INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY



Lumen Learning
Lumen Learning

LibreTexts™

Book: Introduction to Sociology (Lumen)

This text is disseminated via the Open Education Resource (OER) LibreTexts Project (https://LibreTexts.org) and like the thousands of other texts available within this powerful platform, it is freely available for reading, printing, and "consuming."

The LibreTexts mission is to bring together students, faculty, and scholars in a collaborative effort to provide an accessible, and comprehensive platform that empowers our community to develop, curate, adapt, and adopt openly licensed resources and technologies; through these efforts we can reduce the financial burden born from traditional educational resource costs, ensuring education is more accessible for students and communities worldwide.

Most, but not all, pages in the library have licenses that may allow individuals to make changes, save, and print this book. Carefully consult the applicable license(s) before pursuing such effects. Instructors can adopt existing LibreTexts texts or Remix them to quickly build course-specific resources to meet the needs of their students. Unlike traditional textbooks, LibreTexts' web based origins allow powerful integration of advanced features and new technologies to support learning.



LibreTexts is the adaptable, user-friendly non-profit open education resource platform that educators trust for creating, customizing, and sharing accessible, interactive textbooks, adaptive homework, and ancillary materials. We collaborate with individuals and organizations to champion open education initiatives, support institutional publishing programs, drive curriculum development projects, and more.

The LibreTexts libraries are Powered by NICE CXone Expert and was supported by the Department of Education Open Textbook Pilot Project, the California Education Learning Lab, the UC Davis Office of the Provost, the UC Davis Library, the California State University Affordable Learning Solutions Program, and Merlot. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 1246120, 1525057, and 1413739.

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation nor the US Department of Education.

Have questions or comments? For information about adoptions or adaptions contact info@LibreTexts.org or visit our main website at https://LibreTexts.org.

This text was compiled on 04/16/2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Licensing

2: Course Contents

- 2.1: About This Course
- 2.2: Course Contents at a Glance
- 2.3: Learning Outcomes

3: Faculty Resources

- 3.1: Faculty Resources Overview
- 3.2: Pacing
- 3.3: PDF
- 3.4: PowerPoints
- 3.5: Assignments and Discussions
- 3.6: Question Banks
- 3.7: In-Class Activities
- 3.8: Additional Resources
- 3.9: I Need Help

4: Module 1- Foundations of Sociology

- 4.1: Why It Matters- Foundations of Sociology
- 4.2: Introduction to Sociology
- 4.3: What Is Sociology?
- 4.4: The Development of Sociology
- 4.5: Why Study Sociology?
- 4.6: Introduction to the Sociological Imagination
- 4.7: The Sociological Imagination
- 4.8: Introduction to Sociological Perspectives
- 4.9: The Main Sociological Theories
- 4.10: Structural-Functional Theory
- 4.11: Conflict Theory
- 4.12: Symbolic Interactionist Theory
- 4.13: Reviewing Sociological Theories
- 4.14: Putting It Together- Sociological Foundations
- 4.15: Discussion- Introduce Yourself
- 4.16: Assignment- Sociologist Player Trading Cards

5: Module 2- Sociological Research

- 5.1: Why It Matters- Sociological Research
- 5.2: Introduction to Sociological Research
- 5.3: Sociological Research
- 5.4: The Scientific Method
- 5.5: Ethics
- 5.6: Introduction to Research Methods
- 5.7: Surveys

- 5.8: Experiments
- 5.9: Field Research
- 5.10: Secondary Data Analysis
- 5.11: Summary of Research Methods
- 5.12: Putting It Together- Sociological Research
- 5.13: Discussion- Sociology Research
- 5.14: Assignment- Utilizing Secondary Research

6: Module 3- Culture

- 6.1: Why It Matters- Culture
- 6.2: Introduction to Culture
- 6.3: Culture, Values, and Beliefs
- 6.4: Social Norms
- 6.5: Symbols and Language
- 6.6: Introduction to Cultural Similarities and Differences
- 6.7: Cultural Universals
- 6.8: Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism
- 6.9: Introduction to Pop Culture, Subculture, and Cultural Change
- 6.10: Pop Culture and Subculture
- 6.11: Cultural Change
- 6.12: Globalization and Technology
- 6.13: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Culture and Technology
- 6.14: Functionalism on Culture and Technology
- 6.15: Conflict Theory on Culture and Technology
- 6.16: Symbolic Interactionism on Media and Technology
- 6.17: Putting It Together- Culture
- 6.18: Assignment- Tattoos and Culture
- 6.19: Discussion- Tattoos in Culture
- 6.20: Discussion- Media and Technology
- 6.21: Discussion- Media and Culture

7: Module 4- Socialization

- 7.1: Why It Matters- Socialization
- 7.2: Introduction to Socialization
- 7.3: The Importance of Socialization
- 7.4: Theories of Socialization
- 7.5: Introduction to Reality as a Social Construct
- 7.6: The Social Construction of Reality
- 7.7: Roles and the Presentation of Self
- 7.8: Introduction to Agents of Socialization
- 7.9: Agents of Socialization
- 7.10: Socialization Across the Lifespan
- 7.11: Resocialization
- 7.12: Putting It Together- Socialization
- 7.13: Discussion- Socialization
- 7.14: Assignment- Agents of Socialization

8: Module 5- Society and Groups

- 8.1: Why It Matters- Society and Groups
- 8.2: Introduction to the Fundamentals of Society
- 8.3: Society, Culture, and Social Institutions
- 8.4: Types of Societies
- 8.5: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Society
- 8.6: Functionalism and Society
- 8.7: Conflict Theory and Society
- 8.8: Symbolic Interactionism and the McDonaldization of Society
- 8.9: Introduction to Organizations and Groups
- 8.10: Types of Formal Organizations
- 8.11: Types of Groups
- 8.12: Group Dynamics
- 8.13: Leadership Styles
- 8.14: Putting It Together- Society and Groups
- 8.15: Discussion- Society and Formal Organizations
- 8.16: Assignment- Society and Groups

9: Module 6- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control

- 9.1: Why It Matters- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control
- 9.2: Introduction to Deviance
- 9.3: Deviance and Control
- 9.4: Introduction to Theories of Social Deviance
- 9.5: Functionalism and Deviance
- 9.6: Conflict Theory and Deviance
- 9.7: Symbolic Interactionism and Deviance
- 9.8: Reviewing Theories on Deviance
- 9.9: Introduction to Crime and The Law
- 9.10: The Criminal Justice System
- 9.11: Criminal Activity
- 9.12: Putting It Together- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control
- 9.13: Discussion- Deviance
- 9.14: Assignment- Deviance in the News

10: Module 7- Stratification and Inequality

- 10.1: Why It Matters- Stratification and Inequality
- 10.2: Introduction to Stratification and Systems of Stratification
- 10.3: Social Stratification, Social Inequality, and Global Stratification
- 10.4: Systems of Global Classification
- 10.5: Systems of Social Stratification
- 10.6: Class in the United States
- 10.7: Introduction to Social Mobility and Poverty
- 10.8: Social Mobility
- 10.9: Global Poverty
- 10.10: Poverty in the U.S.
- 10.11: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Stratification
- 10.12: Theoretical Perspectives on Social Stratification
- 10.13: Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification

- 10.14: Putting It Together- Social Stratification and Inequality
- 10.15: Discussion- Stratification
- 10.16: Assignment- Stratification

11: Module 8- Race and Ethnicity

- 11.1: Why It Matters- Race and Ethnicity
- 11.2: Introduction to Race, Ethnicity, and Discrimination
- 11.3: Racial, Ethnic, and Minority Groups
- 11.4: Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination
- 11.5: Intergroup Relationships
- 11.6: Introduction to Race and Ethnicity in the United States
- 11.7: Native Americans
- 11.8: African Americans
- 11.9: Asian Americans
- 11.10: Hispanic
  - 11.10.1: Hispanic/Latino Americans
- 11.11: Arab Americans
- 11.12: White Americans
- 11.13: Introduction to Theories of Racial Inequality
- 11.14: Theoretical Perspectives of Race and Ethnicity
- 11.15: Putting It Together- Race and Ethnicity
- 11.16: Discussion- The Race Card Project
- 11.17: Assignment- Race and Ethnicity

12: Module 9- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

- 12.1: Why It Matters- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality
- 12.2: Introduction to Gender
- 12.3: Sex and Gender
- 12.4: Gender and Socialization
- 12.5: Introduction to Sex and Sexuality
- 12.6: Sex and Sexuality
- 12.7: Sexual Orientation
- 12.8: Introduction to Theories of Gender and Sex
- 12.9: Feminist Movements and Feminist Theory
- 12.10: Theoretical Perspectives on Gender
- 12.11: Theoretical Perspectives on Sex
- 12.12: Putting It Together- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality
- 12.13: Discussion- Gender
- 12.14: Assignment- Gender and Advertising

13: Module 10- Marriage and Family

- 13.1: Why It Matters- Marriage and Family
- 13.2: Introduction to Marriage and Family
- 13.3: Defining Family
- 13.4: Marriage and Courtship Patterns
- 13.5: Lines of Descent and Family Stages
- 13.6: Introduction to Family Life
- 13.7: Variations in Family Life

- 13.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Marriage and Family
- 13.9: Introduction to Challenges Families Face
- 13.10: Divorce and Remarriage
- 13.11: Violence and Abuse
- 13.12: Putting It Together- Marriage and Family
- 13.13: Discussion- Marriage and Family
- 13.14: Assignment- Families in Media

14: Module 11- Religion

- 14.1: Why It Matters- Religion
- 14.2: Introduction to Sociological Views on Religion
- 14.3: The History of Religion
- 14.4: Theoretical Perspectives on Religion
- 14.5: Introduction to World Religions
- 14.6: Types of Religion
- 14.7: Hinduism
- 14.8: Buddhism
- 14.9: Taoism and Confucianism
- 14.10: Judaism
- 14.11: Islam
- 14.12: Christianity
- 14.13: Introduction to Religion in the United States
- 14.14: U.S. Trends in Religion
- 14.15: Religion and Social Change
- 14.16: Putting It Together- Religion
- 14.17: Discussion- Religion
- 14.18: Assignment- World Religions

15: Module 12- Education

- 15.1: Why It Matters- Education
- 15.2: Introduction to Global Education
- 15.3: Education Around the World
- 15.4: Universal Access to Education
- 15.5: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Education
- 15.6: Functionalist Theory on Education
- 15.7: Conflict Theory on Education
- 15.8: Symbolic Interactionist Theory on Education
- 15.9: Introduction to Issues in Education
- 15.10: Hot Topics in Education
- 15.11: Charter Schools and Homeschooling
- 15.12: Contemporary Issues in Education
- 15.13: Putting It Together- Education
- 15.14: Discussion- Education
- 15.15: Assignment- Education Infographic

16: Module 13- Health and Medicine

- 16.1: Why It Matters- Health and Medicine
- 16.2: Introduction to The Social Construction of Health

- 16.3: The Cultural Significance of Health
- 16.4: Theoretical Perspectives on Health and Medicine
- 16.5: Introduction to Health in the United States and Abroad
- 16.6: Global Health and Epidemiology
- 16.7: Health and Inequality in the United States
- 16.8: Mental Health and Disabilities
- 16.9: Healthcare Systems
- 16.10: Putting It Together- Health and Medicine
- 16.11: Discussion- Health and Medicine
- 16.12: Assignment- The Evolution of Health Issues

17: Module 14- Aging and the Elderly

- 17.1: Why It Matters- Aging and the Elderly
- 17.2: Introduction to Aging
- 17.3: Aging in Society
- 17.4: The Graying of the United States and the World
- 17.5: Introduction to the Aging Process
- 17.6: Growing Old
- 17.7: Death and Dying
- 17.8: Introduction to Sociology and Aging
- 17.9: Retirement and Poverty
- 17.10: Ageism and Abuse
- 17.11: Theoretical Perspectives on Aging
- 17.12: Putting It Together- Aging and the Elderly
- 17.13: Discussion- Health and Aging Assignment
- 17.14: Assignment- Aging and the Elderly

18: Module 15- Government and Politics

- 18.1: Why It Matters- Government and Politics
- 18.2: Introduction to Power and Authority
- 18.3: Types of Authority
- 18.4: Introduction to Types of Government
- 18.5: Forms of Government
- 18.6: Politics in the United States
- 18.7: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Government and Power
- 18.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Government
- 18.9: Putting It Together- Government and Politics
- 18.10: Discussion- Government and Politics
- 18.11: Assignment- Politics and Sociology

19: Module 16- Work and the Economy

- 19.1: Why It Matters- Work and the Economy
- 19.2: Introduction to Economic Systems
- 19.3: The Development of Economic Systems
- 19.4: Capitalism and Socialism
- 19.5: Theoretical Perspectives on Economics
- 19.6: Introduction to Globalization and the Economy
- 19.7: Globalization

- 19.8: Introduction to Work in the United States
- 19.9: Work in the United States
- 19.10: Poverty and Unemployment in the United States
- 19.11: Putting It Together- Work and the Economy
- 19.12: Discussion- Work and the Economy
- 19.13: Assignment- Living in Poverty

20: Module 17- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment

- 20.1: Why It Matters- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment
- 20.2: Introduction to Demography and Population Growth
- 20.3: Demography and Population Growth
- 20.4: Demographic Theories
- 20.5: Immigration in the United States
- 20.6: Introduction to Urbanization
- 20.7: Urbanization on the Rise
- 20.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Urbanization
- 20.9: Introduction to the Environment and Society
- 20.10: Environmental Sociology
- 20.11: Environmental Racism
- 20.12: Putting It Together- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment
- 20.13: Discussion- Population and Urbanization
- 20.14: Assignment- Population and Urbanization

21: Module 18- Social Movements and Social Change

- 21.1: Why It Matters- Social Movements and Social Change
- 21.2: Introduction to Collective Behavior
- 21.3: Collective Behavior
- 21.4: Levels of Social Movements
- 21.5: Introduction to Social Movements
- 21.6: Types and Stages of Social Movements
- 21.7: Theoretical Perspectives on Social Movements
- 21.8: Introduction to Social Change
- 21.9: Causes of Social Change
- 21.10: Social Change, Technology, and Modernization
- 21.11: Putting It Together- Social Movements and Social Change
- 21.12: Assignment- Social Movements
- 21.13: Discussion- Social Movements

Index

Glossary

Detailed Licensing

Licensing

*A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in **Back Matter/Detailed Licensing**.*

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Course Contents

2.1: About This Course
2.2: Course Contents at a Glance
2.3: Learning Outcomes

This page titled 2: Course Contents is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

2.1: About This Course

Introduction to Sociology

There is perhaps no course more immediately impactful and relevant to students' lives than sociology. This course provides a comprehensive overview of key sociological topics and encourages students to think critically about the social world. Students develop the sociological imagination and examine society through each of the main sociological paradigms. The course includes embedded practice questions with targeted feedback to encourage reflection and application, as well as videos, discussions, and assignments.

Key topics include research, culture, socialization, society and groups, deviance and crime, stratification and inequality, race and ethnicity, gender, sex, and sexuality, marriage and family, religion, education, health and medicine, aging and the elderly, government and politics, work and the economy, population and urbanization, and social change. Faculty members may readily adapt the course's OER content to include new developments and research to equip students with what they need to have success in their sociological journey.

Contributors

This course, based on the OpenStax 2e Sociology text, was developed by Lumen Learning and includes additional noteworthy contributions by the Lumen Learning team and:

- Scott Barr
- Sarah Hoiland (Hostos Community College)
- Shailaja Menon (Houston Community College)
- Cathy Matresse (Columbia Basin College)
- Florencia Silveira
- Rebecca Vonderhaar (Tidewater Community College)

What's New?

The 2019 edition of Introduction to Sociology includes the following significant improvements and enhancements:

- **Improved course organization**
  - Modules are more consistent in size. This means some modules have been separated out from the previous version of the course. This enables greater instructor flexibility and more manageable learning for students.
  - Content is organized around specific, granular learning outcomes, which are listed at the top of each page.
  - Practice questions, try it questions, and quiz questions all align with learning outcomes.
- **Improved course content**
  - Course content was reviewed for accuracy and currency, then updated with modern examples, news, and research.
- **"Try It" embedded practice questions** for every learning outcome. This means that students learn about concepts and then immediately check their understanding with applied practice.
- **"Watch It"** embedded videos that explain and reiterate key concepts throughout the course.
  - Most videos come from CrashCourse Sociology, although several others are included from various sources such as Khan Academy and Sociology Live!
- **Discussions and Assignments** for every module

As a Waymaker course, this is customizable and delivered with user-friendly personalized learning tools to strengthen engagement and student success. There are formative self-check assessments and summative quiz questions that can be imported directly into the LMS.

Pacing

The Introduction to Sociology course contains eighteen modules. Since many instructors choose not to teach every module, sometimes it works well to cover roughly one module per week for a sixteen-week semester. Although the modules are generally

similar in size, some of the content is lighter in certain modules or more dense in others, so it may make sense to combine some modules in one week or draw out other modules over several weeks. See the “Pacing” page inside of faculty resources for more information and suggestions.

About Lumen

Lumen Learning’s mission is to enable unprecedented learning for all students.

We do this by using open educational resources (OER) to create well-designed and low-cost course materials that replace expensive textbooks. Because learning is about more than affordability and access, we also apply learning science insights and efficacy research to develop learning activities that are engineered to improve subject mastery, course completion and retention.

If you’d like to connect with us to learn more about adopting this course, please Contact Us.

You can also make an appointment during OER office hours to connect virtually with a live Lumen expert about any question you may have. Learn more about OER Office Hours.

CC licensed content, Original

- About This Course. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 2.1: About This Course is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

2.2: Course Contents at a Glance

The following list shows the module-level topics for the course. To see all of the course pages, visit the Table of Contents.

Module 1: Foundations of Sociology

- What Is Sociology?
- The Development of Sociology
- Why Study Sociology?
- The Sociological Imagination
- The Main Sociological Theories
- Structural-Functional Theory
- Conflict Theory
- Symbolic Interactionist Theory
- Reviewing Sociological Theories

- Module 2: Sociological Research
  - Sociological Research
  - Ethics
  - The Scientific Method
  - Surveys
  - Experiments
  - Field Research
  - Secondary Data Analysis
  - Summary of Research Methods

- Module 3: Culture
  - Culture, Values, and Beliefs
  - Social Norms
  - Symbols and Language
  - Cultural Universals
  - Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism
  - Pop Culture and Subculture
  - Cultural Change
  - Globalization and Technology
  - Functionalism on Culture and Technology
  - Conflict Theory on Culture and Technology
  - Symbolic Interactionism on Media and Technology

- Module 4: Socialization
  - The Importance of Socialization
  - Theories of Socialization
  - The Social Construction of Reality
  - Roles and the Presentation of Self
  - Agents of Socialization
  - Socialization Across the Lifespan
  - Resocialization

- Module 5: Society and Groups
  - Society, Culture, and Social Institutions
  - Types of Societies
  - Functionalism and Society
  - Conflict Theory and Society
  - Symbolic Interactionism and the McDonaldization of Society
  - Types of Formal Organizations
  - Types of Groups
  - Group Dynamics
  - Leadership Styles
- Module 6: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control
  - Deviance and Control
  - Functionalism and Deviance
  - Conflict Theory and Deviance
  - Symbolic Interactionism and Deviance
  - Reviewing Theories on Deviance
  - The Criminal Justice System
  - Criminal Activity
- Module 7: Stratification and Inequality
  - Social Stratification, Social Inequality, and Global Stratification
  - Systems of Global Classification
  - Systems of Social Stratification
  - Class in the United States
  - Social Mobility
  - Global Poverty
  - Poverty in the U.S.
  - Theoretical Perspectives on Social Stratification
  - Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification
- Module 8: Race and Ethnicity
  - Racial, Ethnic, and Minority Groups
  - Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination
  - Intergroup Relationships
  - Native Americans
  - African Americans
  - Asian Americans
  - Hispanic/Latino Americans
  - Arab Americans
  - White Americans
  - Theoretical Perspectives of Race and Ethnicity
- Module 9: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality
  - Sex and Gender
  - Gender and Socialization
  - Sex and Sexuality
  - Sexual Orientation
  - Feminist Movements and Feminist Theory
  - Theoretical Perspectives on Gender
  - Theoretical Perspectives on Sex

- Module 10: Marriage and Family
  - Why It Matters: Marriage and Family
  - Introduction to Marriage and Family
  - Defining Family
  - Marriage and Courtship Patterns
  - Lines of Descent and Family Stages
  - Variations in Family Life
  - Theoretical Perspectives on Marriage and Family
  - Divorce and Remarriage
  - Violence and Abuse
- Module 11: Religion
  - The History of Religion
  - Theoretical Perspectives on Religion
  - Types of Religion
  - Hinduism
  - Buddhism
  - Taoism and Confucianism
  - Judaism
  - Islam
  - Christianity
  - U.S. Trends in Religion
  - Religion and Social Change
- Module 12: Education
  - Education Around the World
  - Universal Access to Education
  - Functionalist Theory on Education
  - Conflict Theory on Education
  - Symbolic Interactionist Theory on Education
  - Hot Topics in Education
  - Charter Schools and Homeschooling
  - Contemporary Issues in Education
- Module 13: Health and Medicine
  - The Cultural Significance of Health
  - Theoretical Perspectives on Health and Medicine
  - Global Health and Epidemiology
  - Health and Inequality in the United States
  - Mental Health and Disabilities
  - Healthcare Systems
- Module 14: Aging and the Elderly
  - Aging in Society
  - The Graying of the United States and the World
  - Growing Old
  - Death and Dying
  - Retirement and Poverty
  - Ageism and Abuse
  - Theoretical Perspectives on Aging

- Module 15: Government and Politics
  - Types of Authority
  - Forms of Government
  - Politics in the United States
  - Theoretical Perspectives on Government
- Module 16: Work and the Economy
  - The Development of Economic Systems
  - Capitalism and Socialism
  - Theoretical Perspectives on Economics
  - Globalization
  - Work in the United States
  - Poverty and Unemployment in the United States
- Module 17: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment
  - Demography and Population Growth
  - Demographic Theories
  - Immigration in the United States
  - Urbanization on the Rise
  - Theoretical Perspectives on Urbanization
  - Environmental Sociology
  - Environmental Racism
- Module 18: Social Movements and Social Change
  - Collective Behavior
  - Levels of Social Movements
  - Types and Stages of Social Movements
  - Theoretical Perspectives on Social Movements
  - Causes of Social Change
  - Social Change, Technology, and Modernization

CC licensed content, Original

- Course Contents at a Glance. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Binoculars Icon. **Authored by**: Musmellow. **Provided by**: Noun Project. **Located at**: https://thenounproject.com/term/binoculars/1234056/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 2.2: Course Contents at a Glance is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

2.3: Learning Outcomes



The content and assessments for this course are aligned to learning outcomes. A full list of course learning outcomes can be viewed here: Course Learning Objectives for Sociology.

CC licensed content, Original

- Learning Outcomes. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Magnify. **Authored by**: Eucalyp. **Provided by**: Noun Project. **Located at**: https://thenounproject.com/term/magnify/1276779/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 2.3: Learning Outcomes is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

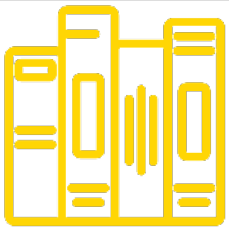
CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Faculty Resources

3.1: Faculty Resources Overview
3.2: Pacing
3.3: PDF
3.4: PowerPoints
3.5: Assignments and Discussions
3.6: Question Banks
3.7: In-Class Activities
3.8: Additional Resources
3.9: I Need Help

This page titled 3: Faculty Resources is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

3.1: Faculty Resources Overview



We've seen overwhelming demand for high quality, openly-licensed course materials, including supplemental resources to enrich teaching and learning and to make life easier for instructors. To support this need, we've developed and curated faculty resources to use with this course.

Free and Open Supplemental Materials

On the following pages, you will find supplemental resources that are freely available to use with the interactive learning materials for this course. Since these resources are openly licensed, you may use them as is or adapt them to your needs.

Additional Faculty Resources

Additional supplemental resources, learning tools, and support services are available to faculty who adopt Waymaker, OHM, or Candela courses with paid support from Lumen Learning. For many courses, these include some combination of summative assessments, answer keys, solutions manuals, or other materials shared only with authorized instructors in order to protect academic integrity.

Click here to learn more about additional instructor tools and resources available to faculty who adopt Lumen-supported courseware. Information about pricing and payment options is available on this page. Lumen's low-cost support fees replace the cost of expensive textbooks and may be paid by students or by the institution directly.

Continuously Improving Learning Materials

Are you interested in collaborating with us to make these course materials better? We use learning data to identify where content improvements are needed, and then we invite faculty and subject matter experts to work with us developing continuous improvements aimed at increasing learning.

Learn more about our continuous improvement efforts from this blog post, or sign up here to join our continuous improvement mailing list and stay up to date about upcoming OER hackathons and other continuous improvement activities.

CC licensed content, Original

- Faculty Resources Overview. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Books Icon. **Authored by**: Ilham Fitrotul Hayat. **Provided by**: Noun Project. **Located at**: https://thenounproject.com/term/books/2792694/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 3.1: Faculty Resources Overview is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

3.2: Pacing



The Introduction to Sociology course contains eighteen modules. Since many instructors choose not to teach every module, sometimes it works well to cover roughly one module per week for a fifteen or sixteen-week semester. Although the modules are generally similar in size, some of the content is lighter in certain modules or more dense in others, so it may make sense to combine some modules in one week or draw out other modules over several weeks.

Some modules that work well together include:

- **Module 1: Foundations of Sociology** and **Module 2: Sociological Research**
- **Module 3: Culture** and **Module 4: Socialization** OR
- **Module 4: Socialization** and **Module 5: Society and Groups**
- **Module 9: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality** and **Module 10: Marriage and Family**
- **Module 11: Religion** and **Module 12: Education**
- **Module 13: Health and Medicine** and **Module 14: Aging and the Elderl**y
- **Module 15: Government and Politics** and **Module 16: Work and the Economy**
- **Module 17: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment** and **Module 18: Social Movements and Social Change**

The “smallest” modules are modules 2, 10, and 13-16:

- Module 2: Sociological Research
- Module 10: Marriage and Family
- Module 13: Health and Medicine
- Module 14: Aging and the Elderly
- Module 15: Government and Politics
- Module 16: Work and the Economy

Module Changes

For those switching over from the earlier version of the course, a comparison of the two versions is included below. In soliciting feedback from instructors, we heard the desire for smaller, more flexible modules. The core content remains similar to the previous version, although some things have shifted to better align with similar concepts. For example, pieces on technology have been added into the culture module and included throughout the course, instead of tacked on at the end. The modules on culture and society were split to help clarify those essential concepts. The religion and education modules were split as they each deserved separate attention. The module on health, aging, and the elderly was split due to its broad scope.

The new, smaller modules also allow more faculty autonomy is choosing specific modules. For example, many have expressed a desire to exclude certain modules which are covered in other courses, such as education, government and politics, work and the

economy, or health and medicine. Now that those social institutions each have their own module, picking and choosing is even easier.

New Lumen Course	Old Lumen Course	OpenStax Sociology
Module 1: Foundations of Sociology	Module 1: Foundations of Sociology	Chapter 1: Introduction to Sociology
Module 2: Sociological Research	Module 2: Culture and Society	Chapter 2: Sociological Research
Module 3: Culture	Module 3: Socialization and Interaction	Chapter 3: Culture
Module 4: Socialization	Module 4: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control	Chapter 4: Society and Social Interaction
Module 5: Society and Groups	Module 5: Social Stratification and Inequality	Chapter 5: Socialization
Module 6: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control	Module 6: Race and Ethnicity	Chapter 6: Groups and Organization
Module 7: Stratification and Inequality	Module 7: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality	Chapter 7: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control
Module 8: Race and Ethnicity	Module 8: Marriage and Family	Chapter 8: Media and Technology
Module 9: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality	Module 9: Religion and Education	Chapter 9: Social Stratification in the United States
Module 10: Marriage and Family	Module 10: Health, Aging, and the Elderly	Chapter 10: Global Inequality
Module 11: Religion	Module 11: Government and Politics	Chapter 11: Race and Ethnicity
Module 12: Education	Module 12: Work and the Economy	Chapter 12: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality
Module 13: Health and Medicine	Module 13: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment	Chapter 13: Aging and the Elderly
Module 14: Aging and the Elderly	Module 14: Social Movements, Media, and Technology	Chapter 14: Marriage and Family

Module 15: Government and Politics		Chapter 15: Religion
Module 16: Work and the Economy		Chapter 16: Education
Module 17: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment		Chapter 17: Government and Politics
Module 18: Social Movements and Social Change		Chapter 18: Work and the Economy
		Chapter 19: Health and Medicine
		Chapter 20: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment
		Chapter 21: Social Movements and Social Change

Here are some sample schedules if teaching the entire course:

Week	Sample Schedule 1: 15 weeks	Sample Schedule 2: 14 weeks	Sample Schedule 3: 12 weeks
Week 1	Module 1: Foundations of Sociology	Module 7: Stratification and Inequality	
Week 6	Module 7: Stratification and Inequality	Module 6: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control	Module 8: Race and Ethnicity
Week 7	Module 8: Race and Ethnicity	Module 7: Stratification and Inequality	Module 9: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality
Week 9	Module 10: Marriage and Family	Module 9: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality	Module 15: Government and Politics Module 17: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment
Week 12	Module 13: Health and Medicine Module 14: Aging and the Elderly	Module 13: Health and Medicine Module 14: Aging and the Elderly	Module 18: Social Movements and Social Change
Week 13	Module 15: Government and Politics Module 16: Work and the Economy	Module 15: Government and Politics Module 16: Work and the Economy	
Week 14	Module 17: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment	Module 17: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment Module 18: Social Movements and Social Change	
Week 15	Module 18: Social Movements and Social Change	Review	

If you are transitioning from the old Lumen course and would like to teach the entire course in a similar manner, we recommend combining the modules as shown below. Note that the module numbering is included here, but once inside the LMS, the module

numbers are not included, and may be renamed or renumbered to suit your class' needs.

Old Lumen Course	New Lumen Course
Module 1: Foundations of Sociology	Module 1: Foundations of Sociology Module 2: Sociological Research
Module 2: Culture and Society	Module 3: Culture
Module 3: Socialization and Interaction	Module 4: Socialization Module 5: Society and Groups
Module 4: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control	Module 6: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control
Module 5: Social Stratification and Inequality	Module 7: Stratification and Inequality
Module 6: Race and Ethnicity	Module 8: Race and Ethnicity
Module 7: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality	Module 9: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality
Module 8: Marriage and Family	Module 10: Marriage and Family
Module 9: Religion and Education	Module 11: Religion Module 12: Education
Module 10: Health, Aging, and the Elderly	Module 13: Health and Medicine Module 14: Aging and the Elderly
Module 11: Government and Politics	Module 15: Government and Politics
Module 12: Work and the Economy	Module 16: Work and the Economy
Module 13: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment	Module 17: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment
Module 14: Social Movements, Media, and Technology	

	Module 18: Social Movements and Social Change

CC licensed content, Original

- Pacing Guide. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Stopwatch. **Authored by**: Adrien Coquet, FR. **Provided by**: Noun Project. **Located at**: https://thenounproject.com/term/stopwatch/1094680/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 3.2: Pacing is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

3.3: PDF



A PDF version of the primary textbook is available as a print only alternative. The pdf does not include interactive content such as simulations, videos, and quizzes and is not vetted for accessibility. For these reasons, we **do not recommend using the textbook in the pdf form.** The offline version should be used as a print backup rather than as the primary textbook.

To share these files with your students, copy and paste the text and download link above into a page or announcement in your learning management system (Blackboard, Canvas, etc.).

- Introduction to Sociology PDF

CC licensed content, Original

- PDF. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Kindle Oasis. **Authored by**: Richard Slater. **Located at**: https://thenounproject.com/term/kindle-oasis/611350/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 3.3: PDF is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

3.4: PowerPoints

A full set of PowerPoint decks is provided for download below. All decks are tightly aligned to the modules in this course. Since they are openly licensed, you are welcome to retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute as desired.

These PowerPoint files are accessible. If you do revise them, make sure to follow these guidelines for creating accessible PowerPoints.

You may download each individual deck as it is becomes available below. Download the slides as a .zip file.

- Module 1: Foundations of Sociology
- Module 2: Sociological Research
- Module 3: Culture
- Module 4: Socialization
- Module 5: Society and Groups
- Module 6: Deviance, Crime, and Social Control
- Module 7: Stratification and Inequality
- Module 8: Race and Ethnicity
- Module 9: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality
- Module 10: Marriage and Family
- Module 11: Religion
- Module 12: Education
- Module 13: Health and Medicine
- Module 14: Aging and the Elderly
- Module 15: Government and Politics
- Module 16: Work and the Economy
- Module 17: Population, Urbanization, and the Environment
- Module 18: Social Movements and Social Change

CC licensed content, Original

- PowerPoints. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Projector Screen. **Authored by**: Denis Shumaylov. **Provided by**: Noun Project. **Located at**: https://thenounproject.com/term/projector-screen/1211212/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 3.4: PowerPoints is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

3.5: Assignments and Discussions

Assignment prompts are provided with this course for instructors to use at their discretion. Since they are openly licensed, instructors may use them as is or to adapt to better fit the class's focus, time frame and learning outcomes.

Assignments may be delivered pre-populated in your LMS assignment tool in your LMS course shell, where you may modify or delete them as you wish. The recommended expectation for the discussion assignments is that **students should do their initial post first** before seeing replies from other students (This is generally an option faculty need to select once inside the LMS and looks like "Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum." or "Users must post before seeing replies").

We do **NOT recommend assigning every discussion and assignment**, as some are large and time-consuming or may not fit well with your course schedule. Some marked as "larger assignments" could be introduced in earlier modules or split into several parts.

If you would like to include your own assignments or have recommendations for additions or modifications, you are invited to contribute! If you would like to share your materials with other faculty and have them included in our list of options, please send

them with an explanatory message to support@lumenlearning.com. Be sure to mention which course and learning outcome(s) they align with when you send a message.

	Discussion	Assignment
Foundations of Sociology	• Discussion: Introduce Yourself	• Assignment: Sociologist Player Trading Cards • Create a playing card for a famous sociologist
Sociological Research	• Discussion: Sociology Research • Find a peer-reviewed article	• Assignment: Utilizing Secondary Research • Analyze census data
Culture	• Discussion: Tattoos in Culture • Analyze celebrity tattoos • Discussion: Media and Culture • Choose a movie and describe the significance of social media to its plot and development	• Assignment: Tattoos and Culture • Watch a documentary and discuss tattoos and social norms • Assignment: Media and Technology • Visit the American Academy of Pediatrics website and learn about the effect of social media on children
Socialization	• Discussion: Socialization • Discuss culture and socialization	• Assignment: Agents of Socialization • Case study about the agents of socialization
Society and Groups	• Discussion: Society and Formal Organizations • Analyze bureaucracies and meritocracy	• Assignment: Society and Groups • Explain a primary group, secondary group, in-group, out-group, and a reference group
Deviance, Crime, and Social Control	• Discussion: Deviance • Discuss formal deviance norms in the U.S.	• Assignment: Deviance in the News • Find a current event about deviance
Stratification and Inequality	• Discussion: Stratification • Look for conspicuous consumption	• Assignment: Stratification • Compare stratification in advertising
Race and Ethnicity	• Discussion: The Race Card Project • Write a six-word novel about race	• Assignment: Race and Ethnicity • Watch Chimananda Adiche's TED Talk "The Danger of a Single Story" and write about single stories
Gender, Sex, and Sexuality	• Discussion: Gender • Find gender-specific advertisements and utilize one of the main theoretical perspectives to analyze gender stereotypes	• Assignment: Gender and Advertising • Analyze gender stereotypes and the presentation of gender, sex, or sexuality

Marriage and Family	• Discussion: Marriage and Family • How does the increasing numbers of adults choosing to remain single impact the future role of family in society?	• Assignment: Families in Media • Analyze a t.v. or movie family through sociological lens
Religion	• Discussion: Religion • Is society is becoming either more secularized or more fundamentalist?	• Assignment: World Religions • Write an essay or create an infographic about a world religion
Education	• Discussion: Education • Pick two questions to discuss issues related to education	• Assignment: Education Infographic • Create a poster or infographic that addresses the major sociological issues related to education equity at your school
Health and Medicine	• Discussion: Health and Medicine • Find and relate a news article on health or medicine and examine the social implications of the illness	• Assignment: The Evolution of Health Issues • Compare and contrast the health issues from previous decades with the same issue today
Aging and the Elderly	• Discussion: Health, Aging, and the Elderly • Discuss and research issues related to the elderly	• Assignment: Aging and the Elderly • Conduct an interview of a person 65+
Government and Politics	• Discussion: Government and Politics • Pick a question to discuss related to sociology and politics	• Assignment: Politics and Sociology • Find a current news event article about politics, voting, or political leadership
Work and the Economy	• Discussion: Work and the Economy • Visit the website to play the game "Spent": http://playspent.org/ to facilitate a discussion	• Assignment: Living in Poverty • Create a practical budget for a family in poverty
Population, Urbanization, and the Environment	• Discussion: Population and Urbanization • Find a current event article related to population grown or decline, emigration, immigration, gentrification, or the brain drain	• Assignment: Population and Urbanization • Use census data to compare two American cities and write a letter to a friend about which city would be preferable
Social Movements and Social Change	• Discussion: Social Movements • Share completed posters from the social movement project for discussion	• Assignment: Social Change • Select a current social movement and complete research about its lifecycle

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignments and Discussions. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- pencil cup. **Authored by**: IconfactoryTeam. **Provided by**: The Noun Project. **Located at**: https://thenounproject.com/term/pencil-cup/628840/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 3.5: Assignments and Discussions is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

3.6: Question Banks

*Note: It is your responsibility to handle question banks and answer keys **securely** and appropriately to prevent them from being widely available and searchable via the Internet.*

The quizzes (machine-graded assessments) included in this course are organized by module and are aligned to specific learning outcomes. The quizzes appear in three places: Show What You Know (ungraded pretests at the beginning of each module), Self-Checks (short, ungraded practice tests), and end-of-module quizzes (graded).

Faculty can edit and delete any of the quiz questions and also add new ones. The standard way to "get your hands on" the quiz banks and answer keys is to follow the instructions in the Waymaker Faculty User Guide AFTER the course package has been imported to your learning management system (Blackboard, Canvas, etc.).

Optional Download

The Show What You Know and Self-Check questions are also available as a separate file that can be downloaded and imported into the assessment tool in your LMS. **This format and extra step are needed ONLY if you want to make your own customized quiz, midterm, or final exam that combines quiz questions from multiple modules**.

There are 18 question banks with a total of 853 multiple choice questions.

We provide quiz banks as QTI files, a standard format that allows you to import questions, build, and customize quizzes in most learning management systems (Canvas, Blackboard, etc.). **These files cannot be opened outside of an LMS.**

According to Lumen company policy, we do not provide quizzes in written (e.g. MS Word) form, in order to preserve the academic integrity of our quiz banks on behalf of everyone using our materials. We adopted this policy after observing how easy it is for quiz banks in written formats to find their way onto websites that promote academic cheating.

Click the name of your LMS to prompt the download of the file.

- Canvas Question Banks
- Blackboard Question Banks
- D2L Question Banks
- Moodle Question Banks

Once you've downloaded the file, visit the Quiz Imports page and click through to the directions for your LMS.

CC licensed content, Original

- Question Banks. **Authored by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Usability Testing. **Authored by**: Maxim Basinski. **Provided by**: Noun Project . **Located at**: https://thenounproject.com/term/usability-testing/1290736/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 3.6: Question Banks is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

3.7: In-Class Activities

Suggestions for in-class activities, as well as additional essay and discussion questions are included below. Suggested in-class activities and additional essay and discussion questions can also be downloaded as a document here. This was originally created by Kathy Dolan and Jennie Law from Georgia State University.

Module 1 Foundations of Sociology

Short answers:

1. How would you define sociology to someone who knows nothing about it?
2. What is the sociological imagination? Illustrate your definition with an example.
3. What are the benefits of studying sociology?
4. Describe the differences between micro-level and macro-level theories. Illustrate your point with examples.

Essays:

1. Describe the history of sociology, naming and describing the contributions of three different sociological theorists.
2. Should we raise the minimum wage? Present arguments for and against raising the minimum wage. Identify which of the three sociological theories would best match arguments for and against raising the minimum wage.

Online Discussion Question:

1. Do some online research on locavores and one specific locavore group. Describe the group using the symbolic interactionist perspective. Include web links and other relevant sources.

Class Activities:

1. Create an infographic (using an infographic creator tool or website tool) showcasing the main parts of each of the three major sociological theories, Functionalism, Conflict Theory, and Symbolic Interactionism.
2. Create a simulation of a social media conversation between two different sociological theorists on the nature of society.

Module 2 Sociological Research

Short answers:

1. What are the advantages of using surveys in research?
2. Define reliability and validity.
3. Devise a hypothesis about some aspect of society. Identify your dependent and independent variables.
4. What is interpretive research? Give an example of a research question that would be best answered using an interpretive framework.

Essays:

1. Outline and define the steps of the sociological research process.
2. Describe at least three ethical concerns in sociological research and how the profession addresses those concerns. Make up original examples to illustrate your points.

Online Discussion Question:

1. If you had a million-dollar research grant to study anything about society, what would you study? Why would you choose this topic? Remember to develop a sociological question with sociological reasoning. Try to be value free. Which research method would you use and why?

Class Activity:

1. As a class or in groups, identify a sociological research topic. Ask a question about this topic. Formulate a hypothesis. Create 10 closed-ended survey questions addressing your hypothesis. Use a program like Plickers or an electronic polling tool to have students in class answer the questions. Create infographics, charts, etc. to display the results to the class. Have each group discuss the results for their questions and their conclusions about their hypothesis. Explain to students why these results pertain just to this class and cannot be generalized.

Module 3 Culture

Short answers:

1. Describe at item of material culture that is important to you. What symbolic significance does it hold for you?
2. How is social control functional for society?
3. Describe the difference between folkways and mores. Give an original example for each.
4. Technology does not just meet modern technology. Describe two original examples of technological developments that had an impact on group living.
5. Describe how the media can have a life-changing function. Illustrate with an original example.

Essays:

1. Define ideal and real culture. Explain the concepts with an original example.
2. Describe high culture and popular culture. Provide original examples for each, explaining why they fit the description.
3. What is the digital divide? How is this concept related to social class and inequality? Who suffers from the digital divide?
4. What is media consolidation, and what impact does it have on society?

Online Discussion Question:

1. Have you ever experienced culture shock? Describe a time you experienced culture shock. What was surprising to you? How did you react to the surprise? How did you overcome your culture shock?
2. Have you ever thought about inventing something, or that someone else should invent something to solve a specific problem? What would you invent if you could? Explain how your invention would be functional for society.
3. Imagine knowing nothing about human life in the United States. Pick an aspect of life that seems mundane and normal to you, and explain it to someone who is experiencing culture shock.

Class Activity:

1. The Breaching Experiment, as described on P. 58 of your text, is a classic sociological experiment. For this assignment, students should break a social norm at the folkway level. Be sure students understand that they should not do anything dangerous or illegal or that would put them at risk in any way. Often students will choose to do this assignment with a family member or friend. Have students report to the class on what they did and how people reacted. Discuss sanctions and social control.
2. As individuals, small groups or a whole class, create a new norm for society. Decide what the norm is, how it will be enforced, and what the sanctions will be for following or breaking the norm. Then describe how you would effectively socialize people into this norm. Discuss.

Module 4 Socialization

Short answers:

1. How do sociologists and psychologists view the world differently? Give an original example to illustrate your point.
2. What is resocialization? Illustrate your definition with an original example.

Essay:

1. How important are peer groups to socialization? In what ways do they influence individuals throughout the life course?
2. Describe the concept of the social construction of reality. Illustrate your essay with an original example.
3. Describe Erving Goffman's theory of the presentation of self in everyday life through role performance. Illustrate the theory with original examples.

Online Discussion Question:

1. Have you ever observed someone experiencing a self-fulfilling prophecy? Explain. If you have not personally observed this, use an example from the media, books, movies, or TV.
2. Have you ever experienced role strain or role conflict? Describe the different roles and how they were strained or conflicted. How did you resolve this?
3. Since socialization is often so unconscious, we sometimes take for granted what we know without thinking too much about how we came to know it. For this discussion, think about an aspect of life you take for granted, and describe what you can remember about being socialized or taught specific norms.

Module 5 Society and Groups

Short answers:

1. How did the Industrial Revolution lead to urbanization?
2. Describe Karl Marx's theory of alienation.
3. What is the difference between social group and institutional agents of socialization? Explain your answer with original examples from both social group and institutional agents.
4. Define the concept of the McDonaldization of society, including the 4 characteristics Ritzer describes in his book.
5. Choose two of the four characteristics of the McDonaldization of Society and show how these concepts can be applied to other aspects of our lives.

Essays:

1. Define and describe two different leadership styles. Give original examples of both from your own life or in society and explain why they are good examples of the style.

Online Discussion Question:

1. What would life be like if the Internet just stopped working? Describe how this event would impact two different social institutions.
2. After reading about George Ritzer's concept of the McDonaldization of society, think of another example besides fast food where you see this concept being applied. For this discussion you will
    1. Briefly describe the concept of Mcdonaldization.
    2. Describe your example.
    3. Apply the four characteristics of McDonaldization to your example.
    4. Include inserted photos, links, and resources to help illustrate your example.
3. How does advertising play on the ideas of in-groups and out-groups to sell products and services?
4. Are you a part of any voluntary groups? Describe them and why you joined them. What do you get out of them? What do you contribute to them?

Class Activity:

1. How are sociological theorists relevant to today's world? As individuals or as a class, do a hashtag search for Karl Marx on a social media platform that uses hashtags. Do a brief content analysis of the posts that you find to describe their relevance.
2. You can use this activity in class with magazines and glue sticks, using old file folders as the base, or you can have students create their image boards using online tools and programs. Have students make an image/text board or infographic using images and text that illustrate the McDonaldization of Society. These can be posted online and discussed or discussed in the classroom.

Module 6 Deviance, Crime, and Social Control

Short answers:

1. How can deviance be positive? Explain your answer using an original example.
2. What are the two main ways we get statistics on crime in the United States? Name the reports and describe how their data is collected.
3. Describe 2 of the 4 types of social bonds in control theory. Give original examples of each.

Essays:

1. According to Functionalist theory, deviance can be functional for society. Give 4 specific, original examples of how deviance can be functional for society.
2. Sanctions, or reactions to behavior, can be positive or negative and formal or informal. Define the 4 combinations and give original examples to illustrate your descriptions.

Online Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think about C. Wright Mills' notion of the Power Elite? Who do you think makes up the power elite? Give two specific original examples, and show how their decisions can impact society as a whole.
2. What is panoptic surveillance? Besides prison, where else do we find this? Why does it exist? Describe two original examples.

Class Activity:

1. Make a list of common law-breaking activities or actions that most people do not consider serious, and the legal penalty in your area for each. Using Plickers or another classroom survey tool in an anonymous way, ask students who has broken each law. Have them tally up how much they would owe in fines and jail time had they been caught and convicted of these offenses. Discuss perceptions of crime and why different law-breaking activities are treated differently.

Module 7 Stratification and Inequality

Short answers:

1. What is meritocracy? To what extent do you think the United States is a meritocracy? Give two original examples to justify your response.
2. Why do most Americans self-identify as middle class?
3. Why are conflict theorists deeply critical of social stratification?
4. Briefly describe Wallerstein's world systems approach to global inequality.
5. Differentiate between absolute and relative poverty, and give original examples for both.

Essay:

1. Social mobility can take many forms. List and describe three types of social mobility. Give original examples of each to illustrate your answer.
2. Compare and contrast how conspicuous consumption would be explained by a symbolic interactionist theorist and a functionalist theorist.
3. What is meant by the cycle of poverty? How does it operate? How is poverty feminized? How does the feminization of poverty impact the cycle of poverty?

Online Discussion Question:

1. How would you describe your standard of living? What factors are you basing your description on? Has your standard of living changed over time or by circumstances? What are some indicators of that change?
2. Discuss conspicuous consumption. Insert photos from the Internet or original photos of your own of 3 examples of conspicuous consumption. What are these items supposed to signify? What are some other social meanings that might be assigned to these items if viewed from a different perspective?
3. Do you think you purchase goods made in sweat shops? Look up where some of your clothes and goods are made. Look up the records on working conditions of the workers in companies that make your products. Who actually made them? If they were made in sweatshops, does that matter? Why or why not?
4. Create a discussion OR have a class discussion surrounding the interactive found at the bottom of this page: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm...tratification/.
    1. Are there any forms of cultural capital that can be acquired without economic capital? That is, can one cultivate habits of speech and appearance that suggest higher social status but which do not cost money? (or at least very much money?) What symbolic values are at work here?
    2. If prestigious brand-name products, such as the Louis Vuitton handbag we started with, confer some sort of high status on those who possess and display them, then how does the "branding" of the self function in our 21st-Century economy? When

individuals brand themselves through social media and other public platforms, whether as employees or “influencers” and such, what status or characteristics are they trying to claim? What do they hope to gain?

3. The sociologist Charles Horton Cooley introduced the concept of the “looking glass self,” which says we develop our sense of self according to how we believe others perceive us. Can this idea help us understand how social status and economic class are related? To what extent are status and class a matter of self-conscious performance for the benefit of an imagined audience?

Class Activity:

1. Have students go to Playspent.org and play through the game at least twice. Or, you can do this in the classroom and make choices as a group. Each choice opens up the conversation to discussions of inequality and structural and personal factors that impact those living in poverty. Discuss how poverty is linked to so many other social problems.
2. As individuals, groups, or a class, list several indicators of global stratification. Choose three countries you think will rank differently on these indicators and find data on the chosen indicators for each country. Compare and discuss results and how stratification manifests in your examples.

Module 8 Race and Ethnicity

Short answers:

1. How are stereotypes both functional and dysfunctional for society?
2. What is racial steering? In what ways do things like this exist today?

Essay:

1. What is intersection theory? How can we use it to help understand the experiences of those around us? Illustrate your answer with an original example.

Online Discussion Question:

1. What do you do when you hear someone tell a racist joke? What social responsibility do you think we have to speak up or stand up when we see or hear racist behavior or talk?
2. Have you ever been incorrectly stereotyped? Describe the situation and why you think you were stereotyped. Why was the stereotype wrong?

Class Activity:

1. Have students go to Implicit Association Test Website and take an Implicit Association Test related to race and ethnicity. In advance, explain to them how the test works and what the results will and will not mean. The website has a great explanation and answers to questions. Discuss results and why students think they got the results they did (go beyond the mechanics of the test).

Module 9 Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

Short answers:

1. What is gender identity? How does society contribute to our understanding of what it means to identify ourselves and others by gender categories?
2. How did the work of Alfred Kinsey impact the field of sexuality studies?

Essay:

1. How does the concept of heteronormativity manifest in society? Describe three original examples.
2. How does inequality based on gender impact society? Compare and contrast the functionalist and conflict views on gender inequality.

Online Discussion Question:

1. It is easier to see examples of gender role socialization in children than it is in adults. Think of some examples of how adults are socialized into gender roles over the life course. What does society expect of people based on gender at different ages?

Class Activity:

1. In small groups, create Public Service Announcements (PSAs) targeted at teaching boys and men not to sexually assault girls and women. Use some class time to prepare, and the rest for the students to act out or demonstrate their PSAs. As a class, discuss the perceived pros and cons of the PSAs.

