we're all living within a kind of crisis of the imagination.

Over the past several decades, the competing dreams of modernity have collapsed. The dreams of the old left were declared dead in the 1980's, as Neoliberal capitalism claimed total victory over communism. Then, the conservative icon Margaret Thatcher, former prime minister of the UK, celebrated the total hegemony of her class by declaring "There is no alternative" to global free market capitalism.

But today, after enduring 40 years of austerity and growing inequality, and as we witness the unraveling of the living systems of this world, of which we are part, the dreams of capitalism have surely died. Some may still hold them close, but more out of nostalgia than actual hope. Those old dreams have lost their power. And where they still hold sway, they take the shape of reactionary nationalism and misdirected resentment.

The modern dreamscape is as clearcut and barren as the modern landscape.

In these hard times, what stories do we need to be able to make sense of – and give meaning to – our lives? What stories will help us survive the future, and heal?

Let's go back to Arturo Escobar's suggestion that "there are no modern solutions to our modern problems." By this, he means that the solutions to our problems will have to come from outside the framework of modernity and capitalist eurocentric culture – and he directs our attention particularly to Indigenous peoples and radical social movements.

Indigenous communities – as the historian and native activist Nick Estes argues – not only have centuries of experience resisting colonialism, but also hold practical knowledge about how to live within reciprocal ecological relationships connected to local places. So Indigenous-led social movements, such as the movements to stop the construction of oil pipelines, aren't just about stopping pipelines or protecting the environment. They're assertions of alternative ways of relating to other people and the other-than-human world – of being responsible in our relationships with our various relatives. Estes makes this point partly by exploring the Lakota phrase that became a rallying cry for the movement at Standing Rock; mni wiconi, meaning water is life. "Mni Wiconi and these Indigenous ways of relating to human and other-than-human life exist in opposition to capitalism, which transforms both humans and nonhumans into labor and commodities to be bought and sold. These ways of relating also exist in opposition to capitalism's twin, settler colonialism, which calls for the annihilation of Indigenous people and their other-than-human kin." Within Indigenous-led resistance, we can see concretely that other worlds are indeed possible. They've been here all along, resisting.

Radical social movements can also offer living alternatives to the status quo. Not only do these movements call for an end to various oppressive systems, they often embody examples of what alternative systems might look like. So Occupy Wall Street didn't just call for an end to the rule of the 1%, it embodied a radically democratic alternative based on mutual aid and direct participatory democracy in daily general assemblies. And it invited people into a different way of understanding themselves and others. The Black Lives Matter movement didn't just call for an end to police violence but also built networks of local community members and organizations engaged in everything from mutual aid to collective strategy – the kinds of community ties needed within a society free of the carceral state. None of these examples are perfect, and none of them offers a simple blueprint for a better world. Better still, these are the tangible spaces where people are actively trying to figure out how to build a better society together. They are spaces of agency and creativity – where transformative dreams are nurtured and built.

But radical alternatives can even show up in the most mundane places. The anthropologist and anarchist David Graeber points out that mutual aid and cooperative relationships are actually all over the place. Consider for example how radically utopian your local library is. It's this institution for resource sharing and community, and it's free. In my old neighborhood, we had a volunteer-run tool library. I'd go there every couple of weeks and borrow a lawn mower for free. Then I'd bring it back, and one of my neighbors would take it the next week. You could borrow everything from a screwdriver to a jackhammer. It was dreamy – a shabby beacon of a revolutionary alternative, housed in the basement of a local church. It was like Home Depot's worst nightmare.

One of the most hopeful books I've read in the past few years is called "A Paradise Built In Hell" by Rebecca Solnit. Solnit finds that radically solidaristic and caring communities emerge within the most unexpected places. She takes a hard look at the history and sociological study of disasters. What she finds, I think, is deeply moving, and a bit of a salve in these scary times. For one thing, she finds that this culture fundamentally misunderstands how people behave in times of crisis. We're encouraged, by Hollywood, for example, to imagine that when crises hit, people revert to a kind of brutal instinct. We panic, hoard resources and get violent fast. But it turns out we usually don't. In fact, the actual history of crisis tells a very different story. People often spontaneously begin looking out for each other, for strangers, rescuing folks in crisis and sharing what they have. And it happens over and over again in history. It's the norm.

Let's just take a minute and sit with that. The implications are enormous. Maybe we're not all cruel brutes overlaid by a thin veneer of civilization. Maybe that's another story we can leave behind.

What's more, Solnit shows that people often think back on moments of crisis – paradoxically – as some of the deepest and, strangely, best, memories of their lives. It isn't that the crisis was good. People often suffered devastating losses amid these crises. It was the unexpected richness of community and mutual aid that people experienced during and just after the crisis. Solnit argues that we always need that deeper sense of community and purpose, but that this society just doesn't provide it. It's only in extraordinary moments when the alienation of daily life within this society is ruptured, that we experience it – or rather, that we seem to spontaneously co-create it.

You and I are living within a moment of multiple unprecedented crises. Things seem to be unraveling all around us. Ecological systems are coming apart and transforming. The legitimacy of our economic and political systems is crumbling.

And, the dreams of modernity appear to be dead. May they rest in peace, and never re-emerge from the grave.

At the same time, multiple transformative dreams seem to also be taking root and flourishing – sometimes within people's struggles against this system, and sometimes in the wake of the disasters it rains down upon us. In this moment – which is as unstable as it is creative – maybe our goal shouldn't be to find the right dream (as a noun) but to cultivate our capacity to dream (as a verb).

As we attempt to Trace the roots of the climate crisis, we find that they run deep. They're entangled within the core beliefs and institutions of this entire civilization. That means that only the deepest transformations are likely to get us out of this mess. I guess that's both the bad news. And it's also the good news.

Nobody can tell us where all of this is headed. The future is unknowable. As Rebecca Solnit puts it: "The future is dark, with a darkness as much of the womb as of the grave."

A couple years ago, I was on a walk at the Sandy River Delta, at the mouth of the Columbia Gorge, with my good friend, the scholar of social movements and teacher, David Osborn. He posed a question that really struck me. It's been bouncing around in my head ever since. He asked: "If the changing climate was a gift, what would it offer us?"