Module 10 Marriage and Family

Short answers:

1. How does the U.S. Census definition of family compare to the sociological definition of family?
2. How do changes in one social institution or structure impact another? Give an original example using the institution of the family.

Essay:

1. How does symbolic interactionism describe how we develop an understanding of what constitutes a family? How does this differ from a functionalist explanation?
2. Describe intimate partner violence in the United States using an intersectional approach.

Online Discussion Question:

1. Who do you consider to be family? Do you consider only relatives, or do other people or creatures fit that description for you? How do you decide who you consider family?

Class Activity:

1. As a class, list the functions of the family. Divide the class into small groups and have them imagine a society where the institution of the family does not exist. In their society, how would the functions the class listed be filled? Groups should be creative and inventive. After about half of the class period is over, ask groups to describe their societies and how the functions that would be met by the institution of the family are met in their imagined society. Students should be thinking in terms of social structure.

Module 11 Religion

Short answers:

1. How does a religious movement move from being a sect to a denomination?
2. Explain 3 functions of religion that are positive for society.
3. What is liberation theology? Give an original example from current events.

Essay:

1. How does the social structure of religion impact other institutions in a society? Illustrate your description with two original examples.
2. How is the Protestant Work Ethic related to capitalism? How might it be used to justify inequality?

Online Discussion Question:

1. Megachurches are a relatively recent phenomenon described in your text. What is a megachurch? Find an example of a megachurch and do some research on it. Using functionalist theory, explain how the megachurch meets various needs for its members and for society. Give concrete examples.

Class Activity:

1. Individually or in small groups, have students investigate death rituals from a culture other than mainstream U.S. culture. What are the functions of the death rituals for the group? As a class, discuss similarities and differences in death rituals across cultures.

Module 12 Education

Short answers:

1. How is education related to life expectancy?
2. In what ways is the U.S. education system unequal?
3. What is social promotion? How can it be both functional and dysfunctional?

Essay:

1. How does cultural transmission work through the institution of education? Give three original examples.
2. How is the importance of credentialism in today's society explained by labeling theory? Illustrate your explanation with original examples.

Online Discussion Question:

1. You read about grade inflation in this chapter. What do you think about it? How do you think grades in your college classes should be calculated and distributed? Give some examples related to grades that you have experienced that you thought were either helpful or harmful and discuss why you feel the way you do.

Class Activity:

1. In small groups, have students design a sex ed curriculum for 5th, 8th, and 11th grade public school students. What topics would they cover at each grade level and why? What topics would they exclude and why? What is the overall goal of their curriculum? Discuss as a class, and have each student group add to a written chart on the board.

Module 13 Health and Medicine

Short answers:

1. Define and describe the stigmatization of illness. Illustrate your description with an original example.
2. How does socioeconomic status influence health?

Essay:

1. How does health and wellness differ between high and low income nations? Give at least 3 examples.
2. What is socialized medicine? Describe 2 benefits and 2 drawbacks.

Online Discussion Question:

1. What are your thoughts on the medicalization of deviance? How might this view be beneficial for society? For the deviant individual? How might it be detrimental? Do a little online research and describe an example of a deviant behavior being medicalized.

Class Activity:

1. Look up and examine historical changes in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual. You may want to assign topics to small groups in class. Discuss how the changes in the conceptions of mental illness are related to other things happening in society. Discuss how social views and the social construction of reality impact the definition of mental illness.

Module 14 Aging and the Elderly

Short answers:

1. Why do we distinguish between three different stages of seniors? What is the basis of the distinction between stages?
2. How is ageism institutionalized? Illustrate your explanation with an original example.

Essays:

1. What makes the Baby Boomers an important generation? Describe three ways they are impacting how society deals with aging.
2. Compare disengagement theory with modernization theory. Which theory do you think better applies to today's seniors? Explain and give an original example.

Online Discussion Question:

1. How much do you think we value the elderly in American society? How are our ideas about what and who is considered “old” changing? What is driving the change in our conceptions of age?

Class Activity:

1. Have students ask elder members of their family to describe their impressions of their own grandparents, great-grandparents or other family elders when they were a child. Ask how their own senior years are comparing to those of their ancestors. Discuss these changes as a class, and connect them to historical and social structural factors in society.

Module 15 Government and Politics

Short answers:

1. Describe the three types of authority, and give original examples for each.
2. How would a symbolic interactionist theorist study government? Illustrate with an example.
3. Describe two social factors that impact voter participation in the United States.

Essay:

1. Compare and contrast two different forms of government.
2. How is voting impacted by race, class, and gender issues?
3. Using functionalist theory, describe the four main functions of the government. Give an original example for each function.

Online Discussion Question:

1. Why do you think some Americans have such a fascination with royal families and monarchies? How do you think views on royalty have changed since an American actress recently married into the British royal family?

Class Activity:

1. Have students create and administer a short interview guide concerning voter participation and attitudes toward voting. They should interview 3 people and discuss their findings with the class.

Module 16 Work and the Economy

Short answers:

1. What are the main differences between capitalism and socialism?
2. What impact have women had on the modern workforce?
3. How do developed countries protect their citizens from absolute poverty?

Essay:

1. How is the information age changing the institution of work?
2. How has globalization impacted the nature of work? Include discussion of global assembly lines and global commodity chains.

Online Discussion Question:

1. You read in your text about the woman who lives without money. Find another example of a group that lives without money. Describe the group’s philosophy on money and how they replace money in their economic system. Provide links to sources where possible, and insert relevant pictures and video clips into your post.

Class Activity:

1. Have students write their description of their ideal job. What would it be? What would the working conditions be like? Responsibilities? Compensation? Then have them search Indeed.com for the job they have described. Students should report back to the class how their ideal job compared to the actual jobs available.

Module 17 Population, Urbanization, and the Environment

Short answers:

1. What is fertility rate and mortality rate? What do these measures tell us about a population?
2. How does the Cornucopia theory address the idea that the human population may become unsustainable?

Essay:

1. Compare and contrast two demographic theories with regard to how societies develop.
2. What is gentrification? What are some functions and dysfunctions of gentrification? How does it impact different groups?

Online Discussion Question:

1. Investigate an organization that is working to ease some aspect of the trash problem somewhere in the world. Check the discussion board before you post to be sure you are posting about an organization that has not already been discussed. Describe the specific trash problem the organization is addressing, the mission of the organization and the impact of their work on the trash problem. Include links, pictures, and video clips when you can.

Class Activity:

1. As individuals or in small groups, think of some items that are generally considered trash and easily thrown away, and come up with a reasonable way to reuse the item. Be inventive and creative as well as practical. Leave time for each group to describe their ideas to the class and for the class to discuss the merits of each idea.

Module 18 Social Movements and Social Change

Short answers:

1. Give an example of each of the three types of framing using frame analysis.
2. The Internet serves many positive functions for society. What are three ways it has been dysfunctional?

Essay:

1. Describe the four different types of crowds, and give original examples for each.
2. There are 5 types of social movements, each with different goals. Define and describe them, and give an original example for each.

Online Discussion Question:

1. Fads are a type of collective behavior. Investigate a fad, from now or the past, and describe what the fad is, how it became popular and how it declined. Which groups were the first to adopt the fad? Who was influential in the spread of the fad? Was the fad related to other things happening in society? Include links, pictures and video clips where you can.

Class Activity:

1. In small groups, have students develop a plan to start a social movement. What social problem are they addressing? Have students restate the claim using three different framing techniques. As a class, discuss each group's ideas and which of the three framing techniques might be most successful in attaining attention and resources for their social movement.
2. There has been years of debate over the question of whether violence in media and video games causes young people to be violent. Discuss arguments on both side.
3. Advertisers have had to become more innovative and clever in order to get their message to a public that may not watch traditional TV ads or see them in print magazines. Discuss two original examples of how advertisers are getting their message to consumers in new ways. Try to give examples classmates have not already given. Include links when you can.
4. Have students keep notes on everything they see in one day that is advertising a brand, product, or service. A lot of these things fly under our radar and we often do not pay close attention to things like company logos on someone's tee shirt, product placement in movies, or an ad on a social media page. Ask students to jot down notes throughout the day because it will be harder to remember them all later. Discuss their examples and the pervasive nature of advertising

CC licensed content, Original

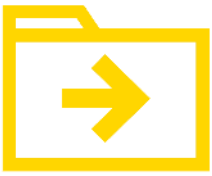
- In-Class Activities modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Classroom. **Authored by**: Prosymbols. **Provided by**: Noun Project. **Located at**: https://thenounproject.com/term/classroom/520781/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Resources for Instructors, Openstax Sociology 2E. **Authored by**: Kathy Dolan and Jennie Law. **Provided by**: Georgia State University. **Located at**: https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/psychology-ancillary/11/?fbclid=IwAR0w1n8jecFiy49h_hKpaZ5bqd43keKhxGxKtpYUs6_eNatlYVhpYadleIA. **Project**: Affordable Learning Georgia Grant. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 3.7: In-Class Activities is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

3.8: Additional Resources



Helpful Resources for Instructors

Additional helpful resources for instructors was created by Kathy Dolan and Jennie Law of Georgia State University.

Resources include:

1. A list of web sources related to each module.
2. Please see the curated YouTube playlists corresponding with each OpenStax Sociology 2E chapter at this link (note that these chapters differ slightly from the Lumen version): Curated YouTube Playlists For Each Chapter

General Sociology Resources

- American Sociological Association This is the site for the national sociology association. This site has resources on sociology, teaching, careers, research, and more.
- Ted Talk Topics for Sociology This site is a curated list of Ted Talks on sociological topics.
- Sociological Images This site is a wealth of resources on sociology, popular sociology, and visual sociology.
- The Sociological Cinema This site contains great information and videos relevant to the course.
- Contexts This is the ASA sociology magazine aimed at the general public. There are links to a lot of free articles.
- OpenStax Sociology 2E

Sociology Infographics

- Visually infographics on sociology topics
- Infographics Mania infographics on sociology topics
- Sociology at work infographics on sociology topics
- Black History Web infographics on sociology topics
- Smithsonian Magazine WEB DuBois Infographics

Module 1: An Introduction to Sociology

- August Comte, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Website on August Comte
- Harriet Martineau, The Martineau Society Website on Harriet Martineau
- Sociologists for Women in Society Sociologists for Women in Society
- Karl Marx New Yorker Magazine Karl Marx Yesterday and Today
- Herbert Spencer PBS Carnegie writing on Spencer
- Georg Simmel Georg Simmel
- Emile Durkheim Did Emile Durkheim Forsee Today's Chaos?
- George Herbert Mead, The Social Self The Social Self
- Max Weber, About Max Weber
- Locavores Locavores Website

Module 2: Sociological Research

- Revise Sociology: Seven Examples of Field Experiments Seven Examples of Field Experiments
- Thoughtco, Major Sociological Studies and Publications Major Sociological Studies and Publications

Module 3: Culture

- Medium.com, The Four Stages of Culture Shock The Four Stages of Culture Shock

- The Guardian, Behemoth, Bully, and Thief: How the English Language is Taking Over the Globe Behemoth, Bully, and Thief: How the English Language is Taking Over the Globe
- Popular Culture Intellect Books Popular Culture
- The Digital Divide Stanford site on Digital Divide
- The Economist, Mobile Phones in Sub-Saharan Africa In much of sub-Saharan Africa Mobile Phones are More Common Than Access to Electricity

Module 4: Socialization

- The Industrial Revolution Why the Industrial Revolution Didn't Happen in China
- Presentation of Self, Goffman's Model Goffman's Dramaturgical Model
- Nature Versus Nurture What is Nature Versus Nurture
- Gap Year What is a Gap Year?

Module 5: Society and Groups

- Barefoot College Barefoot College
- Peer Influence and Smoking Peer Influence and Smoking
- Tea Party U.S. Tea Party Official Site
- Online Eating Disorder Support Groups Eating Disorder Hope
- New York Times, Authoritarian Leaders Greet Trump as One of Their Own Autoritarian Leaders Greet Trump As One of Their Own
- McDonaldization of Society What is McDonaldization?

Module 6: Deviance, Crime and Social Control

- BBC How Prison Changes you The unexpected ways prison time changes people
- Business Insider, Florida Felons Regain Voting Rights Florida Felons Regain Voting Rights
- Duke.edu, The Endless Cycle of Corporate Crime and Why it's So Hard to Stop Endless circle of corporate crime
- FBI Uniform Crime Reporting FBI Uniform Crime Reporting
- National Crime Victimization Survey National Crime Victimization Survey

Module 7: Stratification and Inequality

- CityLab, Does America Have a Caste System? Does America Have a Caste System?
- History.com British Royalty and Commoners British Royals Marrying Commoners
- Slate.com, The Most Prestigious Jobs in America The Most Prestigious Jobs in America
- Conspicuous Consumption Conspicuous consumption
- Global Inequality Inequality.org
- Global Extreme Poverty Our World In Data Extreme Poverty
- Banning Sweatshops Only Hurts the Poor Fee.Org Article
- Factory Girls Factory Girls Have Grown Up and Are Going on Strike

Module 8: Race and Ethnicity

- Fair Housing Act of 1968 Digital Commons Law
- Intersectionality What is Intersectionality, and what does it have to do with me?
- Model Minority Model Minority Myth Used as a Racial Wedge

Module 9: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

- Gay Gene Research DNA and Sexuality
- Teaching Tolerance, Toxic Masculinity What we mean when we say toxic masculinity
- The #MeToo Movement in India Times of India MeToo Movement
- Unconsenting Media: A Search Engine for Sexual Violence in Broadcasting

Module 10: Marriage and Family

- The Atlantic The Rise of the Single Dad
- NPR DNA Tests and Ancestry My Grandmother Was Italian Why Aren't My Genes Italian?
- Psychology Today, Polyandry Why are there virtually no polyandrous societies?
- National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome Don't Shake

Module 11: Religion

- Vice Pentecostal Snake Handling
- Washington Post, Megachurches Billy Graham Inspired Megachurches Taking Over the World
- The Economist, Separation of Church and State American separation of church and state is fraying
- Atheism Atheist Organization

Module 12: Education

- Smithsonian Magazine, Finnish Schools Why are Finnish Schools Successful?
- National Trends in Grade Inflation Grade Inflation
- PBS Charter School FAQ Closing the Achievement Gap
- InsideHigherEd.com, Cultural Capital Can colleges build students' cultural capital and should they?

Module 13: Health and Medicine

- Columbia Journalism Review, Contested Illness Lyme Disease a Contested Illness
- Think Before You Pink Stop the distraction
- Sleep Foundation, Sleep Hygiene
- State Of Obesity Youth Obesity

Module 14: Aging and the Elderly

- The Atlantic, Making Aging Positive Valuing the elderly, improving public health
- Eldercare Robots Waypoint Robotics
- LGBT Seniors LGBT Seniors Face Tougher Old Age
- National Institute on Aging, Elder Abuse National Institute of Aging

Module 15: Government and Politics

- Nautilus, Charisma The anatomy of charisma
- Washington Times Anarchy in Armenia
- Pew Research Center Voter Participation
- Sociological Images The Power Elite

Module 16: Work and the Economy

- Wired The Future of Work
- Life Without Money Moneyless.org
- The Global Assembly Line IPhones The economics of iPhones
- Vox Career Inheritance
- Pew Research Gender and Jobs in Online Image Searches

Module 17: Population, Urbanization and the Environment

- Live Science, Fracking What is Fracking?
- Washington Post, Megalopolis Southeast could become an overdeveloped megalopolis in the next half century
- Forbes, Exurbs So much for the death of sprawl, America's exurbs are booming
- The Hindu, Water Crisis Water Crisis in the Himalayas

Module 18: Social Movements and Social Change

- The Nation, Anonymous Truth about anonymous activism
- The Guardian, Princess Diana's Death and Crowds Death of Diana
- The Black Church, Nonviolence, and the Civil Rights Movement The Black Church, Nonviolence, and the Civil Rights Movement
- The Atlantic, Stonewall An amazing account of the Stonewall uprising

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Resources for Instructors. **Authored by**: Kathy Dolan and Jennie Law . **Provided by**: Georgia State University.. **Located at**: https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/psychology-ancillary/11/?fbclid=IwAR0w1n8jecFiy49h_hKpaZ5bqd43keKhxGxKtpYUs6_eNatlYVhpYadleIA. **Project**: Affordable Learning Georgia Grant 2018. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Folder Arrow. **Authored by**: AlfredoCreates.com. **Provided by**: Noun Project. **Located at**: https://thenounproject.com/term/folder-arrow/444206/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 3.8: Additional Resources is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

3.9: I Need Help



Need more information about this course? Have questions about faculty resources? Can’t find what you’re looking for? Experiencing technical difficulties?

We’re here to help! Take advantage of the following Lumen customer-support resources:

- Check out one of Lumen’s Faculty User Guides.
- Submit a support ticket and tell us what you need.
- Talk and screen-share with a live human during Lumen’s OER office hours.

CC licensed content, Original

- I Need Help. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Help. **Authored by**: Michael Finney. **Provided by**: Noun Project. **Located at**: https://thenounproject.com/term/help/1112130/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 3.9: I Need Help is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Module 1- Foundations of Sociology

4.1: Why It Matters- Foundations of Sociology
4.2: Introduction to Sociology
4.3: What Is Sociology?
4.4: The Development of Sociology
4.5: Why Study Sociology?
4.6: Introduction to the Sociological Imagination
4.7: The Sociological Imagination
4.8: Introduction to Sociological Perspectives
4.9: The Main Sociological Theories
4.10: Structural-Functional Theory
4.11: Conflict Theory
4.12: Symbolic Interactionist Theory
4.13: Reviewing Sociological Theories
4.14: Putting It Together- Sociological Foundations
4.15: Discussion- Introduce Yourself
4.16: Assignment- Sociologist Player Trading Cards

This page titled 4: Module 1- Foundations of Sociology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.1: Why It Matters- Foundations of Sociology

Why study sociology?



Figure 1. Sociology is the scientific study of society and social interactions.

The things you learn about in this course will serve you well, no matter your major or your career path. We are all members of society and we all experience a variety of social interactions every day, so learning about sociology helps us to better understand our social world. In addition, sociology can help us become more informed citizens as we work to understand the issues we face both as individuals and as members of groups. Furthermore, sociology complements many other subject areas—from medicine to business, law to the arts and humanities, and other social sciences.

In this module, we first establish a foundational understanding of what sociology is and review its history. Then, we will learn about the main theoretical perspectives central to sociology, and we will see how they can be applied in the real world.

You will come to find that sociology is pertinent to every aspect of your life. You may see yourself as an individual, but by virtue of your gender, race, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or even consumption habits, you are also a member of several social groups, all of which are interacting constantly. You also operate as in individual within society and thus encounter a variety of social institutions such as government, the economy, religion, education, and the criminal justice system in your everyday life.

Did you know that the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Ronald Reagan, Robin Williams, and First Lady Michelle Obama were all sociology majors? Chances are good that you will find the subject fascinating, too!

CC licensed content, Original

- Sociological Foundations Introduction. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Sociology. **Authored by**: Saylor. **Located at**: https://learn.saylor.org/course/view.php?id=14&sectionid=114. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- People graphic. **Authored by**: Tamaric1997. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SociologijA.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Opening example . **Authored by**: Introduction to Sociology/Introduction. **Located at**: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology/Introduction. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 4.1: Why It Matters- Foundations of Sociology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.2: Introduction to Sociology

What you'll learn to do: define sociology and describe the historical and social context from which it emerged



Figure 1. Sociologists study how society affects people and how people affect society. (Photo courtesy of Diego Torres Silvestre/flickr)

Sociology is the scientific study of social behavior and human groups. Sociology has many sub-sections of study—ranging from the analysis of conversations, to the development of theories, to explaining how the world works. This section will introduce you to sociology, give a brief history of the discipline, and demonstrate how sociology can help you understand the world around you using sociological theories.

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Sociology introduction. **Provided by**: Wikibooks. **Located at**: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology/Introduction. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:TrIRM88K@7/Introduction-to-Sociology. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Anhangabau Subway Station, Line 3 - Red, Sao Paulo, Brazil. **Authored by**: Diego Torres Silvestre. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/3336/10915927833/in/album-72157625598149021/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

Lumen Learning authored content

- Introduction to Sociology. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 4.2: Introduction to Sociology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.3: What Is Sociology?

Learning Objectives

- Describe sociology and some of its central concepts



Figure 1. Sociologists learn about society as a whole while studying one-to-one and group interactions. (Photo courtesy of Gareth Williams/flickr)

What Are Central Concepts in Sociology?

Sociology is the study of groups and group interactions, societies and social interactions. A **group** is any collection of at least two people who interact with some frequency and who share some sense of aligned identity. A group of people who live in a defined geographic area, who interact with one another, and who share a common culture is what sociologists call a **society**.

Sociologists study all aspects and levels of society. Sociologists working from the **micro-level** study small groups and individual interactions, while those using **macro-level** analysis look at trends among and between large groups and societies. For example, a micro-level study might look at the accepted rules of conversation in various groups such as among teenagers or business professionals. In contrast, a macro-level analysis might research the ways that language use has changed over time or in social media outlets.

The term **culture** refers to the group's shared practices, values, and beliefs. Culture encompasses a group's way of life, from routine, everyday interactions to the most important parts of group members' lives. It includes everything produced by a society, including all of the social rules. Sociologists often study culture using the **sociological imagination**, which pioneer sociologist C. Wright Mills described as an awareness of the relationship between a person's behavior and experience and the wider culture that shaped the person's choices and perceptions. It is a way of seeing our own and other people's behavior in relation to history and social structure (1959).

One illustration of this is a person's decision to marry. In the United States, this choice is heavily influenced by individual feelings; however, the social acceptability of marriage relative to the person's circumstances also plays a part. It is important to remember that culture is produced by the people in a society, and therefore sociologists take care not to treat the concept of "culture" as though it were alive in its own right. **Reification** is the term used to describe this mistaken tendency, where one treats an abstract concept as though it has a real, material existence (Sahn 2013).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13232

Watch It

Throughout this course, you will encounter video clips that explain and reiterate key concepts from the reading. They are strongly recommended. Please take the time to watch the videos. The following video gives an introduction to sociology and will give you a preview of many concepts that will be covered in the course.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=54

Studying Patterns: How Sociologists View Society

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



Figure 2. Modern U.S. families may be very different in structure from what was historically typical. (Photo courtesy of Tony Alter/Wikimedia Commons)

Changes in the U.S. family structure offer an example of patterns that sociologists are interested in studying. A “typical” family is now quite different than in past decades when most U.S. families consisted of married parents living in a home with their unmarried children. The percentage of unmarried couples, same-sex couples, single-parent and single-adult households is increasing, as is the number of expanded households, in which extended family members such as grandparents, cousins, or adult children live together in the family home (U.S. Census Bureau 2011).

While mothers still make up the majority of single parents, millions of fathers are also raising their children alone, and more than 1 million of these single fathers have never been married (Williams Institute 2010; cited in Ludden 2012). Increasingly, single men and women and cohabitating opposite-sex or same-sex couples are choosing to raise children outside of marriage through surrogates or adoption.

Sociologists study **social facts**, which are aspects of social life that shape a person’s behavior. How do social facts affect U.S. family structures? These can include the laws, morals, values, religious beliefs, customs, fashions, rituals, and all of the cultural rules that govern social life. These all may contribute to changes in the U.S. family structure. Do people in the United States view marriage and family differently than in earlier periods? Do employment status and economic conditions play a role? How has culture influenced the choices that individuals make in living arrangements?

Sociologists are studying the consequences of these new patterns, such as the ways children are affected by them or by changing needs for education, housing, and healthcare. An example of the way society influences individual decisions can be seen in people’s opinions about and use of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP benefits. Some people believe those who receive SNAP benefits are lazy and unmotivated, though statistics from the United States Department of Agriculture show a more complex picture.

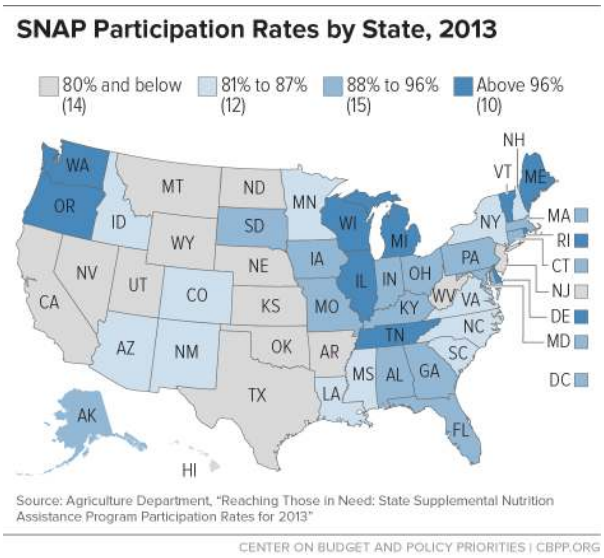


Figure 3. Percentage of eligible people who participate in SNAP.

To identify social trends, sociologists studied how some people use SNAP benefits and how other people react to their use. Research has found that for many people from all classes, there is a strong **stigma,** or an attribute that is deeply discrediting (Goffman 1963), attached to the use of SNAP benefits. This stigma can prevent people who qualify for this type of assistance from using the benefits. According to Hanson and Gundersen (2002), how strongly this stigma is felt is linked to the general economic climate. This illustrates how sociologists observe a pattern in society. The percentage of the population receiving SNAP benefits is much higher in certain states than in others. Does this mean, if the stereotype above were applied, that people in some states are lazier and less motivated than those in other states? Sociologists study the economies in each state—comparing unemployment rates, food, energy costs, and other factors—to explain differences in social issues like this. Sociologists identify and study patterns related to all kinds of contemporary social issues. The "don't ask, don't tell" policy regarding gay and lesbian service members, the emergence of the Tea Party political faction, how Twitter has influenced everyday communication—these are all examples of topics that sociologists might explore.

Studying Part and Whole: How Sociologists View Social Structures

A key premise of the **sociological imagination** is the concept that the individual and society are inseparable. It is impossible to study one without the other. German sociologist Norbert Elias called the process of simultaneously analyzing the behavior of individuals and the society that shapes that behavior **figuration**. An application that makes this concept understandable is the practice of religion. While people experience their religions in a distinctly individual manner, religion exists in a larger social context. For instance, an individual's religious practice may be influenced by governmental authority, traditional holidays, educational institutions, places of worship, well-established rituals, and so on. These influences underscore the important relationship between individual practices of religion and the social pressures that influence that religious experience (Elias 1978).

Individual-Society Connections

When sociologist Nathan Kierns spoke to his friend Ashley (a pseudonym) about the move she and her female partner had made from an urban center to a small Midwestern town, he was curious about how the social pressures placed on a lesbian couple differed from one community to the other. Ashley said that in the city they had been accustomed to getting looks and hearing comments when she and her partner walked hand in hand. Otherwise, she felt that they were at least being tolerated. There had been little to no outright discrimination. Things changed when they moved to the small town for her partner's job. For the first time, Ashley found herself experiencing direct discrimination because of her sexual orientation. Some of it was particularly hurtful. Landlords would not rent to them. Ashley, who is a highly trained professional, had a great deal of difficulty finding a new job.

When Nathan asked Ashley if she and her partner became discouraged or bitter about this new situation, Ashley said that rather than letting it get to them, they decided to do something about it. Ashley approached groups at a local college and several churches in the area. Together they decided to form the town's first gay-straight alliance. The alliance has worked successfully to educate

their community about same-sex couples. It also worked to raise awareness about the kinds of discrimination that Ashley and her partner experienced in the town and how those could be eliminated. The alliance has become a strong advocacy group, and it is working to attain equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, or LBGT individuals. Kierns observed that this is an excellent example of how negative social forces can result in a positive response from individuals to bring about social change (Kierns 2011).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13233

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13234

Think It Over

- What do you think C. Wright Mills meant when he said that to be a sociologist, one had to develop a sociological imagination?
- Describe a situation in which a choice you made was influenced by societal pressures.

Glossary

culture:

a group's shared practices, values, and beliefs

figuration:

the process of simultaneously analyzing the behavior of an individual and the society that shapes that behavior

group:

any collection of at least two people who interact with some frequency and who share some sense of aligned identity

reification: an error of treating an abstract concept as though it has a real, material existence

society:

a group of people who live in a defined geographical area who interact with one another and who share a common culture

sociological imagination:

the ability to understand how your own past relates to that of other people, as well as to history in general and societal structures in particular

sociology:

the systematic study of society and social interaction

CC licensed content, Original

- What Is Sociology? Crash Course Sociology #1. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnCJU6PaCio. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- What is Sociology?. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:XZe6d2Jr@11/What-Is-Sociology. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- SNAP participation by state. **Authored by**: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. **Located at**: http://www.cbpp.org/snap-participation-rates-by-state-2013. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 4.3: What Is Sociology? is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.4: The Development of Sociology

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the development of sociology through the work and theories of classical sociologists



Figure 1. Since ancient times, people have been fascinated by the relationship between individuals and the societies to which they belong. Many topics studied in modern sociology were also studied by ancient philosophers in their desire to describe an ideal society, including theories of social conflict, economics, social cohesion, and power (Hannoum 2003). Plato and Aristotle, Confucius, Khaldun, and Voltaire all set the stage for modern sociology. (Photos (a),(b),(d) courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; Photo (c) courtesy of Moumou82/Wikimedia Commons)

Creating a Discipline

Auguste Comte (1798–1857)



Figure 2. Auguste Comte is considered by many to be the father of sociology. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

In 1838 Auguste Comte, a Frenchman, coined the term **sociology**, from the Latin *socius* (companion or associate) and the Greek term *logia* (study of speech). Comte believed sociology could unify other sciences and improve society. The French Revolution, which began in 1789, greatly impacted Comte, as did the Industrial Revolution in Europe (1760-1840). Questions related to economic class, social status, urbanization, and the dangers of factory work raised new issues about society and social interaction.

Like other thinkers influenced by the Enlightenment (a philosophical movement of the 17th and 18th centuries that emphasized reason and individualism), Comte believed society developed in stages. In *The Course in Positive Philosophy* (1830–1842) and *A General View of Positivism* (1848), Comte described The Law of Three Stages as follows:

1. theological stage where people took religious views of society
2. metaphysical stage where people understood society as natural (not supernatural)
3. the scientific or **positivist** stage, where society would be governed by reliable knowledge and would be understood in light of the knowledge produced by science, primarily sociology.

Comte originally studied to be an engineer, but later became a pupil of social philosopher Claude Henri de Rouvroy Comte de Saint-Simon (1760–1825). They both thought that social scientists could study society using the same scientific methods utilized in the natural sciences. Comte also believed in the potential of social scientists to improve society. He held that once scholars identified the laws that governed society, sociologists could address problems such as poor education and poverty.

Comte named the scientific study of social patterns **positivism**. He believed that using scientific methods to reveal the laws by which societies and individuals interact would usher in a new scientifically oriented "positivist" age of history. In this view, rational claims are seen as scientifically and systematically verifiable, and are opposed to metaphysical and or supernatural explanations. Although much of Comte's *Courses*, a six-volume treatise, has been discarded, particularly the highly simplified and under-examined approach to social development, Comte's lasting contribution to sociology has been his classification of sciences. He presented a hierarchy of the sciences, with sociology at the top of a list that begins with mathematics, and then moves to astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology. He argued that the sciences increase in complexity and decrease in generality as you move up the hierarchy, and that they build upon each of the foundational sciences below. Comte declared sociology the most complex science for its attempt to integrate all of the other sciences in order to explain natural laws of increasing complexity.

Harriet Martineau (1802–1876)

Harriet Martineau was a writer who addressed a wide range of social science issues. She was an early observer of social practices, including economics, social class, religion, suicide, government, and women's rights. Her writing career began in 1931 with a series of stories titled *Illustrations of Political Economy*, in which she tried to educate ordinary people about the principles of economics.

Martineau was the first to translate Comte's writing from French to English and thereby introduced sociology to English-speaking scholars. She is also credited with the first systematic methodological international comparisons of social institutions in two of her most famous sociological works: *Society in America* (1837) and *Retrospect of Western Travel* (1838). Martineau found the workings of capitalism at odds with the professed moral principles of the United States; she identified faults of the free enterprise system in which workers were exploited and impoverished while business owners became wealthy. She further noted that the belief in all being created equal was inconsistent with the lack of women's rights. Much like Mary Wollstonecraft, Martineau was often discounted in her own time by the male domination of academic sociology.

Karl Marx (1818–1883)

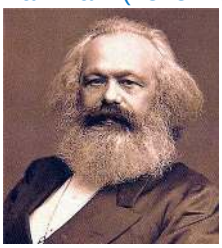


Figure 3. Karl Marx was one of the founders of sociology. His ideas about social conflict are still relevant today. (Photo courtesy of John Mayall/Wikimedia Commons)

Karl Marx was a German social philosopher and economist. In 1848 he and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) coauthored *The Communist Manifesto*, which is one of the most influential political manuscripts in history. It presents Marx's theory of society, which differed from what Comte proposed.

Marx rejected Comte's positivism. He believed that societies grew and changed as a result of the struggles of different social classes as they sought control over the means of production. At the time he was developing his theories, the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism had led to great disparities in wealth between the owners of the factories and workers. Capitalism, an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of goods and the means to produce them, grew in many nations.

Marx predicted that inequalities of capitalism would become so extreme that workers would eventually revolt. This would lead to the collapse of capitalism, which would be replaced by communism. Communism is an economic system under which there is no private or corporate ownership of the means of production. Instead, economic resources are owned communally and are distributed as needed. Marx believed that communism was a more equitable system than capitalism.

While his economic predictions may not have come true in the time frame or in the locations he predicted, Marx's idea that economic, class-based conflict leads to changes in society is still one of the major theories used in modern sociology.

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917)

Durkheim helped legitimize and define sociology as a formal academic discipline by establishing the first European department of sociology at the University of Bordeaux in 1895 and by publishing his *Rules of the Sociological Method* (1895). In another important work, *Division of Labour in Society* (1893), Durkheim articulated his theory of how societies transform from a primitive state into a capitalist, industrial society. According to Durkheim, people rise to their proper levels in society based on merit.

Durkheim believed that sociologists could study objective "social facts." He also believed that through such studies it would be possible to determine if a society was "healthy" or "pathological." He saw healthy societies as stable, while pathological societies experienced a breakdown in social norms between individuals and society.

In 1897, Durkheim attempted to demonstrate the effectiveness of his rules of social research when he published a work titled *Suicide*. Durkheim examined suicide statistics in different police districts to research differences between Catholic and Protestant communities. He attributed the differences to socioreligious forces rather than to individual or psychological causes.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13237

Ida B. Wells-Barnett (1862-1931)



Figure 4. Ida B. Wells was a revolutionary teacher and journalist who brought many sociological issues to light, particularly racial and gender inequalities.

Ida B. Wells was born into slavery in Mississippi to parents were freed after the Civil War and who went on to be politically active during Reconstruction (1865-1877). Wells' parents and younger brother died during a yellow fever epidemic in 1878 when she was just 16 years old. She became a teacher in a black elementary school (Wells attended some college prior to her parents' deaths) so that her five other siblings would not be separated and sent to foster homes[1]. She relocated from Mississippi to Memphis, Tennessee to earn higher wages, and to pursue further education.

In 1884, when Wells was just 24 years old, she refused to give up her seat in a first-class ladies train car and was subsequently dragged from the car by the conductor and two men. After being criminally charged, Wells fought the case all the way to the Tennessee Supreme Court, based on the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which banned racial discrimination in public accommodations. Although Wells lost after the Supreme Court overturned the lower court's decision, her passion for equality and social justice only became stronger and more influential. (Her direct action would be echoed by Rosa Parks' civil disobedience 71 years later.) In 1891, she was fired from her teaching job for criticizing the quality of blacks-only schools in Memphis and thus began a new career in journalism, starting at the *Memphis Free Speech and Headlight* newspaper, which she later co-owned.

After the lynching of three of her friends in 1892, Wells became one of the nation's most vocal anti-lynching activists. She launched an extensive investigation of lynching and published her findings in a pamphlet titled "Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in all its Phases," in 1892[2]. Wells exposed lynching as a barbaric practice of whites in the South used to intimidate and oppress African Americans who represented economic and political competition—and a subsequent threat to entrenched, hierarchical power—for whites. A white mob eventually destroyed her newspaper office and presses, though this did not stifle her voice or

prevent her investigative reporting from finding a national audience, particularly through a distribution network of black-owned newspapers.

Wells was one of the founding members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1908, but her name was left off the list of founding members. She also worked to have full inclusion for black women in the Women's Suffrage Movement and participated in the 1913 Suffrage March in front of the White House. Although not formally trained as an academic sociologist, Wells was the epitome of a public sociologist because she examined racial and gender inequalities and made them public issues. In *Southern Horrors: Lynch Laws in All Its Phases* she stated, "The people must know before they can act, and there is no educator to compare with the press" (1892). This forward-thinking statement is one of her many legacies in sociology.

Max Weber (1864–1920)

Prominent sociologist Max Weber established a sociology department in Germany at the Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich in 1919. Weber wrote on many topics, including political change in Russia and social forces that affect factory workers. He is best known for his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904). The theory that Weber sets forth in this book, which describes how religious belief shapes work habits and thus affects the larger social, political, and economic world, is still controversial. Some believe that Weber argued that the beliefs of many Protestants, especially Calvinists, led to the creation of capitalism. Others interpret it as simply claiming that the ideologies (i.e., belief systems) of capitalism and Protestantism are complementary.

Weber believed that it was difficult, if not impossible, to use standard scientific methods to accurately predict the behavior of groups. This view stood in opposition to positivism, which applied systematic, scientific interpretive frameworks to social phenomena in the same sense that one might apply them to natural phenomena. Instead, Weber proposed a more empathic interpretive method that would take into account one's own cultural biases and orientations. With fellow sociologist Wilhelm Dilthey, Weber introduced the concept of ***verstehen***, a German word that means to understand in a deep, empathetic way. In seeking verstehen, outside observers of a social world—an entire culture or a small setting—attempt to understand it from an insider's point of view.

In his book *The Nature of Social Action* (1922), Weber described sociology as striving to "interpret the meaning of social action and thereby give a causal explanation of the way in which action proceeds and the effects it produces." He and other like-minded sociologists proposed a philosophy of **antipositivism** whereby social researchers would strive for subjectivity as they worked to represent social processes, cultural norms, and societal values. This approach led to some research methods whose aim was not to generalize or predict (as is traditional in science), but to systematically gain an in-depth understanding of social worlds.

The different approaches to research based on positivism or antipositivism are often considered the foundation for the differences found today between quantitative sociology and qualitative sociology. **Quantitative** sociology uses statistical methods such as surveys with large numbers of participants. Researchers analyze data using statistical techniques to see if they can uncover patterns of human behavior. **Qualitative** sociology seeks to understand human behavior by learning about it through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and analysis of content sources (like books, magazines, journals, and popular media).

Further Research

Many sociologists helped shape the discipline. To learn more about prominent sociologists and how they changed sociology check out Profiles of Powerful Sociologists.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13235

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13236

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13238

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13239

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13241

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13242

Think It Over

- What do you make of Karl Marx's contributions to sociology? What perceptions of Marx have you been exposed to in your society, and how do those perceptions influence your views?
- Ida B. Wells emphasized the importance of the press 100 years ago as an educational tool. In what ways does this statement hold true today? How might one disagree that no teacher can compare with the press?

Glossary

antipositivism:
the view that social researchers should strive for subjectivity as they worked to represent social processes, cultural norms, and societal values

generalized others:
the organized and generalized attitude of a social group

positivism:
the scientific study of social patterns

qualitative sociology:
in-depth interviews, focus groups, and/or analysis of content sources as the source of its data

quantitative sociology:
statistical methods such as surveys with large numbers of participants

significant others:
specific individuals that impact a person's life

verstehen:
a German word that means to understand in a deep way

1. "Ida B. Wells biography," accessed September 10, 2018, A&E Television Networks. https://www.biography.com/people/ida-b-wells-9527635↵
2. Steptoe, Tyina (2007). Ida Wells Barnett. BlackPast. Retrieved from https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/barnett-ida-wells-1862-1931/↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The History of Sociology. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:gpZqu-uw@14/The-History-of-Sociology. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Ida B. Wells Barnett. **Authored by**: Mary Garrity, 1893. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fupload.wikimedia.org%2FWikipedia%2Fcommons%2Ff%2Ffd%2FMary_Garrity_-_Ida_B._Wells-Barnett_-_Google_Art_Project_-_restoration_crop.jpg&imgrefurl=https%3A%2F%2Fen.Wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FIda_B._Wells&docid=EKwQwNXPuwVvpM&tbnid=fH5AGOMlSVCXEM%3A&vet=1&w=2673&h=3818&source=sh%2Fx%2Fim. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*
- Section on Ida B. Wells. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Ida_B._Wells. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 4.4: The Development of Sociology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.5: Why Study Sociology?

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the value in studying sociology



Figure 1. The research of sociologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark helped the Supreme Court decide to end "separate but equal" racial segregation in schools in the United States. (Photo courtesy of public domain)

When Elizabeth Eckford tried to enter Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in September 1957, she was met by an angry crowd. But she knew she had the law on her side. Three years earlier in the landmark *Brown vs. the Board of Education* case, the U.S. Supreme Court had overturned twenty-one state laws that allowed blacks and whites to be taught in separate school systems as long as the school systems were "equal." One of the major factors influencing that decision was research conducted by the husband-and-wife team of sociologists, Kenneth and Mamie Clark. Their research showed that segregation was harmful to young black schoolchildren, and the Court found that harm to be unconstitutional.

Since it was first founded, many people interested in sociology have been driven by the scholarly desire to contribute knowledge to this field, while others have seen it as way not only to study society but to improve it. Besides desegregation, sociology has played a crucial role in many important social reforms, such as equal opportunity for women in the workplace, improved treatment for individuals with mental handicaps or learning disabilities, increased accessibility and accommodation for people with physical handicaps, the right of native populations to preserve their land and culture, and prison system reforms.

The prominent sociologist Peter L. Berger (1929–), in his book *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective* (1963), describes a sociologist as "someone concerned with understanding society in a disciplined way." He asserts that sociologists have a natural interest in the monumental moments of people's lives, as well as a fascination with banal, everyday occurrences. Berger also describes the "aha" moment when a sociological theory becomes applicable and understood:

> [T]here is a deceptive simplicity and obviousness about some sociological investigations. One reads them, nods at the familiar scene, remarks that one has heard all this before and don't people have better things to do than to waste their time on truisms—until one is suddenly brought up against an insight that radically questions everything one had previously assumed about this familiar scene. This is the point at which one begins to sense the excitement of sociology. (Berger 1963)

Sociology can be exciting because it teaches people ways to recognize how they fit into the world and how others perceive them. Looking at themselves and society from a sociological perspective helps people see where they connect to different groups based on the many different ways they classify themselves and how society classifies them in turn. It raises awareness of how those classifications—such as economic and social status, education, ethnicity, or sexual orientation—affect perceptions.

Sociology teaches people not to accept easy explanations. It teaches them a way to organize their thinking so that they can ask better questions and formulate better answers. It makes people more aware that there are many different kinds of people in the world who do not necessarily think the way they do. It increases their willingness and ability to try to see the world from other people's perspectives. This prepares them to live and work in an increasingly diverse and integrated world.

Watch It

Watch this video to review the basics of sociology and to see examples of how sociology plays an important role in your daily life.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=58

Sociology in the Workplace

Employers continue to seek people with what are called “transferable skills.” This means that they want to hire people whose knowledge and education can be applied in a variety of settings and whose skills will contribute to various tasks. Studying sociology can provide people with this wide knowledge and a skill set that can contribute to many workplaces, including

- an understanding of social systems and large bureaucracies
- the ability to devise and carry out research projects to assess whether a program or policy is working
- the ability to collect, read, and analyze statistical information from polls or surveys
- the ability to recognize important differences in people’s social, cultural, and economic backgrounds
- the ability to prepare reports and communicate complex ideas
- the capacity for critical thinking about social issues and problems that confront modern society (Department of Sociology, University of Alabama)

Sociology prepares people for a wide variety of careers. Besides actually conducting social research or training others in the field, people who graduate from college with a degree in sociology are hired by government agencies and corporations in fields such as social services, counseling (e.g., family planning, career, substance abuse), community planning, health services, marketing, market research, and human resources. Even a small amount of training in sociology can be an asset in careers like sales, public relations, journalism, teaching, law, and criminal justice.

Please “Friend” Me: Students and Social Networking

The phenomenon known as Facebook was designed specifically for students. Whereas earlier generations wrote notes in each other’s printed yearbooks at the end of the academic year, modern technology and the Internet ushered in dynamic new ways for people to interact socially. Instead of having to meet up on campus, students can call, text, and Skype from their dorm rooms. Instead of a study group gathering weekly in the library, online forums and chat rooms help learners connect. The availability and immediacy of computer technology has forever changed the ways in which students engage with each other.

Now, after several social networks have vied for primacy, a few have established their place in the market and some have attracted niche audiences. While Facebook launched the social networking trend geared toward teens and young adults, now people of all ages are actively “friending” each other. LinkedIn distinguished itself by focusing on professional connections and served as a virtual world for workplace networking. Newer offshoots like Foursquare help people connect based on the real-world places they frequent, while Twitter has cornered the market on brevity.

The widespread ownership of smartphones adds to this social experience. The Pew Research Center (2012) found that the majority of people in the United States with mobile phones now typically have “smart” phones with Internet capability. Many people worldwide can now access Facebook, Twitter, and other social media from virtually anywhere, and there seems to be an increasing acceptance of smartphone use in many diverse and previously prohibited settings. The outcomes of smartphone use, as with other social media, are not yet clear.

These newer modes of social interaction have also spawned harmful consequences, such as cyberbullying and what some call FAD, or Facebook Addiction Disorder. Researchers have also examined other potential negative impacts, such as whether Facebooking lowers a student’s GPA, or whether there might be long-term effects of replacing face-to-face interaction with social media.

All of these social networks demonstrate emerging ways that people interact, whether positive or negative. They illustrate how sociological topics are alive and changing today. Social media will most certainly be a developing topic in the study of sociology for decades to come.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13243

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13244

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13245

Think It Over

- How do you think taking a sociology course might affect your social interactions?
- What sort of career are you interested in? How could studying sociology help you in this career?

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Why Study Sociology?. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:JHjddfwj/Why-Study-Sociology. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Sociology video. **Authored by**: Cindy Hager. **Provided by**: Sociology Live!. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZYq_r4VXuA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 4.5: Why Study Sociology? is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.6: Introduction to the Sociological Imagination

What you'll learn to do: define the sociological imagination and apply it in a variety of contexts



Figure 1. Sociological imagination is making the connection between personal challenges and larger social issues. Occupy Wall Street protestors viewed the difficulty in finding jobs as connected to the larger U.S. social issue of increasing economic inequality. (Photo courtesy of David Shankbone/Wikimedia Commons)

The sociological imagination allows us to grasp the interconnectedness of history and biography. This section will introduce you to C. Wright Mills and his concept of the sociological imagination. The readings and videos will also provide a number of examples for us to explore how the sociological imagination can help us make sense of issues like obesity or the rising cost of college textbooks.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to the Sociological Imagination. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Day 20 Occupy Wall Street October 5 2011. **Authored by**: David Shankbone. **Provided by**: Wikimedia Commons. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Day_20_Occupy_Wall_Street_October_5_2011_Shankbone_14.JPG. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 4.6: Introduction to the Sociological Imagination is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.7: The Sociological Imagination

Learning Outcomes

- Define the sociological imagination
- Apply the sociological imagination



Figure 1. The sociological imagination enables you to look at your life and your own personal issues and relate them to other people, history, or societal structures.

Many people believe they understand the world and the events taking place within it, even though they have not actually engaged in a systematic attempt to understanding the social world, as sociologists do. In this section, you'll learn to think like a sociologist.

The **sociological imagination**, a concept established by C. Wright Mills (1916-1962) provides a framework for understanding our social world that far surpasses any common sense notion we might derive from our limited social experiences. Mills was a contemporary sociologist who brought tremendous insight into the daily lives of society's members. Mills stated: "Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both"[1]. The sociological imagination is making the connection between personal challenges and larger social issues. Mills identified "troubles" (personal challenges) and "issues" (larger social challenges), also known as biography, and history, respectively. Mills' sociological imagination allows individuals to see the relationships between events in their personal lives (biography), and events in their society (history). In other words, this mindset provides the ability for individuals to realize the relationship between their personal experiences and the larger society in which they live their lives.

Personal troubles are private problems experienced within the character of the individual and the range of their immediate relation to others. Mills identified that we function in our personal lives as actors and actresses who make choices about our friends, family, groups, work, school, and other issues within our control. We have a degree of influence on the outcome of matters within this personal level. A college student who parties 4 nights out of 7, who rarely attends class, and who never does his homework has a personal trouble that interferes with his odds of success in college. However, when 50% of all college students in the United States never graduate, we label it as a larger social issue.

Larger **social or public issues** are those that lie beyond one's personal control and the range of one's inner life. These pertain to broader matters of organization and process, which are rooted in society rather than in the individual. Nationwide, students come to college as freshmen who are often ill-prepared to understand the rigors of college life. They haven't often been challenged enough in high school to make the necessary adjustments required to succeed in college. Nationwide, the average teenager text messages, surfs the Net, plays video games, watches TV, spends hours each day with friends, and works at least part-time. Where and when would he or she get experience focusing attention on college studies and the rigorous self-discipline required to transition into college?

The real power of the sociological imagination is found in how we learn to distinguish between the personal and social levels in our own lives. This includes economic challenges. For example, many students do not purchase required textbooks for college classes at both 2-year colleges and 4-year colleges and universities. Many students simply do not have the money to purchase textbooks, and while this can seem like a "choice," some of the related social issues include rising tuition rates, decreasing financial aid, increasing costs of living and decreasing wages. The Open Educational Resource (OER) movement has sought to address this

personal trouble as a *public issue* by partnering with institutional consortia and encouraging large city and state institutions to adopt OER materials. A student who does not purchase the assigned textbook might see this as a private problem, but this student is part of a growing number of college students who are forced to make financial decisions based on structural circumstances.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13246

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13247

A majority of personal problems are not experienced as exclusively personal issues, but are influenced and affected by social norms, habits, and expectations. Consider issues like homelessness, crime, divorce, and access to healthcare. Are these all caused by personal choices, or by societal problems? Using the sociological imagination, we can view these issues as interconnected personal and public concerns.

For example, homelessness may be blamed on the individuals who are living on the streets. Perhaps their personal choices influenced their position; some would say they are lazy, unmotivated, or uneducated. This approach of blaming the victim fails to account for the societal factors that also lead to homelessness—what types of social obstacles and social failings might push someone towards homelessness? Bad schools, high unemployment, high housing costs, and little family support are all social issues that could contribute to homelessness. C. Wright Mills, who originated the concept of the sociological imagination, explained it this way: “the very structure of opportunities has collapsed. Both the correct statement of the problem and the range of possible solutions require us to consider the economic and political institutions of the society, and not merely the personal situation and character of a scatter of individuals.”

WAtch It

Watch the following video to see an example of how the sociological imagination is used to understand the issue of obesity.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=62

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13248

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13249

Glossary

personal troubles:
private problems experienced by one individual and the range of their immediate relation to others

public issues:
issues that lie beyond one’s personal control and the range of one’s inner life, rooted in society instead of at the individual level

sociological imagination:
the use of imaginative thought to understand the relationship between the individual (personal troubles) and the broader workings of society (public issues)

---

1. Mills, C. W.: 1959, The Sociological Imagination, Oxford University Press, London. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The Sociological Imagination. **Provided by**: College of the Canyons. **Located at**: https://www.canyons.edu/Offices/DistanceLearning/OER/Documents/Open%20Textbooks%20At%20COC/Sociology/SOCI%20101/The%20Sociological%20Imagination.pdf. **Project**: Sociology 101. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

Public domain content

- People graphic. **Authored by**: Peggy_Marco. **Provided by**: pixabay. **Located at**: https://pixabay.com/en/network-society-social-community-1019778/. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*

This page titled 4.7: The Sociological Imagination is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.8: Introduction to Sociological Perspectives

What you'll learn to do: differentiate between the three main theoretical paradigms in sociology and describe how they are used



In this section, you'll learn about how sociologists use paradigms to understand the social world. A paradigm is a broad viewpoint, perspective, or lens that permit social scientists to have a wide range of tools to describe society, and then to build hypotheses and theories. You can also consider paradigms to be guiding principles or belief systems. In the text, you'll sometimes see the word paradigm used interchangeably with perspective, theory, or approach.

In sociology, there are three *main* paradigms: the functionalist paradigm, the conflict paradigm, and the symbolic interactionist paradigm. These are not all of the paradigms, however, and we'll consider others as well as more specific topic-based variations of each of the "Big Three" theories. As you read through the material in this section, consider which paradigm resonates the most with your own views about society.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Sociological Perspectives. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The Three Sociological Paradigms/Perspectives. **Authored by**: Ruth Dunn. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/M_RkLtXv@2/The-Three-Sociological-Paradig. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Theoretical Perspectives. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:QMRfI2p1@11/Theoretical-Perspectives. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- People crossing street in Vienna. **Authored by**: Jacek Dylag. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/PMxT0XtQ--A. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 4.8: Introduction to Sociological Perspectives is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.9: The Main Sociological Theories

Learning Outcomes

- Explain sociological theories



Figure 1. Sociologists develop theories to explain social occurrences such as protest rallies. (Photo courtesy of voanews.com/Wikimedia Commons)

Sociologists study social events, interactions, and patterns, and they develop a theory in an attempt to explain why things work as they do. A sociological **theory** seeks to explain social phenomena. Theories can be used to create a testable proposition, called a **hypothesis**, about society (Allan 2006).

Theories vary in scope depending on the scale of the issues that they are meant to explain. **Macro-level** theories relate to large-scale issues and large groups of people, while **micro-level** theories look at very specific relationships between individuals or small groups. **Grand theories** attempt to explain large-scale relationships and answer fundamental questions such as why societies form and why they change. Sociological theory is constantly evolving and should never be considered complete. Classic sociological theories are still considered important and current, but new sociological theories build upon the work of their predecessors and add to them (Calhoun 2002).

In sociology, a few theories provide broad perspectives that help explain many different aspects of social life, and these are called paradigms. **Paradigms** are philosophical and theoretical frameworks used within a discipline to formulate theories, generalizations, and the experiments performed in support of them. Three paradigms have come to dominate sociological thinking, because they provide useful explanations: structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism.

Sociological Theories or Perspectives. Different sociological perspectives enable sociologists to view social issues through a variety of useful lenses.

Sociological Paradigm	Level of Analysis	Focus
Structural Functionalism	Macro or mid	The way each part of society functions together to contribute to the whole
Conflict Theory	Macro	The way inequalities contribute to social differences and perpetuate differences in power
Symbolic Interactionism	Micro	One-to-one interactions and communications

Watch It

Watch the following video for an overview of each of the sociological paradigms. First, the video introduces major sociological theories in general terms, then gives an overview of structural-functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. Structural functionalism views society as an organism in which the various parts, or social structures, fulfill certain functions to meet the needs of the society. Conflict theory imagines society as a struggle for scarce resources and focuses on the conflicts created by competition and power differences. Conflict theory includes sub-categories such as class conflict theory, race conflict theory, and gender conflict theory. Symbolic interactionism focuses more on individuals and the shared reality that people create through their own experiences.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=66

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13250

Glossary

grand theories:
an attempt to explain large-scale relationships and answer fundamental questions such as why societies form and why they change

hypothesis:
a testable proposition

macro-level theories:
a wide-scale view of the role of social structures within a society

micro-level theories:
the study of specific relationships between individuals or small groups

paradigms:
philosophical and theoretical frameworks used within a discipline to formulate theories, generalizations, and the experiments performed in support of them

theory:
a proposed explanation about social interactions or society

CC licensed content, Original

- Major Sociological Paradigms: Crash Course Sociology #2. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbTt_ySTjaY. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:QMRfI2p1@11/Theoretical-Perspectives. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 4.9: The Main Sociological Theories is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.10: Structural-Functional Theory

Learning Outcomes

- Summarize the structural-functional theory
- Apply the structural-functional theory

Sociological Paradigm #1: Structural-functional theory



Figure 1. Functionalism emphasizes how various social institutions work together to meet the needs of a society.

Structural-functional theory, also called functionalism, sees society as a structure with interrelated parts designed to meet the biological and social needs of the individuals in that society. Functionalism grew out of the writings of English philosopher and biologist, Hebert Spencer (1820–1903), who saw similarities between society and the human body. He argued that just as the various organs of the body work together to keep the body functioning, the various parts of society work together to keep society functioning (Spencer 1898). The parts of society that Spencer referred to were the **social institutions**, or patterns of beliefs and behaviors focused on meeting social needs, such as government, education, family, healthcare, religion, and the economy.

Émile Durkheim, another early sociologist, applied Spencer's theory to explain how societies change and survive over time. Durkheim believed that society is a complex system of interrelated and interdependent parts that work together to maintain stability (Durkheim 1893), and that society is held together by shared values, languages, and symbols. Durkheim believed that individuals may make up society, but in order to study society, sociologists have to look beyond individuals to **social facts**. Social facts are the laws, morals, values, religious beliefs, customs, fashions, rituals, and all of the cultural rules that govern social life (Durkheim 1895). Each of these social facts serves one or more functions within a society. For example, one function of a society's laws may be to protect society from violence, while another is to punish criminal behavior, while another is to preserve public safety.

Although suicide is generally considered an individual phenomenon, Émile Durkheim was interested in studying the social factors that affect it. He studied social ties within a group, or **social solidarity**, and hypothesized that differences in suicide rates might be explained by religion-based differences. Durkheim gathered a large amount of data about Europeans who had ended their lives, and he did indeed find differences based on religion. Protestants were more likely to commit suicide than Catholics in Durkheim's society, and his work on this topic demonstrated the utility of theory for sociological research.

Another noted structural functionalist, Robert Merton (1910–2003), pointed out that social processes often have many functions. **Manifest functions** are the consequences of a social process that are sought or anticipated, while **latent functions** are the unsought consequences of a social process. A manifest function of college education, for example, includes gaining knowledge, preparing for a career, and finding a good job that utilizes that education. Latent functions of your college years include meeting new people, participating in extracurricular activities, or even finding a spouse or partner. Another latent function of education is creating a hierarchy of employment based on the level of education attained. Latent functions can be beneficial, neutral, or harmful. Social processes that have undesirable consequences for the operation of society are called **dysfunctions**. In education, examples of dysfunction include getting bad grades, truancy, dropping out, not graduating, and not finding suitable employment.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13251

Criticism

One criticism of the structural-functional theory is that it can't adequately explain social change. Also problematic is the somewhat circular nature of this theory; repetitive behavior patterns are assumed to have a function, yet we profess to know that they have a function only because they are repeated. Furthermore, dysfunctions may continue, even though they don't serve a function, which seemingly contradicts the basic premise of the theory. Many sociologists now believe that functionalism is no longer useful as a macro-level theory, but that it does serve a useful purpose in some mid-level analyses.

A Global Culture?



Figure 2. Some sociologists see the online world contributing to the creation of an emerging global culture. Are you a part of any global communities? (Photo courtesy of quasireversible/flickr)

Sociologists around the world look closely for signs of what would be an unprecedented event: the emergence of a global culture. In the past, empires such as those that existed in China, Europe, Africa, and Central and South America linked people from many different countries, but those people rarely became part of a common culture. They lived too far from each other, spoke different languages, practiced different religions, and traded few goods. Today, increases in communication, travel, and trade have made the world a much smaller place. More and more people are able to communicate with each other instantly—wherever they are located—by telephone, video, and text. They share movies, television shows, music, games, and information over the Internet. Students can study with teachers and pupils from the other side of the globe. Governments find it harder to hide conditions inside their countries from the rest of the world.

Sociologists research many different aspects of this potential global culture. Some explore the dynamics involved in the social interactions of global online communities, such as when members feel a closer kinship to other group members than to people residing in their own countries. Other sociologists study the impact this growing international culture has on smaller, less-powerful local cultures. Yet other researchers explore how international markets and the outsourcing of labor impact social inequalities. Sociology can play a key role in people's abilities to understand the nature of this emerging global culture and how to respond to it.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13252

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13253

Glossary

dysfunctions:

social patterns that have undesirable consequences for the operation of society

functionalism/structural-functional theory:

a theoretical approach that sees society as a structure with interrelated parts designed to meet the biological and social needs of individuals that make up that society

latent functions:

the unrecognized or unintended consequences of a social process

manifest functions:

sought consequences of a social process

social facts:

the laws, morals, values, religious beliefs, customs, fashions, rituals, and all of the cultural rules that govern social life

social institutions:

patterns of beliefs and behaviors focused on meeting social needs

social solidarity:

the social ties that bind a group of people together such as kinship, shared location, and religion

CC licensed content, Original

- **License**: *Other*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives. **Authored by**: OpenStax. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:QMRfI2p1@11/Theoretical-Perspectives. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

Public domain content

- image of man in gears. **Authored by**: geralt. **Located at**: https://pixabay.com/en/gear-team-man-team-spirit-67139/. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*

This page titled 4.10: Structural-Functional Theory is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.11: Conflict Theory

Learning Outcomes

- Summarize conflict theory
- Apply conflict theory

Sociological Paradigm #2: Conflict Theory

Conflict theory looks at society as a competition for limited resources. This perspective is a macro-level approach most identified with the writings of German philosopher and sociologist Karl Marx (1818–1883), who saw society as being made up of two classes, the **bourgeoisie** (capitalist) and the **proletariat** (workers), who must compete for social, material, and political resources such as food and housing, employment, education, and leisure time. Social institutions like government, education, and religion reflect this competition in their inherent inequalities and help maintain the unequal social structure.

In the economic sphere, Marx focused on the "mode of production" (e.g., the industrial factory) and "relations of production" (e.g., unequal power between workers and factory owners). The bourgeoisie owns and controls the means of production, which leads to exploitation due to the profit motive. In this arrangement, proletarians have only their labor to sell, and do not own or control capital. **False consciousness** is Marx's term for the proletarian's inability to see her real position within the class system, a mis-recognition that is complicated by the control that the bourgeoisie often exerts over the media outlets that disseminate and normalize information. These are just some of the structural constrains that prevent workers from joining together in what Marx called **class consciousness**, or a common group identity as exploited proletarians and potential revolutionaries.

Watch It

Watch this video for an overview of Marx's conflict theory.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=70



Figure 1. Max Weber.

German sociologist Max Weber agreed with some of Marx's main ideas, but also believed that in addition to economic inequalities, there were inequalities of political power and social structure that caused conflict. Weber noted that different groups were affected differently based on education, race, and gender, and that people's reactions to inequality were moderated by class differences and rates of social mobility, as well as by perceptions about the legitimacy of those in power.

Ida B. Wells articulated the conflict perspective when she theorized a connection between an increase in lynching and an increase in black socio-economic mobility in the United States from the late 1800s into the mid-20th century. She also examined competition within the **feminist** movement as women fought for the right to vote, yet the presumably egalitarian mainstream suffragist movements were headed by white women who excluded black women from suffrage. W.E.B. DuBois also examined race in the U.S. and in U.S. colonies from a conflict perspective, and emphasized the importance of a reserve labor force, made up of black men. Race conflict paradigms will be examined later in the course in the module devoted to race and ethnicity.

Race and Conflict Theory

W.E.B. DuBois is a classic sociologist who, after earning a Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1895 (the first black man to do so), went on to an extremely productive career with extensive publication, research, theorizing, and activism. *The Philadelphia Negro* (1896) is considered one of the first examples of scientifically framed and conducted sociology research. DuBois' study included

over 2,500 in-person interviews conducted with African American households in the seventh ward of Philadelphia and even had visual representations of data such as bar graphs to illustrate the realities of racism[1]

He entered the national stage with an article written for *The Atlantic* in 1897 in which he described **double consciousness**. Read the following passage from DuBois' article as he articulates double consciousness:

"It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa; he does not with to bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he believes—foolishly, perhaps, but fervently—that Negro blood has yet a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without losing the opportunity of self-development." [2]

C. Wright Mills, who coined the term **sociological imagination**, also used conflict theory to examine systems of power and the ways in which government, military, and corporations forming a **power elite** (1956) in the United States in the 1950s. Bernie Sanders raised these issues in the 2016 U.S. presidential election by pointing out that both Republican and Democrat candidates were accepting campaign contributions from banks and investment firms on Wall Street, which he argued would make them subject to corporate influence.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13254

Criticism

Just as structural functionalism was criticized for focusing too much on the stability of societies, conflict theory has been criticized because it tends to focus on conflict to the exclusion of recognizing stability. Many social structures are extremely stable or have gradually progressed over time rather than changing abruptly, as conflict theory would suggest.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13255

Gender and conflict Theory



Figure 2. Over the years, feminist demands have changed. First-wave feminists fought for basic citizenship rights, such as the right to vote, while third wave feminists are concerned with more complex social movements, like post-structuralism.

Feminist theory was developed to fill a void in Marxism and neo-Marxism that examined class, but not gender as a distinct category. Feminist theory examines gender and gender inequality and also points out the male-centric aspects of conflict theory. It

focuses on analyzing the limitations faced by women when they claim the right to equality with men. Additionally, feminist scholars examine the gendered nature of human interactions, which makes it a microsociological as opposed to a macrosociological theory.

Feminist scholars study a range of topics, including sexual orientation, race, economic status, and nationality. However, at the core of feminist sociology is the idea that, in most societies, women have been systematically oppressed, and that men have been historically dominant. This system of seemingly "natural" male control is referred to as **patriarchy**.

From the early work of women sociologists like Harriet Martineau, feminist sociology has focused on the power relationships and inequalities between women and men. How can the conditions of inequality faced by women be addressed?

Feminist theory has been criticized for its early focus on the lived experiences of white, educated women—which represent just a small subset within American society. **Intersectional theory** examines multiple, overlapping identities that include black, Latina, Asian, gay, trans, working class, poor, single parent, working, stay-at-home, immigrant, and undocumented women, among others. This synthesis of analytical categories takes into consideration the various lived experiences of a more diverse range of women.

To take a contemporary example, the #MeToo movement began when white actress Ashley Judd came forward in 2017 and claimed that film producer Harvey Weinstein invited her to his hotel room, greeted her in a bathrobe, and asked her to massage him or watch him shower. The phrase "me too" had actually been coined in 2006 by Turana Burke, a black activist who sought to bring attention to women who had been sexually assaulted. Many other wealthy, white, powerful woman came forward and said or tweeted #MeToo. Within one year, the #MeToo movement had become intersectional, stretching across industries, racial and ethnic backgrounds, age, sexual orientation, and gender identities.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13256

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13257

glossary

bourgeoisie:
those who owned the means of production (i.e. factory owners in the Industrial Revolution)

class consciousness:
awareness that one is a proletarian, a worker, and has an understanding of solidarity in a class struggle against the bourgeoisie

conflict theory:
a theory that examines society as a competition for limited resources

double consciousness:
a term used to describe an individual whose identity is divided into several facets

false consciousness:
proletarians are unable to identify and understand their own class position and exploitation

feminist:
one who believes that females should be equal to males

feminist theory:
the critical analysis of the way gender affects societal structures, power, and inequality

intersectional theory:
utilizes multiple identities (such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic class, etc.) as important to understanding inequality

patriarchy:

a set of institutional structures (like property rights, access to positions of power and sources of income) that are based on the belief that males *(patri* means “father”) are and should be dominant

power elite:

the dominant individuals and groups within the military, business world, governments, and other institutions who are at the top of the power hierarchy

proletariat:

those who labor in the means of production (workers) and who do not possess or control capital, as the bourgeoisie does

---

1. Cole, N.L. updated 2017. How WEB DuBois Made His Mark on Sociology. https://www.thoughtco.com/web-dubois-birthday-3026475↵
2. Dubois, W.E.Burghardt. 1897. Strivings of the Negro People. The Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1897/08/strivings-of-the-negro-people/305446/↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives. **Authored by**: OpenStax. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Karl Marx & Conflict Theory: Crash Course Sociology #6. **Authored by**: Crash Course. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gR3igiwaeyc&index=7&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Feminist Theory. **Authored by**: William Little. **Provided by**: BC Campus. **Located at**: https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter1-an-introduction-to-sociology/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- The Feminist Perspective. **Provided by**: Boundless. **Project**: Boundless Sociology. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- WSPU leaders. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Suffragette#/media/File:Annie_Kenney_and_Christabel_Pankhurst.jpg. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

Public domain content

- image of Max Weber. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Weber#/media/File:Max_Weber_1894.jpg. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 4.11: Conflict Theory is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.12: Symbolic Interactionist Theory

Learning Outcomes

- Summarize symbolic interactionism
- Apply symbolic interactionism

Sociological Paradigm #3: Symbolic Interactionist Theory

Symbolic interactionism is a micro-level theory that focuses on meanings attached to human interaction, both verbal and non-verbal, and to symbols. Communication—the exchange of meaning through language and symbols—is believed to be the way in which people make sense of their social worlds.

Charles Horton Cooley introduced the **looking-glass self** (1902) to describe how a person's self of self grows out of interactions with others, and he proposed a threefold process for this development: 1) we see how others react to us, 2) we interpret that reaction (typically as positive or negative) and 3) we develop a sense of self based on those interpretations. "Looking-glass" is an archaic term for a mirror, so Cooley theorized that we "see" ourselves when we interact with others.

George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) is considered a founder of symbolic interactionism, though he never published his work on this subject (LaRossa and Reitzes 1993). Mead's student, Herbert Blumer, actually coined the term "symbolic interactionism" and outlined these basic premises: humans interact with things based on meanings ascribed to those things; the ascribed meaning of things comes from our interactions with others and society; the meanings of things are interpreted by a person when dealing with things in specific circumstances (Blumer 1969). This sounds close to Cooley's looking-glass self, but Mead's contribution was really to the development of self, especially in childhood, which we'll discuss in more detail when we address theories of socialization. If you love books, for example, a symbolic interactionist might propose that you learned that books are good or important in the interactions you had with family, friends, school, or church; maybe your family had a special reading time each week, getting your library card was treated as a special event, or bedtime stories were associated with warmth and comfort.



Figure 1. In symbolic interactionism, people actively shape their social world. This image shows janitorial workers on strike in Santa Monica, California. A symbolic interactionist would be interest in the interactions between these protestors and the messages they communicate.

Social scientists who apply symbolic-interactionist thinking look for patterns of interaction between individuals. Their studies often involve observation of one-on-one interactions. For example, while a conflict theorist studying a political protest might focus on class difference, a symbolic interactionist would be more interested in how individuals in the protesting group interact, as well as the signs and symbols protesters use to communicate their message and to negotiate and thus develop shared meanings.

The focus on the importance of interaction in building a society led sociologists like Erving Goffman (1922–1982) to develop a technique called **dramaturgical analysis**. Goffman used theater as an analogy for social interaction and recognized that people's interactions showed patterns of cultural "scripts." Since it can be unclear what part a person may play in a given situation, as we all occupy multiple roles in a given day (i.e., student, friend, son/ daughter, employee, etc.), one has to improvise his or her role as the situation unfolds (Goffman 1958).

Studies that use the symbolic interactionist perspective are more likely to use qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews or participant observation, because they seek to understand the symbolic worlds in which research subjects live.

Constructivism is an extension of symbolic interaction theory which proposes that reality is what humans cognitively construct it to be. We develop social constructs based on interactions with others, and those constructs that last over time are those that have meanings which are widely agreed-upon or generally accepted by most within the society.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13258

WAtch It

The main tenets of symbolic interactionism are explained in the following video.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=72

Criticism

Research done from this perspective is often scrutinized because of the difficulty of remaining objective. Others criticize the extremely narrow focus on symbolic interaction. Proponents, of course, consider this one of its greatest strengths and generally use research methods that will allow extended observation and/or substantive interviews to provide depth rather than breadth. Interactionists are also criticized for not paying enough attention to social institutions and structural constraints. For example, the interactions between a police officer and a black man are different than the interactions between a police officer and a white man. Addressing systemic inequalities within the criminal justice system, including pervasive racism, is essential for an interactionist understanding of face-to-face interactions.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13259
https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13260
https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13261

Glossary

constructivism:

an extension of symbolic interaction theory which proposes that reality is what humans cognitively construct it to be

dramaturgical analysis:

a technique sociologists use in which they view society through the metaphor of theatrical performance, including role improvisation

looking-glass self:

concept that the development of self occurs through interactions with others, based on our understanding of how others perceive us

symbolic interactionism:

a theoretical perspective through which scholars examine the relationship of individuals within their society by studying their communication (language and symbols)

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:QMRfI2p1@11/Theoretical-Perspectives. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Image of protestors. **Authored by**: Steve Lyon. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_to_protest#/media/File:Janitor_strike_santa_monica.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Symbolic interactionism | Society and Culture | MCAT | Khan Academy. **Provided by**: Khan Academy. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ux2E6uhEVk0. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 4.12: Symbolic Interactionist Theory is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.13: Reviewing Sociological Theories

Learning Outcomes

- Differentiate between theoretical perspectives in the study of a particular social issue

The consumption of food is a commonplace, daily occurrence, yet it can also be associated with important moments in our lives. Eating can be an individual or a group action, and eating habits and customs are influenced by our cultures. In the context of society, our nation's food system is at the core of numerous social movements, political issues, and economic debates. Let's see how food consumption may be examined from each of the three main sociological paradigms.

A **structural-functional** approach to the topic of food consumption might be interested in the role of the agriculture industry within the nation's economy and how this has changed from the early days of manual-labor farming to modern mechanized production. Another examination might study the different functions that occur in food production: from farming and harvesting to flashy packaging and mass consumerism. Functionalists would also examine how food production is related to social solidarity and equilibrium through the division of labor and interdependence among groups in modern society.

A **conflict theorist** might be interested in the power differentials present in the regulation of food, and would explore where people's right to information intersects with corporations' drive for profit, and how the government mediates those interests. Or a conflict theorist might undertake a macro analysis that examines the power that large farming conglomerates like Monsanto have over comparatively powerless local farmers. The documentary film *Food, Inc.* (2009) gives an example of this as it depicts Monsanto's patenting of seed technology. Other topics of study might include how nutrition varies between different social classes or racial and ethnic groups, or why there are food deserts (places that lack access to fresh produce) in densely populated areas.

A sociologist viewing food consumption through a **symbolic interactionist** lens would be more interested in micro-level topics, such as the symbolic use of food in religious rituals, or the role it plays in the social interaction of a family dinner. This perspective might also study the interactions among group members who identify themselves based on their sharing a particular diet, such as vegetarians (people who don't eat meat) or locavores (people who strive to eat locally produced food). Interactionists might also examine the relationships between farmworkers and their employers, how workers or the owners of large farms identify/ see themselves, and/or specific symbols that have taken on importance (i.e. the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) use a bloody t-shirt to represent violence against farmworkers).

How Sociological PARADIGMS Might View Food Consumption

Just like food production and consumption, every society has a legal system in place to regulate human behavior. Examine the legal and justice system (policing, course, fines, jails, prisons etc.) and consider how each theoretical perspective might think about these things:

- How would a conflict theorist examine the criminal justice system in the U.S. and around the world?
- How would a functionalist examine the criminal justice system in the U.S. and around the world?
- How would an interactionist examine the criminal justice system in the U.S. and around the world?

What other topics interest you and how can you begin to think about them using the theoretical paradigms? Which theories do you find yourself gravitating toward and why?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13260

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13261

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives. **Authored by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:QMRfI2p1@8/Theoretical-Perspectives. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 4.13: Reviewing Sociological Theories is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.14: Putting It Together- Sociological Foundations

In this module, you learned about what sociology is, where it came from, and the many possibilities for its present-day use. Unless you are planning a life of total solitude, sociology can contribute positively in both your personal and professional life. Due to the diversity of our society and a “shrinking” world, it’s a good bet that you will regularly encounter people from distinctly different cultures, even within the borders of the United States.

Watch It

You can review the ways that sociologists study behavior and review some of the major contributions from early sociologists in the following video.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=76

Understanding one another contributes to more peaceful interactions as we go about our daily living. An active and working knowledge of the sociological imagination helps us see the connections between our personal experiences and how our own life may be impacted by the way society views us as individuals.

CC licensed content, Original

- Putting It Together: Sociological Foundations. **Authored by**: Cathy Matresse and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- image of outdoor cafe. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Burmese_cuisine#/media/File:Outdoor_caf%C3%A9,_Yangon,_Myanmar.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- An introduction to the discipline of Sociology. **Authored by**: Macat. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32KG_ba_NJc. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 4.14: Putting It Together- Sociological Foundations is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.15: Discussion- Introduce Yourself

STEP 1: Respond to the following prompt in a post between 200 and 400 words:

Please introduce yourself. The sociological imagination allows us to see the connections between history and biography. In order to understand how we can apply this concept to sociological topics like race/ ethnicity, gender/ sexuality, family, religion, education (and many more), let's first begin by applying it to your own lives. Think about the historical period in which you were born, the place/environment in which you were born, and your own biographical information, including where you are now as a college student. Remember, only describe aspects of your life that you are comfortable sharing with the entire class, as this information will be presented in an open forum.

STEP 2: Comment on at least two classmates' posts in a response of 100 words or more. Use this prompt as a conversation tool to connect with your classmates. You will likely see things that are similar to your own responses and things that are different or unique to each student. As always, be respectful and engaged within the online space.

CC licensed content, Original

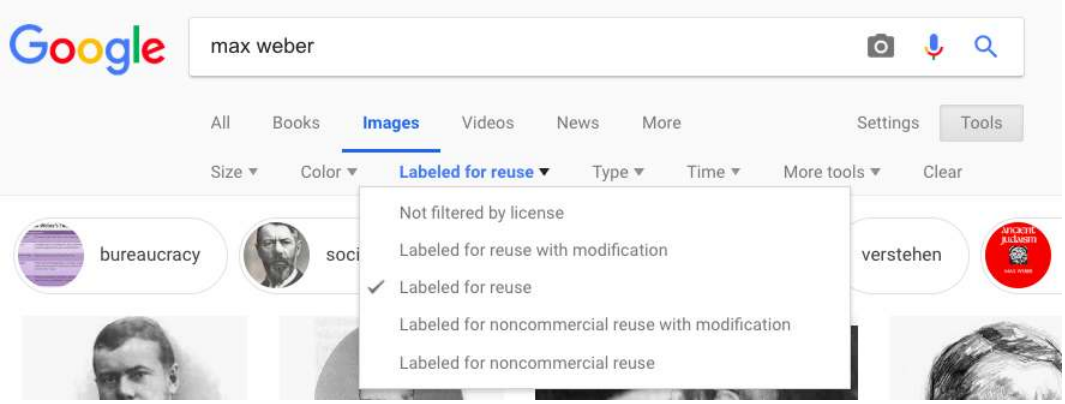
- Discussion: Introduce Yourself. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 4.15: Discussion- Introduce Yourself is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

4.16: Assignment- Sociologist Player Trading Cards

STEP 1: Select one of the sociological theorists discussed in this module. Search for relevant online biographical information about the sociologist, their family life, and/or their contributions to sociology that are not included in the module. Find a minimum of five facts that are interesting, fun, or outrageous (but true) about the sociologist you selected. What would interest people about this person? From mental illness to drunken brawls to living in abject poverty, early sociologists lived pretty colorful lives! Make sure you are using a minimum of 3 credible sources.

STEP 2: Find an open source image of the sociologist by using Google (or another search engine). Using Google search, you can click “Images” and then under “Tools” select “Usage Rights.” Then select “Labeled for Reuse with Modification,” and don’t forget to include the APA image citation.



STEP 3: Compose a digital baseball card of sorts with a photo, and no fewer than five unique facts (separate from what is already in the module). Include correct APA citations. This can be done as a PowerPoint slide, in a Word document, or using a program of your choice, such as Easelly, Canva or Piktochart.

STEP 4: Include a one-liner with the player’s (sociologist’s) stats, which in this case is their major contribution/s to sociology.

STEP 5: Share your player’s stats with your classmates by using a LMS Wiki, Blog, Discussion Forum, and/or share your creation using either Flickr or Wikimedia Commons. Although not required, we strongly recommend uploading and releasing your work with a Creative Commons license.

Rubric

Criteria			Points
Five facts are factually accurate, provide new information, and are interesting and engaging.	Four to five facts are included and may be somewhat redundant and/or are minimally interesting facts.	Three facts or less that have factually inaccuracies or do not provide new or interesting information about the sociologist.	____/10
A minimum of three credible sources are utilized to obtain facts and properly cited.	Two to three credible sources are utilized with some citation errors.	One or two sources (credibility could be in question) and more serious citation errors or lack of APA citations.	____/4
Open source image is selected and properly cited using APA.	Image is not open source and/or citation has one or more errors.	No image or poor image selection and/or no citation or improper citation.	____/3
Trading card has been carefully edited and formatted for clarity and readability.	Some editing and formatting issues remain, affecting clarity and readability.	Paper has substantial editing and formatting issues that inhibit the readability of the player's trading card.	____/3
		Total:	___/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Sociologist Player Trading Cards. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 4.16: Assignment- Sociologist Player Trading Cards is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Module 2- Sociological Research

5.1: Why It Matters- Sociological Research
5.2: Introduction to Sociological Research
5.3: Sociological Research
5.4: The Scientific Method
5.5: Ethics
5.6: Introduction to Research Methods
5.7: Surveys
5.8: Experiments
5.9: Field Research
5.10: Secondary Data Analysis
5.11: Summary of Research Methods
5.12: Putting It Together- Sociological Research
5.13: Discussion- Sociology Research
5.14: Assignment- Utilizing Secondary Research

This page titled 5: Module 2- Sociological Research is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.1: Why It Matters- Sociological Research

Why study sociological research?

Everything–and I mean everything–would be lost if the cops saw me. I was sitting at a table by myself in the back of a heavy metal bar I had visited off and on for the past year and a half. About a third of the faces in the crowd were now familiar to me, and I nodded affirmatively to acknowledge the presence of acquaintances. The place was packed, dark, and sweaty. Long-haired leather-clad men and women broke sweat moving feverishly to the deafening wall of sound produced by the live band on stage.

However, my sense of calm and comfort suddenly turned to mortification when I noticed the faces of two uniformed police officers in the dim light of the long bar off to my left. They had just arrived to case the joint, and I had a lot at stake in staying out of sight. For the next forty minutes I hid under tables, crouched on the dance floor, and in bathroom stalls as the officers methodically scoped out every inch of that club. More than once, those I knew figured out something was up and assisted me by standing in between myself and the panoptical gaze of the officers. When they finally left, others smiled at me knowingly as I breathed a sigh of relief. Not only had I dodged the officers, but my actions had increased my street-cred among the regulars.

I was in the club that night because, as a sociologist, I was conducting a long-term participant observation study of the heavy metal scene. Of all the nights in all the bars in a city exceeding one million people, my then-brother-in-law and his partner, both beat cops, decided to unknowingly case the very place in which I was making some observations. I had already been approached at least a half dozen times that evening by regulars asking if I wanted to buy drugs of various sorts. I rejected their offers, but I knew that exchanging pleasantries with an officer of the law would have immediately pegged me as a narc (undercover narcotics officer). Not only would have this destroyed my credibility in that particular bar but the entire city scene, which would have prematurely ended my research project. I was indeed fortunate to have avoided contact with the police.

Welcome to the exciting (and sometimes dangerous!) world of sociological research. Sociologists study society and human behavior, and in order to do so, they sometimes go to extreme measures to do research that will provide insightful and valuable results. They go beyond common sense understandings in trying to explain or understand social phenomena. Sociologists do not see the world as we normally do, instead they question and analyze why things happen and ask if there is a way to stop a problem before it emerges.

The field notes from the sociologist above illustrate just one way sociologists study social groups and human behavior. Participant observation is one methodology, but we will learn about several other ways in which sociologists conduct research— and not all of them include going to heavy metal bars! For example, a sociologist could learn more about heavy metal song lyrics through content analysis (a different methodology), or learn more about a particular group, like heavy metal fans, through surveys or interviews.

In this module, we will learn about sociological research and research methods.

CC licensed content, Original

- Why It Matters: Sociological Research. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Sociology. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology/Introduction. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 5.1: Why It Matters- Sociological Research is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.2: Introduction to Sociological Research

What you'll learn to do: describe basic sociological research methods and ethical practices



Figure 1. Sociologists rely on systematic scientific processes to collect data and then to evaluate social behavior. Sociologists use different methods of study, including conducting interviews with research participants. (Photo courtesy of Ethan/flickr)

While some results of sociological studies might *seem* like common sense, hopefully you've gathered by now that sociologists rely on systematic scientific processes to collect data and then to evaluate social behavior. Whereas "common sense" relies on myths, traditions, subjective opinion, or amateur observations, social scientists carefully examine and investigate in order to draw accurate conclusions about society as a whole.

The primary aim in this section is to illustrate how sociologists utilize sociological research methods to understand human behavior, groups, and/or aspects of society. Through examples, you will see the difference between common sense understandings and sociological research in trying to explain or understand social phenomena.

Some sociological research centers around groups, as described in the opening vignette, while other sociological research might detail the experiences of specific families or those of individuals. For example, a sociologist may study individuals or families who are facing eviction or who have been evicted from their homes, or they may examine societal conditions that have resulted in increased evictions in the United States (Desmond 2016). Sociologists question and analyze why things happen, always considering larger social, political, and economic forces.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Sociological Research. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Sociology. **Provided by**: Wikibooks. **Located at**: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology/Sociological_Methods. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Interview?. **Authored by**: Ethan. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/42353480@N02/5768808772/in/photolist-DsrCQU-EWc3xx-o3SPz4-nitArf-61z4Lt-GszggC-pN9Mp1-9GPjqX-9vW3iR-9s9GPQ-6DwecF-cPHE1S-dkLkHS-9s6HcR-9FJh8P-9MLDSd-9fvssp-6njsGV-9FMeau-7vyoqy-9FJeKV-sYHmm-5q6Nzq-DczEG-acNku7-epLLJo-eE7eoK-dqSe8A-5S3PrW-5RYtYc-epLDA3-sU4RW-8Agm6h-3h5Ud1-qZdT3w-aLCccF-dsxaYs-Dcduv-7CaptC-uMET5v-bV3tc1-9n9TYf-9kxtL3-9Yvyov-nia3rM-dWW8jj-5mLhoo-5PyKkg-8KdHyv-epLNSY/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 5.2: Introduction to Sociological Research is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.3: Sociological Research

Learning Outcomes

- Describe how sociologists utilize the empirical and the interpretive framework to critically examine social situations

Because sociology examines social relationships and behavior (things everyone is familiar with in some way), sometimes the concepts you cover in this course will seem like common sense. Yet one of the aspects of sociology that makes it an exciting discipline is that is strives to utilize the scientific method to find ways to check common sense and to critically examine perceived relationships and meanings.

Empirical Framework

We often have opinions about social situations, but these may be biased by our expectations or based on limited data. Instead, scientific research is based on **empirical evidence**, which is evidence that comes from direct experience, scientifically gathered data, or experimentation. Conducting research and testing a hypothesis in a controlled setting through deductive methods is the typical process for obtaining empirical evidence.

For example, many people believe that crime rates go up when there's a full moon, but research doesn't support this opinion. Psychologists Rotton and Kelly (1985) conducted a meta-analysis of research on the full moon's effects on behavior. **Meta-analysis** is a technique in which the results of virtually all previous studies on a specific subject are evaluated together. Rotton and Kelly's meta-analysis included thirty-seven prior studies on the effects of the full moon on crime rates, and the overall findings were that full moons are entirely unrelated to crime, suicide, psychiatric problems, and crisis center calls (cited in Arkowitz and Lilienfeld 2009). We may each know of an instance in which a crime happened during a full moon, but it was likely just a coincidence.



Figure 1. Many believe that crime rates go up during the full moon, but scientific research does not support this conclusion. (Photo courtesy of Jubula 2/flickr)

Interpretive Framework

While empirical evidence is very useful, sociologists have found that some social phenomena cannot be easily studied using the traditional scientific method. Sometimes it is necessary to utilize what is called an **interpretive framework,** which focuses on gathering information instead of designing a study. While systematic, this approach doesn't follow the hypothesis-testing model that seeks to find generalizable results. Instead, an interpretive framework seeks to understand social worlds from the point of view of participants, which leads to in-depth knowledge.

Interpretive research is generally more descriptive or narrative in its findings. Rather than formulating a hypothesis and applying a method for testing it, an interpretive researcher will develop approaches for exploring the topic at hand that may involve a significant amount of direct observation or interaction with subjects. This type of researcher also learns as he or she proceeds and sometimes adjusts the research methods or processes midway to optimize findings as they evolve.

Evictions in the U.S.: An Empirical and interpretive approach

Princeton sociologist Matthew Desmond combined both empirical research methods with the interpretive framework to shed light on a topic that had not been systematically researched—evictions. In his Pulitzer Prize winning book *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in*

the American City, Desmond provided a sweeping narrative of eight families in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who were "swept up in the process of eviction" (2016).

Desmond also created the first nationwide database of evictions by examining 83 million court records dating back to 2000. Using secondary sources, Desmond compiled information that has resulted in a national conversation about poverty, inequality, and public policy.

Watch here as Desmond discusses ethnography and how it relates to studying eviction, and how he collected hundreds of thousands of eviction notices, millions of 911 calls, and other types of data to create a fuller picture of eviction and poverty in the United States:

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=88

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13262

Have you ever wondered if home schooling affects a person's later success in college or how many people wait until they are in their forties to get married? Do you wonder if texting is changing teenagers' abilities to spell correctly or to communicate clearly? How do social movements like Occupy Wall Street develop? How about the development of social phenomena like the massive public "fan" communities that follow Star Trek and the Harry Potter series?

Sociological research attempts to answer a vast array of questions, such as these and more, about our social world. Sociologists use empirical data and/or an interpretative framework to increase understanding of societies and social interactions, but in all cases research begins with the pursuit of an answer to a question. Paradoxically, the most interesting research findings often lead to more research!

Glossary

empirical evidence:
evidence that comes from direct experience, scientifically gathered data, or experimentation

interpretive framework:
a sociological research approach that seeks in-depth understanding of a topic or subject through observation or interaction; this approach is not based on hypothesis testing, but is typically more narrative or descriptive

meta-analysis:
a technique in which the results of virtually all previous studies on a specific subject are evaluated together

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Sociological Research. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:3jKfjHaQ@10/Introduction-to-Sociological-Research. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Urban Sociologist Matthew Desmond, 2015 MacArthur Fellow. **Provided by**: macfound. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wajNrp43q8M. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 5.3: Sociological Research is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.4: The Scientific Method

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the scientific method as it applies to sociological research
- Distinguish reliability from validity in a research study
- Distinguish an independent variable from a dependent variable

When sociologists apply the sociological perspective and begin to ask questions, no topic is off limits. Every aspect of human behavior is a source of possible investigation. Sociologists question the world that humans have created and live in. They notice patterns of behavior as people move through that world. Using sociological methods and systematic research within the framework of the scientific method and a scholarly interpretive perspective, sociologists have discovered workplace patterns that have transformed industries, family patterns that have led to legislative changes, and education patterns that have aided structural changes in classrooms.



Figure 1. Research provides no evidence that crime rates increase during a full moon.

The “crime rate during a full moon” discussion mentioned earlier put forth a few loosely stated opinions. The good news is we can look at data sets that show us if there is a connection between full moons and crime rates. If there appears to be a trend of increased crime during those times, we should begin to investigate other variables to see whether there is something else that could account for this relationship. If we were to discover that more crime occurs during full moons, this information could inform policing strategies and potentially make cities safer during full moons. Of course, we would be left with more questions! What is it about full moons that lead to increases in crime? Is this true for men and women? Young and old? In cities and in rural areas?

Connecting crime to a full moon might not seem like common sense to the skeptic. What about crime and hot weather? Or crime and holidays? Or crime during natural disasters? Are there more violent crimes in states with less restrictive gun policies? You can see how there are many, many questions that can be asked about any given topic, also how this type of research can be extremely important for informing and shaping public policy.

The Scientific Method

Sociologists make use of tried and true methods of research, such as experiments, surveys, and field research, but humans and their social interactions are so diverse that these examples might seem un-scientific. However, this is exactly why scientific models work for studying human behavior. A scientific process of research establishes parameters that help make sure results are sound. The **scientific method** involves developing and testing theories about the world based on empirical evidence. It is defined by its commitment to systematic observation of the empirical world and strives to be objective, critical, skeptical, and logical. It involves a series of prescribed steps that have been established over centuries of scholarship.

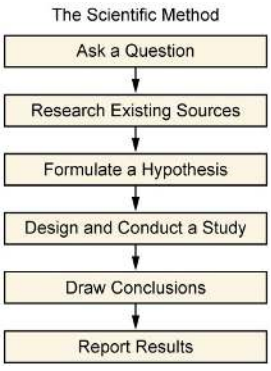


Figure 2. The scientific method is an essential tool in research.

Results of studies tend to provide people with access to knowledge they did not have before—knowledge of other cultures, knowledge of rituals and beliefs, or knowledge of trends and attitudes. No matter what research approach they use, researchers want to maximize the study's **reliability**, which refers to how likely research results are to be replicated if the study is reproduced. If another sociologist follows the same research protocols, will they come up with the same results? If so, then the study is **reliable**. The more exciting the findings, and the more they challenge prevailing understandings, the more likely it is that other sociologists will try to replicate them.

Researchers also strive for **validity**, which refers to how well the study measures what it was designed to measure. Returning to the crime rate during a full moon topic, the reliability of a study would reflect how well the results represent the average adult crime rate during a full moon. Validity would ensure that the study's design accurately examined what it was designed to study and not something else such as one's perception of criminal activity. If police officers believe there is more criminal activity during a full moon, they might be more likely to see criminal activity and to formalize it by making arrests instead of giving warnings, which would actually create the appearance of increased criminal activity–via documentation–during a full moon. This evidence would be created even if the amount of criminal activity were no different than on any other night. Thus, what is actually being measured is police officers' perception of crime, and their subsequent actions during a full moon, rather than criminal activity.

Sociologists can use the scientific method not only to collect but also to interpret and analyze the data. They deliberately apply scientific logic and objectivity. They are interested in—but not attached to—the results. They work outside of their own political or social agendas. This doesn't mean researchers do not have their own personalities, complete with preferences and opinions. But sociologists deliberately use the scientific method to maintain as much objectivity, focus, and consistency as possible in a particular study. In the end, the scientific method provides a shared basis for discussion and analysis (Merton 1963). Typically, the scientific method starts with these steps—1) ask a question, 2) research existing sources, and 3) formulate a hypothesis.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13268

Ask a Question



Figure 3. The scientific process begins with a good question.

The first step of the scientific method is to ask a question, describe a problem, and identify the specific area of interest. The topic should be narrow enough to study within a geography and time frame. "Are societies capable of sustained happiness?" would be too vague. Are married people happier than single people? Are people with children happier than people without children? These questions are more specific, but how is happiness defined and measured?

The question should also be broad enough to have universal merit. "What do personal hygiene habits reveal about the values of college freshman at XYZ College?" would be too narrow so we might want to broaden it to a particular age group (i.e. traditional college students ages 18-22). Also, if you sensed some implicit bias in this question, you would be correct to question whether hygiene, a series of behaviors, should be studied as behaviors or as values (beliefs).

That said, happiness and hygiene are worthy topics to study but must be framed as research questions. As you can probably see, this is a difficult process even for veteran sociologists. Sociologists are careful to define their terms. When forming these basic

research questions, sociologists develop an **operational definition**, that is, they define the concept in terms of the physical or concrete steps it takes to objectively measure it. The operational definition identifies an observable condition of the concept. By operationalizing a variable of the concept, all researchers can collect data methodically in a way that supports the overarching goals of validity and reliability in sociological research.

In a hygiene study, for instance, hygiene could be defined as "personal habits to maintain physical appearance (as opposed to health);" however that might be difficult to measure. Would brushing one's teeth be considered physical appearance (i.e white teeth) or health (i.e. healthy gums, prevent tooth decay, etc.)? To operationalize hygiene, one must be clear about what constitutes personal hygiene for appearance. A researcher could develop a checklist, for example, of things that are included.

Many times, a research question changes. Perhaps after thinking about hygiene and values, the question changes to "How do differing personal hygiene habits reflect cultural gender role norms?" Thus, the ways in culture shapes something very personal would be the topic of this study. Should a woman shave or not shave her legs? Should a man have a beard? Some facial hair? No facial hair? What about nail care for women? For men?

Watch It

Watch this video to learn more about the importance of using the scientific method in sociology.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=90

Research Existing Sources

The next step researchers undertake is to conduct background research through a **literature review**, which is a review of any existing similar or related studies. A visit to the library or a thorough online search of research databases will uncover existing research about the topic of study. This step helps researchers gain a broad understanding of work previously conducted on the topic at hand and enables them to position their own research to build on prior knowledge. Researchers—including student researchers—are responsible for correctly citing existing sources they use in a study or that inform their work. While it is fine to borrow previously published material (as long as it enhances a unique viewpoint), it must be referenced properly and never plagiarized. This step might also prompt the researcher to revisit their research question!

To study hygiene and its value in a particular society, a researcher might sort through existing research and unearth studies about child-rearing, vanity, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, and cultural attitudes toward beauty. It's important to sift through this information and determine what is relevant. Using existing sources educates researchers and helps refine and improve studies' designs.

Formulate a Hypothesis

People commonly try to understand the happenings in their world by finding or creating an explanation for an occurrence, which is what we referred to earlier as common sense. Social scientists may develop a hypothesis for the same reason. A **hypothesis** is a testable educated guess about predicted outcomes between two or more variables; it's a possible explanation for specific happenings in the social world and allows for testing to determine whether the explanation holds true in many instances, as well as among various groups or in different places. The hypothesis will often predict how one form of human behavior influences another. The **independent variables** is the *cause* of the change or the variable that *in*fluences the other variable. The **dependent variable** is the *effect*, or variable that is changed. It *depends* on the independent variable.

For example, researchers establish one form of human behavior as the independent variable and observe the influence it has on a dependent variable. How does gender (the independent variable) affect rate of income (the dependent variable)?

How does one's religion (the independent variable) affect family size (the dependent variable)? How is annual income (the dependent variable) affected by level of education (the independent variable)? It is important to note that we are suggesting relationships or correlations between variables and *not* causation. This is known as **correlation**.

Table 1. Examples of Dependent and Independent Variables.

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
The greater the availability of affordable housing, the lower the homeless rate.	Affordable Housing	Homeless Rate
The greater the availability of math tutoring, the higher the math grades.	Math Tutoring	Math Grades
The greater the police patrol presence, the safer the neighborhood.	Police Patrol Presence	Safer Neighborhood
The greater the factory lighting, the higher the productivity.	Factory Lighting	Productivity
Individuals with college degrees or higher are less likely to live below the poverty line.	College Education	Poverty Line

As the table shows, an independent variable is the one that influences the other variable. Rather than being "right," sociologists are interested in the relationships between variables. If we were to examine the last example, what other variables might come into play? Would we see similar patterns of income for all college-educated people or are there disparities for racial and ethnic minorities? Gender minorities? First, we must move into the next research steps: designing and conducting a study and drawing conclusions. You'll learn more about these types of research methods in the next section of the course.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13267

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13266

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13269

Think It Over

Sociology is a broad discipline covering many topics. Think about something that interests you and/or relates to your experience or your life. As a college student, you operate within a social world ripe for research!

- From competitive sports teams to fraternities or sororities to ROTC to intramural sports and student clubs, there are a plethora of groups on college campuses that would make good topics of study.
- The proverbial *college experience* is different based on one's statuses, particularly minority statuses, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and social class.
- Consider your college's relationship to the surrounding community and that community's relationship with the state and/or country.

If you were to formulate a research question and do some preliminary research on these topics, you would likely find that there have been sociological studies conducted on many of these topics. Furthermore, you would find statistical information about student groups and participation, student demographics, and community demographics.

What value does this type of research have for understanding individuals, groups, and communities?

Glossary

correlation:
when a change in one variable coincides with a change in another variable, but does not necessarily indicate causation

dependent variable: a variable changed by other variables

hypothesis:
a testable educated guess about predicted outcomes between two or more variables

independent variables:

variables that cause changes in dependent variables

literature review:
a scholarly research step that entails identifying and studying all existing studies on a topic to create a basis for new research

operational definitions:
specific explanations of abstract concepts that a researcher plans to study

reliability:
a measure of a study's consistency that considers how likely results are to be replicated if a study is reproduced

scientific method:
an established scholarly research method that involves asking a question, researching existing sources, forming a hypothesis, designing and conducting a study, and drawing conclusions

validity:
the degree to which a sociological measure accurately reflects the topic of study

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Approaches to Sociological Research. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2ehttps://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:uu5Nth4o@9/Approaches-to-Sociological-Research. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- image of moon. **Authored by**: Biswarup Ganguly. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Supermoon_-_Howrah_2011-03-20_1944.JPG. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

All rights reserved content

- The Scientific Method. **Provided by**: Sociology Live!. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcnpuhrnE28. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

Public domain content

- question mark. **Authored by**: Peggy Marco. **Located at**: https://pixabay.com/en/question-mark-question-response-1019820/. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*

This page titled 5.4: The Scientific Method is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.5: Ethics

Learning Outcomes

- Describe key ethical guidelines in sociology

Sociologists conduct studies to shed light on human behaviors. Knowledge is a powerful tool that can be used toward positive change. And while a sociologist's goal is often simply to uncover knowledge rather than to spur action, many people use sociological studies to help improve people's lives. In that sense, conducting a sociological study comes with a tremendous amount of responsibility. Like any scientists, sociologists must consider their ethical obligation to avoid harming subjects or groups while conducting their research.



Figure 1. Sociologists have a responsibility to be ethical and fair.

The American Sociological Association, or ASA, is the major professional organization of sociologists in North America. The ASA is a great resource for students of sociology as well. In 1970, the ASA adopted its first **Code of Ethics**—formal guidelines for conducting sociological research—consisting of principles and ethical standards to be used in the discipline. It was developed out of necessity as a result of several (in)famous studies that were found to have harmed human research participants.

Today, the ASA Code of Ethics consists of the following six principles:

1. Professional competence
2. Integrity
3. Professional and scientific responsibility
4. Respect for people's rights, dignity, and diversity
5. Social responsibility
6. Human rights

In addition, there are nineteen ethical standards, covering the following topics: competence, representation and misuse of expertise, delegation and supervision, discrimination, exploitation, harassment, employment decisions, conflicts of interest and commitment, public communications, confidentiality, informed consent, research planning, implementation, and dissemination, plagiarism, authorship, publication process, responsibilities of reviewers, education, teaching, and training, contractual and consulting services, and adherence to the code of ethics.

The ethical standards that relate most to the research process itself are: confidentiality, informed consent, research planning, implementation, and dissemination.

Each of these principles and ethical standards have detailed descriptions and parameters in the 2018 ASA Code of Ethics.