That's a question that we'll need to answer together. It's a question to live into. But here's one starting point for an answer, from my perspective at least: what if the climate crisis were an outstretched hand, a kind of invitation to change, calling us toward one another – and toward our other-than-human relatives. What if the changing climate were a call to come back home? Back home to a world in which we belong, of which we are participants – responsible members of a living community.

At this point, there's no longer any doubt that the climate crisis is a door to another world. The question is, to what worlds will it lead? What world will we build together?

Thanks for listening to "Tracing the roots of the climate crisis." I'm Ben Cushing. If you've found this podcast to be valuable, please consider sharing it with a friend. Tracing the roots of the climate crisis, including theme music, was written and performed

by me, Ben Cushing. Special thanks to Mike McNaughton for support with sound engineering, and David Osborn for his insightful feedback. Take care everybody.

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Transcript for Figure 10.47, Achuar of Peruvian Amazon Say NO to GeoPark

[Text on screen: In the Peruvian Amazon, the Achuar people are threatened by oil companies. The Chilean company GeoPark plans to drill for oil in Achuar territory without prior consent of its inhabitants.

[Achuar Man, translated to English]: We are told to let the oil companies in, so we'll have work and money. But we prefer to live freely rather than being their prisoners.

[Text on screen: The Achuar have already fought and won several times to keep other oil companies out of their territory. They vow to do the same with GeoPark.

[Achuar Woman, translated to English]: We ask our leaders to keep on fighting. We cannot let our land be damaged or lost.

[Jeremias Petsein, President of the Achuar Federation, translated to English]: United, we categorically reject GeoPark.

[Text on screen: The Achuar are protesting in the Amazon and taking their case to court to protect their territory and way of life.]

[Petsein, translated to English]: We are sowing the seeds for the future generations, for the sake of our grandchildren. We are the guardians of the Amazon.

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Transcript for "Achuar of Peruvian Amazon say NO to GeoPark" by AmazonWatch is included under fair use.

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Transcript for Figure 10.53, Tania Roa, Climate Justice Advocate

[Tania Roe]: Hi, my name is Tania Roa. I'm super excited to create this video so all of you can learn ways that you can take action for the climate crisis and for social justice. Let's return to my exercise from my TED Talk: How to Protect People and Planet. Towards the end of the talk, I bring forward an exercise that everyone can do to really drive into that vision that you want for the future. A vision for a greener, more equitable, more fair future for us all. Regardless if we want to admit it, we simply cannot do it on our own because other species have abilities, talents, skills that we simply do not have. Just by existing, kelp and seagrass draw down carbon from the atmosphere. Isn't that amazing?

So just by keeping those types of species alive we are actually benefiting ourselves and mitigating climate change. Only when we recognize that we are one participant in Earth's ecosystem and Earth's balance do we learn from other species. And that leads to new solutions that we can design and implement for all the interconnected crises we see today.

What is Ecorestoration, which is short for ecosystem restoration? The term regeneration is also used. All of these terms really have in mind certain values and those values include restoring damaged land, waterways, different types of ecosystems that have been damaged due to man-made development, over consumption, and extraction processes. But that reparation, that regeneration, that restoration actually benefits all of us, all species because when we plant trees, when we bring back wildlife, when we create food systems that actually improve the soil health for all of us, then we benefit.

Restoration requires working with other species, not seeing ourselves as on top of birds, fungi, whales, any other type of animal or living thing but actually working with them and collaborating with them. Only when we recognize that role as just one participant rather than the participant in Earth's Cycles, Earth's natural cycles, can we begin to move forward as a society, as a people, and as a species. In order to get deeper into what regeneration actually looks like, let's look at a few examples happening right now in Colombia.

There is one organization called La Cosmopolitana Foundation that is providing resources and courses through University to teach people how to go back to sustainable Food Systems. Sometimes a lot of them are based in indigenous and afro-indigenous food systems and we just need to bring those back in ways that work with us now. Another example is resisting against corporate greed and mismanagement of resources by supporting Indigenous activists, Indigenous land defenders, Earth defenders, water defenders. They're all over the place but specifically in Colombia we see a lot in the Amazon region and right now Indigenous women are protecting this wetland ecosystem that has been overfished to the point where a lot of fish populations were no longer a reliable food source and were no longer helping the river ecosystem. But by creating a new fishing agreement, Indigenous women in the Amazon region are actually restoring this ecosystem and this restores fish populations who many people rely on for protein. So we need to make sure in order to keep our food sources and natural resources alive and thriving that we are managing within reason and not over-fishing, over-extracting, over-consuming.

Another example in Colombia is Francisco Vera. He's a youth leader activist who started Guardianes por la Vida, or Guardians for Life. And this organization is filled with youth leaders now spreading even farther than Colombia who are standing up to legislators, standing up to governments, and saying, we need you to take action. Even in the face of death threats Francisco Vera is making a difference for all of us. So we can support youth activists like him, like indigenous women, like those of the Amazon, and we can join projects that are creating sustainable food systems for us all.

Right now the world that we're living in, with capitalism, with colonialism, with many isms that aren't working for us, and that are maybe only working for the minority but very short term, with these systems it's hard to imagine what a future that works for us actually looks like. That's where imagination comes in and where it's so powerful. So I want to remind you all to really pull an name on that vision for the future and once you have that vision in mind, it'll give you the drive to act. Imagination and action. Let's do this!

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Self-Check Questions

3

Questions

Chapter 1: How Does Social Change Matter to You?