The Tea Room TRade

So why did the ASA create a Code of Ethics? What kinds of studies were occurring that necessitated a clear code to mandate researchers' responsibilities to their human research participants (sometimes referred to as "subjects")? Read on, and consider the ethical issues that arose in sociologist Laud Humphrey's *The Tea Room Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places* (1970).

Laud Humphreys, a sociologist (and an ordained minister), had a suspicion that sex between men was occurring in public places. To understand this secret behavior, he served as a "lookout" or "watch queen" and gained mens' trust in a variety of public restrooms, which he called "tearooms." Humphreys then recorded these mens' license plate numbers, utilized a contact at the police department, and tracked them down at their homes a year later under the guise of a social health surveyor. He interviewed the

subjects to understand their motivation, what types of work they did, and their marital status. In the course of his interviews, he also discovered that only 14% self-identified as homosexual (Humphreys 1970).

Observing deviant and (in this case) illegal behavior is risky for the researcher but riskier still for the research subjects. During the 1960s, anti-sodomy laws were on the books in most states and were used to criminalize any behavior that was "unnatural" or "immoral," including oral sex and anal sex. Not only was Humphreys observing behavior that was considered taboo by most Americans at the time, but this behavior was also criminally prosecutable.

Researchers must obtain participants' *informed consent* and must discuss with subjects the responsibilities and risks of research before they agree to partake. During a study, sociologists must ensure the safety of participants and immediately stop work if a subject becomes potentially endangered on any level. Researchers are required to protect the *privacy* of participants whenever possible. Even if pressured by authorities, such as police or courts, researchers are not ethically allowed to release confidential information.

In this case, Humphreys did not disclose his role as researcher in the tea rooms nor did he let the men in the restrooms know he was doing sociological research on sexual behaviors in public restrooms. He also did not protect the privacy of the unknowing research subjects—he went to their homes and at that time again failed to disclose his true purpose for being there!

Although the ASA Code of Ethics was not in place until Humphreys published his book (drafts of the Code were being written around the time he completed his research), his work was still controversial for that era in sociology due to his methodology. Interestingly, there is evidence that shows a decrease in police raids after *Tea Room Trade* was published in 1970. Thus, advancing knowledge about deviant behavior and taboo groups *can* lead to policy changes. Humphreys' work was published not long after the Stonewall protests of 1969, which were the result of an overzealous police raid on a gay and lesbian nightclub in New York City. This event helped to initiate the GLBTQ Movement in the United States.

Humphreys defended concealing his identity and purpose because of the greater scientific knowledge he was able to obtain about this hidden social world. He knew the mens' behavior would change if they knew he was a researcher writing about informal sexual encounters in public places. Humphreys also promised to protect the identities of the 100 men he observed and had personal contact information for, even if it meant being arrested himself. Ultimately, it did not come to this.

A summary of Humphreys' research and the resulting ethical issues can be found at SexInfo Online, which is maintained by sociology students at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Researchers have long been aware of the tendency of people to act differently when they know they are being watched. In other words, we don't always behave naturally when we know we are being observed. This is called the **Hawthorne effect**—where people change their behavior because they know they are being watched as part of a study. The Hawthorne effect is unavoidable in some research. In most cases, sociologists have to make the purpose of the study known. Subjects must be aware that they are being observed, and a certain amount of artificiality may result (Sonnenfeld 1985).

How do sociologists do research with this Code of Ethics in place? Some strategies will be discussed with each research methodology, but as it turns out, most people respond well to honesty. Sociologist Kathleen Blee studied women in the neo-Nazi movement and in other racist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, utilizing the same methodology of participant observation and interviews that Humphries did, but she followed all research protocols and was able to earn the trust and cooperation of her research subjects. Similarly, Philippe Bourgois studied crack dealers in New York City using participant observation and interviews, and was forthright concerning the purpose of his research. Observing ASA principles, he obtained informed consent from all of his research subjects. These projects take years to execute, but provide invaluable information about human behavior and social groups. They also inform policy on issues such as racism or the drug trade. These studies, and many others, show that sociologists can obtain valuable research about behavior that can be highly secretive while still abiding by the ASA Code of Ethics.

Researchers must make results available to other sociologists, must make public all sources of financial support, and must not accept funding from any organization that might cause a conflict of interest or seek to influence the research results for its own purposes. For example, if Amazon wants to fund a researcher to study the effects of Amazon Prime on small businesses, sociologists would see a conflict of interest because the corporation would be invested in the results. The ASA's ethical considerations shape not only the study but also the publication of results.

Pioneer German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) identified another crucial ethical concern. Weber understood that personal values could distort the framework for disclosing study results. While he accepted that some aspects of research design might be influenced by personal values, he declared it was entirely inappropriate to allow personal values to shape the interpretation of the responses. Sociologists, he stated, must establish **value neutrality**, a practice of remaining impartial, without bias or judgment, during the course of a study and in publishing results (1949). Sociologists are obligated to disclose research findings without omitting or distorting significant data.

Is value neutrality possible? Many sociologists believe it is not feasible to entirely set aside personal values and retain complete objectivity. They caution readers, rather, to understand that sociological studies may, by necessity, contain a certain amount of value bias. It does not discredit the results, but allows readers to view them as one form of truth rather than as a singular fact. Sociologists attempt to remain uncritical and as objective as possible when studying cultural institutions; however, value neutrality does not mean having no opinions. It means striving to overcome personal biases, particularly subconscious biases, when analyzing data. It means avoiding skewing data in order to match a predetermined outcome that aligns with a particular agenda, such as a political or moral point of view. Investigators are ethically obligated to report results, even when they contradict personal views, predicted outcomes, or widely accepted beliefs.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13263

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13264

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13265

Think It Over

- Why do you think the ASA crafted such a detailed set of ethical principles? What are other types of studies that could put human participants at risk? Would this type of study always be unethical? Why or why not?
- Would you willingly participate in a sociological study that centers around deviant and/or illegal behavior such as underage drinking on college campuses? Why or why not? From a research and policy perspective, why it is important to understand this type of behavior?

Glossary

code of ethics:
a set of guidelines that the American Sociological Association has established to foster ethical research and professionally responsible scholarship in sociology

Hawthorne effect:
describes the tendency of people to change their behavior because they know they are being watched as part of a study

value neutrality:
a practice of remaining impartial, without bias or judgment during the course of a study and also when publishing results

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Ethical Concerns. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:bZIscmHP@6/Ethical-Concerns. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- ethics image. **Provided by**: http://thebluediamondgallery.com/e/ethics.html. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 5.5: Ethics is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.6: Introduction to Research Methods

What you'll learn to do: identify and differentiate between types of research methods, discussing the benefits and limitations of each



Figure 1. Surveys gather different types of information from people. The U.S. Census is an excellent example of a large-scale survey intended to gather sociological data. (Photo courtesy of US Census Bureau/flickr)

As Laud Humphreys' study illustrated, conducting research can be quite complex, especially when it comes to informed consent. Humphreys' research design included surveys (when he went do-to-door) and field research (when he served as a "watch queen"). His role in the tea room as participant observer allowed him to observe (listen to) behavior that was naturally occurring with or without his presence. When we discuss experiments, we will see that the "setting" is often manipulated in some way by the research team in order to examine an independent variable. Secondary data is another research methodology that involves reviewing materials that already exist, such as previous studies (i.e., a literature review could lead to use of other peoples' data and/or existing records such as arrests on sodomy charges).

All studies shape the research design, while research design likewise shapes the study. Researchers choose methods that best suit their study topics and that fit with their overall approaches to research. In planning the design of a study, sociologists generally choose from four widely used methods of social investigation: survey, experiment, field research, and secondary data analysis. Every research method comes with plusses and minuses, and the topic of study strongly influences which method or methods are put to use. In this section, you'll examine how researchers use each of these research methods.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Research Methods. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Research Methods. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:5y6RWnGd@12/Research-Methods. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- US Census Worker (2010). **Provided by**: US Census Bureau. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/uscensusbureau/7024455607/. **License**: *CC BY-ND: Attribution-NoDerivatives*

This page titled 5.6: Introduction to Research Methods is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.7: Surveys

Learning Outcomes

- Describe how sociologists utilize surveys

Surveys

As a research method, a survey collects data from subjects who respond to a series of questions about behaviors and opinions, often in the form of a questionnaire, but surveys can also take the form of interviews with open-ended questions and/or closed-ended questions. The **survey** is the most widely used scientific research method in sociology. The standard survey format allows individuals a level of anonymity in which they can express personal ideas. Surveys might seem innocuous. How could someone be harmed with a survey? However, as with *all* types of sociological research, sociologists must obtain approval from a review board (sometimes called an Internal Review Board or IRB) before they commence any type of sociological survey if it is to be used for research purposes. If a professor asks students to complete a survey that asks about previous experience in an online class for the purpose of understanding students' prior knowledge, that would not be considered research and would not require IRB approval. If a faculty member wants to use the results of the research for a academic publication, it would require IRB approval as well as some additional precautions (i.e., a detailed informed consent) since the faculty member is utilizing current students for research purposes.



Figure 1. Questionnaires are a common research method; the U.S. Census is a well-known example. (Photo courtesy of Kathryn Decker/flickr)

At some point, most people in the United States respond to some type of survey. The U.S. Census is an excellent example of a large-scale survey intended to gather sociological data. Not all surveys are considered sociological research, however, and many surveys we encounter focus on identifying marketing needs and strategies rather than testing a hypothesis or contributing to social science knowledge. Questions such as, "How many hot dogs do you eat in a month?" or "Were the staff helpful?" are not usually designed as scientific research. Often, polls on television do not reflect a general population, but are merely answers from a specific show's audience. Polls conducted by programs such as *American Idol* or *So You Think You Can Dance* represent the opinions of fans, but are not particularly scientific. A good contrast to these are the Nielsen Ratings, which determine the popularity of television programming through objective scientific market research.

Sociologists conduct surveys under controlled conditions for specific purposes. Surveys gather different types of information from people. While surveys are not great at capturing the ways people really behave in social situations, they are an effective method for discovering how people feel and think—or at least how they *say* they feel and think. Surveys can track political preferences, or patterns in reported individual behaviors (such as sleeping, driving, or texting habits), or can gather factual information on subjects like employment status, income, and education levels.

A survey targets a specific **population**, people who are the focus of a study, such as college athletes, international students, or teenagers living with type 1 (juvenile-onset) diabetes. Most researchers choose to survey a small sector of the population, or a **sample**: that is, a manageable number of subjects who *represent* a larger population. The success of a study depends on how well a population is represented by the sample. In a **random sample**, every person in a population has the same chance of being chosen for the study. According to the laws of probability, random samples represent the population as a whole. For instance, a Gallup Poll, if conducted as a nationwide random sampling, should be able to provide an accurate estimate of public opinion using a relatively small sample. For polls focused on U.S. issues, a random sample of 1,000 is representative of the opinions of 230 million adults

with a +/- 4 percentage points of accuracy. For world polls, involving 180 countries and 160 different languages utilize similar sample sizes. It's amazing, isn't it?

After selecting subjects, the researcher develops a specific plan to ask questions and record responses. It is important to inform subjects of the nature and purpose of the study up front. If they agree to participate, researchers thank subjects and offer them a chance to see the results of the study if they are interested. The researcher presents the subjects with an instrument, which is a means of gathering the information. A common instrument is a questionnaire, in which subjects answer a series of questions. For some topics, the researcher might ask yes-or-no or multiple-choice questions, allowing subjects to choose possible responses to each question. These **quantitative data**—research collected in numerical form that can be counted—are easy to tabulate. Just count up the number of "yes" and "no" responses or correct/incorrect answers, and chart them into percentages.

Questionnaires can also ask more complex questions with more complex answers. They can go beyond "yes" and "no," or can offer a range of options next to a checkbox. In those cases, the answers are subjective and vary from person to person. *How do you plan to use your college education? Why do you follow Jimmy Buffett around the country and attend every one of his concerts?* Those types of questions require short essay responses, and participants willing to take the time to write those answers will convey personal information about religious beliefs, political views, and morals. Some topics that reflect internal thought are impossible to observe directly and are difficult to discuss honestly in a public forum. People are more likely to share honest answers if they can respond to questions anonymously. This type of information is **qualitative data**—results that are subjective and often based on what is seen in a natural setting. Qualitative information is harder to organize and tabulate. The researcher will end up with a wide range of responses, some of which may be surprising. The benefit of written opinions, though, is the wealth of material that they provide.

An **interview** is a one-on-one conversation between the researcher and the subject, and it is a way of conducting surveys on a topic. Interviews are similar to the short-answer questions on surveys in that the researcher asks subjects a series of questions. However, participants are free to respond as they wish, without being limited by predetermined choices. In the back-and-forth conversation of an interview, a researcher can ask for clarification, spend more time on a subtopic, or ask additional questions. In an interview, a subject will ideally feel free to open up and answer questions that are often more complex. There are no right or wrong answers. The subject might not even know how to answer the questions honestly.

Questions such as "How did society's view of alcohol consumption influence your decision whether or not to take your first sip of alcohol?" or "Did you feel that the divorce of your parents would put a social stigma on your family?" involve so many factors that the answers are difficult to categorize. A researcher needs to avoid steering or prompting the subject to respond in a specific way; otherwise, the results will prove to be unreliable. And, obviously, a sociological interview is not an interrogation. The researcher will benefit from gaining a subject's trust, from empathizing or commiserating with a subject, and from listening without judgment.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13270

Think It Over

- What type of data do surveys gather? For what topics would surveys be the best research method? What drawbacks might you expect to encounter when using a survey? To explore further, ask a research question and write a hypothesis. Then create a survey of about six questions relevant to the topic. Provide a rationale for each question. Now define your population and create a plan for recruiting a random sample and administering the survey.

Try It

Practice differentiating between qualitative and quantitative surveys in the following interactive.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=96

Glossary

interview:

a one-on-one conversation between the researcher and the subject

population:

a defined group serving as the subject of a study

quantitative data:

represent research collected in numerical form that can be counted

qualitative data:

comprise information that is subjective and often based on what is seen in a natural setting

random sample:

a study's participants being randomly selected to serve as a representation of a larger population

samples:

small, manageable number of subjects that represent the population

surveys:

collect data from subjects who respond to a series of questions about behaviors and opinions, often in the form of a questionnaire

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Survey interactive. **Authored by**: Scott Barr for Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Research Methods. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:5y6RWnGd@14/Research-Methods. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 5.7: Surveys is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.8: Experiments

Learning Outcomes

- Describe and give examples of how sociologists utilize experiments

Experiments

You've probably tested some of your own theories: "If I study at night and review in the morning, I'll improve my retention skills." Or, "If I stop drinking soda, I'll feel better." Cause and effect. If this, then that. Causation is difficult to establish, so even if we seem to find evidence in our own lives that appears to prove our hypotheses, this is not sociological research nor is it evidence of causation. Sociologists set up specific studies in controlled environments in order to examine relationships between variables. Some studies are correlational, meaning they examine how two variables change together, while others are experimental, meaning they use controlled conditions to attempt to explain cause and effect. The primary difference between our everyday observations and sociological research is the systematic approach researchers use to collect data.

Experiments aim to measure the relationship of the independent variable to the dependent variable, and the researcher or research team will attempt to control all other variables in the experimental process. This is often done in a lab-based setting, but can also be done as a field experiment. As discussed in the section on ethics, there are many considerations to address before *any* experimental work can occur. Sociologists must obtain approval from a review board (sometimes called an Internal Review Board or IRB) before they commence any type of sociological experiment.

Lab Settings

In a lab setting, the research can be controlled so that perhaps more data can be recorded in a certain amount of time. To set up a lab-based experiment, sociologists create artificial situations that allow them to manipulate variables. Classically, the sociologist selects a set of people with similar characteristics, such as age, class, race, or education. Those people are divided into two groups. One is the experimental group and the other is the control group. The experimental group is exposed to the independent variable(s) and the control group is not. This is similar to pharmaceutical drug trials in which the experimental group is given the test drug and the control group is given a placebo or sugar pill. To test the benefits of tutoring, for example, the sociologist might expose the experimental group of students to tutoring while the control group does not receive tutoring. Then both groups would be tested for differences in performance to see if tutoring had an effect on the experimental group of students. As you can imagine, in a case like this, the researcher would not want to jeopardize the accomplishments of either group of students, so the setting would be somewhat artificial. The test would not be for a grade reflected on their permanent record, for example.

The Stanford Prison Experiment is perhaps one of the most famous sociological experiments ever conducted. In 1971, 24 healthy, middle-class male university students were selected to take part in a simulated jail environment to examine the effects of social setting and social roles on individual psychology and behavior. They were randomly divided into 12 guards and 12 prisoners. The prisoner subjects were arrested at home and transported blindfolded to the simulated prison in the basement of the psychology building on the campus of Stanford University. Within a day of arriving the prisoners and the guards began to display signs of trauma and sadism, respectively. After some prisoners revolted by blockading themselves in their cells, the guards resorted to using increasingly humiliating and degrading tactics to control the prisoners through psychological manipulation. The experiment had to be abandoned after only six days because the abuse had gotten out of hand (Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo 1973).

While the insights into the social dynamics of authoritarianism it generated were fascinating, the Stanford Prison Experiment also serves as an example of the ethical issues that emerge when experimenting on human subjects and the types of emotional harm that subjects can endure as a result of participating in research. Additionally, this classic experiment, which is cited in most sociology and psychology textbooks, has recently been called out as being "theatre" rather than rigorous science. Some social scientists have even provided evidence to show that Zimbardo and his team coached research subjects into being cruel (guards) and dramatic (prisoners). The experiment has also been criticized for its small sample size and unrepresentative sample population.

Natural or Field-Based Experiments

In a natural or field-based experiment, the generation of data cannot be controlled, but the information might be considered more accurate since it was collected without interference or intervention by the researcher. As a research method, either type of

sociological experiment is useful for testing *if-then* statements: *if* a particular thing happens, *then* another particular thing will result.

Sociologists Devah Pager, Bruce Western, and Bart Bonikowski wanted to examine discrimination in the low-wage job market. They recruited white, black, and Latino "testers," who were assigned equivalent résumés and who were matched on a variety of characteristics such as age, education, physical appearance, and interpersonal skills. The testers applied to real job openings and recorded responses from employers. Because black and white testers were sent to the same firms, and testers were matched on a wide variety of characteristics, "much of the unexplained variation that confounds residual estimates of discrimination [was] experimentally controlled" [1] The testers were college-educated males that comprised field teams that included a white, Latino, and black tester; the Latino testers spoke in unaccented English and were U.S. citizens of Puerto Rican descent and claimed no Spanish language ability. They also examined the effect of a criminal record (felony drug offense) for different racial groups in job applications, building upon Pager's research in 2003. Some résumés included a checked box to indicate a felony conviction and also listed prison labor as part of the applicant's employment history. The teams applied for 340 real entry-level jobs throughout New York City over nine months in 2004.

As with many of the most insightful sociological studies, Pager, Western & Bonikowski included qualitative data based on the testers' interactions with employers, which provided a rich supplement to the empirical data acquired through this field experiment. Like Matthew Desmond's multi-method approach to evictions (empirical— secondary resources; interpretive—ethnography), we see a similar approach here (empirical—field experiment; interpretive—testers' narratives of interactions with employers). In this study, blacks were only half as likely to receive a callback or job offer, and whites, blacks, and Latinos with clean criminal backgrounds were no more likely to receive a callback as a white applicant just released from prison. Moreover, the testers did not perceive any signs of clear prejudice (Pager, Western, & Bonikowski, 2009).

Sociologists have long been interested in inequality and discrimination. Read the study below to see how one sociology professor sent her students to the field.

An Experiment in Action



Figure 1. Sociologist Frances Heussenstamm conducted an experiment to explore the correlation between traffic stops and race-based bumper stickers. This issue of racial profiling remains a hot-button topic today. (Photo courtesy of dwightsghost/flickr)

A real-life example will help illustrate the experiment process. In 1971, Frances Heussenstamm, a sociology professor at California State University, Los Angeles, had a theory about police prejudice. To test her theory she conducted an experiment. She chose fifteen students from three ethnic backgrounds: black, white, and Latino. She chose students who routinely drove to and from campus along Los Angeles freeway routes, and who'd had perfect driving records for longer than a year. Those were her control variables—students, good driving records, same commute route. These students signed all had safe, up-to-date cars and signed a pledge to drive safely.

Next, she placed a Black Panther bumper sticker on each car. That sticker, a representation of a social value, was the independent variable. Founded in Oakland, California in 1966, the Black Panthers were a revolutionary African-American group actively fighting racism. Heussenstamm asked the students to follow their normal driving patterns. She wanted to see whether seeming to support the Black Panthers would change how these good drivers were treated by the police patrolling the highways (the dependent variable).

The first citation, for an incorrect lane change, was made two hours after the experiment began. One participant was pulled over three times in three days. He quit the study. After seventeen days, the fifteen drivers had collected a total of thirty-three traffic citations and the funding to pay traffic fines had run out. The experiment was halted (Heussenstamm 1971).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13271

Think It Over

- Do the findings in the Pager, Western & Bonikowski field experiment surprise you? Why or why not? In what ways can studies about discrimination inform public policy?
- What kinds of ethical issues are present in Heussenstamm's experiment? Were some students at greater risk than others? How do you think the experiences of each group (black, white, and Latino) differed? Do you think gender would influence the interaction between student and police officer?
- Imagine your sociology professor asked you to place a "Black Lives Matter" bumper sticker on your vehicle and asked you to sign an informed consent before participating in the study. Would you do it? Why or why not? How does geographic location and personal identity affect one's experience and potential risk factors?

Glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]experiment:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]the testing of a hypothesis under controlled conditions; tests a hypothesis to determine cause and effect relationships[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

---

1. Pager, D., Western, B. and B. Bonikowski. 2009. "Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment." American Sociological Review. Vol. 74 (October: 777-799). ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Research Methods. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:5y6RWnGd@14/Research-Methods. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Additional material on Stanford Prison Experiment. **Authored by**: William Little. **Provided by**: BC Campus. **Located at**: https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter2-sociological-research/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 5.8: Experiments is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.9: Field Research

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the three types of field research: participant observation, ethnography, and case studies

Field Research

The work of sociology rarely happens in limited, confined spaces. Sociologists seldom study subjects in their own offices or laboratories. Rather, sociologists go out into the world. They meet subjects where they live, work, and play. **Field research** refers to gathering **primary data** from a natural environment without doing a lab experiment or a survey. It is a research method suited to an interpretive framework rather than to the scientific method. To conduct field research, the sociologist must be willing to step into new environments and observe, participate, or experience those worlds. In field work, the sociologists, rather than the subjects, are the ones out of their element.

The researcher interacts with or observes a person or people and gathers data along the way. The key point in field research is that it takes place in the subject's natural environment, whether it's a coffee shop or tribal village, a homeless shelter or the DMV, a hospital, airport, mall, or beach resort.

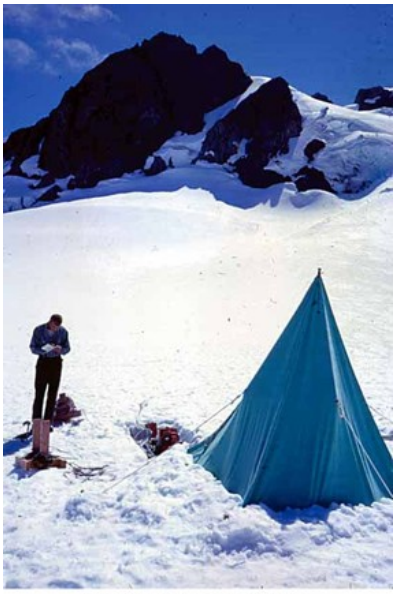


Figure 1. Sociological researchers travel across countries and cultures to interact with and observe subjects in their natural environments. (Photo courtesy of IMLS Digital Collections and Content/flickr and Olympic National Park)

While field research often begins in a specific *setting*, the study's purpose is to observe specific *behaviors* in that setting. Field work is optimal for observing *how* people behave. It is less useful, however, for understanding *why* they behave that way. You can't really narrow down cause and effect when there are so many variables to be factored into a natural environment.

Many of the data gathered in field research are based not on cause and effect but on correlation. And while field research looks for correlation, its small sample size does not allow for establishing a causal relationship between two variables.

Parrotheads as Sociological Subjects





Figure 2. Business suits for the day job are replaced by leis and T-shirts for a Jimmy Buffett concert. (Photo courtesy of Sam Howzitt/flickr)

Some sociologists study small groups of people who share an identity in one aspect of their lives. Almost everyone belongs to a group of like-minded people who share an interest or hobby. Scientologists, Nordic folk dancers, or members of Mensa (an organization for people with exceptionally high IQs) express a specific part of their identity through their affiliation with a group. Those groups are often of great interest to sociologists.

Jimmy Buffett, an American musician who built a career from his top-10 song "Margaritaville," has a following of devoted groupies called Parrotheads. Some of them have taken fandom to the extreme, making Parrothead culture a lifestyle. In 2005, Parrotheads and their subculture caught the attention of researchers John Mihelich and John Papineau. The two saw the way Jimmy Buffett fans collectively created an artificial reality. They wanted to know how fan groups shape culture.

What Mihelich and Papineau found was that Parrotheads, for the most part, do not seek to challenge or even change society, as many sub-groups do. In fact, most Parrotheads live successfully within society, holding upper-level jobs in the corporate world. What they seek is escape from the stress of daily life.

At Jimmy Buffett concerts, Parrotheads engage in a form of role play. They paint their faces and dress for the tropics in grass skirts, Hawaiian leis, and Parrot hats. These fans don't generally play the part of Parrotheads outside of these concerts; you are not likely to see a lone Parrothead in a bank or library. In that sense, Parrothead culture is less about individualism and more about conformity in a group setting. Being a Parrothead means sharing a specific identity. Parrotheads feel connected to each other: it's a group identity, not an individual one.

In their study, Mihelich and Papineau quote from a book by sociologist Richard Butsch, who writes, "un-self-conscious acts, if done by many people together, can produce change, even though the change may be unintended" (2000). Many Parrothead fan groups have performed good works in the name of Jimmy Buffett culture, donating to charities and volunteering their services.

However, the authors suggest that what really drives Parrothead culture is commercialism. Jimmy Buffett's popularity was dying out in the 1980s until being reinvigorated after he signed a sponsorship deal with a beer company. These days, his concert tours alone generate nearly $30 million a year. Buffett made a lucrative career for himself by partnering with product companies and marketing Margaritaville in the form of T-shirts, restaurants, casinos, and an expansive line of products. Some fans accuse Buffett of selling out, while others admire his financial success. Buffett makes no secret of his commercial exploitations; from the stage, he's been known to tell his fans, "Just remember, I am spending your money foolishly."

Mihelich and Papineau gathered much of their information online. Referring to their study as a "Web ethnography," they collected extensive narrative material from fans who joined Parrothead clubs and posted their experiences on websites. "We do not claim to have conducted a complete ethnography of Parrothead fans, or even of the Parrothead Web activity," state the authors, "but we focused on particular aspects of Parrothead practice as revealed through Web research" (2005). Fan narratives gave them insight into how individuals identify with Buffett's world and how fans used popular music to cultivate personal and collective meaning.

In conducting studies about pockets of culture, most sociologists seek to discover a universal appeal. Mihelich and Papineau stated, "Although Parrotheads are a relative minority of the contemporary US population, an in-depth look at their practice and conditions illuminate [sic] cultural practices and conditions many of us experience and participate in" (2005).

Here, we will look at three types of field research: participant observation, ethnography, and the case study.

Participant Observation

In **participant observation** research, a sociologist joins people and participates in a group's routine activities for the purpose of observing them within that context. This method lets researchers experience a specific aspect of social life. A researcher might go to great lengths to get a firsthand look into a trend, institution, or behavior. Researchers temporarily put themselves into roles and record their observations. A researcher might work as a waitress in a diner, live as a homeless person for several weeks, or ride along with police officers as they patrol their regular beat.

Although these researchers try to blend in seamlessly with the population they study, they are still obligated to obtain IRB approval. In keeping with scholarly objectives, the purpose of their observation is different from simply "people watching" at one's workplace, on the bus or train, or in a public space.



Figure 3. Who is the sociologist in this photo? It's impossible to tell! In participant observation, researchers immerse themselves in an environment for a time. (Photo courtesy of zoetnet/flickr)

At the beginning of a field study, researchers might have a question: "What really goes on in the kitchen of the most popular diner on campus?" or "What is it like to experience homelessness?" Participant observation is a useful method if the researcher wants to explore a certain environment from the inside.

Field researchers simply want to observe and learn. In such a setting, the researcher will be alert and open minded to whatever happens, recording all observations accurately. Soon, as patterns emerge, questions will become more specific, observations will lead to hypotheses, and hypotheses will guide the researcher in shaping data into results.

Some sociologists prefer not to alert people to their presence. The main advantage of covert participant observation is that it allows the researcher access to authentic, natural behaviors of a group's members. The challenge, however, is gaining access to a setting without disrupting the pattern of others' behavior. Becoming an inside member of a group, organization, or subculture takes time and effort. Researchers must pretend to be something they are not. The process could involve role playing, making contacts, networking, or applying for a job. Whenever deception is involved in sociological research, it will be intensely scrutinized and may or may not be approved by an institutional IRB.

Once inside a group, participation observation research can last months or even years. Sociologists have to balance the types of interpersonal relationships that arise from living and/or working with other people with objectivity as a researcher. They must keep their purpose in mind and apply the sociological perspective. That way, they illuminate social patterns that are often unrecognized. Because information gathered during participant observation is mostly qualitative, rather than quantitative, the end results are often descriptive or interpretive. This type of research is well-suited to learning about the kinds of human behavior or social groups that are not known by the scientific community, who are particularly closed or secretive, or when one is attempting to understand societal structures, as we will see in the following example.

Nickel and Dimed (2001, 2011)

Journalist Barbara Ehrenreich conducted participation observation research for her book *Nickel and Dimed*. One day over lunch with her editor, Ehrenreich mentioned an idea. *How can people exist on minimum-wage work? How do low-income workers get by?* she wondered aloud. *Someone should do a study.* To her surprise, her editor responded, *Why don't you do it?*

That's how Ehrenreich found herself joining the ranks of the working class. For several months, she left her comfortable home and lived and worked among people who lacked, for the most part, higher education and marketable job skills. Undercover, she applied for and worked minimum wage jobs as a waitress, a cleaning woman, a nursing home aide, and a retail chain employee. During her participant observation, she used only her income from those jobs to pay for food, clothing, transportation, and shelter.

She discovered the obvious, that it's almost impossible to get by on minimum wage service work. She also experienced and observed attitudes many middle and upper-class people never think about. She witnessed firsthand the treatment of working class employees. She saw the extreme measures people take to make ends meet and to survive. She described fellow employees who held two or three jobs, worked seven days a week, lived in cars, could not pay to treat chronic health conditions, got randomly fired, submitted to drug tests, and moved in and out of homeless shelters. She brought aspects of that life to light, describing difficult working conditions and the poor treatment that low-wage workers suffer.

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America, the book she wrote upon her return to her real life as a well-paid writer, has been widely read and used in many college classrooms. The first edition was published in 2001 and a follow-up post-recession

edition was published with updated information in 2011.



Figure 4. Field research happens in real locations. What type of environment do work spaces foster? What would a sociologist discover after blending in? (Photo courtesy of drewzhrodague/flickr)

Ethnography

Ethnography is the extended observation of the social perspective and cultural values of an entire social setting. Ethnographies involve objective observation of an entire community. British anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, who studied the Trobriand Islanders near Papua New Guinea during World War I, was one of the first anthropologists to engage with the communities they studied and he became known for this methodological contribution, which different from the detached observations that took place from a distance (i.e., "on the verandas" or "armchair anthropology").

Although anthropologists had been doing ethnographic research longer, sociologists were doing ethnographic research in the 20th century, particularly in what became known as The Chicago School at the University of Chicago. William Foote Whyte's *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum* (1943) is a seminal work of urban ethnography and a "classic" sociological text.

The heart of an ethnographic study focuses on how subjects view their own social standing and how they understand themselves in relation to a community. An ethnographic study might observe, for example, a small U.S. fishing town, an Inuit community, a village in Thailand, a Buddhist monastery, a private boarding school, or an amusement park. These places all have borders. People live, work, study, or vacation within those borders. People are there for a certain reason and therefore behave in certain ways and respect certain cultural norms. An ethnographer would commit to spending a predetermined amount of time studying every aspect of the chosen place, taking in as much as possible.

A sociologist studying a tribe in the Amazon might watch the way villagers go about their daily lives and then write a paper about it. To observe a spiritual retreat center, an ethnographer might attend as a guest for an extended stay, observe and record data, and collate the material into results.

The Making of *Middletown: A Study in Modern U.S. Culture*

In 1924, a young married couple named Robert and Helen Lynd undertook an unprecedented ethnography: to apply sociological methods to the study of one U.S. city in order to discover what "ordinary" people in the United States did and believed. Choosing Muncie, Indiana (population about 30,000), as their subject, they moved to the small town and lived there for eighteen months.

Ethnographers had been examining other cultures for decades—groups considered minority or outsider—like gangs, immigrants, and the poor. But no one had studied the so-called average American.

Recording interviews and using surveys to gather data, the Lynds did not sugarcoat or idealize U.S. life (PBS). They objectively stated what they observed. Researching existing sources, they compared Muncie in 1890 to the Muncie they observed in 1924. Most Muncie adults, they found, had grown up on farms but now lived in homes inside the city. From that discovery, the Lynds focused their study on the impact of industrialization and urbanization.

They observed that the workers of Muncie were divided into business class and working class groups. They defined *business class* as dealing with abstract concepts and symbols, while *working class* people used tools to create concrete objects. The two classes led different lives with different goals and hopes. However, the Lynds observed, mass production offered both classes the same

amenities. Like wealthy families, the working class was now able to own radios, cars, washing machines, telephones, vacuum cleaners, and refrigerators. This was a newly emerging economic and material reality of the 1920s.



Figure 5. A classroom in Muncie, Indiana, in 1917, five years before John and Helen Lynd began researching this "typical" U.S. community. (Photo courtesy of Don O'Brien/flickr)

As the Lynds worked, they divided their manuscript into six sections: Getting a Living, Making a Home, Training the Young, Using Leisure, Engaging in Religious Practices, and Engaging in Community Activities. Each chapter included subsections such as "The Long Arm of the Job" and "Why Do They Work So Hard?" in the "Getting a Living" chapter.

When the study was completed, the Lynds encountered a big problem. The Rockefeller Foundation, which had commissioned the book, claimed it was useless and refused to publish it. The Lynds asked if they could seek a publisher themselves.

As it turned out, *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture* was not only published in 1929, but also became an instant bestseller, a status unheard of for a sociological study. The book sold out six printings in its first year of publication, and has never gone out of print (PBS).

Nothing like it had ever been done before. *Middletown* was reviewed on the front page of the *New York Times*. Readers in the 1920s and 1930s identified with the citizens of Muncie, Indiana, but they were equally fascinated by the sociological methods and the use of scientific data to define ordinary people in the United States. The book was proof that social data were important—and interesting—to the U.S. public.

Institutional Ethnography

Institutional ethnography is an extension of basic ethnographic research principles that focuses intentionally on everyday concrete social relationships. Developed by Canadian sociologist Dorothy E. Smith, institutional ethnography is often considered a feminist-inspired approach to social analysis and primarily considers women's experiences within male-dominated societies and power structures. Smith's work challenges sociology's exclusion of women, both academically and in the study of women's lives (Fenstermaker, n.d.).

Historically, social science research tended to objectify women and ignore their experiences except as viewed from a male perspective. Modern feminists note that describing women, and other marginalized groups, as subordinates helps those in authority maintain their own dominant positions (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, n.d.). Smith's three major works explored what she called "the conceptual practices of power" (1990; cited in Fensternmaker, n.d.) and are still considered seminal works in feminist theory and ethnography.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13272

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13273

Case Study

Sometimes a researcher wants to study one specific person or event. A **case study** is an in-depth analysis of a single event, situation, or individual. To conduct a case study, a researcher examines existing sources like documents and archival records, conducts interviews, or engages in direct observation and even participant observation, if possible.

Researchers might use this method to study a single case of, for example, a foster child, drug lord, cancer patient, criminal, or rape victim. However, a major criticism of the case study method is that a developed study of a single case, while offering depth on a topic, does not provide broad enough evidence to form a generalized conclusion. In other words, it is difficult to make universal

claims based on just one person, since one person does not verify a pattern. This is why most sociologists do not use case studies as a primary research method.

However, case studies are useful when the single case is unique. In these instances, a single case study can add tremendous knowledge to a certain discipline. For example, a feral child, also called a “wild child,” is one who grows up isolated from other human beings. Feral children grow up without social contact and language, which are elements crucial to a “civilized” child’s development. These children mimic the behaviors and movements of animals, and often invent their own language. There are only about one hundred cases of “feral children” in the world.

As you may imagine, a feral child is a subject of great interest to researchers. Feral children provide unique information about child development because they have grown up outside of the parameters of “normal” child socialization and language acquisition. And since there are very few feral children, the case study is the most appropriate method for researchers to use in studying the subject.

At age three, a Ukranian girl named Oxana Malaya suffered severe parental neglect. She lived in a shed with dogs, and she ate raw meat and scraps. Five years later, a neighbor called authorities and reported seeing a girl who ran on all fours, barking. Officials brought Oxana into society, where she was cared for and taught some human behaviors, but she never became fully socialized. She has been designated as unable to support herself and now lives in a mental institution (Grice 2011). Case studies like this offer a way for sociologists to collect data that may not be collectable by any other method.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13274

Glossary

case study:
in-depth analysis of a single event, situation, or individual

ethnography:
observing a complete social setting and all that it entails

field research:
gathering data from a natural environment without doing a lab experiment or a survey

participant observation:
when a researcher immerses herself in a group or social setting in order to make observations from an “insider” perspective

primary data:
data that are collected directly from firsthand experience

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Research Methods. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.2:5y6RWnGd@14/Research-Methods. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Section on content analysis, Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: William Little. **Provided by**: BC Open Textbooks. **Located at**: https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 5.9: Field Research is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.10: Secondary Data Analysis

Learning Outcomes

- Describe secondary data analysis

Secondary Data

While sociologists often engage in original research studies, they also contribute knowledge to the discipline through **secondary data analysis**. Secondary data do not result from firsthand research collected from primary sources, but are the already completed work of other researchers. Sociologists might study works written by historians, economists, teachers, or early sociologists. They might search through periodicals, newspapers, or magazines from any period in history.

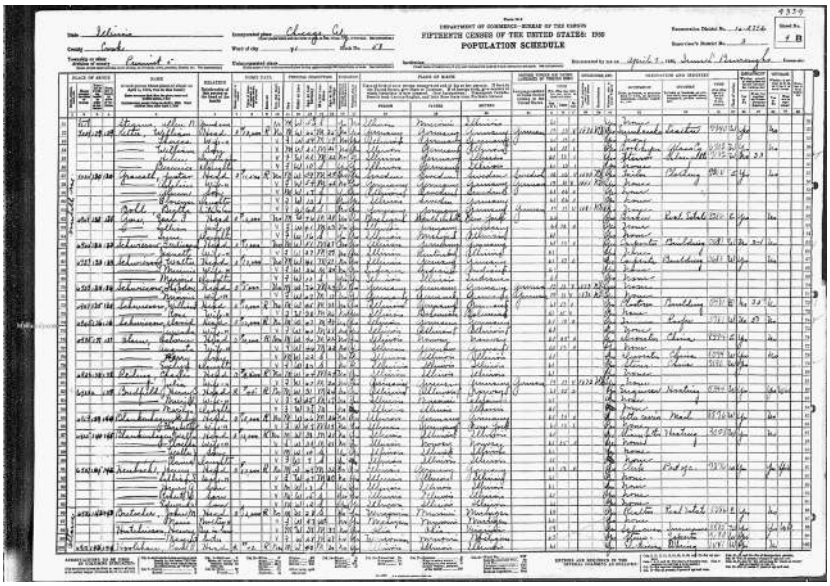


Figure 1. This 1930 Chicago census record is an example of secondary data.

Using available information not only saves time and money but can also add depth to a study. Sociologists often interpret findings in a new way, a way that was not part of an author's original purpose or intention. To study how women were encouraged to act and behave in the 1960s, for example, a researcher might watch movies, televisions shows, and situation comedies from that period. Or to research changes in behavior and attitudes due to the emergence of television in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a sociologist would rely on new interpretations of secondary data. Decades from now, researchers will most likely conduct similar studies on the advent of mobile phones, the Internet, or Facebook.

Content Analysis of Poor in Magazines

Martin Gilens (1996) wanted to find out why survey research shows that the American public substantially exaggerates the percentage of African Americans among the poor. He examined whether media representations influence public perceptions and did a content analysis of photographs of poor people in American news magazines. He coded and then systematically recorded incidences of three variables: (1) Race: white, black, indeterminate; (2) Employed: working, not working; and (3) Age.

Gilens discovered that not only were African Americans markedly overrepresented in news magazine photographs of poverty, but that the photos also tended to underrepresent "sympathetic" subgroups of the poor—the elderly and working poor—while overrepresenting less sympathetic groups—unemployed, working age adults. Gilens concluded that by providing a distorted representation of poverty, U.S. news magazines "reinforce negative stereotypes of blacks as mired in poverty and contribute to the belief that poverty is primarily a 'black problem'" (1996).

Social scientists also learn by analyzing the research of a variety of agencies. Governmental departments and global groups, like the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics or the World Health Organization, publish studies with findings that are useful to sociologists. A public statistic like the foreclosure rate might be useful for studying the effects of the 2008 recession; a racial demographic profile might be compared with data on education funding to examine the resources accessible to different groups.

One of the advantages of secondary data is that they are nonreactive research (or unobtrusive research), meaning that they do not include direct contact with subjects and will not alter or influence people's behaviors. Unlike studies requiring direct contact with people, using previously published data doesn't require entering a population, with all the investment and potential risks inherent in that research process.

Using available data does have its challenges. Public records are not always easy to access. A researcher will need to do some legwork to track them down and gain access to records. To guide the search through a vast library of materials and avoid wasting time reading unrelated sources, sociologists employ **content analysis**, applying a systematic approach to record and value information gleaned from secondary data as they relate to the study at hand.

But, in some cases, there is no way to verify the accuracy of existing data. It is easy to count how many drunk drivers, for example, are pulled over by the police. But how many are not? While it is possible to discover the percentage of teenage students who drop out of high school, it might be more challenging to determine the number who return to school or get their GED later.

Another problem arises when data are unavailable in the exact form needed or do not include the precise angle the researcher seeks. For example, the average salaries paid to professors at a public school is a matter of public record. But the separate figures do not necessarily reveal how long it took each professor to reach the salary range, what their educational backgrounds are, or how long the have been teaching.

When conducting content analysis, it is important to consider the date of publication of an existing source and to take into account attitudes and common cultural ideals that may have influenced the research. For example, Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd gathered research for their book *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture* in the 1920s. Attitudes and cultural norms were vastly different then than they are now. Beliefs about gender roles, race, education, and work have changed significantly since then. At the time, the study's purpose was to reveal the truth about small U.S. communities. Today, it is an illustration of attitudes and values of the 1920s.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13276

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13277

Glossary

content analysis:

applying a systematic approach to record and value information gleaned from secondary data as it relates to the study at hand

secondary data analysis:

using data collected by others but applying new interpretations

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Research Methods. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:5y6RWnGd@12/Research-Methods. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

Public domain content

- 1930 census. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1930_census_Olsen_Schmidt.gif. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 5.10: Secondary Data Analysis is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.11: Summary of Research Methods

Learning Outcomes

- Differentiate between the four kinds of research methods: surveys, field research, experiments, and secondary data analysis

Sociological research is a fairly complex process. As you can see, a lot goes into even a simple research design. There are many steps and much to consider when collecting data on human behavior, as well as in interpreting and analyzing data in order to form conclusive results. Sociologists use scientific methods for good reason. The scientific method provides a system of organization that helps researchers plan and conduct the study while ensuring that data and results are reliable, valid, and objective.

The many methods available to researchers—including experiments, surveys, field studies, and secondary data analysis—all come with advantages and disadvantages. The strength of a study can depend on the choice and implementation of the appropriate method of gathering research. Depending on the topic, a study might use a single method or a combination of methods. It is important to plan a research design before undertaking a study. The information gathered may in itself be surprising, and the study design should provide a solid framework in which to analyze predicted and unpredicted data.

Main Sociological Research Methods. Sociological research methods have advantages and disadvantages.

Method	Implementation	Advantages	Challenges
Survey	• Questionnaires • Interviews	• Yields many responses • Can survey a large sample • Quantitative data are easy to chart	• Can be time consuming • Can be difficult to encourage participant response • Captures what people think and believe but not necessarily how they behave in real life
Field Work	• Observation • Participant observation • Ethnography • Case study	• Yields detailed, accurate real-life information	• Time consuming • Data captures how people behave but not what they think and believe • Qualitative data is difficult to organize
Experiment	• Deliberate manipulation of social customs and mores	• Tests cause and effect relationships	• Hawthorne Effect • Ethical concerns about people's well-being
Secondary Data Analysis	• Analysis of government data (census, health, crime statistics) • Research of historic documents	• Makes good use of previous sociological information	• Data could be focused on a purpose other than yours • Data can be hard to find

Making Connections: When is Sharing Not Such a Good Idea?

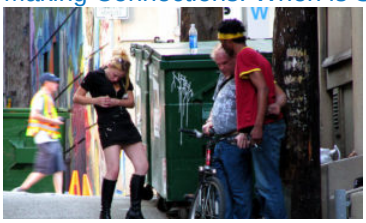




Figure 1. Crack cocaine users in downtown Vancouver.
(Photo courtesy of Wikimedia commons)

Choosing a research methodology depends on a number of factors, including the purpose of the research and the audience for whom the research is intended. If we consider the type of research that might go into producing a government policy document on the effectiveness of safe injection sites for reducing the public health risks of intravenous drug use, we would expect public administrators to want "hard" (i.e., quantitative) evidence of high reliability to help them make a policy decision. The most reliable data would come from an experimental or quasi-experimental research model in which a control group can be compared with an experimental group using quantitative measures.

This approach has been used by researchers studying InSite in Vancouver (Marshall et al. 2011; Wood et al. 2006). InSite is a supervised safe-injection site where heroin addicts and other intravenous drug users can go to inject drugs in a safe, clean environment. Clean needles are provided and health care professionals are on hand to intervene in the case of overdose or other medical emergency. It is a controversial program both because heroin use is against the law (the facility operates through a federal ministerial exemption) and because the heroin users are not obliged to quit using or seek therapy. To assess the effectiveness of the program, researchers compared the risky usage of drugs in populations before and after the opening of the facility and geographically near and distant to the facility. The results from the studies have shown that InSite has reduced both deaths from overdose and risky behaviours, such as the sharing of needles, without increasing the levels of crime associated with drug use and addiction.

On the other hand, if the research question is more exploratory (for example, trying to discern the reasons why individuals in the crack smoking subculture engage in the risky activity of sharing pipes), the more nuanced approach of fieldwork is more appropriate. The research would need to focus on the subcultural context, rituals, and meaning of sharing pipes, and why these phenomena override known health concerns. Graduate student Andrew Ivsins at the University of Victoria studied the practice of sharing pipes among 13 habitual users of crack cocaine in Victoria, B.C. (Ivsins 2010). He met crack smokers in their typical setting downtown and used an unstructured interview method to try to draw out the informal norms that lead to sharing pipes. One factor he discovered was the bond that formed between friends or intimate partners when they shared a pipe. He also discovered that there was an elaborate subcultural etiquette of pipe use that revolved around the benefit of getting the crack resin smokers left behind. Both of these motives tended to outweigh the recognized health risks of sharing pipes (such as hepatitis) in the decision making of the users. This type of research was valuable in illuminating the unknown subcultural norms of crack use that could still come into play in a harm reduction strategy such as distributing safe crack kits to addicts.

Watch It

Watch this video to review some of the key methods used in conducting sociological research.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=104

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13278

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Research Methods. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Making Connections. **Authored by**: William Little. **Provided by**: BC Open Textbooks. **Located at**: https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Sociological Research Methods. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwhK-iEyXYA&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=5. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 5.11: Summary of Research Methods is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.12: Putting It Together- Sociological Research



Figure 1. Outdoor cafe in Yangon, Myanmar.

In this module, you learned the ways that empirical and interpretive scholarly research differ from what we might consider self-evident common sense. Sociologists must adhere to a plethora of ethical guidelines that must be part of a written research plan before they conduct research on human subjects. When sociological research is founded on scientific data, we can get a much more accurate depiction of how people live and behave. You learned about how sociologists use the scientific method to test hypotheses and gather data:

1. First, we ask a question.
2. Then we review existing studies to see if someone has already studied this particular issue.
3. Next, we set up a method by which to study the hypothesis and gather our data.
4. After conducting our study, we look at the answers we have found and draw a conclusion.
5. Finally, we report our findings so that those who come after us will have the benefit of our studies.

You saw that there are a number of strategies sociologists might use in order to conduct their studies, including the strengths and weaknesses of these methods. Depending on the question being asked, a sociologist might use one of these approaches:

1. Surveys
2. Field Research
3. Participant Observation
4. Ethnography
5. Case Study
6. Experiments
7. Secondary Data Analysis

Which method would you select to examine the scene in Figure 1? Why? What would you need to consider *before* you begin your research?

CC licensed content, Original

- Putting it Together: Sociological Research. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Cafe in Yangon. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Burmese_cuisine#/media/File:Outdoor_caf%C3%A9,_Yangon,_Myanmar.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 5.12: Putting It Together- Sociological Research is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.13: Discussion- Sociology Research

STEP 1: Find a peer-reviewed journal article about a topic in Sociology. Acceptable journals include PLOS ONE, Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, The Sociological Review, Journal of Public Health, Health Education Research, American Journal of Public Health, the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, or other similar journals. The study should have been performed within the past 10 years.

STEP 2: In a paragraph, summarize the study including the place of research, who conducted it, the type of research method/s employed, the research question, and the findings. Add in your own thoughts about the study. What did you find interesting?

STEP 3 : Comment on at least 2 other students' posts who selected studies other than the one you selected.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Sociology Research. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 5.13: Discussion- Sociology Research is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

5.14: Assignment- Utilizing Secondary Research

Background: For many sociology students (and sociologists), secondary research can seem like the most "boring" research method; however, as we saw with Emile Durkheim's early work on suicide using secondary data (death records), we are able to glean a great deal from utilizing existing statistical information.

STEP 1: Look at the bivariate (2 variable) table below. This comes from the Social Science Data Analysis Network (SSDAN) and is comprised of data from the American Community Survey (ACS), an annual Census-like survey.

Income	**Less Than High School**	**High School Grads**	**Some College**	**College Grads**	**Total**
< 25K	49.6%	33.1%	24.1%	10.1%	23.2%
25-34K	21.6%	21.3%	18.6%	8.2%	15.7%
35-49K	15.8%	21.4%	22.3%	16.5%	19.4%
50-69K	8.1%	14.3%	18.2%	20.4%	17.2%
70-99K	3.2%	6.7%	10.8%	19.4%	12.3%
100K+	1.7%	3.2%	6%	25.4%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

STEP 2: Identify the **independent variable** and the **dependent variable** that could be tested based on this graph.

STEP 3: Summarize the bivariate table by making at least 3 TRUE statements about the variables using the data (the percentages) provided.

STEP 4: Use your **sociological imagination** to analyze the data. This should be a minimum of 2-3 sentences.

STEP 5: What policy recommendations would you make based on the data? This should be a minimum of 2-3 sentences.

RUBRIC

Criteria	**Rating**			**Points**
Variables	Correctly identifies possible independent and dependent variables based on the data	Only partially identifies correct IV and DV.	Does not correctly identify independent and dependent variables	__/4
Data summary	Writes 3 accurate statements based on the data	Writes 2 statements based on the data	Writes 1 or less statements about the data	__/9
Analysis and recommendations	Analyzes data and makes appropriate policy recommendations	Partially analyzes data and makes appropriate policy recommendations	Does not analyze data or make appropriate policy recommendations	__/7
			Total:	__/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Utilizing Secondary Research . **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 5.14: Assignment- Utilizing Secondary Research is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Module 3- Culture

6.1: Why It Matters- Culture
6.2: Introduction to Culture
6.3: Culture, Values, and Beliefs
6.4: Social Norms
6.5: Symbols and Language
6.6: Introduction to Cultural Similarities and Differences
6.7: Cultural Universals
6.8: Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism
6.9: Introduction to Pop Culture, Subculture, and Cultural Change
6.10: Pop Culture and Subculture
6.11: Cultural Change
6.12: Globalization and Technology
6.13: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Culture and Technology
6.14: Functionalism on Culture and Technology
6.15: Conflict Theory on Culture and Technology
6.16: Symbolic Interactionism on Media and Technology
6.17: Putting It Together- Culture
6.18: Assignment- Tattoos and Culture
6.19: Discussion- Tattoos in Culture
6.20: Discussion- Media and Technology
6.21: Discussion- Media and Culture

This page titled 6: Module 3- Culture is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.1: Why It Matters- Culture

Why explain and evaluate culture?

Human beings have faced similar problems of survival across the years of human existence. Different groups have found various answers to the question, “How shall we live?” When a group of humans successfully found a way to survive, they began to value that approach to life. They built beliefs around their survival and acted on those beliefs and values. Such activities became normal to that group, and created their culture. Some cultures appear quite similar to our own while others seem extremely different.



Figure 1. Indian women wearing colorful saris.

Through their development, some cultures became increasingly complex while others remained simple. Anthropologist, scientist, and author Jared Diamond puzzled over this question (known as Yali’s question in his book *Guns, Germs, and Steel*) and attempted to understand why some cultures have dramatically more “stuff” than others.

If you have traveled or lived outside the United States, or even if you have traveled within our own borders, across the country or perhaps simply across town, you already know that different groups of people have responded to the needs of life through creating different customs. Since the United States is one of the most diverse countries in the world, gaining an understanding of how other people “do” their culture helps us to better understand and interact with people at home and abroad. Just like playing a game, if you know the rules, you will be more successful than if you do not. Understanding the basics of culture helps us to understand one another. Consider the following story:

An American business decided to combine a project with a sister company in India. The company made plans to send five employees over for a long-term stay in order to help orient the Indian employees to the company and provide some training and perhaps build some relationships. Once they landed in India, one of the Americans found that all of her luggage had been lost! She had to go out and purchase clothing and shoes to wear for their extended stay until her luggage might be located. Because she purchased clothing styled and made in India, she had no leather belts, jackets, or shoes and she was garbed in more traditional Indian clothing. As it turned out, the new employees took to her much more readily because she dressed as they did. They felt much more comfortable with her than they did with the other Americans who dressed “strangely.”

CC licensed content, Original

- **Authored by**: Cathy Matresse and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Sari image. **Authored by**: Sebastian Piedoux. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/29592365@N03/4274155376. **License**: *CC BY-NC: Attribution-NonCommercial*

This page titled 6.1: Why It Matters- Culture is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.2: Introduction to Culture

What you'll learn to do: describe the basic elements of culture



Figure 1. How should you greet someone you just met? Shaking someone's hand is an example of a day-to-day greeting and is an expression of culture. In some countries you might shake someone's hand to greet them, in other countries you might kiss their cheek. (Photo courtesy of Cyntonn Photography/unsplash)

The simplest way to think about culture is to think about the distinction between nature (our biology and genetics) and nurture (our environment and surroundings that also shape our identities). Because of our biology and genetics, we have a particular form and we have certain abilities. But our biological nature does not exclusively determine who we are. For that, we need culture. Culture is the non-biological or social aspects of human life, basically anything that is learned or made by humans is part of culture. Culture encompasses objects and symbols, the meanings given to those objects and symbols, and the norms, values, and beliefs that pervade social life.

How should you greet someone you just met? If you are walking on the sidewalk and look up to see that someone is walking towards you, which way should you move? How should you stand in an elevator? Where should you sit in a near-empty movie theatre?

These are all examples of social norms you've come to understand over your lifetime. In this section, we'll learn how these norms develop, and even learn about "breaching experiments", when people intentionally violate these norms. Here's one famous example from an elevator:

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=116

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Culture. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Culture. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:io7WC_uF@5/Introduction-to-Culture. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Introduction to Sociology/Culture. **Provided by**: Wikibooks. **Located at**: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology/Culture. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Handshake. **Authored by**: Cyntonn Photography. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/n95VMLxqM2I. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

All rights reserved content

- Prudential: Everybody's Doing It. **Authored by**: Prudential. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgRoiTWkBHU. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 6.2: Introduction to Culture is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.3: Culture, Values, and Beliefs

Learning Outcomes

- Compare material versus nonmaterial culture
- Describe cultural values and beliefs

Humans are social creatures. Since the dawn of *Homo sapiens* nearly 250,000 years ago, people have grouped together into communities in order to survive. Living together, people form common habits and behaviors—from specific methods of childrearing to preferred techniques for obtaining food. In modern-day Paris, many people shop daily at outdoor markets to pick up what they need for their evening meal, buying cheese, meat, and vegetables from different specialty stalls. In the United States, the majority of people shop once a week at supermarkets, filling large carts to the brim. How would a Parisian perceive U.S. shopping behaviors that suburban Americans take for granted?

Note that in the above comparison we are looking at cultural differences on display in two distinct places, suburban America and urban France, even though we are examining a behavior that people in both places are engaged in. It's important to note that geographical place is an important factor in culture—beliefs and practices, and society—the social structures and organization of individuals and groups.

Almost every human behavior, from shopping to marriage to expressions of feelings, is learned. In the United States, people tend to view marriage as a choice between two people, based on mutual feelings of love. In other nations and in other times, marriages have been arranged through an intricate process of interviews and negotiations between entire families, or in other cases, through a direct system, such as a "mail order bride." To someone raised in New York City, the marriage customs of a family from Nigeria may seem strange or even wrong. Conversely, someone from a traditional Kolkata family might be perplexed with the idea of romantic love as the foundation for marriage and lifelong commitment. In other words, the way in which people view marriage depends largely on what they have been taught.

Behavior based on learned customs is not a bad thing. Being familiar with unwritten rules helps people feel secure and "normal." Also, perhaps such cultural traditions are comforting in that they seem to have already worked well enough for our forebears to have retained them. Most people want to live their daily lives confident that their behaviors will not be challenged or disrupted. But even an action as seemingly simple as commuting to work evidences a great deal of cultural propriety and learned behaviors.



Figure 1. How would a visitor from the suburban United States act and feel on this crowded Tokyo train? (Photo courtesy of simonglucas/flickr)

Take the case of going to work on public transportation. Whether people are commuting in Dublin, Cairo, Mumbai, or San Francisco, many behaviors will be the same, but significant differences also arise between cultures. Typically, a passenger will find a marked bus stop or station, wait for his bus or train, pay an agent before or after boarding, and quietly take a seat if one is available. But when boarding a bus in Cairo, passengers might have to run, because buses there often do not come to a full stop to

take on patrons. Dublin bus riders would be expected to extend an arm to indicate that they want the bus to stop for them. And when boarding a commuter train in Mumbai, passengers must squeeze into overstuffed cars amid a lot of pushing and shoving on the crowded platforms. That kind of behavior would be considered the height of rudeness in the United States, but in Mumbai it reflects the daily challenges of getting around on a train system that is taxed to capacity.

In this example of commuting, **culture** consists of both intangible things like beliefs and thoughts (expectations about personal space, for example) and tangible things (bus stops, trains, and seating capacity).

The objects or belongings of a group of people are considered **material culture**. Metro passes and bus tokens are part of material culture, as are automobiles, stores, and the physical structures where people worship, or engage in other recognizable patterns of behavior.

Nonmaterial culture, in contrast, consists of the ideas, attitudes, and beliefs of a society. Material and nonmaterial aspects of culture are linked, and physical objects often symbolize cultural ideas. A metro pass is a material object, but it represents a form of nonmaterial culture, namely, capitalism, and the acceptance of paying for transportation. Clothing, hairstyles, and jewelry are part of material culture, but the appropriateness of wearing certain clothing for specific events reflects nonmaterial culture. A school building belongs to material culture, but the teaching methods and educational standards within it are part of education's nonmaterial culture. These material and nonmaterial aspects of culture can vary subtly or greatly from region to region. As people travel farther afield, moving from different regions to entirely different parts of the world, certain material and nonmaterial aspects of culture become dramatically unfamiliar. What happens when we encounter different cultures? As we interact with cultures other than our own, we become more aware of the differences and commonalities between others' symbolic and material worlds and our own.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13279

Values and Beliefs

The first, and perhaps most crucial, elements of culture we will discuss are its values and beliefs. **Values** are a culture's standard for discerning what is good and just in society. Values are deeply embedded and critical for transmitting and teaching a culture's beliefs. **Beliefs** are the tenets or convictions that people hold to be true. Individuals in a society have specific beliefs, but they also share collective values. To illustrate the difference, Americans commonly believe in the American Dream—that anyone who works hard enough will be successful and wealthy. Underlying this belief is the American value that wealth is good and important.

Values help shape a society by suggesting what is good and bad, beautiful and ugly, to be sought or avoided. Consider the value that the United States places upon youth. Children represent innocence and purity, while an adult who is youthful in appearance signifies sexual vitality. Shaped by this value, individuals spend millions of dollars each year on cosmetic products and surgeries to look young and beautiful. The United States also has an individualistic culture, meaning people place a high value on individuality and independence. In contrast, many other cultures are collectivist, meaning the welfare of the group and group relationships is a primary value.

Living up to a culture's values can be difficult. It's easy to value good health, but it's hard to quit smoking. Marital monogamy is valued, but many spouses engage in infidelity. Cultural diversity and equal opportunities for all people are valued in the United States, yet the country's highest political offices have been dominated by white men.

Values often suggest how people should behave, but they don't accurately reflect how people actually do behave. Values portray an **ideal culture**, the standards society would like to embrace and live up to. But ideal culture differs from **real culture**, the way society actually is, based on what occurs and exists. In an ideal culture, there would be no traffic accidents, murders, poverty, or racial tension. But in real culture, police officers, lawmakers, educators, and social workers constantly strive to prevent or repair those accidents, crimes, and injustices. American teenagers are encouraged to value celibacy. However, the number of unplanned pregnancies among teens reveals that not only is the ideal hard to live up to, but the value alone is not enough to spare teenagers the potential consequences of having sex.



Figure 2. In many parts of Africa and the Middle East, it is considered normal for men to hold hands in friendship. How would Americans react to these two soldiers? (Photo courtesy of Geordie Mott/Wikimedia Commons)

One way societies strive to put values into action is through rewards, sanctions, and punishments. When people observe the norms of society and uphold its values, they are often rewarded. A boy who helps an elderly woman board a bus may receive a smile and a "thank you." A business manager who raises profit margins may receive a quarterly bonus. People positively **sanction** certain behaviors by giving their support, approval, or permission, or negatively sanction them by invoking formal policies of disapproval and nonsupport. Sanctions are a form of **social control**, a way to encourage conformity to cultural norms. Sometimes people conform to norms in anticipation or expectation of positive sanctions: good grades, for instance, may mean praise from parents and teachers. From a criminal justice perspective, properly used social control is also inexpensive crime control. Utilizing social control approaches pushes most people to conform to societal rules, regardless of whether authority figures (such as law enforcement) are present.

When people go against a society's values, they are punished. A boy who shoves an elderly woman aside to board the bus first may receive frowns or even a scolding from other passengers. A business manager who drives away customers will likely be fired. Breaking norms and rejecting values can lead to cultural sanctions such as earning a negative label—lazy, no-good bum—or to legal sanctions, such as traffic tickets, fines, or imprisonment.

Values are not static; they vary across time and between groups as people evaluate, debate, and change collective societal beliefs. Values also vary from culture to culture. For example, cultures differ in their values about what kinds of physical closeness are appropriate in public. It's rare to see two male friends or coworkers holding hands in the United States where that behavior often symbolizes romantic feelings. But in many nations, masculine physical intimacy is considered natural in public. This difference in cultural values came to light when people reacted to photos of former president George W. Bush holding hands with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia in 2005. An example of nonmaterial culture, the simple gesture of hand-holding carries great symbolic differences across cultures.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13280

Glossary

beliefs:
tenets or convictions that people hold to be true

culture:
the shared beliefs, practices, and material objects of a group of people

ideal culture:
the standards a society would like to embrace and live up to

real culture:
the way society really is based on what actually occurs and exists

sanctions:
a way to authorize or formally disapprove of certain behaviors

social control:
a way to encourage conformity to cultural norms

values:
a culture's standard for discerning what is good and just in society

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- What is Culture?. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:-HOYsFU6@8/3-1-What-Is-Culture. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 6.3: Culture, Values, and Beliefs is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.4: Social Norms

Learning Outcomes

- Describe cultural norms, mores, and folkways

Norms

So far, the examples in this module have often described how people are expected to behave in certain situations—for example, when buying food or boarding a bus. These examples describe the visible and invisible rules of conduct through which societies are structured, or what sociologists call norms. **Norms** define how to behave in accordance with what a society has defined as good, right, and important, and most members of the society adhere to them.

Formal norms are established, written rules. They are behaviors worked out and agreed upon in order to suit and serve the most people. Laws are formal norms, but so are employee manuals, college entrance exam requirements, and "no running" signs at swimming pools. Formal norms are the most specific and clearly stated of the various types of norms, and they are the most strictly enforced. But even formal norms are enforced to varying degrees and are reflected in cultural values.

For example, money is highly valued in the United States, so monetary crimes are punished. It's against the law to rob a bank, and banks go to great lengths to prevent such crimes. People safeguard valuable possessions and install antitheft devices to protect homes and cars. A less strictly enforced social norm is driving while intoxicated. While it's against the law to drive drunk, drinking is for the most part an acceptable social behavior. And though there are laws to punish drunk driving, there are few systems in place to prevent the crime. These examples show a range of enforcement in formal norms.

There are plenty of formal norms, but the list of **informal norms**—casual behaviors that are generally and widely conformed to—is longer. People learn informal norms by observation, imitation, and general socialization. Some informal norms are taught directly—"Kiss your Aunt Edna" or "Use your napkin"—while others are learned by observation, including observations of the consequences when someone else violates a norm. But although informal norms define personal interactions, they extend into other systems as well. In the United States, there are informal norms regarding behavior at fast food restaurants. Customers line up to order their food and leave when they are done. They don't sit down at a table with strangers, sing loudly as they prepare their condiments, or nap in a booth. Most people don't commit even benign breaches of informal norms. Informal norms dictate appropriate behaviors without the need of written rules.

Breaching Experiments

Sociologist Harold Garfinkel (1917–2011) studied people's customs in order to find out how societal rules and norms not only influenced behavior but also shaped social order. He believed that members of society together create a social order (Weber 2011). His resulting book, Studies in Ethnomethodology, published in 1967, discusses people's assumptions about the social makeup of their communities.

One of Garfinkel's research methods was known as a "breaching experiment," in which the researcher behaves in a socially awkward manner in order to test the sociological concepts of social norms and conformity. The participants are not aware an experiment is in progress. If the breach is successful, however, these "innocent bystanders" will respond in some way. For example, if the experimenter is, say, a man in a business suit, and he skips down the sidewalk or hops on one foot, the passersby are likely to stare at him with surprised expressions on their faces. But the experimenter does not simply "act weird" in public. Rather, the point is to deviate from a specific social norm in a small way, to subtly break some form of social etiquette, and see what happens.

To conduct his ethnomethodology, Garfinkel deliberately imposed strange behaviors on unknowing people. Then he observed their responses. He suspected that odd behaviors would shatter conventional expectations, but he wasn't sure how. For example, he set up a simple game of tic-tac-toe. One player was asked beforehand to mark Xs and Os not in the boxes but on the lines dividing the spaces instead. The other player, in the dark about the study, was flabbergasted and did not know how to continue. The second player's reactions of outrage, anger, puzzlement, or other emotions illustrated the existence of cultural norms that constitute social life. These cultural norms play an important role. They let us know how to behave around each other and how to feel comfortable in our community.

There are many rules about speaking with strangers in public. It's OK to tell a woman you like her shoes. It's not OK to ask if you can try them on. It's OK to stand in line behind someone at the ATM. It's not OK to look over his shoulder as he makes his transaction. It's OK to sit beside someone on a crowded bus. It's weird to sit beside a stranger in a half-empty bus.

For some breaches, the researcher directly engages with innocent bystanders. An experimenter might strike up a conversation in a public bathroom, where it's common to respect each other's privacy so fiercely as to ignore other people's presence. In a grocery store, an experimenter

might take a food item out of another person's grocery cart, saying, "That looks good! I think I'll try it." An experimenter might sit down at a table with others in a fast food restaurant or follow someone around a museum and study the same paintings. In those cases, the bystanders are pressured to respond, and their discomfort illustrates how much we depend on social norms. Breaching experiments uncover and explore the many unwritten social rules we live by.

Norms may be further classified as either mores or folkways. **Mores** (mor-ays) are norms that embody the moral views and principles of a group. Violating them can have serious consequences. The strongest mores are legally protected with laws or other formal norms. In the United States, for instance, murder is considered immoral, and it's punishable by law (a formal norm). But more often, mores are judged and guarded by public sentiment (an informal norm). People who violate mores are seen as shameful. They can even be shunned or banned from some groups. The mores of the U.S. school system require that a student's writing be in the student's own words or use special forms (such as quotation marks and a whole system of citation) for crediting other writers. Writing another person's words as if they are one's own has a name—plagiarism. The consequences for violating this norm are severe and usually result in expulsion.

Unlike mores, **folkways** are norms without any moral underpinnings. Rather, folkways direct appropriate behavior in the day-to-day practices and expressions of a culture. They indicate whether to shake hands or kiss on the cheek when greeting another person. They specify whether to wear a tie and blazer or a T-shirt and sandals to an event. In Canada, women can smile and say hello to men on the street. In Egypt, that's not acceptable. In regions in the southern United States, bumping into an acquaintance means stopping to chat. It's considered rude not to, no matter how busy one is. In other regions, people guard their privacy and value time efficiency. A simple nod of the head is enough. Other accepted folkways in the United States may include holding the door open for a stranger or giving someone a gift on their birthday. The rules regarding these folkways may change from culture to culture.

Many folkways are actions we take for granted. People need to act without thinking in order to get seamlessly through daily routines; they can't stop and analyze every action (Sumner 1906). Those who experience culture shock may find that it subsides as they learn the new culture's folkways and are able to move through their daily routines more smoothly. Folkways might be small manners, learned by observation and imitation but they are by no means trivial. Like mores and laws, these norms help people negotiate their daily lives within a given culture.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13281

Watch IT

Watch this video to recap the things we've learned about in this module thus far—including culture, values, beliefs, norms, mores, and folkways. The video also explains the importance of symbols and introduces the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which we'll examine in more detail soon.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=120

Think It Over

- How do you think your culture would exist if there were no such thing as a social "norm"? Do you think chaos would ensue or relative peace could be kept? Explain.

glossary

folkways:
direct, appropriate behavior in the day-to-day practices and expressions of a culture

formal norms:
established, written rules

informal norms:
casual behaviors that are generally and widely conformed to

mores:

the moral views and principles of a group

norms:
the visible and invisible rules of conduct through which societies are structured

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Elements of Culture. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:8pgQStDd@7/3-2-Elements-of-Culture. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Symbols, Values & Norms: Crash Course Sociology #10. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGrVhM_Gi8k&t=14s&index=12&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 6.4: Social Norms is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.5: Symbols and Language

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the significance of symbols and language to a culture
- Explain the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Symbols and Language

Humans, consciously and subconsciously, are always striving to make sense of their surrounding world. **Symbols**—such as gestures, signs, objects, signals, and words—help people understand that world. They provide clues to understanding experiences by conveying recognizable meanings that are shared by societies.

The world is filled with symbols. Sports uniforms, company logos, and traffic signs are symbols. In some cultures, a gold ring is a symbol of marriage. Some symbols are highly functional; stop signs, for instance, provide useful instruction. As physical objects, they belong to **material culture**, but because they function as symbols, they also convey **nonmaterial** cultural meanings. Some symbols are valuable only in what they represent. Trophies, blue ribbons, or gold medals, for example, serve no other purpose than to represent accomplishments. But many objects have both material and nonmaterial symbolic value.

A police officer's badge and uniform are symbols of authority and law enforcement. The sight of an officer in uniform or a squad car triggers reassurance in some citizens, and annoyance, fear, or anger in others.

It's easy to take symbols for granted. Few people challenge or even think about stick figure signs on the doors of public bathrooms. But those figures are more than just symbols that tell men and women which bathrooms to use. They also uphold the value, in the United States, that public restrooms should be gender exclusive. Even though stalls are relatively private, most places don't offer unisex bathrooms.



Figure 1. Some road signs are universal. But how would you interpret the signage on the right? (Photo (a) courtesy of Andrew Bain/flickr; Photo (b) courtesy of HonzaSoukup/flickr)

Symbols often get noticed when they are out of context. Used unconventionally, they convey strong messages. A stop sign on the door of a corporation makes a political statement, as does a camouflage military jacket worn in an antiwar protest. Together, the semaphore signals for "N" and "D" represent nuclear disarmament—and form the well-known peace sign (Westcott 2008). Today, some college students have taken to wearing pajamas and bedroom slippers to class, clothing that was formerly associated only with privacy and bedtime. Though students might deny it, the outfit defies traditional cultural norms and makes a statement.

Even the destruction of symbols is symbolic. Effigies representing public figures are burned to demonstrate anger at certain leaders. In 1989, crowds tore down the Berlin Wall, a decades-old symbol of the division between East and West Germany, communism, and capitalism.

While different cultures have varying systems of symbols, one symbol is common to all: language. **Language** is a symbolic system through which people communicate and through which culture is transmitted. Some languages contain a system of symbols used for written communication, while others rely on only spoken communication and nonverbal actions.

Societies often share a single language, and many languages contain the same basic elements. An alphabet is a written system made of symbolic shapes that refer to spoken sound. Taken together, these symbols convey specific meanings. The English alphabet uses

a combination of twenty-six letters to create words; these twenty-six letters make up over 600,000 recognized English words (OED Online 2011).

Rules for speaking and writing vary even within cultures, most notably by region. Do you refer to a can of carbonated liquid as "soda," pop," or "Coke"? Is a household entertainment room a "family room," "rec room," or "den"? When leaving a restaurant, do you ask your server for a "check," the "ticket," or your "bill"?

Language is constantly evolving as societies create new ideas. In this age of technology, people have adapted almost instantly to new nouns such as "e-mail" and "Internet," and verbs such as "downloading," "texting," and "blogging." Thirty years ago, the general public would have considered these to be nonsense words.

Even while it constantly evolves, language continues to shape our reality. This insight was established in the 1920s by two linguists, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf. They believed that reality is culturally determined, and that any interpretation of reality is based on a society's language. To prove this point, the sociologists argued that every language has words or expressions specific to that language. In the United States, for example, the number thirteen is associated with bad luck. In Japan, however, the number four is considered unlucky, since it is pronounced similarly to the Japanese word for "death."

The **Sapir-Whorf hypothesis** is based on the idea that people experience their world through their language, and that they therefore understand their world through the culture embedded in their language. The hypothesis, which has also been called linguistic relativity, states that language shapes thought (Swoyer 2003). Studies have shown, for instance, that unless people have access to the word "ambivalent," they don't recognize an experience of uncertainty from having conflicting positive and negative feelings about an issue. Essentially, the hypothesis argues that if a person can't describe the experience, the person is not having the experience.

Further Research

The science-fiction novel, *Babel-17*, by Samuel R. Delaney was based upon the principles of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Read an excerpt from the novel *Babel-17* here.

Watch this RSA Animate "Language as a Window into Human Nature" from psychologist Stephen Pinker to see examples of how language influences our relationships.

In addition to using language, people communicate without words. Nonverbal communication is symbolic, and, as in the case of language, much of it is learned through one's culture. Some gestures are nearly universal: smiles often represent joy, and crying often represents sadness. Other nonverbal symbols vary across cultural contexts in their meaning. A thumbs-up, for example, indicates positive reinforcement in the United States, whereas in Russia and Australia, it is an offensive curse (Passero 2002). Other gestures vary in meaning depending on the situation and the person. A wave of the hand can mean many things, depending on how it's done and for whom. It may mean "hello," "goodbye," "no thank you," or "I'm royalty." Winks convey a variety of messages, including "We have a secret," "I'm only kidding," or "I'm attracted to you." From a distance, a person can understand the emotional gist of two people in conversation just by watching their body language and facial expressions. Furrowed brows and folded arms indicate a serious topic, possibly an argument. Smiles, with heads lifted and arms open, suggest a lighthearted, friendly chat.

Is the United States Bilingual?

In 1991, when she was six years old, Lucy Alvarez attended a school that allowed for the use of both English and Spanish. Lucy's teacher was bilingual, the librarian offered bilingual books, and many of the school staff spoke both Spanish and English. Lucy and many of her classmates who spoke only Spanish at home were lucky. According to the U.S. Census, 13.8 percent of U.S. residents speak a non-English language at home. That's a significant figure, but not enough to ensure that Lucy would be encouraged to use her native language in school (Mount 2010).



Figure 2. Nowadays, many signs—on streets and in stores—include both English and Spanish. What effect does this have on members of society? What effect does it have on our culture? (Photo courtesy of istolethetv/flickr)

Lucy's parents, who moved to Texas from Mexico, struggled under the pressure to speak English. Lucy might easily have gotten lost and left behind if she'd felt the same pressure in school. In 2008, researchers from Johns Hopkins University conducted a series of studies on the effects of bilingual education (Slavin et al. 2008). They found that students taught in both their native tongue and English make better progress than those taught only in English. This finding is in keeping with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in that the specific formal rules of one's language can constrain the conceptual meanings that are accessible to them in learning situations.

Technically, the United States has no official language. But many believe English to be the rightful language of the United States, and over thirty states have passed laws specifying English as the official tongue. Proponents of English-only laws suggest that a national ruling will save money on translation, printing, and human resource costs, including funding for bilingual teachers. They argue that setting English as the official language will encourage non-English speakers to learn English faster and adapt to the culture of the United States more easily (Mount 2010).

Groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) oppose making English the official language and claim that it violates the rights of non-English speakers. English-only laws, they believe, deny the reality of our nation's diversity and unfairly target Latinos and Asians. They point to the fact that much of the debate on this topic has risen since 1970, a time when the United States experienced new waves of immigration from Asia and Mexico.

Today, a lot of product information gets written in multiple languages. Enter a store like Home Depot and you'll find signs in both English and Spanish. Buy a children's product, and the safety warnings could be presented in multiple languages. While marketers are financially motivated to reach the largest number of consumers possible, this trend also may help people acclimate to a culture of bilingualism.

Studies show that most U.S. immigrants eventually abandon their native tongues and become fluent in English. Bilingual education helps with that transition. Today, Lucy Alvarez is an ambitious and high-achieving college student. Fluent in both English and Spanish, Lucy is studying law enforcement—a field that seeks bilingual employees. The same bilingualism that contributed to her success in grade school will help her thrive professionally as a law officer serving her community.

Think It Over

- What do you think of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis? Do you agree or disagree with it? Cite examples or research to support your point of view.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13282

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13283

Glossary

language:
a symbolic system of communication

Sapir-Whorf hypothesis:

the idea that people understand the world based on their form of language

symbols:

gestures or objects that have meanings associated with them that are recognized by people who share a culture

CC licensed content, Original

- Recommendation for RSA animate video. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Elements of Culture. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:8pgQStDd@7/3-2-Elements-of-Culture. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 6.5: Symbols and Language is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.6: Introduction to Cultural Similarities and Differences

What you'll learn to do: explain culture, society, cultural universals, and cultural relativism



Are there rules for eating at McDonald's? Generally, we do not think about rules in a fast food restaurant, but if you look around one on a typical weekday, you will see people acting as if they were trained for the role of fast food customer. They stand in line, pick items from the colorful menus, swipe debit cards to pay, and wait to collect trays of food. After a quick meal, customers wad up their paper wrappers and toss them into garbage cans. Customers' movement through this fast food routine is orderly and predictable, even if no rules are posted and no officials direct the process.

People have written entire books analyzing the significance of fast food customs. They examine the extensive, detailed physicality of fast food: the food itself, wrappers, bags, trays, those tiny ketchup packets, the tables and chairs, and even the restaurant building. Everything about a chain restaurant reflects culture, the beliefs and behaviors that a social group shares. Sociological analysis can be applied to every expression of culture, from sporting events to holidays, from education to transportation, from fashion to etiquette.

In this section, you'll examine culture and society and come to understand that a culture represents the beliefs, practices and artifacts of a group, while society represents the social structures and organization of the people who share those beliefs and practices.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Cultural Similarities and Differences. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Sociology. **Authored by**: William Little. **Provided by**: BC OpenTextbooks. **Located at**: https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter3-culture/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Culture. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:io7WC_uF@5/Introduction-to-Culture. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- McDonalds worker in the early 80s. **Authored by**: Ethan. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/42353480@N02/8301882207/in/photolist-dDBjm8-eWWJZ-q5BsUz-87rAHC-28X56zo-oyaR7W-ogTmak-ceJymf-9RGtQt-q5CSVg-7MhAtF-7SVk8s-dJoSFt-6vT2yY-qkFu55-q66qyL-q6eSkt-q5Buh4-qkyKv8-5qktZw-qkyKYc-ffyaLJ-dUVgrf-95ZmA7-fzn7kW-MV3Aj7-np6FbP-MV3JUJ-27hGdnh-MV3FZW-27hGrPs-q6732w-q671rh-pqi2BD-95WjnM-e3LLUs-q5BwrK-WV2Tv8-FAyHzV-cw1iYS-bWqvXc-29Yhb55-C7kgEV-25vQ4u1-MV3Y4u-2evGNBr-AaT2n2-29YhiW7-FE8UGW-RE1AfY. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 6.6: Introduction to Cultural Similarities and Differences is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.7: Cultural Universals

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss and give examples of cultural universalism

Cultural Universals

Often, a comparison of one culture to another will reveal obvious differences. But all cultures also share common elements. **Cultural universals** are patterns or traits that are globally common to all societies. One example of a cultural universal is the family unit: every human society recognizes a family structure that regulates sexual reproduction and the care of children. Even so, how that family unit is defined and how it functions varies. In many Asian cultures, for example, family members from all generations commonly live together in one household. In these cultures, young adults continue to live in the extended household family structure until they marry and join their spouse's household, or they may remain and raise their own nuclear family within the extended family's homestead. In the United States, by contrast, individuals are expected to leave home and live independently for a period before forming a family unit that consists of parents and their offspring. Other cultural universals include customs like funeral rites, weddings, and celebrations of births. However, each culture may view and enact these rituals and ceremonies quite differently.

Anthropologist George Murdock first recognized the existence of cultural universals while studying systems of kinship around the world. Murdock found that cultural universals often revolve around basic human survival, such as finding food, clothing, and shelter, or around shared human experiences, such as birth and death or illness and healing. Through his research, Murdock identified other universals including language, the concept of personal names, and, interestingly, jokes. Humor seems to be a universal way to release tensions and create a sense of unity among people (Murdock 1949). Sociologists consider humor necessary to human interaction because it helps individuals navigate otherwise tense situations.

Is Music a Cultural Universal?

Imagine that you are sitting in a theater, watching a film. The movie opens with the heroine sitting on a park bench with a grim expression on her face. Cue the music. The first slow and mournful notes play in a minor key. As the melody continues, the heroine turns her head and sees a man walking toward her. The music slowly gets louder, and the dissonance of the chords sends a prickle of fear running down your spine. You sense that the heroine is in danger.

Now imagine that you are watching the same movie, but with a different soundtrack. As the scene opens, the music is soft and soothing, with a hint of sadness. You see the heroine sitting on the park bench and sense her loneliness. Suddenly, the music swells. The woman looks up and sees a man walking toward her. The music grows fuller, and the pace picks up. You feel your heart rise in your chest. This is a happy moment.

Music has the ability to evoke emotional responses. In television shows, movies, even commercials, music elicits laughter, sadness, or fear. Are these types of musical cues cultural universals?

In 2009, a team of psychologists, led by Thomas Fritz of the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Leipzig, Germany, studied people's reactions to music that they'd never heard (Fritz et al. 2009). The research team traveled to Cameroon, Africa, and asked Mafa tribal members to listen to Western music. The tribe, isolated from Western culture, had never been exposed to Western culture and had no context or experience within which to interpret its music. Even so, as the tribal members listened to a Western piano piece, they were able to recognize three basic emotions: happiness, sadness, and fear. Music, it turns out, is a sort of universal language.

Researchers also found that music can foster a sense of wholeness within a group. In fact, scientists who study the evolution of language have concluded that originally language (an established component of group identity) and music were one (Darwin 1871). Additionally, since music is largely nonverbal, the sounds of music can cross societal boundaries more easily than words. Music allows people from different cultures to easily make connections, whereas overcoming language barriers might be more difficult. As Fritz and his team found, music and the emotions it conveys can be cultural universals.

Think It Over

- Examine the difference between material and nonmaterial culture in your world. Identify ten objects that are part of your regular cultural experience. For each, then identify what aspects of nonmaterial culture (values and beliefs) that these objects represent. What has this exercise revealed to you about your culture?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13284

Glossary

cultural universals:
patterns or traits that are globally common to all societies

material culture:
the objects or belongings of a group of people

nonmaterial culture:
the ideas, attitudes, and beliefs of a society

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- What is Culture?. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:-HOYsFU6@8/3-1-What-Is-Culture. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 6.7: Cultural Universals is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.8: Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

Learning Outcomes

- Describe and give examples of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism

Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

Despite how much humans have in common, cultural differences are far more prevalent than cultural universals. For example, while all cultures have language, analysis of particular language structures and conversational etiquette reveal tremendous differences. In some Middle Eastern cultures, it is common to stand close to others in conversation. North Americans keep more distance and maintain a larger "personal space." Even something as simple as eating and drinking varies greatly from culture to culture. If your professor comes into an early morning class holding a mug of liquid, what do you assume she is drinking? In the United States, the mug is most likely filled with coffee, not Earl Grey tea, a favorite in England, or Yak Butter tea, a staple in Tibet.

The way cuisines vary across cultures fascinates many people. Some travelers pride themselves on their willingness to try unfamiliar foods, like celebrated food writer Anthony Bourdain, while others return home expressing gratitude for their native culture's fare. Often, people in the United States express disgust at other cultures' cuisine and think that it's gross to eat meat from a dog or guinea pig, for example, while they don't question their own habit of eating cows or pigs. Such attitudes are an example of **ethnocentrism**, or evaluating and judging another culture based on how it compares to one's own cultural norms. Ethnocentrism, as sociologist William Graham Sumner (1906) described the term, involves a belief or attitude that one's own culture is better than all others, and should therefore serve as the standard frame of reference. Almost everyone is a little bit ethnocentric. For example, Americans tend to say that people from England drive on the "wrong" side of the road, rather than on the "other" side. Someone from a country where dog meat is standard fare might find it off-putting to see a dog in a French restaurant—not on the menu, but as a pet and fellow patron's companion. A good example of ethnocentrism is referring to parts of Asia as the "Far East." One might question, "Far east of where?"

A high level of appreciation for one's own culture can be healthy; a shared sense of community pride, for example, connects people in a society. But ethnocentrism can lead to disdain or dislike for other cultures and could cause misunderstanding and conflict. People with the best intentions sometimes travel to a society to "help" its people, because they see them as uneducated or backward—essentially inferior. In reality, these travelers are guilty of **cultural imperialism**, the deliberate imposition of one's own ostensibly advanced cultural values on another culture. Europe's colonial expansion, begun in the sixteenth century, was often accompanied by a severe cultural imperialism. European colonizers often viewed the people in the lands they colonized as uncultured savages who were in need of European governance, dress, religion, and other cultural practices. A more modern example of cultural imperialism may include the work of international aid agencies who introduce agricultural methods and plant species from developed countries while overlooking indigenous varieties and agricultural approaches that are better suited to a particular region.

Ethnocentrism can be so strong that when confronted with all of the differences of a new culture, one may experience disorientation and frustration. In sociology, we call this **culture shock**. A traveler from Chicago might find the nightly silence of rural Montana unsettling, not peaceful. An exchange student from China might be annoyed by the constant interruptions in class as other students ask questions—a practice that is considered rude in China. Perhaps the Chicago traveler was initially captivated by Montana's quiet beauty and the Chinese student was originally excited to see a U.S.-style classroom firsthand. But as they experience unanticipated differences from their own culture, their excitement gives way to discomfort and doubts about how to behave appropriately in the new situation. Eventually, as people learn more about a culture and adapt to its norms, they recover from culture shock.

Culture shock may appear because people aren't always expecting cultural differences. Anthropologist Ken Barger (1971) discovered this when he conducted a participatory observation in an Inuit community in the Canadian Arctic. Originally from Indiana, Barger hesitated when invited to join a local snowshoe race. He knew he'd never hold his own against these experts. Sure enough, he finished last, to his mortification. But the tribal members congratulated him, saying, "You really tried!" In Barger's own culture, he had learned to value victory. To the Inuit people, winning was enjoyable, but their culture valued survival skills essential to their environment: how hard someone tried could mean the difference between life and death. Over the course of his stay, Barger participated in caribou hunts, learned how to take shelter in winter storms, and sometimes went days with little or no food to share

among tribal members. Trying hard and working together, two nonmaterial values, were indeed much more important than winning.

During his time with the Inuit tribe, Barger learned to engage in cultural relativism. **Cultural relativism** is the practice of assessing a culture by its own standards rather than viewing it through the lens of one's own culture. Practicing cultural relativism requires an open mind and a willingness to consider, and even adapt to, new values and norms. However, indiscriminately embracing everything about a new culture is not always possible. Even the most culturally relativist people from egalitarian societies—ones in which women have political rights and control over their own bodies—would question whether the widespread practice of female genital mutilation in countries such as Ethiopia and Sudan should be accepted as a part of cultural tradition. Sociologists attempting to engage in cultural relativism, then, may struggle to reconcile aspects of their own culture with aspects of a culture they are studying.

Sometimes when people attempt to rectify feelings of ethnocentrism and to practice cultural relativism, they swing too far to the other end of the spectrum. **Xenocentrism** is the opposite of ethnocentrism, and refers to the belief that another culture is superior to one's own. (The Greek root word *xeno*, pronounced "ZEE-no," means "stranger" or "foreign guest.") An exchange student who goes home after a semester abroad or a sociologist who returns from the field may find it difficult to associate with the values of their own culture after having experienced what they deem a more upright or nobler way of living.

Perhaps the greatest challenge for sociologists studying different cultures is the matter of keeping a perspective. It is impossible for anyone to keep all cultural biases at bay; the best we can do is strive to be aware of them. Pride in one's own culture doesn't have to lead to imposing its values on others. And an appreciation for another culture shouldn't preclude individuals from studying it with a critical eye.

Overcoming Culture Shock



Figure 1. Experiencing new cultures offers an opportunity to practice cultural relativism. (Photo courtesy of OledSidorenko/flickr)

During her summer vacation, Caitlin flew from Chicago to Madrid to visit Maria, the exchange student she'd befriended the previous semester. In the airport, she heard rapid, musical Spanish being spoken all around her. Exciting as it was, she felt isolated and disconnected. Maria's mother kissed Caitlin on both cheeks when she greeted her. Her imposing father kept his distance. Caitlin was half asleep by the time supper was served—at 10 p.m.! Maria's family sat at the table for hours, speaking loudly, gesturing, and arguing about politics, a taboo dinner subject in Caitlin's house. They served wine and toasted their honored guest. Caitlin had trouble interpreting her hosts' facial expressions, and didn't realize she should make the next toast. That night, Caitlin crawled into a strange bed, wishing she hadn't come. She missed her home and felt overwhelmed by the new customs, language, and surroundings. She'd studied Spanish in school for years—why hadn't it prepared her for this?

What Caitlin hadn't realized was that people depend not only on spoken words but also on subtle cues like gestures and facial expressions, to communicate. Cultural norms accompany even the smallest nonverbal signals (DuBois 1951). They help people know when to shake hands, where to sit, how to converse, and even when to laugh. We relate to others through a shared set of cultural norms, and ordinarily, we take them for granted.

For this reason, culture shock is often associated with traveling abroad, although it can happen in one's own country, state, or even hometown. Anthropologist Kalervo Oberg (1960) is credited with first coining the term "culture shock." In his studies, Oberg found that most people found encountering a new culture to be exciting at first. But bit by bit, they became stressed by interacting with people from a different culture who spoke another language and used different regional expressions. There was new food to digest, new daily schedules to follow, and new rules of etiquette to learn. Living with these constant adaptive challenges can make people feel incompetent and insecure. People react to frustration in a new culture, Oberg found, by initially rejecting it and glorifying one's own culture. An American visiting Italy might long for a "real" pizza or complain about the unsafe driving habits of Italians compared to people in the United States.

It helps to remember that culture is learned. Everyone is ethnocentric to an extent, and identifying with one's own country is natural.

Caitlin's shock was minor compared to that of her friends Dayar and Mahlika, a Turkish couple living in married student housing on campus. And it was nothing like that of her classmate Sanai. Sanai had been forced to flee war-torn Bosnia with her family when she was fifteen. After two weeks in Spain, Caitlin had developed a bit more compassion and understanding for what those people had gone through. She understood that adjusting to a new culture takes time. It can take weeks or months to recover from culture shock, and it can take years to fully adjust to living in a new culture.

By the end of Caitlin's trip, she'd made new lifelong friends. She'd stepped out of her comfort zone. She'd learned a lot about Spain, but she'd also discovered a lot about herself and her own culture.

Further Research

In January 2011, a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America presented evidence indicating that the hormone oxytocin could regulate and manage instances of ethnocentrism. Read the full article "Oxytocin promotes human ethnocentrism" here.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13285

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13286

Think It Over

- Do you feel that feelings of ethnocentricity or xenocentricity are more prevalent in U.S. culture? Why do you believe this? What issues or events might inform this?

Glossary

cultural imperialism:
the deliberate imposition of one's own cultural values on another culture

cultural relativism:
the practice of assessing a culture by its own standards, and not in comparison to another culture

culture shock:
an experience of personal disorientation when confronted with an unfamiliar way of life

ethnocentrism:
the practice of evaluating another culture according to the standards of one's own culture

xenocentrism:
a belief that another culture is superior to one's own

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Scott Barr for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- What is Culture?. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:-HOYsFU6@8/3-1-What-Is-Culture. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 6.8: Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.9: Introduction to Pop Culture, Subculture, and Cultural Change

What you'll learn to do: examine pop culture, subculture, and cultural change



Figure 1. Netflix is an American subscription based streaming service for television and movies, media considered part of popular culture. (Photo courtesy of freestocks.org/unsplash)

It may seem obvious that there are a multitude of cultural differences between societies in the world. After all, we can easily see that people have different beliefs and engage in different practices from one society to the next. It's natural that a young woman from rural Kenya would have a very different view of the world from an elderly man in Mumbai—one of the most populated cities in the world. Additionally, each culture has its own internal variations. Sometimes the differences between cultures are not nearly as large as the differences inside cultures. You'll examine these differences in this section.

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to pop culture, Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Netflix. **Authored by**: freestocks.org. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/11SgH7U6TmI. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 6.9: Introduction to Pop Culture, Subculture, and Cultural Change is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.10: Pop Culture and Subculture

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss the roles of high culture, pop culture, subculture, and counterculture within society

High Culture and Popular Culture

Do you prefer listening to opera or hip hop music? Do you like watching horse racing or NASCAR? Do you read books of poetry or celebrity magazines? In each pair, one type of entertainment is considered high-brow and the other low-brow. Sociologists use the term **high culture** to describe the pattern of cultural experiences and attitudes that exist in the highest class segments of a society. People often associate high culture with intellectualism, political power, and prestige. In America, high culture also tends to be associated with wealth. Events considered high culture can be expensive and formal—attending a ballet, or listening to a live symphony performance, for example.

The term **popular culture** refers to the pattern of the more accessible cultural experiences and attitudes that exist in mainstream society. Popular culture events might include a parade, a baseball game, or the season finale of a television show. Rock and pop music—"pop" is short for "popular"—are part of popular culture. Popular culture is often expressed and spread via commercial media such as radio, television, movies, the music industry, publishers, and corporate-run websites. Unlike high culture, popular culture is known and accessible to most people. You can share a discussion of favorite football teams with a new coworker or comment on *American Idol* when making small talk in line at the grocery store. But if you tried to launch into a deep discussion on the classical Greek play *Antigone*, few members of U.S. society today would be readily familiar with it.

Although high culture may be viewed as superior to popular culture, the labels of high culture and popular culture vary over time and place. Shakespearean plays, considered pop culture when they were written, are now part of our society's high culture. Five hundred years from now, will our descendants associate *Breaking Bad* with the cultural elite?

Subculture and Counterculture

A **subculture** is just what it sounds like—a smaller cultural group within a larger culture; people of a subculture are part of the larger culture but also share a specific identity within a smaller group.

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

Sociologists distinguish subcultures from **countercultures**, which are a type of subculture that rejects the larger culture's norms and values. In contrast to subcultures, which operate relatively smoothly within the larger society, countercultures might actively defy larger society by developing their own set of rules and norms to live by, sometimes even creating communities that operate outside of and apart from the larger society. It is this oppositional, perhaps even antagonistic position that mainly distinguishes a counterculture from a subculture.

Further Research

The Beats were a counterculture that birthed an entire movement of art, music, and literature—much of which is still highly regarded and studied today. The man responsible for the phrase "Beat Generation" was Jack Kerouac; however, the man responsible for introducing mainstream America to that generation was John Clellon Holmes, a writer often lumped in with the group. In 1952 he penned an article for the *New York Times Magazine* titled "This Is the Beat Generation." Read "This is the Beat Generation" learn more about Clellon Holmes and the Beats.

Religious and other "cults," a word that derives from the same root as "culture," are also considered counterculture groups. The cult "Yearning for Zion" (YFZ) in Eldorado, Texas, existed outside the mainstream and the limelight, until its leader was accused

of statutory rape and participating in an underage marriage. The sect's formal norms clashed too severely with U.S. law, and in 2008, authorities raided the compound and removed more than two hundred women and children from the property.

The Evolution of American Hipster Subculture

Skinny jeans, chunky glasses, and T-shirts with vintage logos—the contemporary American hipster is a recognizable figure in the United States. Based predominately in metropolitan areas, sometimes clustered around hotspots such as the Williamsburg neighborhood in New York City, or in parts of Portland, Oregon, hipsters define themselves through a rejection of the mainstream and a carefully curated adoption of ironic fashions and perspectives. As a subculture, hipsters casually spurn many of the values, beliefs and outward presentations of mainstream U.S. culture, often preferring oddly hybridized "retro" clothing to more formalized professional attire. Despite this partly oppositional stance, the aesthetic symbols of hipster subculture are increasingly being folded back into mainstream culture. We can see here a difference in how subcultures, which can generally be assimilated into the mainstream, and countercultures, which are typically too antagonistic to be integrated smoothly, understand themselves and are commonly understood by non-members. While hipster culture may seem to be the new trend among middle-class youth and casual-professional young adults, the history of "hip" movements can actually be traced back to the early decades of the 1900s. In fact, the term "hipster" had already been associated with an earlier self-selecting movement.

Where did the hipster culture begin? In the early 1940s, jazz music was on the rise in the United States. Musicians were known as "hepcats" and had a smooth, relaxed quality that went against upright, mainstream life. Those who were "hep" or "hip" lived by the code of jazz, while those who were "square" lived according to society's rules. The idea of a "hipster" was born. One who was "hip" was "in the know," and chose to recognize others who were similarly aware of and engaged in the same beliefs and practices.

The hipster movement spread, and young people, drawn to the music and fashion, took on attitudes and language derived from the culture of jazz. Unlike the vernacular of the day, hipster slang was purposefully exclusionary, and its verbal codes reflected and informed the social habits and dispositions of its users. When hipsters said, "It's cool, man," they were referring to a cultural mood that emphasized a certain relaxation in the face of hardship, as well as a preference for certain desirable forms of music and dress.



Figure 1. In the 1940s, U.S. hipsters were associated with the "cool" culture of jazz. (Photo courtesy of William P. Gottlieb/Ira and Leonore S. Gershwin Fund Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress)

By the 1950s, the jazz culture was winding down and many traits of hepcat culture were becoming mainstream. A new counterculture was on the rise. The "Beat Generation," a phrase coined by writer Jack Kerouac, was anticonformist and antimaterialistic. They were writers who listened to jazz and who embraced that movement's "cool" ethos of separatism and free expression. They bummed around, hitchhiked the country, and lived in squalor, accepting that to be "beat" was to be self-consciously "down and out" or "beaten down."

The lifestyle spread. College students, clutching copies of Kerouac's *On the Road*, dressed in berets, black turtlenecks, and black-rimmed glasses. Women wore black leotards and grew their hair long. Herb Caen, a San Francisco journalist, used the suffix from *Sputnik 1*, the Russian satellite that orbited Earth in 1957, to dub the movement's followers "Beatniks." This belated coinage quickly came to be seen as a pejorative, and Kerouac and his compatriots never used it themselves, preferring "Beat" or "Beat Generation," both of which had been circulating among them since 1948 and 1952, respectively.



Figure 2. Self-consciously “nerdish” and trendy, today’s hipsters define themselves through cultural irony, the aesthetics of which are often disseminated via social media. (Photo courtesy of Lorena Cupcake/Wikimedia Commons)

As the Beat Generation faded, a new, related movement began. It too focused on breaking social boundaries, but it also advocated freedom of expression, mystical and psychedelic philosophies and music, and free love. It took its name from the generations before; in fact, some theorists claim that Beats themselves coined the term to describe their children. Over time, the “hip” beats of the 1950s morphed into the counterculture movement known in the 1960s and early 1970s as the “hippies.” We can see how this cultural history allows us to to trace the evolution of the term “hip.” With some modifications, the concept it names has endured as part of certain countercultures and subcultures.

Today’s generation of hipsters share certain elements of the “hip” ethos with their cultural forebears such as the jazz hepcats, the Beats and the hippies. Although contemporary hipsters may not seem to have much in common with 1940s hipsters, the emphasis on nonconformity and being “in the know” is still there. In 2010, sociologist Mark Greif set about investigating the hipster subculture of the United States and found that much of what tied the group members together was not exclusively based on fashion, musical taste, or even a specific point of contention with the mainstream. Instead, “all hipsters play at being the inventors or first adopters of novelties,” Greif wrote, “Pride comes from knowing, and deciding, what’s cool in advance of the rest of the world. (Greif 2010). Much as the hepcats of the jazz era opposed common culture with carefully crafted appearances of coolness and relaxation, modern hipsters reject mainstream values with a studiously posed apathy.