1. An “equity lens” means different things to different people. How is an equity lens defined in this chapter? Select all that apply.
    1. Avoiding conflict or confrontation between different cultures.
    2. Recognizing that we do not all receive the same power and resources in society.
    3. Acting to address imbalances in resources by dismantling systems of power, privilege, and oppression.
    4. Acknowledging that race, ethnicity, gender and sexual expression are related to social inequality.
2. Studying social change with an equity lens means being vigilant about identifying the (often hidden) role that marginalized peoples play. Why are some social roles hidden? Select all that apply.
    1. The majority of sociologists today are white, upper-middle-class professionals who can easily overlook the work of Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color (BIPOC), gender diverse people, and people with disabilities.
    2. Written history is dominated by eurocentricism, or the mindset that assumes White ways of knowing are superior to all others.
    3. Colonial legacies continue to dismiss the social roles of non-white peoples.
    4. Social change movements are primarily led by the people groups with the most privilege.
3. The Peace Community of San José de Apartadó recently celebrated 25 years of peaceful resistance to local guerrilla movements, paramilitary forces, and the Colombian army. What factors made this social change movement successful? Select all that apply.
    1. Peace Community members look to memories of the people they lost during the war to organize for their future.
    2. Peace Community members continue the cycle of violence by embracing vindictive action.
    3. Peace Community members form tight-knit working groups to more safely work in their fields.
    4. International human rights protectors partner with Peace Community members.
4. Climate change dramatically impacts societies, especially the Sámi people. How does climate change impact social change for the Sámi? Select all that apply.
    1. The Sámi people live with such direct dependence on the natural world that they are dramatically affected by environmental changes.
    2. Suicide rates in Sweden among the Sámi people can be up to four times higher than the national average.
    3. Without reindeer, herders can’t earn a living by selling reindeer for meat and their hides.
    4. As Sámi culture depends on the survival of the reindeer, climate change poses a direct threat not only to individuals but to an entire people.

Chapter 2: The Study of Social Change

1. It’s always difficult to translate meaning across language. However, what is the best way to explain the concept *Buen Vivir*? Select all that apply.
    1. *Buen Vivir* means Plentiful Life, or a life in harmony.
    2. *Buen Vivir* is the Spanish translation for *sumak kawsay,* an Aymaran and Quechua concept of applying memories from the past to create a dignified life in the present.
    3. *Buen Vivir* is a powerful social movement because it pays attention to how social locations determine human experience.
    4. *Buen Vivir* has not been seriously referenced in national laws or international conferences.
2. Which of the following are key sociological questions when studying social change? Select all that apply.
    1. How do we give meaning and value to behavior, ideas, or objects?
    2. What are the processes and patterns of social change?
    3. What are the connections between our environmental crisis and society?
    4. What do we need to know to make effective decisions to improve the environment as a society?

3. Social institutions change over time. Which of the following are examples of this phenomenon? Select all that apply.
    1. Once the U.S. economy became industrialized, there was no longer a need for large families to produce enough manual labor to run a farm so family size grew smaller.
    2. In fact, all social institutions do not change when one institution changes, and this phenomenon is known as cultural lag.
    3. At the beginning of the 20th century, people built roads and highways for the new invention of cars. Families began living farther from each other and from their workplaces.
    4. E-mail, the Internet, and smartphones have enabled instant communication even in low-income parts of the world.
4. Which of the following is true of the Sunrise Movement? Select all that apply.
    1. The Sunrise Movement is a civic society organization, or an organization that functions outside of government to advocate for social issues.
    2. In 2020, the Sunrise Movement forced Democrats running for president to outline their plans for cutting U.S. fossil fuel emissions.
    3. Young people mobilize the Sunrise Movement, showing the urgency that this social group experiences.
    4. The Sunrise Movement advocated for a set of policies that deny climate change.

Chapter 3: Social Location and Social Theories

1. Which of the following characteristics determine a person's social location? Select all that apply.
    1. Social class, otherwise known as socioeconomic status (SES)
    2. Race
    3. Ethnicity
    4. Gender
    5. Sexual orientation
    6. Religion
    7. Ability
    8. Immigration
    9. Language
    10. Employment
2. Sociology analyzes different kinds of racism at work in society. Which of the following are examples of structural racism? Select all that apply.
    1. One white person holds prejudice in thought or action and by their power discriminates against people of color.
    2. Institutions and policies interact over time to systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color.
    3. One school adopts unfair policies that produce racially inequitable outcomes for students of color and white students.
    4. An overarching system of racial bias across institutions and society produces violence upon bodies of color.
3. What is an example of the way newer social theories differentiate from classical theories? Select all that apply.
    1. Postcolonial theory emerges from the social elite, not from people who survive and resist the power of empire.
    2. Critical race theory uses intersectionality to show how one's racial experiences intersect with other identities, such as gender and sexuality.
    3. Feminist theories recognize that knowledge is static and objective.
    4. Classical theories do not differ in any meaningful way from newer theories.

Chapter 4: Globalization and Inequality

1. Sociologists study global stratification using three main lenses. Select the three lenses below.
    1. The unequal distribution of economic and social resources between nations.
    2. The unequal distribution of economic and social resources within nations (internal inequality).
    3. Measures within nations as compared with other nations.
    4. The superiority of the United States to all other nations.
2. Which of the following are used as indicators of quality of life in the study of global stratification? Select all that apply.
    1. Life expectancy
    2. The adult literacy rate
    3. Enrollment in primary, secondary, and higher education

4. The effects of environmental degradation

3. Which of the following statements accurately describes a theory of inequality as discussed in this chapter? Select all that apply.
    1. World systems analysis puts countries into three categories: core countries, peripheral countries, and semi-peripheral countries.
    2. Land grabs are an example of dependency theory, showing that low-income countries exploit high-income countries.
    3. Modernization theory is criticized for its ethnocentric bias because it assumes that "developed" countries are superior.
4. How would an optimist globalist describe current trends in global inequality? Select all that apply.
    1. Technological innovation has led to improvements in medicine and communications networks.
    2. Global agribusiness has resulted in a dramatic and rapid deterioration of the world's natural diversity.
    3. Our current economies enable a wealthy elite, or the 1%, to accumulate vast fortunes at the expense of ordinary people, particularly poor women and girls.
    4. Many consumers support people who live in poverty with their purchase choices by paying higher prices for fair trade products.

Chapter 5: Roots of Global Inequality, Decolonization, and Resistance

1. Which of the following accurately describes an ideology of colonialism? Select all that apply.
    1. The white man's burden depicts colonized people as childlike and dangerous and colonialing people as stern and wise parents.
    2. Neocolonialism emerged after World War II, as former colonial powers dominated newly independent nation-states using debt and trade agreements.
    3. The civilization mission justifies colonialism by asserting that colonization is best for the spiritual and moral interests of colonized people.
    4. Decolonization celebrates colonial rule and settlement, working to ensure that it continues.
2. Which of the following accurately describe impacts of foreign aid as discussed in this chapter? Select all that apply.
    1. Since the 1970s, the number of preventable deaths of children under five has decreased by half with U.S. assistance.
    2. The global community has learned to measure, monitor, and improve severe levels of poverty since the era of foreign assistance and development began in the 1960s.
    3. When funds are given to struggling countries to serve the interests of donor nations, often called a "win-win," more poverty and violence can occur.
    4. The Green Revolution program displaced farmers from their land and polluted soil and water.
3. Which of the following statements is true of resistance movements as described in this chapter? Select all that apply.
    1. People haven't just been fighting *against* imposed forms of power and exploitation, they have also been fighting *for* innumerable alternative ways of life.
    2. In 2006, protesting teachers in Oaxaca, Mexico created a camp in the city center, a tactic that would be used in Portland, Oregon, during Occupy Wall Street.
    3. Resistance to colonialism and globalization can be thought of as a "movement of movements," where each movement has its own goals but also shared values and common antagonists.
    4. Resistance leaders call for a focus on inclusion and inclusive growth rather than just poverty.
4. How do indigenous communities address global inequality? Select all that apply.
    1. Many Indigenous cultures manage the land, water, and ecosystems in which they live so that future generations can preserve their cultures.
    2. Indigenous communities apply the economic, political, and social systems of Western-dominated countries.
    3. As Indigenous land rights are protected, it gives Indigenous Peoples a platform to share their values of living as stewards of the natural world.
    4. Indigenous communities spark shifts in thinking about how our global economy operates and the ways to define and encourage development.

Chapter 6: Economy and Social Change

1. Which critiques are more commonly associated with capitalism? Select all that apply.
    1. Slows technological advances.
    2. Benefits a small minority at the expense of many.
    3. Infringes on freedom with public ownership.
    4. Fosters exploitive labor relationships.
    5. Incentivizes war by continuously needing new markets and resources.
2. Max Weber argued that the Protestant ethic helped pave the way for capitalism. Which of the following best illustrates the values of the Protestant ethic? Select all that apply.
    1. Reinvesting profits rather than spending.
    2. Working hard as a duty to God rather than to pay bills.
    3. Paying workers less in order to increase profits.
    4. Working to provide meaning and purpose to a person's life.
3. The New Deal helped reduce income inequality with multiple government initiatives. Which of the following is NOT part of the New Deal initiative. Select one.
    1. Created well-paid government jobs.
    2. Created a social safety net with programs such as Social Security and Unemployment..
    3. Decreased regulations on corporations and banks.
    4. Increased public works projects such as building roads and bridges.
4. New economic models and measurements are being developed that address issues such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. Which of the following are aspects of some new economic models and measurements? Select all that apply.
    1. Localization
    2. Balancing social needs without exceeding environmental limits
    3. Re-evaluating Growth
    4. Gross national Happiness Index

Chapter 7: Health, Safety, and the State

1. Which of the following statements illustrate the evaluation of healthcare through a social construction lens? Select all that apply.
    1. Labeling certain conditions such as chronic fatigue as psychological or imagined.
    2. Stigmatizing one disease such as AIDS over another.
    3. Treating all medical conditions as purely biological with no social influence.
    4. Medicalizing natural functions such as menstruation or expressions such as homosexuality.
2. Which of the following are examples of how class, racism, and gender influence the ability to live in safety and security in the United States? Select all that apply.
    1. The only nearby food markets are convenience stores.
    2. A hurricane knocks out power to an entire city.
    3. All of the community's affordable housing is built in a flood plain.
    4. A person needs to work two jobs in order to pay the rent.
    5. Affordable reproductive care is available regardless of income level.
3. Colonization shapes issues around health and safety. For example, owning land is a Colonial worldview. Which of the following are other examples of a Colonial worldview? Select all that apply.
    1. Building a dam to control the flow of a river and produce energy.
    2. Creating a communal garden.
    3. Displacing communities to build an interstate freeway.
    4. Giving birth at a center that involves midwives, family, and traditional rituals.
    5. Privatizing water resources for industrial use.

4. Transformative Justice is an alternative approach that can help us reframe how we think of public safety. Which of the statements below illustrate Transformative Justice practices? Select all that apply.
    1. Addressing the root causes of oppression.
    2. Hiring more BIPOC police officers.
    3. Responding to violence without creating more violence.
    4. Addressing a community member's abusive behavior, creating a process for accountability and transformation.

Chapter 8: Education: Inequality and Justice

1. Which statement below best reflects what a Conflict theorist focuses on when studying education? Select one.
    1. Focus on the cultural symbols present in an educational setting and their meaning.
    2. Focus on how education either maintains or challenges unequal social power and reinforces societal inequalities.
    3. Focus on the positive functions that education fulfills like socialization and skill building.
2. Which of the following are examples of cultural capital in education? Select all that apply.
    1. Knowledge and understanding of language and etiquette used in academic settings.
    2. Natural athletic ability that leads to a scholarship.
    3. Access to after school programs that prepare students to complete college applications.
    4. Vocabulary on standardized tests that tests knowledge related to specific cultures.
3. Which of the following are characteristics of educational debt? Select all that apply.
    1. Sociopolitical factors such as voting barriers that exclude people from decision-making that impacts school districts.
    2. Natural fluctuations in population that impact enrollment and funding.
    3. Moral debt such as not addressing past injustices like redlining.
    4. Economics factors such as inequitable spending on school districts.
4. Which of the following models support social justice and cultural restoration? Select all that apply.
    1. Banking model of education
    2. Culturally Responsive Education
    3. Pedagogy of the Oppressed
    4. Indigenization

Chapter 9: Religion, Spiritual Belief Systems, and Social Change

1. Which of the following statements describe how these early sociologists explained religion and spiritual belief systems in society? Select all that apply.
    1. Emile Durkheim saw religion as a source of social stability through solidarity and social integration focusing on how religion serves society.
    2. Max Weber believed religion could be a force for social change, as seen in a shift to a capitalist economy in Western Europe which was supported in part by a particular kind of religious belief.
    3. Karl Marx believed religion united the working class and empowered them to fight oppression.
2. Feminist theology has been powerful in creating social change. However there are criticisms for lacking representation. Which examples illustrate how critical race and queer theories are expanding representation? Select all that apply.
    1. Arguing that lived experiences of white women are not universal.
    2. Including diverse representations such as the Yemanja festival in Brazil or the warrior women of Dahomey in feminist scholarship.
    3. Prioritizing Western religious traditions over Indigenous beliefs.
    4. Representing spiritual traditions that see gender as fluid or non-binary.
3. Religion and spiritual belief systems can be used as a tool of oppression or to support social justice. Which statements illustrate how religion and spiritual beliefs can support social justice? Select all that apply.
    1. Black churches provide leadership and organization to civil rights movements.
    2. Religious institutions discourage activism in favor of maintaining traditional values.
    3. Blending traditions and worldviews, such as *Día de Los Muertos* as a means of resistance.