Young people are often drawn to oppose mainstream conventions, even if in the same way that others do. Ironic, cool to the point of non-caring, and quasi-intellectual, hipsters continue to perform a subcultural group identity, complete with its own orientations and rituals.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13287

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13288

Watch It

This video reiterates some of the specifics about culture that you have learned about in this module. In the video, you’ll learn more about types of cultures, subcultures, and countercultures and begin an examination into how the structural-functional theory and conflict theory help us understand culture.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=132

Think It Over

- Identify several examples of popular culture and describe how they inform our understanding of the larger culture. How prevalent or important are the effects of these popular cultural expressions in your everyday life?

- Consider some of the specific issues or concerns of your generation. Are any ideas countercultural? What subcultures have emerged from your generation? How have the issues of your generation expressed themselves culturally? How has your generation made its mark on society's collective culture?

Glossary

countercultures:
groups that reject and oppose society's widely accepted cultural patterns and values

high culture:
the cultural patterns of a society's elite

popular culture:

mainstream, widespread patterns among a society's population

subcultures:
groups whose members share a specific identification, apart from a society's majority, even as they exist within a larger society

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Scott Barr for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Pop Culture, Subculture, and Cultural Change. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:TuMX8swj@6/3-3-Pop-Culture-Subculture-and-Cultural-Change. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Cultures, Subcultures, and Countercultures: Crash Course Sociology #11. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV50AV7-Iwc&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=12. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 6.10: Pop Culture and Subculture is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.11: Cultural Change

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the role of innovation, diffusion, and globalization in cultural change

Cultural Change

As the previous hipster example illustrates, culture is always evolving. Moreover, new things are added to material culture every day, and they affect nonmaterial culture as well. Cultures change when something new opens up new ways of living and when new ideas first enter a culture.

In the 21st century, most of us probably think about the latest gadget as promoting cultural change, but technology is not merely a product of the modern era. **Technology** is the application of science to address the problems of daily life. For example, fire and stone tools were some of the first technologies because they changed how people lived. From the first calculator, invented in 2400 B.C.E. Babylon in the form of an abacus, to the predecessor of the modern computer, created in 1882 by Charles Babbage, all of our technological innovations are advancements on previous iterations. All aspects of our lives today are influenced by technology. In agriculture, the introduction of machines that can till, thresh, plant, and harvest greatly reduced the need for manual labor, which in turn meant there were fewer rural jobs. This led to the urbanization of society, as well as lowered birthrates because there was less need for large families to work the farms. In the criminal justice system, the ability to ascertain innocence through DNA testing has saved the lives of people on death row. The examples are endless: technology plays a role in absolutely every aspect of our lives and in many ways has led to cultural change.

Innovation: Discovery and Invention

An **invention** refers to an object or concept's initial appearance in society. It can be thought of as the creation of a product or introduction of a process for the first time. **Discoveries** make known previously unknown but existing aspects of reality. In 1610, when Galileo looked through his telescope and discovered Saturn, the planet was already there, but until then, no one had known about it. When Christopher Columbus encountered America, the land was, of course, already well known to its inhabitants. However, Columbus's discovery was new knowledge for Europeans, and it opened the way to changes in European culture, as well as to the cultures of the discovered lands. For example, new foods such as potatoes and tomatoes transformed the European diet, and horses brought from Europe changed hunting practices of Native American tribes of the Great Plains.

Innovations result when something is improved upon or formed from existing objects or concepts—when things are put together in a new manner. For example, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, electric appliances were invented at an astonishing pace. Cars, airplanes, vacuum cleaners, lamps, radios, telephones, and televisions were all new inventions. After the initial invention, innovation resulted in better models, faster processing times, improved technology, and even in new inventions. Inventions and innovations may shape a culture when people use them in place of older ways of carrying out activities, and especially when relating to or communicating with others. Their adoption reflects (and may shape) cultural values, and their use may require new norms for new situations and activities.

Consider the introduction of modern communication technology, such as mobile phones and smartphones. As more and more people began carrying these devices, phone conversations no longer were restricted to homes, offices, and phone booths. People on trains, in restaurants, and in other public places often became annoyed by listening to one-sided conversations. New norms were needed for cell phone use. Some people felt that those who are out in the world should pay attention to their companions and surroundings, and shouldn't unnecessarily disturb others. However, technology soon produced a workaround: texting, which enables quiet communication and has surpassed phoning as the chief way to meet today's highly valued ability to stay in touch anywhere.

When the pace of innovation increases, it can lead to generation gaps. Technological gadgets that catch on quickly with one generation are sometimes met with indifference by a skeptical older generation. A culture's objects and ideas can cause not just generational but cultural gaps. Material culture tends to diffuse more quickly than nonmaterial culture; technology can spread through society in a matter of months, but it can take generations for the ideas and beliefs of society to change. Sociologist William F. Ogburn coined the term **culture lag** to refer to this time that elapses between the introduction of a new item of material culture and its acceptance as part of nonmaterial culture (Ogburn 1957).

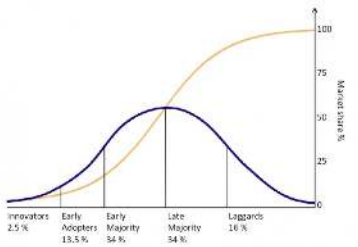


Figure 1. Sociologist Everett Rogers (1962) developed a model of the diffusion of innovations. As consumers gradually adopt a new innovation, the item grows toward a market share of 100 percent, or complete saturation within a society. (Graph courtesy of Tungsten/Wikimedia Commons)

Culture lag can also cause tangible problems. The infrastructure of the United States, built a hundred years ago or more, is having trouble supporting today's more heavily populated and fast-paced society. Yet there is a lag in conceptualizing solutions to infrastructure problems. Rising fuel prices, increased air pollution, and traffic jams are all symptoms of culture lag. Although people are becoming aware of the consequences of overusing resources, the means to support changes takes time to achieve.

Diffusion and Globalization

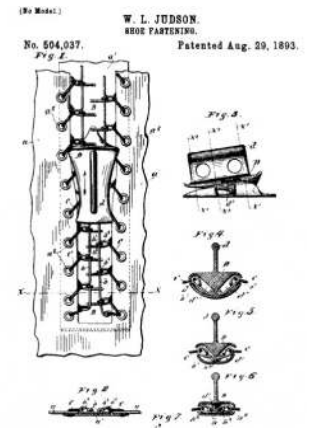


Figure 2. Officially patented in 1893 as the "clasp locker" (left), the zipper did not diffuse through society for many decades. Today, it is immediately recognizable around the world. (Photo (a) courtesy of U.S. Patent Office/Wikimedia Commons; Photo (b) courtesy of Rabensteiner/Wikimedia Commons)

The integration of world markets and technological advances in recent decades has allowed for greater cultural exchange through the processes of **globalization** and **diffusion**. Beginning in the 1980s, Western governments began to deregulate state-sponsored and funded social services while granting greater liberties and market share to private businesses. As a result, world markets became dominated by multinational companies, a new state of affairs at that time. We have since come to refer to this integration of international trade and finance markets as globalization. Increased communications and air travel have further opened doors for international business relations, facilitating the flow not only of goods but also of information and people as well (Scheuerman 2014). Today, many U.S. companies set up offices in other nations where the costs of materials, productive infrastructure, and labor are cheaper. When a person in

the United States calls to get information about banking, insurance, or computer services, the person taking that call may be working in another country and from a very distant time zone.

Alongside the process of globalization is diffusion, or the spread of material and nonmaterial culture from one culture to another. While globalization refers to the integration of markets, diffusion relates to a similar process in the integration of international cultures. Middle-class Americans can fly overseas and return with a new appreciation of Thai noodles or Italian gelato. Access to television and the Internet has brought the lifestyles and values portrayed in U.S. sitcoms into homes around the globe. Twitter feeds from public demonstrations in one nation have encouraged political protesters in other countries. When this kind of diffusion occurs, material objects and ideas from one culture are introduced into another.

Think It Over

- What are some examples of cultural lag that are present in your life? Do you think technology affects culture positively or negatively? Explain.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13289

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13290

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13291

Glossary

culture lag:
the gap of time between the introduction of material culture and nonmaterial culture's acceptance and integration of it

diffusion:
the spread of material and nonmaterial culture from one culture to another

discoveries:
things and ideas found among what already exists

globalization:
the integration of international trade and finance markets

innovations:
improvements, additions, or new ways of thinking that enhance or transform existing objects, processes, technologies, or organizations

inventions:
new objects or ideas introduced into culture for the first time

technology:
the application of science to solve problems in daily life

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Pop Culture, Subculture, and Cultural Change. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:TuMX8swj@6/3-3-Pop-Culture-Subculture-and-Cultural-Change. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 6.11: Cultural Change is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.12: Globalization and Technology

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the advantages and concerns of media globalization
- Describe the globalization of technology



Figure 1. These Twitter updates—a revolution in real time—show the role social media can play on the political stage. (Photo courtesy of Cambodia4kidsorg/flickr)

In this section, we will look more closely at how media globalization and technological globalization are integral parts of culture and cultural diffusion. As the names suggest, **media globalization** is the worldwide integration of **media** (all print, digital, and electronic means of communication) through the cross-cultural exchange of ideas. **Technological globalization** refers to the cross-cultural development and exchange of technology. The speed with which culture is diffused has changed as a result of technological advances. Sharing of ideas, information, goods, and services through globalization is also possible because of advances in communication technology and the media.

Media Globalization

Have you ever traveled to another country and been surprised to see American advertisements or watched American television or movies abroad? How have companies like Disney successfully marketed their products around the world? Lyons (2005) suggests that multinational corporations are the primary vehicle of media globalization, and these corporations control global mass media content and distribution (Compaine 2005). It is true, when looking at who controls which media outlets, that there are fewer independent news sources as larger and larger conglomerates develop. The United States offers about 1,500 newspapers, 2,600 book publishers, and an equal number of television stations, plus 6,000 magazines and a whopping 10,000 radio outlets (Bagdikian 2004).

On the surface, there is endless opportunity to find diverse media outlets, but the numbers are misleading. **Media consolidation** is a process in which fewer and fewer owners control the majority of media outlets. In 1983, a mere 50 corporations owned the bulk of mass-media outlets. Today in the United States (which has no government-owned media) just five companies control 90 percent of media outlets (McChesney 1999). Ranked by 2014 company revenue, Comcast is the biggest, followed by the Disney Corporation, Time Warner, CBS, and Viacom (Time.com 2014).

Media consolidation results in the following dysfunctions:

1. consolidated media owes more to its stockholders than to the public and represent the political and social interests of only a small minority
2. there are fewer incentives to innovate, improve services, or decrease prices
3. cultural and ideological bias can be widespread and based on the interests of who owns the purveyors of media

Although we have cases where social media was used to document the Arab Spring uprisings in real time in 2011, current research suggests that the public sphere accessing the global village will tend to be rich, Caucasoid, and English-speaking (Jan 2009) and not the predicted “global village” (McLuhan 1964).

Cultural and ideological bias are not the only risks of media globalization. In addition to the risk of cultural imperialism and the loss of local culture, other problems come with the benefits of a more interconnected globe. One risk is the potential for censoring

by national governments that let in only the information and media they feel serve their message, as is occurring in China. Criminals can circumvent local laws against socially deviant and dangerous behaviors such as gambling, child pornography, and the sex trade. Offshore or international web sites allow U.S. citizens (and others) to seek out whatever illegal or illicit information they want, from twenty-four hour online gambling sites that do not require proof of age, to sites that sell child pornography. These examples illustrate the societal risks of unfettered information flow.

Watch It: Media and Culture

Listen to Dr. Tom Patterson, Bradlee Professor of Government and Press at Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy. He also serves as the Research Director of journalistsresource.org. In this clip, he talks a little bit about the Journalist Resource website as well as some of the consequences of globalization.

You can visit the website Journalist's Resource. to learn about some topics related to culture in the news (click on "Society" and then "Culture" from the dropdown menu).

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=136

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13292

Technological Globalization

Technological globalization is accelerated in large part by technological diffusion, or the spread of technology across borders. In the last two decades, there has been rapid improvement in the spread of technology to peripheral and semi-peripheral nations, and a 2008 World Bank report discussed both the benefits and ongoing challenges of this diffusion. In general, the report found that technological progress and economic growth rates were linked, and that the rise in technological progress helped improve the situations of many living in absolute poverty (World Bank 2008). The report recognized that rural and low-tech products such as corn can benefit from new technological innovations, and that, conversely, technologies like mobile banking can aid those whose rural existence consists of low-tech market vending. In addition, technological advances in areas like mobile phones can lead to competition, lowered prices, and concurrent improvements in related areas such as mobile banking and information sharing.

However, the same patterns of social inequality that create a **digital divide**, or the uneven access to technology among different races, classes, and geographic areas, in the United States also create digital divides within other nations. While the growth of technology use *among* countries has increased dramatically over the past several decades, the spread of technology *within* countries is significantly slower for certain nations. In these countries, far fewer people have the training and skills to take advantage of new technology, let alone access it. Technological access tends to be clustered around urban areas and leaves out vast swaths of citizens. While the diffusion of information technologies has the potential to resolve many global social problems, it is often the population most in need that is most affected by the digital divide. For example, technology to purify water could save many lives, but the villages most in need of water purification don't have access to the technology, the funds to purchase it, or the technological comfort level to introduce it as a solution.

The Mighty Cell Phone: How Mobile Phones Are Impacting Sub-Saharan Africa

Many of Africa's poorest countries suffer from a marked lack of infrastructure including poor roads, limited electricity, and minimal access to education and telephones. But while landline use has not changed appreciably during the past ten years, there's been a fivefold increase in mobile phone access. More than a third of people in Sub-Saharan Africa have the ability to access a mobile phone (Katine 2010). Even more can use a "village phone"—through a shared-phone program created by the Grameen Foundation. With access to mobile phone technology, a host of benefits become available that have the potential to change the dynamics in these poorest nations. Sometimes that change is as simple as being able to make a phone call to neighboring market towns. By finding out which markets have vendors interested in their goods, fishers and farmers can ensure they travel to the market that will serve them best and avoid a wasted trip. Others can use mobile phones and some of the emerging money-sending systems to securely transfer money to a family member or business partner elsewhere (Katine 2010). Cell phone usage in Africa has increased rapidly in African nations, with two-fifths of sub-saharan Africans owning cell phones in 2016, and nine out of ten

people owning cell phones in South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana.[1] In fact, cell phone access has outpaced access to electricity in several central African nations.[2]

These shared-phone programs are often funded by businesses like Germany's Vodafone or Britain's Masbabi, which hope to gain market share in the region. Phone giant Nokia points out that there are 4 billion mobile phone users worldwide—that's more than twice as many people as have bank accounts—meaning there is an opportunity to connect banking companies with people who need their services (ITU Telecom 2009). Not all access is corporate-based, however. Other programs are funded by business organizations that seek to help peripheral nations with tools for innovation and entrepreneurship.

But this wave of innovation and potential business comes with costs. There is, certainly, the risk of cultural imperialism, and the assumption that core nations (and core-nation multinationals) know what is best for those struggling in the world's poorest communities. Whether well intentioned or not, the vision of a continent of Africans successfully chatting on their iPhone may not be ideal. Like all aspects of global inequity, access to technology in Africa requires more than just foreign investment. There must be a concerted effort to ensure the benefits of technology get to where they are needed most.

Technological Inequality



Figure 2. Some schools sport cutting-edge computer labs, while others sport barbed wire. Is your academic technology at the cusp of innovation, relatively disadvantaged, or somewhere in between? (Photo courtesy of Carlos Martinez/flickr)

As with any improvement to human society, not everyone has equal access. Technology, in particular, often creates changes that lead to ever greater inequalities. In short, the gap gets wider faster. This technological stratification has led to a new focus on ensuring better access for all.

There are two forms of technological stratification. The first is differential class-based access to technology in the form of the digital divide. This digital divide has led to the second form, a **knowledge gap**, which is, as it sounds, an ongoing and increasing gap in information for those who have less access to technology. Simply put, students in well-funded schools receive more exposure to technology than students in poorly funded schools. Those students with more exposure gain more proficiency, which makes them far more marketable in an increasingly technology-based job market and leaves our society divided into those with technological knowledge and those without. Even as we improve access, we have failed to address an increasingly evident gap in **e-readiness**—the ability to sort through, interpret, and process knowledge (Sciadas 2003).

Since the beginning of the millennium, social science researchers have tried to bring attention to the digital divide. The term became part of the common lexicon in 1996, when then Vice President Al Gore used it in a speech. This was the point when personal computer use shifted dramatically, from 300,000 users in 1991 to more than 10 million users by 1996 (Rappaport 2009). In part, the issue of the digital divide had to do with communities that received infrastructure upgrades that enabled high-speed Internet access, upgrades that largely went to affluent urban and suburban areas, leaving out large swaths of the country.

At the end of the twentieth century, technology access was also a big part of the school experience for those whose communities could afford it. Early in the millennium, poorer communities had little or no technology access, while well-off families had personal computers at home and wired classrooms in their schools. In the 2000s, however, the prices for low-end computers dropped considerably, and it appeared the digital divide was ending. Research demonstrates that technology use and Internet access still vary a great deal by race, class, and age in the United States, though most studies agree that there is minimal difference in Internet use by adult men and adult women.

Data from the Pew Research Center (2011) suggest the emergence of yet another divide. As technological devices get smaller and more mobile, larger percentages of minority groups (such as Latinos and African Americans) are using their phones to connect to the Internet. In fact, about 50 percent of people in these minority groups connect to the web via such devices, whereas only one-third of whites do (Washington 2011). And while it might seem that the Internet is the Internet, regardless of how you get there, there's a notable difference. Tasks like updating a résumé or filling out a job application are much harder on a cell phone than on a wired computer in the home. As a result, the digital divide might mean no access to computers or the Internet, but could mean access to the kind of online technology that allows for empowerment, not just entertainment (Washington 2011).

Mossberger, Tolbert, and Gilbert (2006) demonstrated that the majority of the digital divide for African Americans could be explained by demographic and community-level characteristics, such as socioeconomic status and geographic location. For the Latino population, ethnicity alone, regardless of economics or geography, seemed to limit technology use. Liff and Shepard (2004) found that women, who are accessing technology shaped primarily by male users, feel less confident in their Internet skills and have less Internet access at both work and home. Finally, Guillen and Suarez (2005) found that the global digital divide resulted from both the economic and sociopolitical characteristics of countries.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13294

Technology Today

Does all this technology have a positive or negative impact on your life? When it comes to cell phones, a large majority of users check their phones for messages or calls even when the phone is not ringing. In addition, 71% of cell phone users sleep with the phone next to the bed, 60% of U.S. college students consider themselves to have a cell phone addiction, and 44% of people say they could not go a day without their cell phone.[3]

With so many people using social media both in the United States and abroad, it is no surprise that it is a powerful force for social change. Eighty-eight of 18- to 29-year-olds indicate that they use some form of social media.[4] You will read more about the influence of technology on social movements in later modules, but you can surely see examples around you of ways the technology has been used to raise awareness (like Twitter hashtags), fight stereotypes, or even change laws. In Latvia, two twenty-three-year-olds used a U.S. State Department grant to create an e-petition platform so citizens could submit ideas directly to the Latvian government. If at least 20 percent of the Latvian population (roughly 407,200 people) supports a petition, the government will look at it (Kumar 2014).

Think It Over

- Where do you get your news? Is it owned by a large conglomerate (you can do a web search and find out!)? Does it matter to you who owns your local news outlets? Why, or why not?
- To what extent is technology becoming a cultural universal?
- Can you think of people in your own life who support or defy the premise that access to technology leads to greater opportunities? How have you noticed technology use and opportunity to be linked, or does your experience contradict this idea?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13293

glossary

digital divide:

the uneven access to technology around race, class, and geographic lines

e-readiness:

the ability to sort through, interpret, and process digital knowledge

knowledge gap:

the gap in information that builds as groups grow up without access to technology

media:
all print, digital, and electronic means of communication

media consolidation:
a process by which fewer and fewer owners control the majority of media outlets

media globalization:
the worldwide integration of media through the cross-cultural exchange of ideas

technological diffusion:
the spread of technology across borders

technological globalization:
the cross-cultural development and exchange of technology

1. Cell Phones in Africa: Communication Lifeline. (2016, August 10). Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2015/04/15/cell-phones-in-africa-communication-lifeline/↵
2. https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2017/11/08/in-much-of-sub-saharan-africa-mobile-phones-are-more-common-than-access-to-electricity ↵
3. Cell Phone Addiction. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.psychguides.com/behavioral-disorders/cell-phone-addiction/↵
4. Smith, A., Anderson, M., Smith, A., & Anderson, M. (2018, September 19). Social Media Use 2018: Demographics and Statistics. Retrieved from http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/03/01/social-media-use-in-2018/↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- The Internet, Globalization and the Media Future. **Provided by**: Harvard Kennedy School. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuzvmoMCygg. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 6.12: Globalization and Technology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.13: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Culture and Technology

What you'll learn to do: contrast the various theoretical perspectives on culture and technology



There are three major theoretical approaches toward the interpretation of culture. A *functionalist*, or structural functionalist, perspective acknowledges that there are many parts of culture that work together as a system to fulfill society's needs and to promote stability. *Conflict theory* focuses on populations that may be systematically disadvantaged while other groups are advantaged. It focuses on power and inequality within a culture. A *symbolic interactionist* is primarily interested in culture as experienced in the daily interactions between individuals and the symbols that have meaning in a culture. If we think about technology as an overarching aspect of culture, we can utilize these theories to explain and even predict cultural patterns, including those regarding technology.

Music, fashion, technology, and values—all are products of culture. But what do they mean? How do sociologists perceive and interpret culture based on these material and nonmaterial items? Let's complete our analysis of culture by reviewing them in the context of the three theoretical perspectives.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Culture. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Perspectives Summary, Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Light, colour, phone and technology HD photo. **Authored by**: Noiseporn. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/JNuKyKXLh8U. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 6.13: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Culture and Technology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.14: Functionalism on Culture and Technology

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss how structural-functional theory views culture and technology

Functionalists view society as a system in which all parts work—or function—together to create society as a whole. In this way, societies need culture to exist. Cultural norms function to support the fluid operation and continued stability of society, and cultural values guide people in making choices. Just as members of a society work together to fulfill a society's needs, culture exists to meet its members' basic needs.

Functionalists also study culture in terms of values. Education is an important concept in the United States because it is valued. The culture of education—including material culture such as classrooms, textbooks, libraries, dormitories—supports the emphasis placed on the value of educating a society's members.

Functionalism and Technology

Because functionalism focuses on how media and technology contribute to the smooth functioning of society, a good place to begin understanding this perspective is to write a list of functions you perceive media and technology to perform. Your list might include the ability to find information on the Internet, television's entertainment value, or how advertising and product placement contribute to social norms.

Commercial Function



Figure 1. TV commercials can carry significant cultural currency. For some, the ads during the Super Bowl are more water cooler-worthy than the game itself. (Photo courtesy of Dennis Yang/flickr)

As you might guess, with nearly every U.S. household possessing a television, and the 250 billion hours of television watched annually by people in the United States, companies that wish to connect with consumers find television an irresistible platform to promote their goods and services (Nielsen 2012). Television advertising is a highly functional way to meet a market demographic where it lives. Sponsors can use the sophisticated data gathered by network and cable television companies regarding their viewers and target their advertising accordingly. Whether you are watching cartoons on Nick Jr. or a cooking show on Telemundo, chances are advertisers have a plan to reach you.

And it certainly doesn't stop with television. Commercial advertising precedes movies in theaters and shows up on and inside public transportation, as well as on the sides of building and alongside roadways. Major corporations such as Coca-Cola bring their advertising into public schools by sponsoring sports fields or tournaments, as well as by filling the halls and cafeterias of those schools with vending machines hawking their goods. With rising concerns about childhood obesity and attendant diseases, the era of soda machines in schools may be numbered. In fact, as part of the United States Department of Agriculture's Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act (2010) and Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Initiative, a ban on junk food in schools began in July 2014. It's worth

noting, however, that this program's implementation varied from state to state, and that in 2018 the USDA weakened enforcement of the act.

Entertainment Function

An obvious manifest function of media is its entertainment value. Most people, when asked why they watch television or go to the movies, would answer that they enjoy it. And the numbers certainly illustrate that. While 2012 Nielsen research shows a slight reduction of U.S. homes with televisions, the reach of television is still vast and the amount of time spent watching is substantial. On the technology side, as well, there is a clear entertainment factor to the use of new innovations. From online gaming to chatting with friends on Facebook, technology offers new and more exciting ways for people to entertain themselves.

Social Norm Functions

Even while the media is selling us goods and entertaining us, it also serves to socialize us, helping us pass along norms, values, and beliefs to the next generation. In fact, we are socialized and resocialized by media throughout our lives. All forms of media teach us what is good and desirable, how we should speak, how we should behave, and how we should react to events. Media also provide us with cultural touchstones during events of national significance. How many of your older relatives can recall watching the explosion of the space shuttle *Challenger* on television? How many of those reading this textbook followed the events of 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina on television or the Internet?

There is ongoing debate over the extent and impact of media socialization. One recent study (Krahe et al. 2011) demonstrated that violent media content does have a desensitizing effect and is correlated with aggressive thoughts. Another group of scholars (Gentile, Mathieson, and Crick 2011) found that among children, exposure to media violence led to an increase in both physical and relational aggression. Yet, a meta-analysis study covering four decades of research (Savage 2003) could not establish a definitive link between viewing violence and committing criminal violence.

It is clear from watching people emulate the styles of dress and talk that appear in media that these depictions have a socializing influence. What is not clear, despite nearly fifty years of empirical research, is how much socializing influence the media has when compared to other agents of socialization, which include any social institution that passes along norms, values, and beliefs (such as peers, family, religious institutions, and the like).

Life-Changing Functions

Like media, many forms of technology do indeed entertain us, provide a venue for commercialization, and socialize us. For example, some studies suggest the rising obesity rate is correlated with the decrease in physical activity caused by an increase in use of some forms of technology, a latent function of the prevalence of media in society (Kautiainen et al. 2011). Without a doubt, a manifest function of technology is to change our lives, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. Think of how the digital age has improved the ways we communicate. Have you ever used Skype or another webcast to talk to a friend or family member far away? Or maybe you have organized a fund drive, raising thousands of dollars, all from your desk chair.

Of course, the downside to this ongoing information flow is the near impossibility of disconnecting from technology, which in turn leads to an expectation of constant access to information and people. Such a fast-paced dynamic is not always to our benefit. Some sociologists assert that this level of media exposure leads to narcotizing dysfunction, a result in which people are too overwhelmed with media input to really care about the issue itself. In this state, their involvement becomes defined by awareness instead of by action (Lazerfeld and Merton 1948).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13296

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13295

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Culture. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:8gVcKWtQ@3/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Culture. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 6.14: Functionalism on Culture and Technology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.15: Conflict Theory on Culture and Technology

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss how conflict theory views culture and technology

Conflict theorists view social structure as inherently unequal, based on power differentials related to issues like class, gender, race, and age. For a conflict theorist, culture is seen as reinforcing issues of privilege for certain groups based upon race, sex, class, and so on. Women strive for equality in a male-dominated society. Senior citizens struggle to protect their rights, their health care, and their independence from a younger generation of lawmakers. Advocacy groups such as the ACLU work to protect the rights of all races and ethnicities in the United States.

Inequalities exist within a culture's value system. Therefore, a society's cultural norms benefit some people but hurt others. Some norms, formal and informal, are practiced at the expense of others. Women were not allowed to vote in the United States until 1920. Gay and lesbian couples have been denied the right to marry in some states. Racism and bigotry are very much alive today. Although cultural diversity is supposedly valued in the United States, many people still frown upon interracial marriages. Same-sex marriages are banned in most states, and polygamy—common in some cultures—is unthinkable to most Americans.

At the core of conflict theory is the effect of economic production and materialism; for example, dependence on technology and education in rich nations versus a lack of technology and accessible education in poor nations. Conflict theorists believe that a society's system of material production has an effect on the rest of culture. People who have less power also have less ability to adapt to or enact cultural change. This view contrasts with the perspective of functionalism. For example, in the U.S. culture of capitalism, we continue to strive toward the promise of the "American Dream," which perpetuates the belief that the wealthy deserve their privileges.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13297

Conflict Perspective and Technology

When we take a conflict perspective, one major focus is the differential access to media and technology embodied in the digital divide. Conflict theorists also look at who controls the media, and how media promotes the norms of upper-middle-class white people in the United States while minimizing the presence of the working class, especially people of color.

Control of Media and Technology

Powerful individuals and social institutions have a great deal of influence over which forms of technology are released, when and where they are released, and what kind of media is available for our consumption, which is a form of **gatekeeping**. Shoemaker and Voss (2009) define gatekeeping as the sorting process by which thousands of possible messages are shaped into a mass media-appropriate form and reduced to a manageable amount. In other words, the people in charge of the media decide what the public is exposed to, which, as C. Wright Mills (1956) famously noted, is the heart of media's power. Take a moment to think of the way "new media" evolve and replace traditional forms of hegemonic (i.e., ruling or dominant) media. With hegemonic media, a culturally diverse society can be dominated by one race, gender, or class that manipulates the media to impose its worldview as a societal norm. New media weakens the gatekeeper role in information distribution. Popular sites such as YouTube and Facebook not only allow more people to freely share information but also engage in a form of self-policing. Users are encouraged to report inappropriate behavior that moderators will then address.

In addition, some conflict theorists suggest that the way U.S. media are generated results in an unbalanced political arena. Those with the most money can buy the most media exposure, run smear campaigns against their competitors, and maximize their visual presence. Almost a year before the 2012 U.S. presidential election, the candidates—Barack Obama for the Democrats and numerous Republican contenders—had raised more than $186 million (Carmi et al. 2012). Some would say that the *Citizens United vs. Federal Election Committee* is a major contributing factor to our unbalanced political arena. In *Citizens United*, the Supreme Court affirmed the right of outside groups, including Super Political Action Committees (SuperPACs) with undisclosed donor lists, to spend unlimited amounts of money on political ads as long as they don't coordinate with the candidate's campaign or specifically advocate for a candidate. This finding was predicated on the idea that spending money on political ads is itself a form

of free speech, and is therefore constitutionally protected. What do you think a conflict perspective theorist would suggest about the potential for the non-rich to be heard in politics, especially when SuperPACs ensure that the richest groups have the most say?

Technological Social Control and Digital Surveillance

Social scientists take the idea of the surveillance society so seriously that there is an entire journal devoted to its study, *Surveillance and Society*. The **panoptic surveillance** envisioned by Jeremy Bentham, depicted in the form of an all-powerful, all-seeing government by George Orwell in *1984*, and later analyzed by Michel Foucault (1975) is increasingly realized in the form of technology used to monitor our every move. This surveillance was imagined as a form of constant monitoring in which the observation posts are decentralized and the observed subject is never communicated with directly. In effect, the subject never knows when or if he is actually being surveilled within the panoptical environment, and therefore comes to internalize the system's implicit social controls and to behave accordingly. Today, digital security cameras capture our movements, observers can track us through our cell phones, and police forces around the world use facial-recognition software.

Feminist Perspective



Figure 1. What types of women are we exposed to in the media? Some would argue that the range of female images is misleadingly narrow. (Photo courtesy of Cliff1066/flickr)

Take a look at popular television shows, advertising campaigns, and online game sites. In most, women are portrayed according to a particular set of parameters and tend to have a uniform look that society recognizes as attractive. Most are thin, white or light-skinned, beautiful, and young. Why does this matter? Feminist perspective theorists believe this idealized image is crucial in creating and reinforcing stereotypes. For example, Fox and Bailenson (2009) found that online female avatars conforming to gender stereotypes enhance negative attitudes toward women, and Brasted (2010) found that media (advertising in particular) promotes gender stereotypes. Some commercial media enterprises have tried to reconcile their political commitments with their economic viability. For example, as early as 1990 the feminist magazine *Ms.* instituted a policy of publishing without any commercial advertising.

The gender gap in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math) is no secret. A 2011 U.S. Department of Commerce Report suggested that gender stereotyping is one reason for this gap, and acknowledged a longstanding bias toward men as keepers of technological knowledge (US Department of Commerce 2011). But gender stereotypes go far beyond the use of technology. Press coverage in the news and other media reinforces stereotypes that subordinate women, often prioritizing looks over skills and knowledge, and disparaging women who defy accepted gender norms.

Recent research in new media has offered a mixed picture of its potential to equalize the status of men and women in the arenas of technology and public discourse. A European agency, the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women (2010), issued a report suggesting that while there is the potential for new media forms to perpetuate gender stereotypes and gaps in technology and media access, at the same time new media could offer alternative forums for feminist groups as well as the exchange of feminist ideas. Still, the committee warned against the relatively unregulated environment of new media and the potential for antifeminist activities, from pornography to human trafficking, to flourish there.

Increasingly prominent in the discussion of new media and feminism is cyberfeminism, the Internet's application to, and promotion of, feminism online. Research on cyberfeminism runs the gamut from the liberating use of blogs by women living in Iraq during the second Gulf War (Peirce 2011) to an investigation of the Suicide Girls web site (Magnet 2007).

Think It Over

- Contrast a functionalist viewpoint of digital surveillance with a conflict perspective viewpoint.
- Describe how a cyberfeminist might address the fact that powerful female politicians are often demonized in traditional media.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13298

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13299

glossary

cyberfeminism:
the Internet's application to and promotion of feminism online

gatekeeping:
the sorting process by which thousands of possible messages are shaped into a mass media-appropriate form and reduced to a manageable amount

panoptic surveillance:
a form of constant monitoring in which the observation posts are decentralized and the observed subject is never communicated with directly

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Culture. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:8gVcKWtQ@3/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Culture. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 6.15: Conflict Theory on Culture and Technology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.16: Symbolic Interactionism on Media and Technology

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss how symbolic interactionists view culture and technology

Symbolic interactionism is a sociological perspective that is most concerned with the face-to-face interactions between members of society. Interactionists see culture as being created and maintained by the ways people interact and in how individuals interpret each other's actions. Proponents of this theory conceptualize human interactions as a continuous process of deriving meaning from both objects in the environment and the actions of others. This is where the term symbolic comes into play. Every object and action has a symbolic meaning, and language serves as a means for people to represent and communicate their interpretations of these meanings to others. Those who believe in symbolic interactionism perceive culture as highly dynamic and fluid, as it is dependent on how meaning is interpreted and how individuals interact when conveying and negotiating these meanings.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13300

Symbolic Interactionism and Technology

Technology itself may act as a symbol for many. The kind of computer you own, the kind of car you drive, your ability to afford the latest Apple product—these serve as a social indicator of wealth and status. **Neo-Luddites** are people who are critical of technology and who see it as symbolizing the coldness and alienation of modern life. ("Neo" means "new," and you'll recall from the previous section that there was an earlier **Luddite** movement from which this name is taken.) But for **technophiles**, technology symbolizes the potential for a brighter future. For those adopting an ideological middle ground, technology might symbolize status (in the form of a massive flat-screen television) or failure (ownership of a basic old mobile phone with no bells or whistles).

Try It

Click through this presentation to learn more about Luddites, sociologists, and views on technology.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=144

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13302

Social Construction of Reality

Meanwhile, media create and spread symbols that become the basis for our shared understanding of society. Theorists working in the interactionist perspective focus on this social construction of reality, an ongoing process in which people subjectively create and understand reality. Media constructs our reality in a number of ways. For some, the people they watch on a screen can become a primary group, meaning the small informal groups of people who are closest to them. For many others, media depictions become a reference group: a group that influences an individual and to which an individual compares himself or herself, and by which we judge our successes and failures. We might do very well without the latest smartphone, until we see characters using it on our favorite television show or our classmates whipping it out between lectures.

While media may indeed provide the means by which the messages of rich white males are spread, Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, and Sasson (1992) point out that some forms of media discourse allow competing constructions of reality to appear. (A discourse is an ongoing conversation, or a body of knowledge accumulated thusly.) For example, advertisers find new and creative ways to sell us products we don't need and probably wouldn't want without their prompting, but some networking sites such as Freecycle offer a commercial-free way of requesting and trading items that would otherwise be discarded. The web is also full of blogs chronicling lives lived "off the grid," or without participation in the commercial economy.

Social Networking and Social Construction

While Tumblr and Facebook encourage us to check in and provide details of our day through online social networks, corporations can just as easily promote their products on these sites. Even supposedly crowd-sourced sites like Yelp (which aggregates local reviews) are not immune to corporate marketing intrusions. That is, we think we are reading objective observations when in reality we may be buying into one more form of advertising.

Facebook, which started as a free social network for college students, is increasingly a monetized business, selling you goods and services in subtle ways. But chances are you don't think of Facebook as one big online advertisement. What started out as a symbol of coolness and insider status, unavailable to parents and corporate shills, now promotes consumerism in the form of games and fandom. For example, think of all the money spent to upgrade popular Facebook games like Candy Crush. And notice that whenever you become a "fan," you likely receive product updates and special deals that promote online and real-world consumerism. It is unlikely that millions of people want to be "friends" with Pampers. But if it means a weekly coupon, they will, in essence, rent out space on their Facebook pages for Pampers to appear. Thus, we develop both new ways to spend money and brand loyalties that will last even after Facebook is considered outdated and obsolete.

Think It Over

- In what ways has the Internet affected how you view reality? Explain using a symbolic interactionist perspective.
- Would you characterize yourself as a technophile or a Neo-Luddite? Explain, and use examples.
- Consider a current social trend that you have witnessed, perhaps situated around family, education, transportation, or finances. For example, many veterans of the Armed Forces, after completing tours of duty in the Middle East, are returning to college rather than entering jobs as veterans from previous generations did. Choose a sociological approach—functionalism, conflict theory, or symbolic interactionism—to describe, explain, and analyze the social issue. Afterward, determine why you chose the approach you did. Does it suit your own way of thinking? Or did it offer the best method to illuminate the social issue?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13301

Glossary

neo-Luddites:
those who see technology as a symbol of the coldness of modern life

technophiles:
those who see technology as symbolizing the potential for a brighter future

CC licensed content, Original

- Luddite Presentation. **Authored by**: Scott Barr for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Culture. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:8gVcKWtQ@3/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Culture. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 6.16: Symbolic Interactionism on Media and Technology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.17: Putting It Together- Culture

In this section you looked at what makes up culture and how we absorb cultural norms. You saw how human societies developed from our earliest existence to the present-day, and how the functioning of society impacts personal experience by constructing our social realities, including our technology-driven and increasingly globalized social realities.

You also learned about different aspects of culture, such as material and non-material culture that we often take for granted as simply “being there” without questioning why it is there. You learned that it is very easy to understand and like your own culture better than that of others, especially when you are confronted with unfamiliar cultural norms.

Finally, you learned how the three main theoretical perspectives help to explain culture and the role of technology, and how they may also help us to predict future cultural shifts.

Key Takeaways

Watch this TEDTalk to bridge what we learned about culture in this module with our next topic of socialization. Julien S. Bourrelle suggests that we can relate to another culture in three ways. Do you agree or disagree? How do you see the world through cultural glasses? How is culture related to diversity?



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=146

CC licensed content, Original

- Putting It Together: Culture. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Culture. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:io7WC_uF@5/Introduction-to-Culture. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- How Culture Drives Behaviours. **Authored by**: Julien S. Bourrelle. **Provided by**: TEDx Talks. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-Yy6poJ2zs. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 6.17: Putting It Together- Culture is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.18: Assignment- Tattoos and Culture

STEP 1: Search online for a short documentary video that discusses tattooing as a part of culture. To focus your search, try including key terms like “culture” or “society” or “appropriation.” Look for a video that seems to making an argument about what tattoos mean in a present-day cultural context. Take notes and listen carefully for the main questions and issues that are being explored. For example, you could watch “Can Tattoos be Taboo?” found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQC13yBJ9dA

STEP 2: Review the sections from this module about social norms, ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, pop culture, and subculture. Choose at least three concepts from these sections and apply them to the issues and questions raised by the video about tattoos.

For example, how do tattoos violate (or confirm) certain formal or informal norms? What are some possible consequences for these transgressions? How can concepts like cultural relativism and ethnocentrism be applied to certain styles of tattoos? Do you think that tattoos are more subcultural or countercultural? Have cultural views of tattooing changed over time? How so? Why do you think this? These are just some suggestions, and there are of course other useful concepts from the readings that can help you think about tattooing from a sociological perspective.

In addition to addressing the questions and concepts from the video and the reading, be sure to offer your own view on the cultural context of tattooing. What do you think is at stake in this discussion? Who is affected? How?

STEP 3: On a more nuts-and-bolts level, write an essay answering the questions above. Your paper should be 500-750 words and should be carefully edited for clarity and readability. It should include correct APA citations.

Rubric

Criteria			Points
Key questions and issues from video are briefly summarized and explicitly addressed.	Key questions and issues are not explained or are only vaguely addressed.	Key questions and issues are not present; paper is mostly unfocused, unsubstantiated opinion.	____/7
Relevant concepts from reading are accurately and thoughtfully applied to issues raised in video.	Relative concepts are applied in an unclear or too general sense. Student understanding not adequately demonstrated.	Relevant concepts are only vaguely addressed or are completely absent.	____/7
Student’s own views are clearly and substantively articulated.	Student’s views are unclearly or too briefly stated.	Student’s views largely or completely absent.	____/3
Paper has been carefully edited for clarity and readability. Paper meets minimum length requirements. Paper includes correct citations.	Some editing issues remain, affecting clarity and readability. Paper is below the minimum length.	Paper has substantial editing issues that make the student’s thinking hard to follow. Paper is far too short.	____/3
		Total:	___/20

CC licensed content, Original

- **Authored by**: Scott Barr and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 6.18: Assignment- Tattoos and Culture is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.19: Discussion- Tattoos in Culture

STEP 1: Respond to the following prompt in a post between 200 and 400 words:

Tattoos are arguably more mainstream than they've ever been. Search online, perhaps using Google images, for two public figures (athletes, celebrities, etc.) who are visibly tattooed. Addressing the questions and issues raised by your video assignment, explain what culturally relevant symbolic meanings those individuals' tattoos might have. In what cultural context do these persons operate?

For example, how might their tattoos signify differently in the NFL vs. in the high fashion world? In mixed martial arts vs. hip hop? What do those specific tattoo styles say about one's countercultural or subcultural identity? Are they connected to any biographical and ethnic origins or contexts? How controversial–or entirely acceptable–are they? To help your colleagues write up their responses, be sure to paste your images directly into the thread with your first post.

STEP 2: Comment on at least TWO classmates' posts in a response of 100 words or more. Explicitly address their examples and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way. Be sure to cite relevant concepts and key terms from the reading.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Culture. **Authored by**: Scott Barr and Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 6.19: Discussion- Tattoos in Culture is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.20: Discussion- Media and Technology

STEP 1: Social media has grown exponentially over the last 25 years. The impact of social media has both advantages and disadvantages. Hollywood has used movies to describe the impact of social media into our lives. Choose a movie of any genre (fiction, documentary, etc.) that emphasizes the role of social media.

STEP 2: Watch the movie you have chosen.

STEP 3: Write a discussion post between 250-500 words that:

- Identifies the movie and the genre you chose, then summarizes the movie
- Describes the impact of social media to the characters in the movie
- Compares and contrasts the role of social media in the movie (advantages and disadvantages to the characters) and how this relates to the individual and society in general.

STEP 4: Return to the discussion to comment on at least TWO other posts.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Media and Technology. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 6.20: Discussion- Media and Technology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

6.21: Discussion- Media and Culture

STEP 1: Go to Journalist's Resource. Click on "Society" and then "Culture" from the dropdown menu and select one article to read. Briefly summarize the article in your discussion post. Then, write about the cultural connections and implications of what you read. Finally, consider how the article may be presented differently from something that "pops up" in your social media? (Note that you could make these types of articles a part of your own online news consumption by subscribing or adding *Journalist's Resource* on Facebook or Twitter!)

STEP 2: Comment on at least TWO classmates' posts in a response of 100 words or more. Discuss their chosen article, then add to their summary and analysis with further extensions, questions, or applications. Be sure to cite relevant concepts and key terms from the reading.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Media and Culture. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 6.21: Discussion- Media and Culture is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Module 4- Socialization

7.1: Why It Matters- Socialization
7.2: Introduction to Socialization
7.3: The Importance of Socialization
7.4: Theories of Socialization
7.5: Introduction to Reality as a Social Construct
7.6: The Social Construction of Reality
7.7: Roles and the Presentation of Self
7.8: Introduction to Agents of Socialization
7.9: Agents of Socialization
7.10: Socialization Across the Lifespan
7.11: Resocialization
7.12: Putting It Together- Socialization
7.13: Discussion- Socialization
7.14: Assignment- Agents of Socialization

This page titled 7: Module 4- Socialization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.1: Why It Matters- Socialization



Why understand socialization throughout the lifespan?

Socialization is the lifelong process through which we learn the norms and beliefs of our society. From our earliest family and play experiences, we are made aware of societal values and expectations.

In the summer of 2005, police detective Mark Holste followed an investigator from the Department of Children and Families to a home in Plant City, Florida. They were there to look into a statement from the neighbor concerning a shabby house on Old Sydney Road. A small girl was reported peering from one of its broken windows. This seemed odd because no one in the neighborhood had seen a young child in or around the home, which had been inhabited for the past three years by a woman, her boyfriend, and two adult sons.

Who was the mystery girl in the window?

Entering the house, Detective Holste and his team were shocked. It was the worst mess they'd ever seen, infested with cockroaches, smeared with feces and urine from both people and pets, and filled with dilapidated furniture and ragged window coverings.

Detective Holste headed down a hallway and entered a small room. That's where he found the little girl, with big, vacant eyes, staring into the darkness. A newspaper report later described the detective's first encounter with the child: "She lay on a torn, moldy mattress on the floor. She was curled on her side . . . her ribs and collarbone jutted out . . . her black hair was matted, crawling with lice. Insect bites, rashes and sores pocked her skin . . . She was naked—except for a swollen diaper. … Her name, her mother said, was Danielle. She was almost seven years old" (DeGregory 2008).

Detective Holste immediately carried Danielle out of the home. She was taken to a hospital for medical treatment and evaluation. Through extensive testing, doctors determined that, although she was severely malnourished, Danielle was able to see, hear, and vocalize normally. Still, she wouldn't look anyone in the eyes, didn't know how to chew or swallow solid food, didn't cry, didn't respond to stimuli that would typically cause pain, and didn't know how to communicate either with words or simple gestures such as nodding "yes" or "no." Likewise, although tests showed she had no chronic diseases or genetic abnormalities, the only way she could stand was with someone holding onto her hands, and she "walked sideways on her toes, like a crab" (DeGregory 2008).

What had happened to Danielle? Put simply: beyond the basic requirements for survival, she had been neglected. Based on their investigation, social workers concluded that she had been left almost entirely alone in rooms like the one where she was found. Without regular interaction—the holding, hugging, talking, the explanations and demonstrations given to most young children—she had not learned to walk or to speak, to eat or to interact, to play or even to understand the world around her. From a sociological point of view, Danielle had not been socialized.

In the following sections, we will examine the importance of the complex process of socialization and how it takes place through interaction with many individuals, groups, and social institutions. We will explore how socialization is not only critical to children as they develop, but also how it is a lifelong process through which we become prepared for new social environments and expectations in every stage of our lives.

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Learning Outcomes. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Girls soccer . **Authored by**: woodleywonderworks. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/wwworks/2873723425/in/album-72157604628017760/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Socialization, Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 7.1: Why It Matters- Socialization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.2: Introduction to Socialization

What you'll learn to do: explain socialization and describe its major theories



Figure 1. Socialization is the lifelong process through which people learn the values and norms of a given society. Early birthday parties can socialize children to understand the significance of birthdays and teach them to associate sweets and gifts with birthdays. (Photo courtesy of Jorge Ibanez/unsplash)

How did you develop your sense of identity, and what makes you *you*? While psychologists generally focus on how the mind and internal thought processes lead to the development of the self, sociologists focus their study on the role of society and social interaction in self-development. How did the environment and others shape who you are today? When, and how, did you develop a concept of right and wrong?

In this section, you'll examine the work of behavioral scientists and consider what factors influence your identity and awareness.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Socialization. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Summary from Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Girl, child, birthday and cake HD photo. **Authored by**: Jorge Ibanez. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/cK6ixOQx1fI. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 7.2: Introduction to Socialization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.3: The Importance of Socialization

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the importance of socialization both for individuals and society
- Distinguish nature from nurture in socialization

Socialization is the lifelong process through which people learn the values and norms of a given society. *Socialization* is not the same as *socializing*. Socializing is to mix socially with others (i.e., family, friends, neighbors, coworkers), whereas socialization is a process that may include *socializing* as one element, but is a more complex, multi-faceted and formative set of interactive experiences. It is also an adaptive lifelong learning experience, because society is constantly changing, and because we may find ourselves in new situations—such as a new job with different norms and values, or in a different familial role—such as that of parent or caregiver to an older relative.

As Danielle's story from the beginning of this module illustrates, even the most basic human activities are learned. You may be surprised to know that even physical tasks like sitting, standing, and walking had not automatically developed for Danielle as she grew. And without socialization, Danielle hadn't learned about the material culture of her society (the tangible objects a culture uses): for example, she couldn't hold a spoon, bounce a ball, or use a chair for sitting. She also hadn't learned its nonmaterial culture, such as its beliefs, values, and norms. She had no understanding of the concept of "family," didn't know cultural expectations for using a bathroom, and had no sense of modesty. Most importantly, she hadn't learned to use the symbols that make up language—through which we learn about who we are, how we fit in with other people, and the natural and social worlds in which we live.

Sociologists have long been fascinated by circumstances like Danielle's—in which a child receives sufficient human support to survive, but virtually no social interaction—because they highlight how much we depend on social interaction to provide the information and skills we need to be part of society or even to develop a "self."

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13303

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13304

Socialization is critical both to individuals and to the societies in which they live. As individuals, social interaction provides us the means by which we gradually become able to see ourselves through the eyes of others, and how we learn who we are and how we fit into the larger world. In addition, to function successfully in society, we have to learn the basics of both material and nonmaterial culture, everything from how to dress ourselves to what's suitable attire for a specific occasion; from when we sleep to what we sleep on; and from what's considered appropriate to eat for dinner and even how to use the stove to prepare it. Most importantly, we have to learn language—whether it's the dominant language or one common in a subculture, whether it's verbal or through signs—in order to communicate and to think. As we saw with Danielle, without socialization we have no commonly recognizable sense of self.

For society to function, the socialization of individuals is necessary. Although how this occurs and what is transmitted in terms of cultural norms and values differs, every society relies upon socialization to ensure its survival. A core value in the United States is democracy, so children in the U.S. might hear about voting or go to vote with their families before they even begin school. Once in school, they will learn about American history, civics, and citizenship. Students also learn the ways that the U.S. has not upheld democratic ideals and has disenfranchised various groups of people. Thus, in addition to voting and learning how to use material objects such as voting machines, children also learn about various social movements and leaders who resisted the existing social norms in order to facilitate change. Learning about how society has failed to live up to its ideals (and continues to struggle in certain areas) helps citizens not only to understand values and norms on a personal level, but also to see the importance of values and norms in society, as well as how these can change over time. Remember that socialization is a lifelong process, so in our example, people will continue to examine whether or not the U.S. is living up to its democratic ideals over many years.

WAtch It

Watch this video to learn more about what it means to be socialized, and what things contribute to socialization. The video provides an effective overview of several concepts related to socialization that will be covered in this module.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=162



Figure 1. Socialization teaches us our society's expectations for dining out. The manners and customs of different cultures (When can you use your hands to eat? How should you compliment the cook? Who is the "head" of the table?) are learned through socialization. (Photo courtesy of Niyam Bhushan/flickr)

Nature versus Nurture

Some experts argue that who we are is based entirely on genetics or our biological makeup. According to this belief, our temperaments, interests, and talents are set before birth. From this perspective, who we are depends on **nature**. Others, including most sociologists, assert that who we are is a result of **nurture**—the relationships and environments that surround us.



Figure 2. Identical twins may look alike, but their differences can give us clues to the effects of socialization. (Photo courtesy of D. Flam/flickr)

One way researchers attempt to measure the impact of nature is by studying twins. Some studies have followed identical twins who were raised separately. The pairs shared the same genetic inheritance, but in some cases were socialized in different ways. Instances of this situation are rare, but studying the degree to which identical twins raised apart are the same or different can give researchers insight into the way our temperaments, preferences, and abilities are shaped by our genetic makeup versus our social environment.

For example, in 1968 twin girls born to a mentally ill mother were put up for adoption, separated from each other, and raised in different households. The adoptive parents, and certainly the adoptees themselves, did not know the girls were one of five pairs of twins who were made subjects of a scientific study (Flam 2007).

In 2003, the two women, then age thirty-five, were reunited. Elyse Schein and Paula Bernstein sat together in awe, feeling like they were looking into a mirror. Not only did they look alike but they also behaved alike, using the same hand gestures and facial expressions (Spratling 2007). Studies like these point to the genetic roots of our temperament and behavior.

Dig Deeper

Learn about the famous twins, Oskar and Jack, who were separated as infants and led strikingly different lives. You can visit the article "Separated at Birth" to read about five other sets of twins who grew up apart and discovered each other later in life.

Though genetics and hormones play an important role in human behavior, sociology's larger concern is the effect society has on human behavior–the "nurture" side of the nature-versus-nurture debate. What race were the twins? From what social class were their parents? What about gender? Religion? All these factors affected the lives of the twins as much as their genetic makeup, and are critical to consider as we look at life through the sociological lens.

The Life of Chris Langan, the Smartest Man You've Never Heard Of

Bouncer. Firefighter. Factory worker. Cowboy. Chris Langan spent the majority of his adult life just getting by with jobs like these. He had no college degree, few resources, and a past filled with much disappointment. Chris Langan also had an IQ of over 195, nearly 100 points higher than the average person (Brabham 2001). So why didn't Chris become a neurosurgeon, professor, or aeronautical engineer? According to Macolm Gladwell (2008) in his book Outliers: The Story of Success, Chris didn't possess the set of social skills necessary to succeed on such a high level—skills that aren't innate but learned.

Gladwell looked to a recent study conducted by sociologist Annette Lareau in which she closely shadowed 12 families from various economic backgrounds and examined their parenting techniques. Parents from lower income families followed a strategy of "accomplishment of natural growth," which is to say they let their children develop on their own with a large amount of independence; parents from higher-income families, however, "actively fostered and accessed a child's talents, opinions, and skills" (Gladwell 2008). These parents were more likely to engage in analytical conversation, encourage active questioning of the establishment, and foster development of negotiation skills. The parents were also able to introduce their children to a wide range of activities, from sports to music to accelerated academic programs. When one middle-class child was denied entry to a gifted and talented program, the mother petitioned the school and arranged additional testing until her daughter was admitted. Lower-income parents, however, were more likely to unquestioningly obey authorities such as school boards. Their children were not being socialized to comfortably confront the system and speak up (Gladwell 2008).

What does this have to do with Chris Langan, deemed by some the smartest man in the world (Brabham 2001)? Chris was born in severe poverty, moving across the country with an abusive and alcoholic stepfather. His genius went largely unnoticed. After accepting a full scholarship to Reed College, he lost his funding after his mother failed to fill out necessary paperwork. Unable to successfully make his case to the administration, Chris, who had received straight A's the previous semester, was given F's on his transcript and forced to drop out. After he enrolled in Montana State, an administrator's refusal to rearrange his class schedule left him unable to find the means necessary to travel the 16 miles to attend classes. What Chris had in brilliance, he lacked in practical intelligence, or what psychologist Robert Sternberg defines as "knowing what to say to whom, knowing when to say it, and knowing how to say it for maximum effect" (Sternberg et al. 2000). Such knowledge was never part of his socialization.

Chris gave up on school and began working an array of blue-collar jobs, pursuing his intellectual interests on the side. Though he's recently garnered attention for his "Cognitive Theoretic Model of the Universe," he remains weary of and resistant to the educational system.

As Gladwell concluded, "He'd had to make his way alone, and no one—not rock stars, not professional athletes, not software billionaires, and not even geniuses—ever makes it alone" (2008).

Chris is a white male who was born in the United States, though he also faced considerable economic and domestic challenges. How would the story change if our example was a female immigrant, with dark skin? Social class and what Pierre Bourdieu calls "cultural capital" are important in directing one's life chances, but perhaps equally important are race/ethnicity, gender, economic class, and whether one is perceived as an immigrant or a native-born citizen.

Sociologists all recognize the importance of socialization for healthy individual and societal development. But how do scholars working in the three major theoretical paradigms approach this topic?

Structural functionalists would say that socialization is essential to society, both because it trains members to operate successfully within it and because it perpetuates culture by transmitting it to new generations. Without socialization, a society's culture would destabilize and ultimately perish as members died off.

A conflict theorist might argue that socialization reproduces inequality from generation to generation by conveying different expectations and norms to those with different social characteristics. For example, individuals are socialized differently by gender, social class, and race. As in Chris Langan's case, this creates different (unequal) opportunities.

An interactionist studying socialization is concerned with face-to-face exchanges and symbolic communication. For example, dressing baby boys in blue and baby girls in pink is one small way we convey messages about differences in gender roles.

Think It Over

- Why are twin studies an important way to learn about the relative effects of genetics and socialization on children? What questions about human development do you believe twin studies are best for answering? For what types of questions would twin studies not be as helpful?
- Why do you think that people like Chris Langan continue to have difficulty even after they are helped through societal systems? How does this story help you understand the role of nature and the role of nurture?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13307

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13305

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13306

Glossary

nature:
the influence of our genetic makeup on self-development

nurture:
the role that our social environment plays in self-development

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Why Socialization Matters. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:zeTojT9p@3/Why-Socialization-Matters. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Socialization: Crash Course Sociology #14. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-RvJQxqVQc. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 7.3: The Importance of Socialization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.4: Theories of Socialization

Learning Outcomes

- Describe psychological and sociological theories of socialization

Theories of Socialization

When we are born, we have a genetic makeup and biological traits. However, who we are as human beingsour identity–develops through social interaction. Many scholars, both in the fields of psychology and in sociology, have described the process of self-development as a precursor to understanding how that "self" becomes socialized.

Psychological Perspectives on Self-Development

Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) was one of the most influential modern scientists to offer a theory of how people develop a sense of self. He believed that personality and sexual development were closely linked, and he divided the maturation process into psychosexual stages: oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital. He posited that one's self-development is closely linked to early stages of development, like breastfeeding, toilet training, and sexual awareness (Freud 1905). According to Freud, failure to properly engage in or disengage from a specific stage results in emotional and psychological consequences throughout adulthood. An adult with an oral fixation may indulge in overeating or binge drinking. An anal fixation may produce a neat freak (hence the term "anal retentive"), while a person stuck in the phallic stage may be promiscuous or emotionally immature. Although no solid empirical evidence supports Freud's theory, his ideas continue to contribute to the work of scholars in a variety of disciplines.

Psychologist Erik Erikson (1902–1994) created a theory of personality development based, in part, on the work of Freud. However, Erikson believed the personality continued to change over time and was never truly finished. His theory includes eight stages of development, beginning with birth and ending with death. According to Erikson, people move through these stages throughout their lives. In contrast to Freud's focus on psychosexual stages and basic human urges, Erikson's view of self-development gave credit to more social aspects, like the way we negotiate between our own base desires and what is socially accepted (Erikson 1982).

Jean Piaget (1896–1980) was a Swiss psychologist who specialized in child development, focusing specifically on the role of developmental social interactions. He recognized that the development of self evolved through a negotiation between the world as it exists in one's mind and the world that exists as it is experienced socially (Piaget 1954). All three of these thinkers have contributed to our modern understanding of self-development.

Lawrence Kohlberg (1927–1987) was interested in how people learn to decide what is right and what is wrong. To understand this topic, he developed a **theory of moral development** that includes three levels: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. Morality generally refers to the way people learn what society considers to be "good" and "bad," which is important for a smoothly functioning society. In the preconventional stage, young children, who lack a higher level of cognitive ability, experience the world around them only through their senses. As teenagers, there is increasing awareness of others' feelings, and teens begin to take those into consideration when determining what's "good" and "bad." The final stage, called postconventional, is when people begin to think of morality in more complex, abstract terms, such as Americans believing that everyone has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. At this stage, people also recognize that legality and morality do not always match up evenly (Kohlberg 1981).

Psychologist Carol Gilligan (1936–), recognized that Kohlberg's theory might show gender bias since his research was only conducted on male subjects, so she set out to study differences between how boys and girls developed morality. Gilligan's research demonstrated that boys and girls do, in fact, have different understandings of morality. Boys tend to have a justice perspective, by placing emphasis on rules and laws. Girls, on the other hand, have a care and responsibility perspective, and they are more likely to consider a personal rationale for behavior that seems morally wrong. Gilligan also recognized that Kohlberg's theory rested on the assumption that the justice perspective was the right, or better, perspective. Gilligan, in contrast, theorized that neither perspective was "better," and that the two norms of justice served different purposes. Ultimately, she explained that boys are socialized for a work environment where rules make operations run smoothly, while girls are socialized for a home environment where flexibility allows for harmony in caretaking and nurturing (Gilligan 1982; Gilligan 1990).



Figure 1. Baby rhesus monkeys, like humans, need to be raised with social contact for healthy development. (Photo courtesy of Paul Asman and Jill Lenoble/flickr)

The necessity for early social contact was demonstrated by the research of Harry and Margaret Harlow. From 1957 to 1963, the Harlows conducted a series of experiments studying how rhesus monkeys, which behave a lot like people, are affected by isolation as babies. They studied monkeys raised under two types of "substitute" mothering circumstances: a mesh and wire sculpture, or a soft terrycloth "mother." The monkeys systematically preferred the company of a soft, terrycloth substitute mother (closely resembling a rhesus monkey) that was unable to feed them, to a mesh and wire mother that provided sustenance via a feeding tube. This demonstrated that while food was important, social comfort was of greater value (Harlow and Harlow 1962; Harlow 1971). Later experiments testing more severe isolation revealed that such deprivation of social contact led to significant developmental and social challenges later in life, as shown in the example of Danielle, who was introduced at the beginning of the module.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13308

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13309

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13310

Sociological Perspectives on Self-Development

One of the pioneering contributors to sociological perspectives on self-development was Charles Cooley (1864–1929). He asserted that one's self understanding is constructed, in part, by our perception of how others view us—a process termed "the looking glass self" (Cooley 1902), which was discussed when we first introduced symbolic interactionism. This concept is central to sociological perspectives on self-development because it demonstrates the importance of social interaction in the development of one's identity.

Later, George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) studied the **self**, a person's distinct identity as developed through social interaction. In order to engage in this process of "self," an individual has to be able to view him or herself through the eyes of others. This is not an ability that is innate (Mead 1934). Through socialization we learn to put ourselves in someone else's shoes and look at the world through their perspective. This assists us in becoming self-aware, as we look at ourselves from the perspective of the "other." The case of Danielle, for example, illustrates what happens when social interaction is absent from early experience. Recall that Danielle had no ability to see herself as others would see her. From Mead's point of view, she had no socially informed "self."

How do we go from being newborns to being humans with "selves?" Mead believed that there is a specific path of development that all people go through. During the preparatory stage, children are only capable of imitation; they have no ability to imagine how others see things. They copy the actions of people with whom they regularly interact, such as their mothers and fathers. This is followed by the play stage, during which children begin to take on the role that one other person might have. Thus, children might try on a parent's point of view by acting out "grownup" behavior, like playing "dress up" and acting out the "mom" role, or talking on a toy telephone the way they see their father do.

During the game stage, children learn to consider several roles at the same time and how those roles interact with each other. They learn to understand interactions involving different people with a variety of purposes. For example, a child at this stage is likely to be aware of the different responsibilities of people in a restaurant who together make for a smooth dining experience (e.g., someone seats you, another takes your order, someone else cooks the food, while yet another clears away dirty dishes).

Finally, children develop, understand, and learn the idea of the **generalized other**, the common behavioral expectations of general society. By this stage of development, an individual is able to imagine how he or she is viewed by one or many others—and thus,

from a sociological perspective, to have a “self” (Mead 1934; Mead 1964).

Watch it

Learn more about Mead’s theory on the self and how self-identity develops in this Khan Academy video.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=164

Psychological and Sociological Theories of Socialization

As you have learned, both psychologists and sociologists have theories about socialization and the influences that make you *you*. The two disciplines differ, however, in that psychological theories tend to focus on internal processes and the mind, while sociologists focus on external influences, interactions, and society.

Psychological Theories of Socialization	**Sociological Theories of Socialization**
Focus is how the mind influences human behavior	Focus is the role of society in shaping behavior
Psychologists tend to look inward (mental health, emotional processes) to understand human behavior	Sociologists tend to look outward (social institutions, cultural norms, interactions with others) to understand human behavior
Key psychological contributions by Sigmund Freud	Key sociological contributions by George Herbert Mead

Think It Over

Imagine conducting research on first kisses.

The viral video *First Kiss* was a clothing advertisement with models, actors, and musicians paid to kiss a stranger. Images of beautiful strangers kissing to a soundtrack of trendy music reinforces cultural ideals about what a first kiss means, and provide ample material for sociological theorization.

A sociologist would likely examine cultural norms for dating, religious beliefs, age, gender, sexual orientation, historical patterns for a first kiss, and society (including geographic location). Romantic love was not part of any society until the 18th Century. Prior to that, marriage was primarily a political and economic arrangement within which love and desire were not considerations, thought they could potentially evolve as part of the union.

A recent study of the first kiss by psychologists at the University of Connecticut examined the reflection of personality (i.e., introvert or extrovert), internal and external motivations, psychosocial qualities of identity and intimacy, and additional factors such as the family’s religious background, self-esteem, use of alcohol, academic experiences, body image, and body size (Lefkowitz et. al. 2018).

Sociologists and psychologists have sometimes collaborated to increase knowledge, and the disciplinary subfields of both social psychology and bio-sociological research offer some overlapping perspectives. However, generally speaking the focus on internal (psychology) and external (sociology) elements remain the fundamental orientations for each discipline. Both disciplines make valuable contributions through different approaches, and provide us with a diverse range of useful insights.

Glossary

generalized other:
the common behavioral expectations of general society

moral development:
a person’s distinct sense of identity as developed through social interaction

self:
a person’s distinct sense of identity as developed through social interaction

socialization:

the process wherein people come to understand societal norms and expectations, accept society's beliefs, and become aware of societal values

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theories of Self-Development. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:COSh8XOM@3/Theories-of-Self-Development. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Introduction to Sociology: George Herbert Mead: The I and the Me. **Authored by**: Brooke Miller. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7A2GIct0UnQ. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 7.4: Theories of Socialization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.5: Introduction to Reality as a Social Construct

What you'll learn to do: explain the social construction of reality



Society is based on the social construction of reality. What does this mean? Consider something that we consider "obvious" like Grade Point Average (GPA). Remember, the sociological perspective is about making the familiar strange, right? For college acceptance, scholarships, and many other important events that occur in one's life, GPA is a factor. We define academic excellence, in part, with a high GPA. A student with two A's (4.0) and two D's (2.0) has a GPA of 3.0. A student with four B's (3.0) also has a GPA of 3.0. Does this average accurately represent student performance? What if one student is taking college classes in high school and the other student is taking all electives?

If a student has a high GPA, they might be given accolades such as a place on the "honor roll" or "dean's list," and as we will see, social constructions like this have very real implications for college admissions, scholarships, one's identity, as well as on the way that others see us. We might eventually *perform* the role of a high-achieving student once that expression aligns with our sense of self.

Sociologists examine the social constructions of reality as they relate to gender, race and ethnicity, age, economic class, religion, and other factors that make up our social location. We all take on various roles throughout our lives, and our social interactions depend on what types of roles we assume, who we assume them with, and the scene where these interactions takes place.

In this section, you will learn to explain the social construction of reality, define roles, and examine how individuals perceive themselves within a social context.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Reality as a Social Construct. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Class, classroom, school and teacher HD photo. **Authored by**: NeONBRAND. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/zFSo6bnZJTw. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 7.5: Introduction to Reality as a Social Construct is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.6: The Social Construction of Reality

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the social construction of reality, including habitualization



Figure 1. Who are we? What role do we play in society? According to sociologists, we construct reality through our interactions with others. In a way, our day-to-day interactions are like those of actors on a stage. (Photo courtesy of Jan Lewandowski/flickr)

Just as socialization is mostly determined by the world and culture around us, our perception of the world is also influenced by external forces. Consider your own society, for example. A **society** describes a group of people who live in a defined geographical area, interact with one another, and share a common culture. How do you think your society was "constructed"? Who decided upon the appropriate social norms and behaviors that shape your reality and experience? Sociologists understand that reality is socially constructed, meaning that people shape their experiences through social interaction.

In 1966 sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann wrote a book called *The Social Construction of Reality*. In it, they argued that society is created by humans and human interaction, which they call **habitualization**. Habitualization describes how "any action that is repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern, which can then be … performed again in the future in the same manner and with the same economical effort" (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Not only do we construct our own society but we also accept it as it is because others have created it before us. Society is, in fact, a matter of "habit."

For example, your school exists as a school and not just as another building because you and others agree that it is a school. If your school is older than you are, it was created by the agreement of others who came before you. In a sense, it exists by consensus, both prior and ongoing. This is an example of the process of institutionalization, the act of implanting a convention or norm into society. Bear in mind that the institution, while socially constructed, is still quite real.

Another way of looking at this concept is through William I. and Dorothy Thomas's notable **Thomas theorem** which states, "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas 1928). That is, people's behavior can be determined by their subjective construction of reality rather than by objective reality. The Thomases used a case study of a mentally ill prisoner who believed his fellow inmates were talking about him and physically attacked them every time he saw their lips move. Although the other prisoners were not talking about him, it did not matter, because the situation (i.e., gossip, verbal abuse) was real to the mentally ill prisoner and the consequences (i.e., physical attacks) were very real.



Figure 2. The story line of a self-fulfilling prophecy appears in many literary works, perhaps most famously in the story of Oedipus. Oedipus is told by an oracle that he will murder his father and marry his mother. In going out of his way to avoid his fate, Oedipus inadvertently fulfills it. Oedipus's story illustrates one way in which members of society contribute to the social construction of reality. (Photo courtesy of Jean-Antoine-Theodore Giroust/Wikimedia Commons)

Like Berger and Luckmann in their description of habitualization, the Thomases state that our moral codes and social norms are created by "successive definitions of the situation." Racism, or the belief that one race is superior to another, is a social construction. In the United States, racism has been defined over time through laws and repeatedly interpreted by the courts. In *Scott v. Sanford* (1857), the U.S. Supreme Court declared that Dred Scott, a former slave, was not a citizen (or person under the law), and therefore could not sue and be recognized in federal court. Forty years later (1896), the Court upheld segregation laws in the trial of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and infamously decided that "separate but equal" was okay. Homer Plessy, who was one-eighth Black, had purchased a first class ticket for a train in Louisiana, but was was arrested and jailed for sitting in the "White's Only" car. The *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling would not be reversed until the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling (1954).

Sociologist Robert K. Merton used the phrase **self-fulfilling prophecy** to describe how even a false idea can become true if it is acted upon. One example Merton gives is of a "bank run." Say for some reason, a number of people falsely fear that their bank is soon to be bankrupt. Because of this false notion, people run to their bank and demand all of their cash at once. As banks rarely, if ever, have that much money on hand, the bank does indeed run out of money, fulfilling the customers' prophecy. Here, reality is constructed by an idea. Examples of Merton's bank run self-fulfilling prophecy took place place at two major international airports on opposite sides of the country (JFK in New York City and LAX in Los Angeles) within two weeks of each other in 2016, as people tweeted and posted pictures of an active shooter situation. Although there were no gunshots or active shooters in either airport, the reactions by law enforcement and security and the thousands of frightened travelers were very real in their consequences.

Symbolic interactionists offer another lens through which to analyze the social construction of reality. With a theoretical perspective focused on the symbols (like words, gestures, and artifacts) that people use to interact, this approach is interested in how people interpret those symbols in daily interactions. For example, we might feel fright at seeing a person carrying a gun, unless, of course, it turns out to be a police officer. Interactionists also recognize that language and body language reflect our values. One has only to learn a foreign tongue to know that not every English word can be easily translated into another language. The same is true for gestures. While Americans might recognize a "thumbs up" as meaning "great," in Germany it would mean "one" and in Japan it would mean "five." Thus, our construction of reality is influenced by our symbolic interactions and culturally specific knowledge.

A Year Without the Internet–by choice?

The Internet provides fertile new ground in terms of understanding how meaning is created, or constructed, and how those realities become our social world. Americans are increasingly spending their waking hours on the Internet; according to "Surveying the Digital Future," an annual report conducted by researchers at USC Annenberg, Americans are spend 23.6 hours online each week, up from 9.4 hours per week in 2000, and home use has risen from 3.3 hours per week to 17.6 hours per week over the same period. [1] What are the implications for family life, friendships, consumer habits, and how we receive news? How does this change the way we see ourselves as well as those around us?

Listen to Paul Miller's TEDx talk about his journey of going offline for one year. What things changed for him? How does he strive to find balance?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13311

Think It Over

- Think of a self-fulfilling prophecy that you've experienced or observed. Based on this example, do you agree with the Thomas theorem? Are there any current events that we might better understand by applying the Thomas theorem?
- Imagine a year offline. In what ways do you think your reality would change or shift?

Glossary

habitualization:
the idea that society is constructed by us and those before us, and it is followed like a habit

society:
a group of people who live in a defined geographical area who interact with one another and share a common culture

self-fulfilling prophecy:
an idea that becomes true when acted upon; the way that a person's beliefs can affect their behavior

Thomas theorem:
how a subjective reality can drive events to develop in accordance with that reality, despite being originally unsupported by objective reality

---

1. Cole, J. and Suman M. 2017. "Surveying the digital future." USC Annenberg Annual Report. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Social Constructions of Reality. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:0GrZhc7L@2/Social-Constructions-of-Reality. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 7.6: The Social Construction of Reality is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.7: Roles and the Presentation of Self

Learning Outcomes

- Describe how individuals present themselves and perceive themselves in a social context

Long before the Internet, sociologists were examining how individuals interact with society and how they present themselves to others and are in turn perceived. In our digital age, we can contemplate the kinds of photos posted online, how others react to those photos (“hearts,” “thumbs up,” emojis, comments, etc.), and then how we interpret those reactions. This threefold process correlates with Cooley’s 1902 concept of the looking-glass self, in which we develop our sense of self as we: 1) see how others react to us, 2) interpret that reaction (typically as positive or negative) and 3) develop a sense of self based on those interpretations.

Status and Roles

Sociologists use the term **status** to describe the responsibilities and benefits that a person experiences according to their rank and role in society. Some statuses are **ascribed**—those you do not select, such as son, elderly person, or female. Others, called **achieved statuses**, are obtained by choice, such as high school dropout, self-made millionaire, or nurse. As a daughter or son, you occupy a different status than as a neighbor or employee.

As you can imagine, people employ many types of behaviors in day-to-day life. **Roles** are patterns of behavior that we recognize in each other, and 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 status.

If too much is required of a single role, individuals can experience **role strain**. Consider the duties of a parent: cooking, cleaning, driving, problem-solving, acting as a source of moral guidance—the list goes on. Similarly, a person can experience **role conflict** when one or more roles are contradictory. A parent who also has a full-time career can experience role conflict on a daily basis. When there is a deadline at the office but a sick child needs to be picked up from school, which comes first? When you are working toward a promotion but your children want you to come to their school play, which do you choose? Being a college student can conflict with being an employee, being an athlete, or even being a friend. Our roles in life powerfully affect our decisions and help to shape our identities.

One person can be associated with a multitude of roles and statuses. Even a single status such as “student” has a complex **role-set**, or array of roles, attached to it (Merton 1957).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13312

Presentation of Self

Of course, it is impossible to look inside a person’s head and study what role they are playing. All we can observe is outward behavior, or role performance. **Role performance** is how a person expresses his or her role. Sociologist Erving Goffman presented the idea that a person is like an actor on a stage. Calling his theory **dramaturgy**, Goffman believed that we use **impression management** to present ourselves to others as we hope to be perceived. Each situation is a new scene, and individuals perform different roles depending on who is present (Goffman 1959). Think about the way you behave around your coworkers versus the way you behave around your grandparents or with a blind date. Even if you’re not consciously trying to alter your personality, your grandparents, coworkers, and date probably see different sides of you.

Watch It

Watch the following video to learn more about Erving Goffmann’s concept of dramaturgical analysis and consider the various roles you play on the different “stages” of your life. What is your front-stage self and your back-stage self?

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=170

As in a play, the setting matters as well. If you have a group of friends over to your house for dinner, you are playing the role of a host. It is agreed upon that you will provide food and seating and probably be stuck with a lot of the cleanup at the end of the night.

Similarly, your friends are playing the roles of guests, and they are expected to respect your property and any rules you may set forth (“Don’t leave the door open or the cat will get out.”). In any scene, there needs to be a shared reality between players. In this case, if you view yourself as a guest and others view you as a host, there are likely to be problems.

Impression management is a critical component of symbolic interactionism. For example, a judge in a courtroom has many “props” to create an impression of fairness, gravity, and control—like her robe and gavel. Those entering the courtroom are expected to adhere to the scene being set. Just imagine the “impression” that can be made by how a person dresses. This is the reason that attorneys frequently select the hairstyle and apparel for witnesses and defendants in courtroom proceedings.



Figure 1. Janus, another possible “prop”, depicted with two heads, exemplifies war and peace. (Photo courtesy of Fubar Obfusco/Wikimedia Commons)

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13314

Again, Goffman’s dramaturgical approach expands on the ideas of Charles Cooley and the **looking-glass self**. We imagine how we must appear to others, then react to this speculation. We put on certain clothes, prepare our hair in a particular manner, wear makeup, use cologne, and the like—all with the notion that our presentation of ourselves is going to affect how others perceive us. We expect a certain reaction, and, if lucky, we get the one we desire and feel good about it. But more than that, Cooley believed that our sense of self is based upon this idea: we imagine how we look to others, draw conclusions based upon their reactions to us, and then we develop our personal sense of self. In other words, people’s reactions to us are like a mirror in which we are reflected.

Watch It

Watch this Khan Academy video to learn more about Charles Cooley’s looking-glass self.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=170

Think It Over

- Describe a situation in which you have tried to influence others’ perception of you? How does Goffman’s impression management apply to this situation?
- Draw a large circle, and then “slice” the circle into pieces like a pie, labeling each piece with a role or status that you occupy. Add as many statuses, ascribed and achieved, that you have. Don’t forget things like dog owner, gardener, traveler, student, runner, employee. How many statuses do you have? In which ones are there role conflicts?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13313

Glossary

achieved status: the status a person chooses, such as a level of education or income

ascribed status:

the status outside of an individual’s control, such as sex or race

dramaturgical approach:

a technique sociologists use in which they view society through the metaphor of theatrical performance

impression management:

the effort to control or influence other peoples' opinion

looking-glass self:

our reflection of how we think we appear to others

roles:

patterns of behavior that are representative of a person's social status

role-set:

an array of roles attached to a particular status

role conflict:

a situation when one or more of an individual's roles clash

role performance:

the expression of a role

role strain:

stress that occurs when too much is required of a single role

status:

the responsibilities and benefits that a person experiences according to his or her rank and role in society

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Social Constructions of Reality. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: Home. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.

All rights reserved content

- Charles Cooley Looking Glass Self. **Authored by**: Brooke Miller. **Provided by**: Khan Academy. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/embed/XCxe9HbfJcM?enablejsapi=1. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Dramaturgy (Dramaturgical Analysis). **Provided by**: Sociology Live!. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=5Qe5TI__ZDU. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 7.7: Roles and the Presentation of Self is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.8: Introduction to Agents of Socialization

What you'll learn to do: describe the roles that agents of socialization play in the socialization process and describe how socialization develops across the life course



We discussed food and food production as a cultural universal in an earlier module on culture. All cultures also have norms regarding the preparing and eating of food. Where did you learn your table manners? Chances are, you were instructed from an early age at your home dinner table about how to eat appropriately around others. Or maybe your parents never explicitly said, "chew with your mouth closed," but you picked up on their disapproval when they looked at you and frowned. Table manners vary from culture to culture and also within cultures. Burping after a meal is regarded as a compliment to the chef in certain parts of the world, "slurping" soup is acceptable in others, eating with one's hands or with chopsticks is the norm in many parts of the world, and so on. Does one eat alone or with others? In New York City, for example, people are often seen eating alone and/or "on the go" (i.e. walking and eating one's lunch) whereas this would be very unusual in other places. Is texting or updating social media while eating with others acceptable? Social norms change over time and vary between and within cultures.

In this section, you'll see that it's through direct interactions with social groups, like families and peers, that we learn how others expect us to behave. Likewise, a society's formal and informal institutions socialize its population. Schools, workplaces, and the media communicate and reinforce cultural norms and values.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Agents of Socialization. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Family_dinner. **Authored by**: U.S. Department of Agriculture . **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/6918640906/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 7.8: Introduction to Agents of Socialization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.9: Agents of Socialization

Learning Outcomes

- Examine the roles of agents of socialization, such as families, peer groups, and institutional agents

Socialization helps people learn to function successfully in their social worlds. How does the process of socialization occur? How do we learn to use the objects of our society's material culture? How do we come to adopt the beliefs, values, and norms that represent its nonmaterial culture? This learning takes place through interaction with various agents of socialization, like peer groups and families, plus both formal and informal social institutions.

Agents of Socialization

Social groups often provide the first experiences of socialization. Families, and later peer groups, communicate expectations and reinforce norms. People first learn to use the tangible objects of material culture in these settings, as well as being introduced to the beliefs and values of society.

Family

Family is the first agent of socialization. What constitutes family is also socially constructed and may or may not exclusively refer to blood relatives. Family may include neighbors and/or close friends, but more typically includes parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. These family members teach a child what he or she needs to know. For example, they show the child how to use objects such as clothes, computers, eating utensils, books, or bikes; how to relate to others (some as "family," others as "friends," still others as "strangers" or "teachers" or "neighbors"); and how the world works (what is "real" and what is "imagined"). As you are aware, either from your own experience as a child and/or from your role in helping to raise one, socialization includes teaching and learning about an unending array of objects and ideas.

Keep in mind, however, that families do not socialize children in a vacuum. Many social factors affect the way a family raises its children. For example, we can use the sociological imagination to recognize that individual behaviors are affected by the historical period in which they take place. For example, people raised in the 1940s (perhaps your grandparents or great grandparents) did not have televisions in their homes but people raised in the 1950s and 1960s typically did. Today, parents are deciding when to buy their child a cell phone, how much "screen time" they can have in a day, and are using all types of technology to monitor their children, from location tracking apps to Internet filters. Not only are families demonstrating norms related to technology through their own modeling and ongoing process of socialization, but they are also teaching norms and values explicitly.

Sociologists recognize that race, social class, religion, and other factors play an important role in socialization. For example, poor families usually emphasize obedience and conformity when raising their children, while wealthy families emphasize judgment and creativity (National Opinion Research Center 2008). This may occur because working-class parents have less education and often occupy repetitive-task jobs for which it is helpful to be able to follow rules and conform. Wealthy parents tend to have better educations and often work in managerial positions or careers that require creative problem solving, so they teach their children behaviors that are beneficial in these positions. This means children are effectively socialized and raised to take the types of jobs their parents already have, thus reproducing the class system (Kohn 1977). Likewise, children are socialized to abide by gender norms, perceptions of race, and class-related behaviors.



Figure 1. The socialized roles of dads (and moms) vary by society. (Photo courtesy of Nate Grigg/flickr)

In Sweden, for instance, stay-at-home fathers are an accepted part of the social landscape. A government policy provides subsidized time off work—480 days for families with newborns—with the option of the paid leave being shared between mothers and fathers.

As one stay-at-home dad says, being home to take care of his baby son "is a real fatherly thing to do. I think that's very masculine" (Associated Press 2011). Close to 90 percent of Swedish fathers use their paternity leave (about 340,000 dads); on average they take seven weeks per birth (The Economist, 2014). How do U.S. policies—and our society's expected gender roles—compare? How will Swedish children raised this way be socialized to parental gender norms? How might that be different from parental gender norms in the United States?

Peer Groups

A **peer group** is made up of people who are similar in age and social status and who share interests. Peer group socialization begins in the earliest years, such as when kids on a playground teach younger children the norms about taking turns, the rules of a game, or how to shoot a basket. As children grow into teenagers, this process continues. Peer groups are important to adolescents in a new way, as they begin to develop an identity separate from their parents and exert independence. Additionally, peer groups provide their own opportunities for socialization since kids usually engage in different types of activities with their peers than they do with their families.

The way peer groups interact has also changed over time with technological advances. Thirty years ago, kids played Nintendo or Sega but they were not "online." If they wanted to play video games with others, they had to arrange it. Today, kids are playing video games with people from all over the world with a few clicks. Their peer group might include people they have never met outside of video games or social media.

Peer groups provide adolescents' first major socialization experience outside the realm of their families. Interestingly, studies have shown that although friendships rank high in adolescents' priorities, this is balanced by parental influence.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13315

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13316

Institutional Agents

The social institutions of our culture also inform our socialization. Formal institutions—like schools, workplaces, and the government—teach people how to behave in and navigate these systems. Other institutions, like the media, contribute to socialization by inundating us with messages about norms and expectations.



Figure 1. These kindergarteners aren't just learning to read and write; they are being socialized to norms like keeping their hands to themselves, standing in line, and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. (Photo courtesy of Bonner Springs Library/flickr)

School

Most U.S. children spend about seven hours a day, 180 days a year, in school, which makes it hard to deny the importance school has on their socialization (U.S. Department of Education 2004). Students are not in school only to study math, reading, science, and other subjects–the manifest function of this system–schools also serve a latent function in society by socializing children into behaviors like practicing teamwork, following a schedule, and using textbooks.

School and classroom rituals, led by teachers serving as role models and leaders, regularly reinforce what society expects from children. Sociologists describe this aspect of schools as the **hidden curriculum**, the informal teaching done by schools. For example, in the United States, schools have built a sense of competition into the way grades are awarded and the way teachers evaluate students (Bowles and Gintis 1976). When children participate in a relay race or a math contest, they learn there are winners and losers in society. When children are required to work together on a project, they practice teamwork with other people in cooperative situations. The hidden curriculum prepares children for the adult world. Children learn how to deal with bureaucracy, rules, expectations, waiting their turn, and sitting still for hours during the day. Schools in different cultures socialize children differently in order to prepare them to function well in those cultures. The latent functions of teamwork and dealing with bureaucracy are features of U.S. culture. Schools also have structures in place to reward students for attendance and timeliness and to punish students for absenteeism and lateness. For young children, who are often unable to get themselves to school and rely on their families, this can unfairly punish young students who have little control over when they arrive at school.

Schools also socialize children by teaching them about citizenship and national pride. In the United States, children are taught to say the Pledge of Allegiance. Most districts require classes about U.S. history and geography. As academic understanding of history evolves, textbooks in the United States have been scrutinized and revised to update attitudes toward other cultures as well as perspectives on historical events; thus, children are more effectively socialized to a more inclusive world history than earlier textbooks might have offered. For example, information about the mistreatment of African Americans and Native Americans more accurately reflects those events compared to past textbooks. However, the experience of Latinos, Blacks, and Asian Americans is still neglected in many standard textbooks.

Further Research

Watch this clip of Belissa Escoloedo, Zariya Allen, and Rhiannan McGavin as they present their poem “Somewhere in America” at the 2014 Brave New Voices Poetry Slam. Look for examples of the hidden curriculum in public schools.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=174

Controversial Textbooks

On August 13, 2001, twenty South Korean men gathered in Seoul. Each chopped off one of his own fingers because of textbooks. These men took drastic measures to protest eight middle school textbooks approved by Tokyo for use in Japanese middle schools. According to the Korean government (and other East Asian nations), the textbooks glossed over negative events in Japan’s history at the expense of other Asian countries.

In the early 1900s, Japan was one of Asia’s more aggressive nations. For instance, it held Korea as a colony between 1910 and 1945. Today, Koreans argue that the Japanese are whitewashing that colonial history through these textbooks. One major criticism is that they do not mention that, during World War II, the Japanese forced Korean women into sexual slavery. The textbooks describe the women as having been “drafted” to work, a euphemism that downplays the brutality of what actually occurred. Some Japanese textbooks dismiss an important Korean independence demonstration in 1919 as a “riot.” In reality, Japanese soldiers attacked peaceful demonstrators, leaving roughly 6,000 dead and 15,000 wounded (Crampton 2002).

Although it may seem extreme that people are so enraged about how events are described in a textbook that they would resort to self-dismemberment, the protest affirms that textbooks are a significant tool of socialization in state-run education systems.

The Workplace

Just as children spend much of their day at school, many adults at some point invest a significant amount of time at a place of employment. Although socialized into their culture since birth, workers require new socialization into a workplace, in terms of both

material culture (such as how to operate the copy machine) and nonmaterial culture (such as whether it's okay to speak directly to the boss or how to share the break room refrigerator).

Different jobs require different types of socialization. In the past, many people worked a single job until retirement. Today, the trend is to switch jobs at least once a decade. Between the ages of eighteen and forty-six, the average baby boomer of the younger set held 11.3 different jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). This means that people must become socialized to, and socialized by, a variety of work environments.

Religion

While some religions are informal institutions, here we focus on practices followed by formal institutions. Religion is an important avenue of socialization for many people. The United States is full of synagogues, temples, churches, mosques, and similar religious communities where people gather to worship and learn. Like other institutions, these places teach participants how to interact with the religion's material culture (like a mezuzah, a prayer rug, or a communion wafer). For some people, important ceremonies related to family structure—like marriage and birth—are connected to religious celebrations. Many religious institutions also uphold gender norms and contribute to their enforcement through socialization. From ceremonial rites of passage that reinforce the family unit to power dynamics that reinforce gender roles, organized religion fosters a shared set of socialized values that are passed on through society.

Mass Media

Mass media distribute impersonal information to a wide audience, via television, newspapers, radio, and the Internet. With the average person spending over four hours a day in front of the television (and children averaging even more screen time), media greatly influence social norms (Roberts, Foehr, and Rideout 2005). People learn about objects of material culture (like new technology and transportation options), as well as nonmaterial culture—what is true (beliefs), what is important (values), and what is expected (norms).

Gender role socialization and animated films



Figure 2. Some people are concerned about the way girls today are socialized into a "princess culture." (Photo courtesy of Jørgen Håland/flickr).

Pixar is one of the largest producers of children's movies in the world and has released large box office draws and hugely popular films such as *Toy Story* (1995) and its sequels (1999), (2010), and (2019), *Monsters, Inc.* (2001) and *Monsters University* (2013), *Finding Nemo* (2003) and *Finding Dori* (2016), *Cars* (2006) and its sequels (2011) and (2017), *The Incredibles* (2004) and its sequel (2018), *Up* (2009), *Brave* (2012), *Inside Out* (2015), and *Coco* (2017), just to name a few.

Disney, Pixar's parent company, and Pixar were both criticized for not including female leads and in cases in which the star is a female (i.e. *Snow White*, *Cinderella*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *and Mulan*) for reifying tropes like the princess who needs to be saved by a prince. In some cases, the female lead is captured (Belle in *Beauty and the* Beast) and mistreated by the male character who becomes a prince, or rendered mute as in *The Little Mermaid*, or in the case of *Mulan*, when a female is a war hero (dressed as a male), she is expected to be humble and go back to her domestic duties after the war.

Prior to *Brave*, Pixar films featured females as supporting characters and love interests. In *Up*, for example, the only human female character dies within the first ten minutes of the film. For the millions of girls watching Pixar films, there were few strong characters or roles for them to relate to but several recent films have changed and featured female leads. *Brave*, *The Incredibles 2*,

Inside Out, and *Coco* all feature female lead characters. A closer examination of Riley Anderson in *Inside Out* reveals gendered emotions. Joy, sadness, and disgust are emotions personified by female voices whereas anger and fear are personified by male voices. Is this reifying the gender stereotypes of masculine and feminine emotions?

The Incredibles 2 (2018) features a working mom and a stay-at-home dad, a reversal of traditional gender role norms. Noticeably the mom is the lead in *Incredibles 2* and the breadwinner whereas in *The Incredibles* she was supporting her husband's efforts to save the world. Mom (Elastigirl) feels guilty for leaving her children to work, Dad (Mr. Incredible) feels overwhelmed and inadequate at times, and the kids are impressed with Mom's efforts to save the world. Some of the gender role stereotypes from the 2004 film cannot be overcome, though. The name Elasti*girl* infantilizes a grown woman and some reviewers argued that she is overly sexualized and once again reifying the role of women as sexual objects in film (see *New Yorker* review of The Incredibles 2 that was shared on Twitter).

Think It Over

- Do you think it is important that parents discuss gender roles with their young children, or is gender a topic better left for later? How do parents consider gender norms when buying their children books, movies, and toys? How do you believe they *should* consider it?
- Based on your observations, when are adolescents more likely to listen to their parents or to their peer groups when making decisions? What types of dilemmas lend themselves toward one social agent over another?

Further Research

Most societies expect parents to socialize children into gender norms. See the controversy surrounding one Canadian couple's refusal to raise their children with gender roles.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13317

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13318

Glossary

hidden curriculum:
the informal teaching done in schools that socializes children to societal norms

peer group:
a group made up of people who are similar in age and social status and who share interests

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Agents of Socialization. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:MlbkT6dl/5-3-Agents-of-Socialization. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Somewhere in America by Los Angeles Team. **Provided by**: Brave New Voices (Finals). **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OadZpUJv8Eg&feature=youtu.be. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 7.9: Agents of Socialization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.10: Socialization Across the Lifespan

Learning Outcomes

- Explain how socialization is a lifelong process

Socialization isn't a one-time or even a short-term event. We aren't "stamped" by some socialization machine as we move along a conveyor belt and thereby socialized once and for all. Instead, socialization is a lifelong process.

In the United States, socialization throughout the life course is determined greatly by age norms and "time-related rules and regulations" (Setterson 2002). As we grow older, we encounter age-related transition points that require socialization into a new role, such as becoming school age, entering the workforce, or retiring. For example, the U.S. government mandates that all children attend school. Child labor laws, enacted in the early twentieth century, nationally established that childhood be a time of learning, not of labor. In countries such as Niger and Sierra Leone, however, child labor remains common and socially acceptable, with little legislation to regulate such practices (UNICEF 2012).

Gap Year: How Different Societies Socialize Young Adults



Figure 1. *Age transition points require socialization into new roles that can vary widely between societies. Young adults in America may enter college or the workforce right away, students in England and India can take a year off like British Princes William and Harry did, while young men in Singapore and Switzerland must serve time in the military, and men and women in Israel serve in the military. (Photo courtesy of Charles McCain/flickr)*

Have you ever heard of gap year? It's a common custom in British society among the upper class. When teens finish their secondary schooling (aka high school in the United States), they often take a year "off" before entering college. Frequently, they might take a job, travel, or find other ways to experience another culture. Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge, spent his gap year practicing survival skills in Belize, teaching English in Chile, and working on a dairy farm in the United Kingdom (Prince of Wales 2012a). His brother, Prince Harry, advocated for AIDS orphans in Africa and worked as a jackeroo (a novice ranch hand) in Australia (Prince of Wales 2012b).

In the United States, this life transition point is socialized quite differently, and taking a year off is generally frowned upon. Instead, U.S. youth are encouraged to pick career paths by their mid-teens, to select a college and a major by their late teens, and to have completed all collegiate schooling or technical training for their career by their early twenties. In 2017, Malia Obama chose to take a gap year rather and was criticized. Chelsea Clinton and Barbara and Jenna Bush went straight to college when their fathers were President of the United States, which resulted in a full secret service detail at their respective universities. Malia Obama represents a shift in American norms; many elite universities are recommending that students take a year "off" to avoid burnout.

In yet other nations, this phase of the life course often entails conscription, a term for compulsory military service. Egypt, Switzerland, Turkey, Israel, and Singapore all have this system in place. Youth in these nations (often only the males) are expected to undergo a number of months or years of military training and service.

How might your life be different if you lived in one of these other countries? Can you think of similar social norms—related to life age-transition points—that vary from country to country?

Many of life's social expectations are made clear and enforced on a cultural level. Through interacting with others and watching others interact, the expectation to fulfill roles becomes clear. While in elementary or middle school, the prospect of having a

boyfriend or girlfriend may have been considered undesirable. The socialization that takes place in high school, however, often changes our views regarding this expectation. By observing the excitement and importance attached to dating and relationships within the high school social scene, it quickly becomes apparent that one is now expected not only to be a child and a student, but also a significant other. Graduation from formal education—high school, vocational school, or college—involves socialization into a new set of expectations.

Educational expectations vary not only from culture to culture, but also from class to class. While middle- or upper-class families may expect their daughter or son to attend a four-year university after graduating from high school, other families may expect their child to immediately begin working full-time, as many within their family have done before.

The Long Road to Adulthood for Millennials

2008 was a year of financial upheaval in the United States. Rampant property foreclosures and bank failures set off a chain of events leading to government distrust, loan defaults, and large-scale unemployment. How has this affected the United States' young adults?

Millennials, sometimes also called Gen Y, is a term that describes the generation born from approximately 1982 to 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. While the recession was in full swing, many were in the process of entering, attending, or graduating from high school or college. With unemployment at its second-highest levels since the Great Depression of the 1930s, large numbers of graduates were unable to find work, sometimes moving back in with their parents and struggling to pay back student loans.

According to the *New York Times*, this economic malaise is causing Millennials to postpone what most Americans consider to be adulthood: "The traditional cycle seems to have gone off course, as young people remain untethered to romantic partners or to permanent homes, going back to school for lack of better options, traveling, avoiding commitments, competing ferociously for unpaid internships or temporary (and often grueling) Teach for America jobs, forestalling the beginning of adult life" (Henig 2010). The term "Boomerang Generation" has been used to describe recent college graduates for whom lack of adequate employment upon leaving school often leads to a return to the parental home (Davidson 2014).

The five milestones that define adulthood, Henig writes, are "completing school, leaving home, becoming financially independent, marrying, and having a child" (Henig 2010). These social milestones are taking longer for Millennials to attain, if they're attained at all. Sociologists wonder what long-term impact this generation's situation may have on society as a whole.

In the process of socialization, adulthood brings a new set of challenges and expectations, as well as new roles to fill. As the aging process moves forward, social roles continue to evolve. Pleasures of youth, such as wild nights out and serial dating, become less acceptable in the eyes of society. Responsibility and commitment are emphasized as pillars of adulthood, and men and women are expected to "settle down." During this period, many people enter into marriage or a civil union, bring children into their families, and focus on a career path. They become partners or parents instead of students or significant others.

Just as young children pretend to be doctors or lawyers, play house, and dress up, adults also engage in anticipatory socialization, the preparation for future life roles. Examples would include a couple who cohabitate before marriage, or soon-to-be parents who read infant care books and prepare their home for the new arrival. As part of **anticipatory socialization**, adults who are financially able begin planning for their retirement, saving money, and looking into future healthcare options. The transition into any new life role, despite the social structure that supports it, can be difficult.

Think It Over

Consider a person who is joining a sorority or fraternity, attending college or boarding school, or even a child beginning kindergarten. How is the process the student goes through a form of socialization? What new cultural behaviors must the student adapt to?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13319

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13320

Glossary

anticipatory socialization:

the way we prepare for future life roles

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Socialization Across the Life Course. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:JpBA6gIv@5/5-4-Socialization-Across-the-Life-Course. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 7.10: Socialization Across the Lifespan is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.11: Resocialization

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the characteristics of a total institution
- Describe when and how resocialization occurs

Resocialization

If socialization is the lifelong process of learning the values and norms of a given society, then **resocialization** refers to undergoing this process again by drastically changing one's values and beliefs. Typically, this occurs in a new environment where the old rules no longer apply. According to Erving Goffman (1961) **total institutions** such as private boarding schools, the military, jails or prisons, and mental institutions provide such environments because they are effectively cut off from the larger society and are highly regulated. This regulation includes strict norms (i.e., uniform, hairstyle, daily schedule, communication, etc.) and comprehensive rules. Typically, a single authority figure such as a prison warden, drill sergeant, high ranking military officer, or headmaster is in charge and oversees staff to enforce the regulations.



Figure 1. In basic training, members of the Air Force are taught to walk, move, and look like each other. (Photo courtesy of Staff Sergeant Desiree N. Palacios, U.S. Air Force/Wikimedia Commons

Sociologist Harold Garfinkel (1956) coined the term **degradation ceremony** (also known as "status degradation ceremony") and described a process through which people who have usually wronged society in some way are marked and punished to reaffirm the existing norms. They are often stripped of their former identity and given a new, lower-status identity.

Initiation Rituals

On some occasions, degradation ceremonies are used to initiate people into total institutions like schools, mental hospitals, prisons, or military units. The purpose of a ceremony in this context is to deprive people of their former identities and dignity in order make them more accepting of external control. The "perp walk," wherein a person suspected of committing criminal acts is publicly arrested and led into a police car or station, is a common example of this kind of degradation ceremony. Invasive searches in jails and prisons, being assigned a number, having one's hair cut and jewelry taken, and being issued a prison uniform are all examples of initiation rituals. Through a variety of such processional steps, one's identity is diminished and replaced with that of a jail or prison inmate, for example. With the exception of tattoos, any representations of material culture such as piercings or jewelry, is removed. The resocialization process continues as one learns the systems of value and social norms necessary for survival in this type of total institution. A norm that would have been previously unacceptable, such as using an open toilet in a shared room, is now a daily occurrence. Here the common value of personal privacy has to be discarded to some extent as a result of external constraints.

When entering the army, soldiers have their hair cut short, their old clothes are removed, and they are issued matching uniforms. These individuals must give up any markers of their former identity as a "civilian" in order to be resocialized into a new identity as a "soldier." In the military, soldiers go through basic training together, where they learn new rules and bond with one another. They follow structured schedules set by their leaders. Soldiers must keep their areas clean for inspection, learn to march in correct formations, and salute when in the presence of superiors. Values that might have been part of civilian life such as individuality and privacy are typically discarded in boot camp, an intensive period of time in which soldiers are trained physically and mentally. Marine Corps Boot Camp is intended to "break" incoming civilians and rebuild them as Marines.

These examples of resocialization are within total institutions, but the process is sometimes more gentle outside of these extreme environments. To enter a senior care home, an elderly person often must leave a family home and give up many belongings which were part of his or her long-standing identity. Though caretakers guide the elderly compassionately, the process can still produce feelings of loss and disorientation.

Returning to a more normal life after having lived in a total institution requires yet another process of resocialization. In the U.S. military, soldiers learn discipline and a capacity for hard work. They set aside personal goals to achieve a mission, and they take pride in the accomplishments of their units. Many soldiers who leave the military transition these skills into excellent careers. Others find themselves lost upon leaving, uncertain about the outside world and what to do next. The process of resocialization to civilian life is not a simple one.