4. Catholic leaders reform practices that promote the idea of the church as a servant of the people.

4. Which of the below sentences best describes anthropocentrism? Select one.
    1. A perspective that the earth is for all generations and decisions today should reflect on the impact they will have in the future.
    2. A worldview that makes humans central to decisions about ethics and daily life.
    3. A belief system that warns against conspicuous consumption.

Chapter 10: Social Movements and the Environment

1. The DREAM Act and the Marriage Equality Act are examples of which types of movements? Select one.
    1. Conservative Revolutionary Movements
    2. Innovative Reform Movements
    3. Innovative Redemptive Movements
2. According to the Innovation Network's Social Movement Learning Project, which of the following are key elements of successful social movement-making? Select all that apply.
    1. Influencer Power
    2. Economic Power
    3. People Power
    4. Narrative Power
3. Which of the below statements illustrate examples of Environmental inequity? Select all that apply.
    1. People of color are more likely to live near hazardous waste facilities.
    2. Neighborhoods that were once redlined have a larger share of homes endangered by flooding.
    3. Wealthy coastal communities are disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution.
    4. Migrant workers in California experience unsafe drinking water due to failing water systems.
    5. Black children are five times more likely to suffer from lead poisoning than white children.
4. Which of the following statements are true about the environmental justice movements? Select all that apply.
    1. They are based on principles that all people have a right to be protected from environmental issues and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment
    2. They focus exclusively on protecting wildlife and natural resources, without considering the impact on human communities.
    3. They are based on the assumption that environmental problems cannot be solved without unveiling practices that maintain social injustices.

Answer Key

Chapter 1: How Does Social Change Matter to You?

1. An "equity lens" means different things to different people. How is an equity lens defined in this chapter? Select all that apply.
    1. Avoiding conflict or confrontation between different cultures.
    2. Recognizing that we do not all receive the same power and resources in society. (correct)
    3. Acting to address imbalances in resources by dismantling systems of power, privilege, and oppression. (correct)
    4. Acknowledging that race, ethnicity, gender and sexual expression are related to social inequality. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: An equity lens accepts differences across culture, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual expression. It also asks how those differences, along with unequal access to power and resources, influence the lived experiences of individuals in society.
2. Studying social change with an equity lens means being vigilant about identifying the (often hidden) role that marginalized peoples play. Why are some social roles hidden? Select all that apply.
    1. The majority of sociologists today are white, upper-middle-class professionals who can easily overlook the work of Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color (BIPOC), gender diverse people, and people with disabilities. (correct)
    2. Written history is dominated by eurocentricism, or the mindset that assumes White ways of knowing are superior to all others. (correct)
    3. Colonial legacies continue to dismiss the social roles of non-white peoples. (correct)

4. Social change movements are primarily led by the people groups with the most privilege.
5. Answer feedback: An equity lens recognizes the contributions of historically marginalized groups. People who are BIPOC, gender diverse, and have disabilities create social movements despite limited access to power and resources.

3. The Peace Community of San José de Apartadó recently celebrated 25 years of peaceful resistance to local guerrilla movements, paramilitary forces, and the Colombian army. What factors made this social change movement successful? Select all that apply.
    1. Peace Community members look to memories of the people they lost during the war to organize for their future. (correct)
    2. Peace Community members continue the cycle of violence by embracing vindictive action.
    3. Peace Community members form tight-knit working groups to more safely work in their fields. (correct)
    4. International human rights protectors partner with Peace Community members. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: By strengthening relationships with one another and the international community, members make access to their lands safer. Remembering loved ones and ancestors lost to violence guides and motivates members to create a new path to the future.
4. Climate change dramatically impacts societies, especially the Sámi people. How does climate change impact social change for the Sámi? Select all that apply.
    1. The Sámi people live with such direct dependence on the natural world that they are dramatically affected by environmental changes. (correct)
    2. Suicide rates in Sweden among the Sámi people can be up to four times higher than the national average. (correct)
    3. Without reindeer, herders can't earn a living by selling reindeer for meat and their hides. (correct)
    4. As Sámi culture depends on the survival of the reindeer, climate change poses a direct threat not only to individuals but to an entire people. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: As the Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world, Sámi face increased challenges to their reindeer husbandry, survival, and way of life. Indigenous people the world over tend to be the first to feel the effects of climate change.

Chapter 2: The Study of Social Change

1. It's always difficult to translate meaning across language. However, what is the best way to explain the concept *Buen Vivir*? Select all that apply.
    1. *Buen Vivir* means Plentiful Life, or a life in harmony. (correct)
    2. *Buen Vivir* is the Spanish translation for *sumak kawsay*, an Aymaran and Quechua concept of applying memories from the past to create a dignified life in the present. (correct)
    3. *Buen Vivir* is a powerful social movement because it pays attention to how social locations determine human experience. (correct)
    4. *Buen Vivir* has not been seriously referenced in national laws or international conferences.
    5. Answer feedback: *Buen Vivir* guided national laws in Bolivia and Ecuador thanks to the advocacy of Indigenous organizations and coalitions of the Andean world. *Buen Vivir* motivates global study and research, generating a widespread movement for social change.
2. Which of the following are key sociological questions when studying social change? Select all that apply.
    1. How do we give meaning and value to behavior, ideas, or objects? (correct)
    2. What are the processes and patterns of social change? (correct)
    3. What are the connections between our environmental crisis and society? (correct)
    4. What do we need to know to make effective decisions to improve the environment as a society? (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: The study of social change is about asking questions. These questions examine how society influences our individual decisions. They also ask how collective decisions shape our possible futures.
3. Social institutions change over time. Which of the following are examples of this phenomenon? Select all that apply.
    1. Once the U.S. economy became industrialized, there was no longer a need for large families to produce enough manual labor to run a farm so family size grew smaller. (correct)
    2. In fact, all social institutions do not change when one institution changes, and this phenomenon is known as cultural lag.

3. At the beginning of the 20th century, people built roads and highways for the new invention of cars. Families began living farther from each other and from their workplaces. (correct)
4. E-mail, the Internet, and smartphones have enabled instant communication even in low-income parts of the world.
5. Answer feedback: Cultural lag is the period of time between the introduction of new technology and the acceptance of the technology by institutions. It means that the change process can be slow. The final answer option does not name a specific social institution.

4. Which of the following is true of the Sunrise Movement? Select all that apply.
    1. The Sunrise Movement is a civic society organization, or an organization that functions outside of government to advocate for social issues. (correct)
    2. In 2020, the Sunrise Movement forced Democrats running for president to outline their plans for cutting U.S. fossil fuel emissions. (correct)
    3. Young people mobilize the Sunrise Movement, showing the urgency that this social group experiences. (correct)
    4. The Sunrise Movement advocated for a set of policies that deny climate change.
    5. Answer feedback: The Sunrise Movement shows that environmental change is a social topic, as people organize to change their government and invest in Black, brown and working class communities.

Chapter 3: Social Location and Social Theories

1. Which of the following characteristics determine a person's social location? Select all that apply.
    1. Social class, otherwise known as socioeconomic status (SES) (correct)
    2. Race (correct)
    3. Ethnicity (correct)
    4. Gender (correct)
    5. Sexual orientation (correct)
    6. Religion (correct)
    7. Ability (correct)
    8. Immigration (correct)
    9. Language (correct)
    10. Employment (correct)
    11. Answer feedback: Multiple identities determine someone's social location. Sometimes these identities produce privilege and sometimes disadvantage. Power is unevenly distributed based on social identities.
2. Sociology analyzes different kinds of racism at work in society. Which of the following are examples of structural racism? Select all that apply.
    1. One white person holds prejudice in thought or action and by their power discriminates against people of color.
    2. Institutions and policies interact over time to systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color. (correct)
    3. One school adopts unfair policies that produce racially inequitable outcomes for students of color and white students.
    4. An overarching system of racial bias across institutions and society produces violence upon bodies of color. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Racism operates between people as well as between institutions and entire social systems. Structural racism is the interaction of policies and many institutions that together privilege white people.
3. What is an example of the way newer social theories differentiate from classical theories? Select all that apply.
    1. Postcolonial theory emerges from the social elite, not from people who survive and resist the power of empire.
    2. Critical race theory uses intersectionality to show how one's racial experiences intersect with other identities, such as gender and sexuality. (correct)
    3. Feminist theories recognize that knowledge is static and objective.
    4. Classical theories do not differ in any meaningful way from newer theories.
    5. Answer feedback: Classical theories emerge from historically privileged racial and social groups, whereas newer theories emerge from people who thrive outside these elite circles. The inclusion of newer theories offers a more comprehensive method of analyzing social change.

Chapter 4: Globalization and Inequality

1. Sociologists study global stratification using three main lenses. Select the three lenses below.
    1. The unequal distribution of economic and social resources between nations. (correct)
    2. The unequal distribution of economic and social resources within nations (internal inequality). (correct)
    3. Measures within nations as compared with other nations. (correct)
    4. The superiority of the United States to all other nations.
    5. Answer feedback: Sociologists study the unequal distribution of resources by looking between, within, and across individual nations. One reason that the U.S. can't be considered superior to all other nations is that it has produced immense inequality.
2. Which of the following are used as indicators of quality of life in the study of global stratification? Select all that apply.
    1. Life expectancy (correct)
    2. The adult literacy rate (correct)
    3. Enrollment in primary, secondary, and higher education (correct)
    4. The effects of environmental degradation (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: All of the above are quality of life indicators.
3. Which of the following statements accurately describes a theory of inequality as discussed in this chapter? Select all that apply.
    1. World systems analysis puts countries into three categories: core countries, peripheral countries, and semi-peripheral countries. (correct)
    2. Land grabs are an example of dependency theory, showing that low-income countries exploit high-income countries.
    3. Modernization theory is criticized for its ethnocentric bias because it assumes that "developed" countries are superior. (correct)
    4. Answer feedback: Dependency theory argues that high-income countries exploit middle-income and low-income countries. It explains global inequality in terms of power imbalances between countries. This theory developed in response to criticisms of modernization theory.
4. How would an optimist globalist describe current trends in global inequality? Select all that apply.
    1. Technological innovation has led to improvements in medicine and communications networks. (correct)
    2. Global agribusiness has resulted in a dramatic and rapid deterioration of the world's natural diversity.
    3. Our current economies enable a wealthy elite, or the 1%, to accumulate vast fortunes at the expense of ordinary people, particularly poor women and girls.
    4. Many consumers support people who live in poverty with their purchase choices by paying higher prices for fair trade products. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Pessimist globalists focus on the negative impacts of globalization, including the devastation of the natural world. Optimist globalists focus on the capacity for positive change such as increased life spans as a result of increased globalization.

Chapter 5: Roots of Global Inequality, Decolonization, and Resistance

1. Which of the following accurately describes an ideology of colonialism? Select all that apply.
    1. The white man's burden depicts colonized people as childlike and dangerous and colonialing people as stern and wise parents. (correct)
    2. Neocolonialism emerged after World War II, as former colonial powers dominated newly independent nation-states using debt and trade agreements. (correct)
    3. The civilization mission justifies colonialism by asserting that colonization is best for the spiritual and moral interests of colonized people. (correct)
    4. Decolonization celebrates colonial rule and settlement, working to ensure that it continues.
    5. Answer feedback: Colonialist ideologies depict colonized people as inferior to colonizing people. Even after formal rule ends, colonial powers keep control of the wealth of former colonies. In contrast, decolonization works to return the cultural autonomy of nations.
2. Which of the following accurately describe impacts of foreign aid as discussed in this chapter? Select all that apply.

1. Since the 1970s, the number of preventable deaths of children under five has decreased by half with U.S. assistance. (correct)
2. The global community has learned to measure, monitor, and improve severe levels of poverty since the era of foreign assistance and development began in the 1960s. (correct)
3. When funds are given to struggling countries to serve the interests of donor nations, often called a “win-win,” more poverty and violence can occur. (correct)
4. The Green Revolution program displaced farmers from their land and polluted soil and water. (correct)
5. Answer feedback: Scientists, development professionals, and global activists learn a lot from decades of aid and development. While there are concrete gains for humanity as a result of foreign aid, there are also measurable losses often for the most vulnerable people.

3. Which of the following statements is true of resistance movements as described in this chapter? Select all that apply.
    1. People haven’t just been fighting *against* imposed forms of power and exploitation, they have also been fighting *for* innumerable alternative ways of life. (correct)
    2. In 2006, protesting teachers in Oaxaca, Mexico created a camp in the city center, a tactic that would be used in Portland, Oregon, during Occupy Wall Street. (correct)
    3. Resistance to colonialism and globalization can be thought of as a “movement of movements,” where each movement has its own goals but also shared values and common antagonists. (correct)
    4. Resistance leaders call for a focus on inclusion and inclusive growth rather than just poverty (correct).
    5. Answer feedback: Resistance movements seek to challenge the injustices of the dominant paradigm and uplift alternative ways of knowing, relating, and living in community. In doing so, they remind us that the social world is made, and that it could be made differently.
4. How do indigenous communities address global inequality? Select all that apply.
    1. Many Indigenous cultures manage the land, water, and ecosystems in which they live so that future generations can preserve their cultures. (correct)
    2. Indigenous communities apply the economic, political, and social systems of Western-dominated countries.
    3. As Indigenous land rights are protected, it gives Indigenous Peoples a platform to share their values of living as stewards of the natural world. (correct)
    4. Indigenous communities spark shifts in thinking about how our global economy operates and the ways to define and encourage development. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: While environmentally sustainable practices are being adopted by many Western people, as a whole, Western-dominated countries do not reflect indigenous values. This is a major contributing factor to environmental degradation on small and large scales.

Chapter 6: Economy and Social Change

1. Which critiques are more commonly associated with capitalism? Select all that apply.
    1. Slows technological advances.
    2. Benefits a small minority at the expense of many. (correct)
    3. Infringes on freedom with public ownership.
    4. Fosters exploitive labor relationships. (correct)
    5. Incentivizes war by continuously needing new markets and resources. (correct)
    6. Answer feedback: Critiques of capitalism often highlight concerns about inequality and exploitation of people and resources, while critiques of socialism focus more on limitations to individual freedoms and concerns about inefficiency or lack of innovation.
2. Max Weber argued that the Protestant ethic helped pave the way for capitalism. Which of the following best illustrates the values of the Protestant ethic? Select all that apply.
    1. Reinvesting profits rather than spending. (correct)
    2. Working hard as a duty to God rather than to pay bills. (correct)
    3. Paying workers less in order to increase profits.
    4. Working to provide meaning and purpose to a person’s life. (correct)

5. Answer feedback: Weber believed that Protestant values such as frugality and work as a “calling” aligned with its influence on capitalism.

3. The New Deal helped reduce income inequality with multiple government initiatives. Which of the following is NOT part of the New Deal initiative. Select one.
    1. Created well-paid government jobs.
    2. Created a social safety net with programs such as Social Security and Unemployment..
    3. Decreased regulations on corporations and banks. (correct)
    4. Increased public works projects such as building roads and bridges.
    5. Answer feedback: The New Deal increased regulations on corporations and banks designed to protect the public interest. However, since the mid 1970s, income inequality has dramatically increased due to reversal of New Deal type policies.
4. New economic models and measurements are being developed that address issues such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. Which of the following are aspects of some new economic models and measurements? Select all that apply.
    1. Localization (correct)
    2. Balancing social needs without exceeding environmental limits (correct)
    3. Re-evaluating Growth (correct)
    4. Gross national Happiness Index (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: All of the above are aspects of new economic models or measurements. They respond to growing awareness that conventional economic models are not providing solutions to the challenges we face today.

Chapter 7: Health, Safety, and the State

1. Which of the following statements illustrate the evaluation of healthcare through a social construction lens? Select all that apply.
    1. Labeling certain conditions such as chronic fatigue as psychological or imagined. (correct)
    2. Stigmatizing one disease such as AIDS over another. (correct)
    3. Treating all medical conditions as purely biological with no social influence.
    4. Medicalizing natural functions such as menstruation or expressions such as homosexuality. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Evaluating healthcare through a social construction lens involves seeing the interactions in society that shape our understanding of health and illness. Examples include labeling or stigmatizing conditions or diseases, and medicalizing natural functions.
2. Which of the following are examples of how class, racism, and gender influence the ability to live in safety and security in the United States? Select all that apply.
    1. The only nearby food markets are convenience stores. (correct)
    2. A hurricane knocks out power to an entire city.
    3. All of the community’s affordable housing is built in a flood plain. (correct)
    4. A person needs to work two jobs in order to pay the rent. (correct)
    5. Affordable reproductive care is available regardless of income level.
    6. Answer feedback: Issues such as limited access to healthy food, affordable housing in vulnerable areas, and the need to work multiple jobs for basic living expenses reflect how class, racism, and gender can influence safety and security.
3. Colonization shapes issues around health and safety. For example, owning land is a Colonial worldview. Which of the following are other examples of a Colonial worldview? Select all that apply.
    1. Building a dam to control the flow of a river and produce energy. (correct)
    2. Creating a communal garden.
    3. Displacing communities to build an interstate freeway. (correct)
    4. Giving birth at a center that involves midwives, family, and traditional rituals.
    5. Privatizing water resources for industrial use. (correct)
    6. Answer feedback: Colonial worldview prioritizes land as a resource, individualism and symptoms-based medical approaches. While the Indigenous worldview prioritizes land as sacred, community, and a more holistic medical approach.

4. Transformative Justice is an alternative approach that can help us reframe how we think of public safety. Which of the statements below illustrate Transformative Justice practices? Select all that apply.
    1. Addressing the root causes of oppression. (correct)
    2. Hiring more BIPOC police officers.
    3. Responding to violence without creating more violence. (correct)
    4. Addressing a community member's abusive behavior, creating a process for accountability and transformation. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Transformative Justice (TJ) seeks to address violence, harm, and abuse by transforming the conditions that enable them, without involving the criminal justice system. Hiring BIPOC police officers is a reform of current policies, not an example of TJ.

Chapter 8: Education: Inequality and Justice

1. Which statement below best reflects what a Conflict theorist focuses on when studying education? Select one.
    1. Focus on the cultural symbols present in an educational setting and their meaning.
    2. Focus on how education either maintains or challenges unequal social power and reinforces societal inequalities. (correct)
    3. Focus on the positive functions that education fulfills like socialization and skill building.
    4. Answer feedback: Conflict theorists examine how education reinforces or challenges social inequalities by maintaining power dynamics that benefit dominant groups. A functionalist might focus on positive functions and the symbolic interactionist might focus on cultural symbols.
2. Which of the following are examples of cultural capital in education? Select all that apply.
    1. Knowledge and understanding of language and etiquette used in academic settings. (correct)
    2. Natural athletic ability that leads to a scholarship.
    3. Access to after school programs that prepare students to complete college applications. (correct)
    4. Vocabulary on standardized tests that tests knowledge related to specific cultures. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Cultural capital includes non-financial assets like language, cultural norms, and access to enrichment activities that support student success.
3. Which of the following are characteristics of educational debt? Select all that apply.
    1. Sociopolitical factors such as voting barriers that exclude people from decision-making that impacts school districts. (correct)
    2. Natural fluctuations in population that impact enrollment and funding.
    3. Moral debt such as not addressing past injustices like redlining. (correct)
    4. Economics factors such as inequitable spending on school districts. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Educational debt focuses on systemic inequalities over time, like sociopolitical barriers, economic disparities, and moral obligations but not fluctuations of population.
4. Which of the following models support social justice and cultural restoration? Select all that apply.
    1. Banking model of education
    2. Culturally Responsive Education (correct)
    3. Pedagogy of the Oppressed (correct)
    4. Indigenization (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Models like Culturally responsive education, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and Indigenization all foster social justice and cultural restoration. The banking model, however, promotes a passive, non-transformative approach.

Chapter 9: Religion, Spiritual Belief Systems, and Social Change

1. Which of the following statements describe how these early sociologists explained religion and spiritual belief systems in society? Select all that apply.
    1. Emile Durkheim saw religion as a source of social stability through solidarity and social integration focusing on how religion serves society. (correct)
    2. Max Weber believed religion could be a force for social change, as seen in a shift to a capitalist economy in Western Europe which was supported in part by a particular kind of religious belief. (correct)
    3. Karl Marx believed religion united the working class and empowered them to fight oppression.

4. Answer feedback: While Durkheim saw religion as a source of stability and Weber saw it could be a force for change, Karl Marx viewed religion as a tool used by capitalist societies to perpetuate inequality and the status quo by claiming it was part of the divine plan.

2. Feminist theology has been powerful in creating social change. However there are criticisms for lacking representation. Which examples illustrate how critical race and queer theories are expanding representation? Select all that apply.
    1. Arguing that lived experiences of white women are not universal. (correct)
    2. Including diverse representations such as the Yemanja festival in Brazil or the warrior women of Dahomey in feminist scholarship. (correct)
    3. Prioritizing Western religious traditions over Indigenous beliefs.
    4. Representing spiritual traditions that see gender as fluid or non-binary. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Critical race and queer theories are challenging the dominance of white and Western perspectives.
3. Religion and spiritual belief systems can be used as a tool of oppression or to support social justice. Which statements illustrate how religion and spiritual beliefs can support social justice? Select all that apply.
    1. Black churches provide leadership and organization to civil rights movements. (correct)
    2. Religious institutions discourage activism in favor of maintaining traditional values.
    3. Blending traditions and worldviews, such as *Día de Los Muertos* as a means of resistance. (correct)
    4. Catholic leaders reform practices that promote the idea of the church as a servant of the people. (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: Religion can be a powerful force for social justice as seen in the Black churches, blended traditions and religious reforms. Discouraging activism is not aligned with supporting social justice.
4. Which of the below sentences best describes anthropocentrism? Select one.
    1. A perspective that the earth is for all generations and decisions today should reflect on the impact they will have in the future.
    2. A worldview that makes humans central to decisions about ethics and daily life. (correct)
    3. A belief system that warns against conspicuous consumption.
    4. Answer feedback: Anthropocentrism places humans at the center of ethical and daily decisions. The other options reflect perspectives focused on intergenerational responsibility and environmental care, which are found in various cultural and philosophical traditions.

Chapter 10: Social Movements and the Environment

1. The DREAM Act and the Marriage Equality Act are examples of which types of movements? Select one.
    1. Conservative Revolutionary Movements
    2. Innovative Reform Movements (correct)
    3. Innovative Redemptive Movements
    4. Answer feedback: Both movements use legal and political frameworks to achieve change, aiming for systemic reform. They are also “innovative” because they challenge traditional social norms and push for new societal structures and rights.
2. According to the Innovation Network’s Social Movement Learning Project, which of the following are key elements of successful social movement-making? Select all that apply.
    1. Influencer Power (correct)
    2. Economic Power
    3. People Power (correct)
    4. Narrative Power (correct)
    5. Answer feedback: According to the Innovation Network (Figure 10.25), institutional power, influencer power, people power, and narrative power are all key elements of successful social movement-making.
3. Which of the below statements illustrate examples of Environmental inequity? Select all that apply.
    1. People of color are more likely to live near hazardous waste facilities. (correct)
    2. Neighborhoods that were once redlined have a larger share of homes endangered by flooding. (correct)
    3. Wealthy coastal communities are disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution.
    4. Migrant workers in California experience unsafe drinking water due to failing water systems. (correct)

5. Black children are five times more likely to suffer from lead poisoning than white children. (correct)
6. Answer feedback: Environmental Inequity has many forms and disproportionately affects low-income communities and people of color.

4. Which of the following statements are true about the environmental justice movements? Select all that apply.
    1. They are based on principles that all people have a right to be protected from environmental issues and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment (correct)
    2. They focus exclusively on protecting wildlife and natural resources, without considering the impact on human communities.
    3. They are based on the assumption that environmental problems cannot be solved without unveiling practices that maintain social injustices. (correct)
    4. Answer feedback: Key principles of environmental justice include a right to a clean environment and addressing social injustices. The movements focus on human communities as well as wildlife and natural resources.

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2

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