Similarly, for people who have spent time in jail or prison, resocialization to the outside world is extremely difficult. One classic example from *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) occurs when "Red" (Morgan Freeman), is released as an elderly black man who had spent his life in prison. He obtains a job working as a bagger at the grocery store and asks the white manager, "Restroom break, Boss?" to which his manager waves him over and says, "You don't need to ask me every time you need to take a piss."[1] This quick exchange signals Red's difficulty in acclimating to the freedom to use the restroom as needed, and also demonstrates the sweeping societal changes in racial dynamics he missed while in prison. The scene also displays his manager's discomfort with the racial and age-based dynamics in play.

Further Research

Homelessness is an endemic problem among veterans. Many soldiers leave the military, perhaps after one or several combat deployments, and experience difficulty resocializing into civilian life. Learn more about the issues around resocializing veterans.

Think It Over

- Goffman included schools in his list of total institutions. In what ways do schools strip students of their identities and reshape values and norms?
- Do you think resocialization requires a total institution? Why, or why not? Can you think of any other ways someone could be resocialized?
- What other groups utilize degradation ceremonies to initiate members? What ethical questions do such ceremonies raise?

Glossary

degradation ceremony:
the process by which new members of a total institution lose aspects of their old identities and are given new ones

resocialization:
the process by which old behaviors are removed and new behaviors are learned in their place

total institutions:
a closed social system that is highly regulated with strict norms, rules and schedules and generally a single authority figure who oversees staff to carry out rule enforcement

---

1. Darabont, F., Marvin, N., Robbins, T., Freeman, M., Gunton, B., Sadler, W., Brown, C., ... Warner Home Video (Firm). (2004). The Shawshank redemption. Burbank, CA: Warner Bros. Pictures. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Socialization Across the Life Course. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:JpBA6gIv@3/Socialization-Across-the-Life-Course. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 7.11: Resocialization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.12: Putting It Together- Socialization

Sociologists examine the importance of environment to understand social behavior and human groups. Examples of neglected children and identical twins separated at birth help us to understand the importance of socialization and its effect on individuals. We can see the importance of socialization for reinforcing values and norms, but must also acknowledge the changing nature of socialization across time and within diverse cultural contexts.

Take gender, for example. A later module will be devoted to the discussion of sex and gender, but take a moment now to consider how social institutions have helped shape your own understanding of gender roles and expected behavior. What messages did you get about gender roles from your family? What about from institutional agents like your school or church? Now think about how your understanding of these roles have shifted throughout your life. Even on the national stage, attitudes about gender are evolving. This 2019 Gilette advertisement is a product of the #metoo era and the changing views about what masculinity looks like:

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=180

CC licensed content, Original

- Putting It Together: Socialization. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

All rights reserved content

- We Believe: The Best Men Can Be | Gillette (Short Film). **Provided by**: Gilette. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koPmuEyP3a0. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 7.12: Putting It Together- Socialization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.13: Discussion- Socialization

STEP 1: Respond to the following prompt in a response of at least 150 words:

Cultural norms play a significant role in socialization, as outlined in the example of Princes William and Harry taking a “gap year” before starting college. Take a moment to think about the various ways culture has shaped your own socialization. Pick a specific example of how your culture may have shaped your socialization and identify how exposure to a different culture may have shaped you differently. Use specific terminology from the module.

STEP 2: Return to respond to at least TWO other posts in at least 75 words or more.

CC licensed content, Original

- **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 7.13: Discussion- Socialization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

7.14: Assignment- Agents of Socialization

In this module, you learned about the importance of socialization, how various agents and institutions play a role in socializing an individual, and how these experiences in socialization impact the individual across their lifespan. In this assignment, you will apply this information by analyzing the agents of socialization as they impact a specific individual in writing an essay between 400-600 words.

STEP 1: Identify and briefly describe the agents of socialization. Please include information like: general age of a person in which the agent plays a specific role, importance of the agent in socialization, how long these agents remain relevant, and when these agents are most relevant.

STEP 2: Choose an individual to use as a case study to better understand each agent of socialization. This example can be a real person, or it can be character from a television show, movie, or book. Discuss the various change agents this person has in their life. Describe, in detail, the specific roles these change agents play in socialization of the individual.

STEP 3: In a majority of situations, change agents aren't always "on the same page" and social expectations between agents may create difficulty or conflict for an individual. Using your example, identify a situation in which the social expectation varied between agents. What are some ways an individual may respond to these conflicting expectations? What issues may arise for an individual as they navigate these expectations? What are some ways clinicians can assist in this area?

Rubric

Criteria	**Ratings**			**Points**
Identify agents of socialization	Appropriately identifies all agents of socialization and includes relevant information about each.	Identifies all agents appropriately, but without depth. Describes most agents with relevant information.	Does not appropriately identify or describe all of the change agents.	__/5
Provides example	Provides appropriate example and identifies relevant agents of socialization, provides depth of information.	Provides appropriate example, and relevant agents, but without depth or additional information.	Does not provide appropriate example or does not identify relevant agents.	__/5
Identifies conflict, discusses relevance	Uses example to clearly outline issues that arise with conflict. Demonstrates analytical thinking and problem solving when answering specific questions.	Uses example but does not clearly address the issues that may arise. Provides basic answers to specific questions.	Does not appropriately relate answer to example or does not address issues that may arise, does not answer all of the questions.	__/10
			Total	__/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Agents of Socialization. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 7.14: Assignment- Agents of Socialization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Module 5- Society and Groups

8.1: Why It Matters- Society and Groups
8.2: Introduction to the Fundamentals of Society
8.3: Society, Culture, and Social Institutions
8.4: Types of Societies
8.5: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Society
8.6: Functionalism and Society
8.7: Conflict Theory and Society
8.8: Symbolic Interactionism and the McDonaldization of Society
8.9: Introduction to Organizations and Groups
8.10: Types of Formal Organizations
8.11: Types of Groups
8.12: Group Dynamics
8.13: Leadership Styles
8.14: Putting It Together- Society and Groups
8.15: Discussion- Society and Formal Organizations
8.16: Assignment- Society and Groups

This page titled 8: Module 5- Society and Groups is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.1: Why It Matters- Society and Groups

Why describe society and understand how groups operate?

Recently, a group in France known as the Yellow Jackets have made international headlines. They have no specified leader and claim they represent a movement and an uprising by the people, not a social protest.[1] Who comprise “the people”? The most common denominator seems to be rural or provincial working class men and women who feel cheated by taxes and high prices and who advocate for a direct, internet-based, popular democracy (Lichfield, 2019). One of many such web-originated uprisings around the world, the Yellow Jackets have used violence and have protested in large numbers (as many as 280,000 protestors in November 2018). They have garnered global attention for their bright yellow vests (an emergency-indicating item that all French motorists are required to keep in their car trunk) and the ways in which they have highlighted alleged presidential improprieties and growing income inequality.



Figure 1. A Yellow Jackets protest in Belfort, France.

If we use our sociological imagination to examine France’s history, we might recall that sociology began with Frenchmen Auguste Comte’s question, “What holds society together?” Instead of questioning why the French Revolution occurred, Comte wondered why it hadn’t happened earlier! Similarly, we can think about other countries that have sizable and growing income disparities (including the United States) and ask, “What holds these societies together?”

In the following sections, we will examine society, social institutions, and culture. Specifically, we will explore the analyses of society advanced by Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber. Finally, we will examine organizations and groups and the importance of group dynamics.

These sociological frameworks will provide us with resources for understanding groups like the Yellow Jackets or the conservative Tea Party Movement, and for theoretically contextualizing the orientations and behaviors of similar groups.

---

1. Lichfield, J. 2019. "In the Yellow Jackets' Heartland." Politico. https://www.politico.eu/article/france-protests-yellow-jackets-heartland-gilets-jaunes/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Why It Matters: Society and Groups. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 8.1: Why It Matters- Society and Groups is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.2: Introduction to the Fundamentals of Society

What you'll learn to do: understand society and its components, and learn about types of societies that have developed over time



Figure 1. NASA is one of many government agencies with programs that were affected by the government shutdown. Can you think of others? What are the short and long-term effects of the furlough?

Examining society from a macrosociological point of view can be difficult, but as you will see, major shifts (i.e., political, technological, economic, and/or social) such as the French Revolution for Auguste Comte, or the Industrial Revolution for Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and Max Weber were epochal events that prompted early sociologists to examine the affected societies.

September 11, 2001 was such a moment that affected not only the society in which the attacks occurred (the United States), but also impacted societies around the world because of the global interconnectedness of market and communication networks. Many societal frames of reference were called into question by this event, and its incomprehensibility produced widespread feelings of what sociologists call *anomie*–a condition wherein familiar explanatory norms seem inadequate or unavailable.

The 2018-2019 United States government shutdown provides another illustrative example. Although it was not the first government shutdown, it was the longest. What types of essential services were included in this shutdown? How did it affect federal and state employees and other citizens whose livelihood depends on the smooth operation of government offices? What assumptions about state authority and stability did it weaken or otherwise complicate? The number of government workers impacted was approximately 800,000, and the ripple effect on contractors and and other dependents was substantial.

In this section, you will review some key concepts from earlier modules and see how the main theoretical paradigms of sociology help us to understand societies.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to the Fundamentals of Society. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 8.2: Introduction to the Fundamentals of Society is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.3: Society, Culture, and Social Institutions

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the relationship between culture, society, and social institutions
- Identify and define social institutions

As you recall from earlier modules, **culture** describes a group's shared norms (or acceptable behaviors) and values, whereas **society** describes a group of people who live in a defined geographical area, and who interact with one another and share a common culture. For example, the United States is a society that encompasses many cultures. **Social institutions** are mechanisms or patterns of social order focused on meeting social needs, such as government, economy, education, family, healthcare, and religion. Some sociological methods focus on examining social institutions over time, or compare them to social institutions in other parts of the world. In the United States, for example, there is a system of free public education but no universal healthcare program, which is not the case in many other affluent, democratic countries. Throughout the rest of this course, we will devote much of our attention to studying these specific social institutions.

What behavioral rules are in effect when you encounter an acquaintance at school, work, or in the grocery store? Generally, we do not step back to consider all of the intricacies of such normative rules. We may simply say "Hello!" and ask, "How was your weekend?" or offer some other trivial question meant to be a friendly greeting. Rarely do we physically embrace or even touch the individual, and this is often because in *our* culture we see this as the norm, or the standard of acceptable social behavior. Only when confronted with a different norm do we begin to *see* cultural differences or even understand that this everyday behavior is part of a larger socialization process. In other cultures, not kissing and/or hugging could be viewed as rude, but in the United States, we have fairly rigid rules about personal space.

Watch It



Figure 1. The apps on a phone are like the cultural components of society.

One way to think about the relationship between society and culture is to consider the characteristics of a phone. The phone itself is like society, and the apps on the phone are like culture:

- Society and social institutions = the physical phone/protective phone case
  - The phone has a tangible structure, just as society has specific structures and institutions. Social institutions are like the hardware of the phone.
- Culture = software/apps
  - Apps and software are instructions on the phone that are intangible, just as intangible culture provides the rules and input that make society function.

The software and apps on the phone could be compared to culture. These are the pieces that give the phone a recognizable "personality", just as the culture of a group describes its beliefs, practices, and guidelines for living. And just as phone apps go through updates or changes, culture can also evolve over time.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=192

Social institutions can be most visible when they break down. For example, for six days in January 2019, public school teachers in California went on strike. The Los Angelos school district (the second-largest in the nation) scrambled to provide substitute teachers and staff to stay with students after 30,000 teachers walked out, demanding smaller class sizes, more teachers and support staff, and a 6.5% raise. They eventually compromised with a 6% raise, more support staff, and a gradual reduction in class size, but the six days out of school cost the district over 125 million dollars. How do breakdowns of social institutions like this one (public education) affect individuals? How does it affect students? Parents? Teachers and administrators? How would the strike affect other school employees such as cafeteria workers or custodial staff? Our system of public education meets many complex societal needs, including the training and preparation of future voters and workers, but on a more pragmatic level it also provides a place for children to go while parents work.

Let's examine a complicated social institution—that of the family. When we think about family as a social institution, we might consider the ways in which the definition of family has changed over time and how this has produced new formal norms (i.e., state and federal laws). The family meets a variety of social needs—including legal (i.e., right to make medical decisions), economic (i.e., inheritance), and social/emotional. The legalization of same-sex marriage was an issue that divided many states and serves as an illustrative sociological example of the interplay between society and culture.

Watch It

Watch this video to see specific examples of social institutions.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=192

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13323

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13324

Glossary

culture:
shared beliefs, values, and practices

social institutions:
mechanisms or patterns of social order focused on meeting social needs, such as government, economy, education, family, healthcare, and religion

society:
people who live in a definable, often geographically bordered community and who share a culture

CC licensed content, Original

- Culture and society | Society and Culture | MCAT | Khan Academy. **Provided by**: Khan Academy Medicine. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=9&v=QQsBM1dZLO4. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Types of Societies. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:qs6Nobg-@7/4-1-Types-of-Societies. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- phone image. **Authored by**: LoboStudioHamburg. **Provided by**: Pixabay. **Located at**: https://pixabay.com/en/twitter-facebook-together-292994/. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

All rights reserved content

- Social Institutions. **Provided by**: Khan Academy. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=9KR1bad76qg. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 8.3: Society, Culture, and Social Institutions is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.4: Types of Societies

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the difference between preindustrial, industrial, and postindustrial societies



Figure 1. How does technology influence a society's daily occupations? (Photo courtesy of Mo Riza/flickr)

Hunting and gathering tribes, industrialized Japanese, suburban Americans—each is a society. But what does this mean? Exactly what is a society? In sociological terms, society refers to a group of people who live in a definable geographic space and share the same or similar culture. Consider the cell phone example: phone (society), hardware (social institutions), and software (culture).

Sociologist Gerhard Lenski (1924–) defined societies in terms of their technological sophistication. As a society advances, so does its use of **technology**, which is defined as the application of science to address the problems of daily life.

Societies with rudimentary technology depend on the fluctuations of their environments, while industrialized societies have more control over the impact of their surroundings and thus develop different cultural features. This distinction is so important that sociologists generally classify societies along a spectrum based on their degree of industrialization—from preindustrial to industrial to postindustrial.

Pre-Industrial Societies

Before the Industrial Revolution and the widespread use of machines, societies were small, rural, and dependent largely on local resources. Economic production was limited to the amount of labor a human being could provide, and there were few specialized occupations. The very first occupation was that of hunter-gatherer.

Hunter-Gatherer

Hunter-gatherer societies demonstrate the strongest dependence on the environment of the various types of preindustrial societies. As the basic structure of human society until about 10,000–12,000 years ago, these groups were based around kinship or tribes. Hunter-gatherers relied on their surroundings for survival—they hunted wild animals and foraged for uncultivated plants for food. When resources became scarce, the group moved to a new area to find sustenance, meaning they were nomadic. These societies were common until several hundred years ago, but today only a few hundred remain in existence, such as indigenous Australian tribes referred to as "aborigines," or the Bambuti, a group of pygmy hunter-gatherers in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Hunter-gatherer groups are quickly disappearing as the world's population increases and fewer truly remote areas exist.

Pastoral

Changing conditions and adaptations led some societies to rely on the domestication of animals where circumstances permitted. Roughly 7,500 years ago, human societies began to recognize their ability to tame and breed animals and to grow and cultivate their own plants. **Pastoral societies**, such as the Maasai villagers of East Africa, rely on the domestication of animals as a resource for survival. Unlike earlier hunter-gatherers who depended entirely on existing resources to stay alive, pastoral groups were able to breed livestock for food, clothing, and transportation, and they created a surplus of goods. Herding, or pastoral, societies remained nomadic because they were forced to follow their animals to fresh feeding grounds. Around the time that pastoral societies emerged, specialized occupations began to develop, and societies commenced trading with each other.

Further Research

The Maasai are a modern pastoral society with an economy largely structured around herds of cattle. Read more about the Maasai people and see pictures of their daily lives.

Where Societies Meet—The Worst and the Best

When cultures meet, technology can help, hinder, and even destroy. The Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska nearly destroyed the local inhabitants' entire way of life. Oil spills in the Nigerian Delta have forced many of the Ogoni tribe from their land and forced removal has meant that over 100,000 Ogoni have sought refuge in the country of Benin (University of Michigan, n.d.). And the massive Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2006 drew great attention as it occurred in an affluent, highly developed country, the United States. Environmental disasters continue as Western technology and its need for energy expands into less developed regions of the globe.



Figure 2. Otherwise skeptic or hesitant villagers are more easily convinced of the value of the solar project when they realize that the "solar engineers" are their local grandmothers. (Photo courtesy of Abri le Roux/flickr)

Of course not all technology is destructive. We take electric light for granted in the United States, Europe, and the rest of the developed world. Such light extends the day and allows us to work, read, and travel at night. It makes us safer and more productive. But regions in India, Africa, and elsewhere are not so fortunate. Meeting the challenge, one particular organization, Barefoot College, located in District Ajmer, Rajasthan, India, works with numerous less-developed nations to increase access to solar electricity, clean water, and educational resources. The implementation of the solar projects falls to the village elders. They agree to select two grandmothers to be trained as solar engineers and then choose a village committee composed of men and women to help operate the solar program.

The program has brought light to over 450,000 people in 1,015 villages. The environmental rewards include a substantial reduction in the use of kerosene and thus in carbon dioxide emissions. Additionally, the fact that the villagers are operating the projects themselves helps minimize their sense of dependence.

Horticultural

Around the same time that pastoral societies were on the rise, another type of society developed, based on the newly developed capacity for people to grow and cultivate plants. Previously, the depletion of a region's crops or water supply forced pastoral societies to relocate in search of food sources for their livestock. **Horticultural societies** formed in areas where rainfall and other conditions allowed them to grow stable crops. They were similar to hunter-gatherers in that they largely depended on the environment for survival, but since they didn't have to abandon their location to follow resources, they were able to start permanent settlements. This created more stability and more material goods and became the basis for the first revolution in human survival.

Agricultural

While pastoral and horticultural societies used small, temporary tools such as digging sticks or hoes, **agricultural societies** relied on permanent tools for survival. Around 10,000 B.C.E. an explosion of new technology known as the Agricultural Revolution made farming possible—and profitable. Farmers learned to rotate the types of crops grown on their fields and to reuse waste products as fertilizer, which led to better harvests and greater surpluses of food. New tools for digging and harvesting were made of metal, and this made them more effective and longer lasting. Human settlements grew into towns and cities, and particularly bountiful regions became networked centers of trade and commerce.

This is also the age in which people had the time and comfort to engage in more contemplative and thoughtful activities, such as music, poetry, and philosophy. This period came to be known as the “dawn of civilization” by some because of the increase of leisure time and the development of the humanities. Craftspeople were able to support themselves through the production of creative, decorative, or thought-provoking aesthetic objects and writings.

As resources became more plentiful, social classes became more divisive. Those who had more resources could afford better standards of living and developed into a class of nobility. Differences in social standing between men and women increased. As cities expanded, ownership and preservation of resources became a pressing concern.

Feudal

The ninth century gave rise to **feudal societies**. These societies contained a strict hierarchical system of power based on land ownership and protection. The nobility, known as lords, placed vassals in charge of pieces of land. In return for the resources that the land provided, vassals promised to fight for their lords.

These individual pieces of land, known as fiefdoms, were cultivated by the lower class. In return for maintaining the land, peasants were guaranteed a place to live and protection from outside enemies. Power was handed down through family lines, with peasant families serving lords, often across many generations. Ultimately, the social and economic system of feudalism failed and was replaced by the more non-centralized and entrepreneurial system of capitalism, enabled by the technological advances of the industrial era.

Industrial Society

In the eighteenth century, Europe experienced a dramatic rise in technological invention, ushering in an era known as the Industrial Revolution. What made this period remarkable was the number of new inventions that influenced people’s daily lives. Within a generation, tasks that had until this point required months of labor became achievable in a matter of days. Before the Industrial Revolution, work was largely person or animal-based, and relied on human workers or horses to power mills and drive pumps. In 1782, James Watt and Matthew Boulton created a steam engine that could effectively do the work of twelve horses.

Steam power began appearing everywhere. Instead of paying artisans to painstakingly spin wool and weave it into cloth, people turned to textile mills that produced fabric quickly at a better price and often with better quality. Rather than planting and harvesting fields by hand, farmers were able to purchase mechanical seeders and threshing machines that caused agricultural productivity to soar. Products such as paper and glass became available to the average person, and the quality and accessibility of education and health care soared. Gas lights allowed increased visibility in the dark, and towns and cities developed both a nightlife and greater economic productivity.

One of the results of increased productivity and technology was the rise of urban centers. Workers flocked to factories for jobs, and the populations of cities became increasingly diverse. The new generation became less preoccupied with maintaining family land and traditions and more focused on acquiring wealth and achieving upward mobility. People wanted their children and their children’s children to continue to rise, and as capitalism expanded, so too did social mobility.

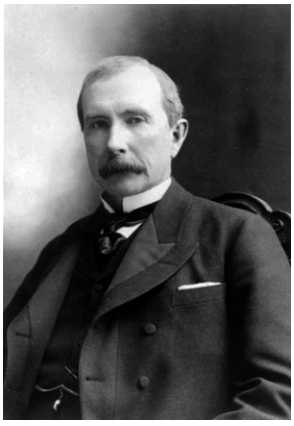


Figure 3. John D. Rockefeller, cofounder of the Standard Oil Company, came from an

unremarkable family of salesmen and menial laborers. By his death at age 98, he was worth $1.4 billion. In industrial societies, business owners such as Rockefeller hold the majority of the power. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

It was during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of the Industrial Revolution that sociology was born. Life was changing quickly and the long-established traditions of the agricultural eras did not apply to life in the larger cities. Masses of people were moving to new environments and often found themselves faced with horrendous conditions of filth, overcrowding, and poverty. Social scientists emerged to study the relationship between the individual members of society and society as a whole.

It was during this time that power moved from the hands of the aristocracy and "old money" to business-savvy newcomers who amassed fortunes in their lifetimes. Families such as the Rockefellers and the Vanderbilts became the new elites and used their influence in business to control aspects of government as well. Eventually, concerns over the exploitation of workers led to the formation of labor unions and consequently to laws that set mandatory working conditions for employees. Although the introduction of new technology at the end of the nineteenth century ended the industrial age, much of our social structure and many of our social ideas—like family, childhood, and time standardization—have a basis in industrial society.

Post-Industrial Society

Information societies, sometimes known as postindustrial or digital societies, are a recent development. Unlike **industrial societies** that are rooted in the production of material goods, information societies are based on the production of information and services.

Digital technology is the steam engine of information societies, and computer moguls such as Steve Jobs and Bill Gates are its John D. Rockefellers and Cornelius Vanderbilts. Since the economy of information societies is driven by knowledge and not material goods, power lies with those in charge of storing and distributing information. Members of a postindustrial society are likely to be employed as sellers of services—software programmers or business consultants, for example—instead of producers of goods. Social classes are divided by access to education, since without technical skills, people in an information society lack the means to achieve success.

Think It Over

- In which type or types of societies do the benefits seem to outweigh the costs? Explain your answer, and cite social and economic reasons.
- Is Gerhard Lenski right in classifying societies based on technological advances? What other criteria might be appropriate, based on what you have read?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13325

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13326

Glossary

agricultural societies:
societies that rely on farming as a way of life

feudal societies:
societies that operate on a strict hierarchical system of power based around land ownership and protection

horticultural societies:
societies based around the cultivation of plants

hunter-gatherer societies:
societies that depend on hunting wild animals and gathering uncultivated plants for survival

industrial societies:
societies characterized by a reliance on mechanized labor to create material goods

information societies:
societies based on the production of nonmaterial goods and services

pastoral societies:
societies based around the domestication of animals

technology:
the application of science to address the problems of daily life

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Types of Societies. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:qs6Nobg-@7/4-1-Types-of-Societies. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 8.4: Types of Societies is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.5: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Society

What you'll learn to do: describe theoretical perspectives on society



While many sociologists have contributed to research on society, three thinkers are considered fundamental: Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber. They all developed different useful theoretical approaches to help us understand the way societies function.

The most fascinating thing about these three theorists is that their theories, much like the theory of relativity that Albert Einstein developed at the turn of the twentieth century (1905-1915), still provide useful tools for us to understand the events around us. As you think about your experiences in a post-industrial society, how can the three theoretical paradigms help you make sense of the changing world?

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Society. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Time to hit the books. **Authored by**: Debby Hudson. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/asviIGR3CPE. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 8.5: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Society is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.6: Functionalism and Society

Learning Outcomes

- Describe Durkheim's functionalist view of society
- Distinguish mechanical solidarity from organic solidarity



Figure 1. Warren Buffett (an investor and one of the world's richest men) has controversial ideas about taxation and spending habits of the very wealthy, particularly since they raise questions about America's embedded system of class structure and social power. Buffet advocates that the wealthy should pay higher taxes than they do, as he refutes the claim that trickle-down economics really benefits the lower and middle classes. The three major sociological paradigms differ in their perspectives on these issues. (Photo courtesy of Medill DC/flickr)

In previous modules, you learned about **social solidarity** (the social ties that bind a group of people together such as kinship, shared location, and religion) and **social facts** (the laws, morals, values, religious beliefs, customs, fashions, rituals, and all of the cultural rules that govern social life). Social solidarity and social facts are essential concepts that functionalists use to empirically analyze societies.

Émile Durkheim and Structural-Functionalism

As a functionalist, Émile Durkheim's (1858–1917) perspective on society stressed the necessary interconnectivity of all of its elements. To him, society was greater than the sum of its parts. He asserted that individual behavior was not the same as collective behavior and that studying collective behavior was quite different from studying an individual's actions. Durkheim called the communal beliefs, morals, and attitudes of a society the **collective conscience**.

In his quest to understand what causes individuals to act in similar and predictable ways, he wrote, "If I do not submit to the conventions of society, if in my dress I do not conform to the customs observed in my country and in my class, the ridicule I provoke, the social isolation in which I am kept, produce, although in an attenuated form, the same effects as punishment" (Durkheim 1895). This is what we know as peer pressure, and is an illustrative example of how something that seems like common sense can be studied empirically.

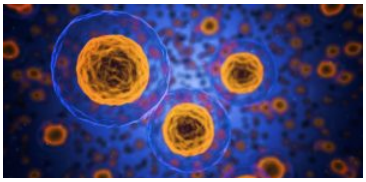


Figure 2. Durkheim viewed societies as multicellular organisms like the ones pictured here. The structure of the cell is society and the cells within the organism are individuals.

Following the ideas of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer, Durkheim likened society to that of a living organism, in which each organism plays a necessary role in keeping the being alive.

Durkheim asserted that members of societies who violate social norms are necessary to the well-being of society because punishment for deviance affirms the collective conscience. “A crime is a crime because we condemn it,” Durkheim wrote in 1893. “An act offends the common consciousness not because it is criminal, but it is criminal because it offends that consciousness” (Durkheim 1893). Durkheim’s unique perspective on crime provides one example of societal elements that are social facts, or social forces, that were to be considered real in their effects and which existed beyond the individual.

Watch It

Learn more about Émile Durkheim and the ideas that led to the development of structural-functional theory in the following video.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=198

As an observer of his social world, Durkheim was not entirely satisfied with the direction of society in his day. His primary concern was that the cultural glue that held society together was failing, and people were becoming more divided. In his book *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893), Durkheim argued that as society grew more complex, social order made the transition from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity.

Preindustrial societies, Durkheim explained, were held together by **mechanical solidarity**, a type of social order maintained by the collective consciousness of a culture. Societies with mechanical solidarity act in an automatic fashion; things are done mostly because they have always been done that way. This type of thinking was common in preindustrial societies, where strong bonds of kinship and a low division and differentiation of labor created shared morals and values among people, such as those in hunter-gatherer groups. When people tend to do the same type of work, Durkheim argued, they tend to think and act alike. Here we see that labor and communal self-preservation are fundamental.

In industrial societies, mechanical solidarity is replaced with **organic solidarity**, which is social order based around an acceptance of economic and social differences. In capitalist societies, Durkheim wrote, division of labor becomes so specialized that everyone is doing different things. Instead of punishing members of a society for failure to assimilate to common values, organic solidarity allows people with differing values to coexist. Laws exist as formalized morals and are based on restitution and justice rather than revenge.

While the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity is, in the long run, advantageous for a society, Durkheim noted that it can be a time of chaos and “normlessness.” One of the outcomes of the transition is something he called social **anomie**. Anomie—literally, “without law”—is a situation in which society no longer has the support of a firm collective consciousness, and wherein established norms are weakened. People, though more necessarily interdependent as they attempt to solve complex problems in these advanced societies, are also more alienated from each other. Anomie is experienced in times of social uncertainty, such as during war or amidst a great upturn or downturn in the economy. As societies reach an advanced stage of organic solidarity, they avoid anomie by reestablishing an adapted set of shared norms. According to Durkheim, once a society achieves organic solidarity, it has finished its development.

Think It Over

- How do you think anomie is experienced today? Can you think of moments that our society experienced anomie? How and where do we see anomic situations around the world? What factors precipitate these situations?
- A Georgetown University student describes “modern-day anomie” in this TEDx Talk. Have you experienced similar moments as a student? How does Durkheim’s empirical work on suicide help us understand this Georgetown student’s experience?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13327

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13328

Glossary

collective conscience:
the communal beliefs, morals, and attitudes of a society

anomie:
a situation in which society no longer has the support of a firm collective consciousness

mechanical solidarity:
a type of preindustrial social order maintained by the collective consciousness of a culture

organic solidarity:
a type of industrial social order based around an acceptance of economic and social differences

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Society. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:ZBTgyR6V@3/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-So. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- cell image. **Authored by**: kimono. **Provided by**: Pixabay. **Located at**: https://pixabay.com/en/cells-human-medical-biology-health-1872666/. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*

All rights reserved content

- Sociology-Emile Durkheim. **Provided by**: The School of Life. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=58&v=z9W0GQvONKc. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 8.6: Functionalism and Society is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.7: Conflict Theory and Society

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the conflict theory view of society
- Explain Karl Marx's concepts of class and alienation

Conflict theory looks at society as a competition for limited resources among groups and individuals who have unequal amounts of power. This perspective is a macro-level approach most identified with the writings of German philosopher and sociologist Karl Marx (1818–1883), who saw society as being made up of individuals in different social classes who must compete for social, material, and political resources such as food and housing, employment, education, and leisure time. Social institutions like government, education, and religion reflect this competition in their inherent inequalities and help maintain (perhaps unwittingly) the unequal social structure.

Karl Marx and Conflict Theory

Karl Marx is certainly among the most significant social thinkers in recent history. While there are many critics of his work, it is still widely respected and influential. For Marx, society's constructions were predicated upon the idea of "base and superstructure." This term refers to the idea that a society's economic character forms its base, upon which rests the cultural and social institutions, the superstructure. For Marx, it is the base (economy) that determines what a society will be like.

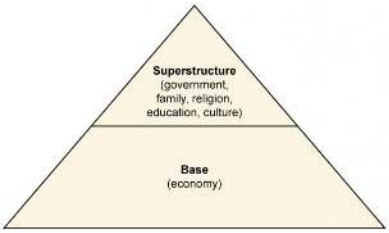


Figure 1. Karl Marx asserted that all elements of a society's structure depend on its economic structure.

Additionally, Marx saw conflict in society as the primary means of change. Economically, he saw conflict existing between the owners of the means of production—the **bourgeoisie**—and the laborers, called the **proletariat**.

Marx maintained that these conflicts appeared consistently throughout history during times of social revolution. These revolutions, or "class antagonisms" as he called them, were a result of one class dominating another. Most recently, with the end of feudalism, a new revolutionary class he called the bourgeoisie dominated the laboring masses that he called the proletariat. The bourgeoisie were revolutionary in the sense that they represented a radical change in the structure of society. In Marx's words, "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" (Marx and Engels 1848).

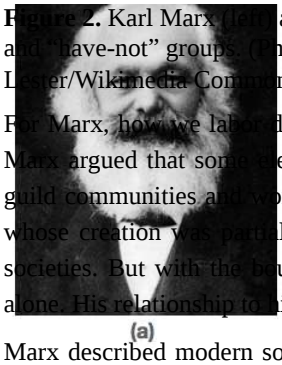
In the mid-nineteenth century, as industrialization was booming, bourgeois industrial employers, the "owners of the means of production" in Marx's terms, became more and more exploitative toward the working class proletariat. The large manufacturers of steel were particularly ruthless, and their facilities were popularly dubbed "dark satanic mills" based on a poem by William Blake. Marx's frequent co-author and friend, Friedrich Engels, wrote *The Condition of the Working-Class in England* (1844), which described the horrid conditions.

Such is the Old Town of Manchester, and on re-reading my description, I am forced to admit that instead of being exaggerated, it is far from black enough to convey a true impression of the filth, ruin, and uninhabitableness, the defiance of all considerations of cleanliness, ventilation, and health which characterise the construction of this single district, containing at least twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants. And such a district exists in the heart of the second city of England, the first manufacturing city of the world.

Add to that the long hours, the use of child labor, and exposure to extreme temperatures and toxic chemicals, and it is no wonder that Marx and Engels referred to capitalism, which is a way of organizing an economy so that the things that are used to make and transport products (such as land, oil, factories, ships, etc.) are owned by profit-seeking individuals and companies rather than by the government, as the "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie."







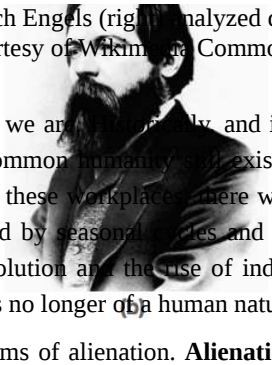


Figure 2. Karl Marx (left) and Friedrich Engels (right) analyzed differences in social power between "have" and "have-not" groups. (Photo (a) courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; Photo (b) courtesy of George Lester/Wikimedia Commons)

For Marx, how we labor defines who we are. Historically, and in spite of the persistent efforts of one class to dominate another, Marx argued that some element of common humanity still existed in pre-industrial, smaller-scale modes of productions such as guild communities and workshops. In these workplaces, there was at least some connection between the worker and the product, whose creation was partially governed by seasonal cycles and by the the rise and fall of the sun, just as in earlier agricultural societies. But with the bourgeois revolution and the rise of industrialization and capitalism, the worker now labored for wages alone. His relationship to his labor was no longer of a human nature, but was instead based on artificial, inorganic conditions.

Marx described modern society in terms of alienation. **Alienation** refers to the condition in which the individual is isolated and divorced from his or her society, work, or sense of self. Marx defined four specific types of alienation.

1. *Alienation from the product of one's labor.* An industrial worker does not have the opportunity to relate to the product he labors on. Instead of training for years as a watchmaker, an unskilled worker can get a job at a watch factory pressing buttons to seal watch pieces together. The worker does not care if he is making watches or cars, simply that the job exists. In the same way, a worker may not even know or care what product to which he is contributing. A worker on a Ford assembly line may spend all day installing windows on car doors without ever seeing the rest of the car.
2. *Alienation from the process of one's labor.* A worker does not control the conditions of her job because she does not own the means of production (i.e., the factory and its tools and raw materials). If a person is hired to work in a fast food restaurant, she is expected to make the food the way she is taught. All ingredients must be combined in a particular order and in a particular quantity; there is no room for creativity or change. An employee at Burger King cannot decide to change the spices used on the fries in the same way that an employee on a Ford assembly line cannot decide to place a car's headlights in a different position. Everything is decided by the factory-owning bourgeoisie who then dictate orders to the laborers.
3. *Alienation from others.* Workers compete, rather than cooperate. Employees vie for time slots, bonuses, and job security. Even when a worker clocks out at night and goes home, the competition does not end. As Marx and Engels described this dynamic in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), "No sooner is the exploitation of the laborer by the manufacturer, so far at an end, that he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portion of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker."
4. *Alienation from one's self.* A final outcome of industrialization is a loss of connectivity between a worker and her occupation. Because there is nothing that ties a worker to her labor, there is no longer a sense of self. Instead of being able to take pride in an identity such as being a watchmaker, automobile builder, or chef, a person is simply a cog in the machine.



Figure 3. An assembly line worker installs car parts with the aid of complex machinery. Has technology made this type of labor more or less alienating? (Photo courtesy of Carol Highsmith/Wikimedia Commons)

Taken as a whole, then, alienation in modern society means that an individual has no control over his life. But why, then, does the modern working class not rise up and rebel? (Indeed, Marx predicted that this would be the ultimate outcome and would result in the collapse of capitalism.)

Another idea that Marx developed is the concept of **false consciousness**. False consciousness is a condition in which the beliefs, ideals, or ideology of a person are not in the person's own best interest. In fact, it is the ideology of the dominant class (here, the bourgeois capitalists) that is imposed upon the proletariat. Ideas such as the emphasis of competition over cooperation, or of hard

work being its own reward, clearly benefit the owners of the means of production. Therefore, workers are less likely to question their place in society or to assume individual responsibility for existing conditions.

In order for society to overcome false consciousness, Marx proposed that it be replaced with **class consciousness**, the awareness of one's rank in society. He thought it was crucial that workers recognize their real relationship to, and political distance from, the means of production. Instead of existing as a "class in itself," the proletariat must become a "class for itself" in order to effect social change, meaning that instead of just being an inert stratum of society, the class could advocate for social improvements (Marx and Engels 1848). Only once society entered this state of political consciousness would it be ready for a social revolution.

WAtch It

Review Marx's ideas about alienation and the four types of alienation in the following video.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=200

Further Research

One of the most influential pieces of political writing in modern history was Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). Visit "Manifesto of the Communist Party" on Marxists.org to read the original document that spurred revolutions around the world.

Think It Over

- Think of the ways workers are alienated from the product and process of their jobs. How can these concepts be applied to students and their educations?
- Use Marx's argument to explain a current social event such as the Occupy movement. Does his theory hold up under modern scrutiny?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13329

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13330

Glossary

alienation:
an individual's isolation from his society, his work, and his sense of self

bourgeoisie:
the owners of the means of production in a society

capitalism:
a way of organizing an economy so that the things that are used to make and transport products (such as land, oil, factories, ships, etc.) are owned by profit-seeking individuals and companies rather than by the government

class consciousness:
the lack of awareness of one's rank in society and relationship to the means of production

false consciousness:
a person's beliefs and ideology that are in conflict with her best interests

proletariat:
the laborers in a society

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Society. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:ZBTgyR6V@3/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-So. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Alienation. **Authored by**: Sociology Live!. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30HeJvE9KCg. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 8.7: Conflict Theory and Society is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.8: Symbolic Interactionism and the McDonaldization of Society

Learning Outcomes

- Identify how symbolic interactionists understand society
- Identify the components of McDonaldization

Max Weber and Symbolic Interactionism

While Karl Marx may be one of the best-known political thinkers of the nineteenth century, Max Weber is certainly one of the greatest influences in the field of sociology. Like the other social thinkers discussed here, he was concerned with the important changes taking place in Western society with the advent of industrialization. And, like Marx and Durkheim, he feared that industrialization would have negative effects on individuals.

Weber's primary focus on the structure of society lay in the elements of class, status, and power. Similar to Marx, Weber saw class as economically determined. Society, he believed, was split between owners and laborers. Status, on the other hand, was based on noneconomic factors such as education, kinship, and religion. Both status and economic class determined an individual's power, or influence over ideas. Unlike Marx, Weber believed that these ideas, and not just the particular form of the means of production, formed the "base" of society.



Figure 1. Cubicles are used to maximize individual workspace in an office. Such structures may be rational, but they are also isolating. (Photo courtesy of Tim Patterson/flickr)

Weber's analysis of modern society centered on the concept of **rationalization**. A rational society is one built around logic and efficiency rather than morality or tradition. To Weber, capitalism is entirely rational. Although this leads to efficiency and merit-based success, it can have adverse effects when taken to the extreme. In some modern societies, this is seen when rigid routines and strict design requirements lead to a mechanized work environment and a focus on producing identical products in every location.

Weber was also unlike his predecessors in that he was more interested in how individuals experienced societal divisions than in the divisions themselves. The symbolic interactionism theory, the third of the three most influential theories of sociology, is based on Weber's early ideas that emphasize the viewpoint of the individual and how that individual relates to society. For Weber, the culmination of industrialization and rationalization results in what he called the **iron cage**, in which the individual is trapped by institutions and bureaucracy. This leads to a sense of "disenchantment of the world," a phrase Weber used to describe the final condition of humanity. Indeed a dark prediction, but one that has, at least to some degree, been borne out (Gerth and Mills 1918).

Watch It: The Protestant Work Ethic

In a series of essays in 1904, Max Weber presented the idea of the *Protestant work ethic*, a new attitude toward work based on the Calvinist principle of predestination. In the early sixteenth century, Europe was shaken by the Protestant Revolution. Religious leaders such as Martin Luther and John Calvin argued against the Catholic Church's belief in salvation through obedience. While Catholic leaders emphasized the importance of church-sanctioned religious dogma and performing good deeds as a gateway to Heaven, Protestants believed that a more individual inner grace, or faith in God, was enough to achieve salvation.

John Calvin in particular popularized the Christian concept of predestination, the idea that all events—including salvation—have already been decided by God. Because followers were never sure whether they had been chosen to enter Heaven or Hell, they looked for signs in their everyday lives. If a person was hard-working and successful, this prosperity might be a sign that he was

one of the chosen. If a person was lazy or simply indifferent, and did not know material success, he was likely to be one of the damned.

Weber argued that this mentality encouraged people to work hard for personal gain; after all, why should one help the unfortunate if they were already damned? Over time, the Protestant work ethic spread and became an important foundation for capitalism.

Watch the video on Max Weber to hear more about Weber's seminal work *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904).

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=202

In a rationalized, modern society, we have supermarkets instead of family-owned stores. We have chain restaurants instead of local eateries. Superstores that offer a multitude of merchandise have replaced independent businesses that focused on one product line, such as hardware, groceries, automotive repair, or clothing. Shopping malls offer retail stores, restaurants, fitness centers, even condominiums. This change may be rational, but is it universally desirable? George Ritzer utilized many of Weber's concepts and developed a conceptual framework within which we can examine a variety of changes within society.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13331
https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13332

The McDonaldization of Society

The **McDonaldization of Society** (Ritzer 1993) refers to the increasing presence of the fast food business model in common social institutions. This business model includes efficiency (the division of labor), predictability, calculability, and control (monitoring). For example, in your average chain grocery store, people at the register check out customers, stockers keep the shelves full of goods, and deli workers slice meats and cheese to order (efficiency). Whenever you enter a store within that grocery chain, you receive the same type of goods, see the same store organization, and find the same brands at the same prices (predictability). You will find that goods are sold by the pound, so that you can weigh your fruit and vegetable purchase rather than simply guessing at the price, while the employees use a timecard to calculate their hours and receive overtime pay (calculability). Finally, you will notice that all store employees are wearing a uniform (and usually a name tag) so that they can be easily identified. There are security cameras to monitor the store, and some parts of the store, such as the stockroom, are generally considered off-limits to customers (control).

While McDonaldization has resulted in improved profits and an increased availability of various goods and services to more people worldwide, it has also reduced the variety of goods available in the marketplace while rendering available products uniform, generic, and bland. Think of the difference between a mass-produced shoe and one made by a local cobbler, between a chicken from a family-owned farm and a corporate grower, or between a cup of coffee from the local diner and one from Starbucks.

Watch It

Watch this video for an explanation of McDonaldization.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=202

Think It Over

- Use Weber's argument to explain a recent or current social event such as the Occupy movement. Does his theory hold up under modern scrutiny?
- Where do you prefer to shop, eat out, or grab a cup of coffee? Large chains like Walmart or smaller retailers? Starbucks or a local restaurant? What do you base your decisions on? Does this section change how you think about these choices? Why, or why not?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13333
https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13334

Glossary

iron cage:

a situation in which an individual is trapped by social institutions and bureaucracy

McDonaldization of Society:

the increasing presence of the fast food business model in common social institutions

rationalization: a belief that modern society should be built around logic and efficiency rather than morality or tradition

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Further Research on the Protestant Work Ethic. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Society. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:ZBTgyR6V@3/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-So. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Max Weber and the Protestant Work Ethic. **Provided by**: BBC. **Located at**: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02mrmv7. **Project**: A History of Ideas. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- McDonaldization. **Provided by**: Sociology Live!. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCj_VhLgcmY. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 8.8: Symbolic Interactionism and the McDonaldization of Society is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.9: Introduction to Organizations and Groups

What you'll learn to do: define the characteristics of organizations and types of groups; describe how group dynamics are impacted by leadership, size, and conformity



Figure 1. Former president Barack Obama addresses a joint session of Congress. (Photo courtesy of Lawrence Jackson/Wikimedia Commons)

Earlier, we discussed the hardware of a cell phone (social institutions) and the software of society (culture) and examined explanatory theories of society using the three main theoretical paradigms. Another way to advance our understanding of society is to study formal organizations and groups, which can help us think about how the various social institutions operate.

We live in a time of contradiction: while the pace of change and technology is requiring people to be more nimble and less rigid in their thinking, large bureaucracies like hospitals, schools, and governments are more hampered than ever by their organizational format. At the same time, the past few decades have seen a trend toward the standardization of previously individualistic local institutions. Increasingly, Main Streets across the country resemble each other; instead of a Bob's Coffee Shop and a Jane's Hair Salon there is a Dunkin' Donuts and a Supercuts. This trend has been referred to as the McDonaldization of society.

While an analysis of formal organizations helps us understand macrosocological processes in society, or the "hardware" in our phone example, we will also examine the role of groups, and take a close look at group dynamics. "Would you jump off a cliff just because your friends are doing it?" You may think about this age-old question differently after reading this section about groups and conformity. You'll see that the pressure to conform within a group sometimes leads people to do uncharacteristic and sometimes obviously stupid things. You'll also learn that the size and leadership styles of a group greatly affect how members act. Even weak connections with others form an important network that provide us with benefits and opportunities.

CC licensed content, Original

- Objectives and Activities. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Learning Objectives, modified from Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

Public domain content

- Obama Health Care Speech to Joint Session of Congress. **Provided by**: Wikimedia Commons. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Obama_Health_Care_Speech_to_Joint_Session_of_Congress.jpg. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 8.9: Introduction to Organizations and Groups is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.10: Types of Formal Organizations

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the different types of formal organizations
- Explain bureaucracy as an ideal-type

A complaint of modern life is that society is dominated by large and impersonal organizations. From schools to businesses to healthcare to government, these organizations, referred to as **formal organizations**, often leave us feeling like a cog in a machine. What is it like to track down a health insurance billing question? Have you ever tried to get technical support on a computer or cell phone? How long did it take and how many different times were you placed on hold? If you went back to the store where you purchased the device, were you asked to wait in line? Does your college or university have a streamlined process for questions related to advising or financial aid?

Sociologist Max Weber developed a conceptual framework to help us understand formal organizations and to work on moving from the particular ("I had this experience with my cell phone service provider") to the general ("Formal organizations have similar characteristics such as…"). Weber's **ideal-type** is a model or a collection of characteristics that could describe most examples of the item under discussion. We will discuss bureaucracies as an ideal-type of organization.

Types of Formal Organizations



Figure 1. Girl Scout troops and correctional facilities are both formal organizations. (Photo (a) courtesy of moonlightbulb/flickr; Photo (b) courtesy of CxOxS/flickr)

Sociologist Amitai Etzioni (1975) posited that formal organizations fall into three categories. **Normative organizations**, also called **voluntary organizations**, are based on shared interests. As the name suggests, joining them is voluntary and typically done because people find membership rewarding in an intangible way. The Audubon Society and a ski club are examples of normative organizations. **Coercive organizations** are groups that are forced to join. These may include prison or a rehabilitation center. The third type is **utilitarian organizations**, which, as the name suggests, are joined because of the need for a specific material reward. High school and the workplace fall into this category—one joined in pursuit of a diploma, the other in order to make money.

Table of Formal Organizations. This table shows Etzioni's three types of formal organizations. (Table courtesy of Etzioni 1975)

	Normative or Voluntary	Coercive	Utilitarian
Benefit of Membership	Intangible benefit	Corrective benefit	Tangible benefit
Type of Membership	Volunteer basis	Required	Contractual basis
Feeling of Connectedness	Shared affinity	No affinity	Some affinity

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13335

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13336

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13337

Bureaucracies

All formal organizations are, or likely will become, **bureaucracies**. Weber utilized the **ideal-type** to conceptualize bureaucracies as having a hierarchy of authority, a clear division of labor, explicit rules, and an atmosphere of impersonality (1922). Bureaucracies are not a new social phenomenon—they have been around for nearly a century! Today, people often complain about bureaucracies—declaring them slow, rule-bound, difficult to navigate, and unfriendly. Let's take a look at Weber's ideal-type of bureaucracies in the early twentieth century and see whether it describes bureaucracies we encounter today

Hierarchy of authority refers to the aspect of bureaucracy that places one individual or office in charge of another, who in turn must answer to her own superiors. For example, at your college or university, the Board of Trustees is the governing body of most institutions of higher education. The president (or chancellor) answers to the Board, and the divisions arranged under the president have their own leaders, who in turn manage other subordinate employees. Faculty (even tenured faculty) are much more autonomous than in other professions, but each department has its own organizational structure and will typically answer to a dean or provost. Often there are elaborate organizational charts to show who answers to whom. Delegation of tasks and duties flows downward and responsibility flows upward. For example, if there was a major incident such as a mass shooting on a college campus, the college president would be asked to explain what happened and would be held accountable for any lapses in security, delayed response time, etc.

A **clear division of labor** refers to the fact that within a bureaucracy, each individual has a specialized task to perform. For example, psychology professors teach psychology, but they do not attempt to provide students with financial aid forms. In this case, it is a clear and commonsense division. Students often go to faculty for advising. On some campuses, faculty are trained to advise students and on other campuses, there are counselors who provide advising. For students, this might be frustrating—why do you have to go to so many different people just to have questions answered?

The existence of **explicit rules** refers to the way in which rules are outlined, written down, and standardized. For example, at your college or university, the student guidelines are contained within the Student Handbook. As technology changes and campuses encounter new concerns like cyberbullying, identity theft, and other hot-button issues, organizations scramble to ensure that there are explicit rules addressing these emerging topics. College employees are also governed by a system of rules and might be asked, or mandated, to complete training (i.e., concerning sexual harassment) as part of their employment.

Finally, bureaucracies are also characterized by **impersonality**, which takes personal feelings out of professional situations. This characteristic grew, to some extent, out of a desire to protect organizations from nepotism, backroom deals, and other types of favoritism, simultaneously protecting customers and others served by the organization. Depending on the size of your college or university, impersonality is likely the most variable characteristic in this type of bureaucracy. Some students are in Introduction to Sociology classes comprised of 15 students, while others are taking classes with 200 or more students. Many colleges and universities, regardless of size, prioritize individual students and put in place a number of procedures to reduce the impersonality that is common in formal organizations. Large business organizations like Walmart often situate themselves as bureaucracies. This allows them to effectively and efficiently serve large volumes of customers quickly and to offer affordable products based on volume. This results in an impersonal organization. Customers frequently complain that stores like Walmart care little about individuals, other businesses, and the community at large.

Bureaucracies are, in theory at least, **meritocracies**, meaning that hiring and promotion are based on proven and documented skills, rather than on nepotism or random choice. In order to get into a prestigious college, you need to perform well on the ACT or SAT and have an impressive transcript. In order to become a lawyer and represent clients, you must take the LSAT, obtain a law degree, and pass the state bar exam.

Of course, there are many well-documented examples of success by those who did not proceed through traditional meritocracies. Think about technology companies with founders who dropped out of college, or performers who became famous after a YouTube video went viral. How well do you think established meritocracies identify talent? Wealthy families hire tutors, interview coaches, test-prep services, and consultants to help their kids get into the best schools. This starts as early as kindergarten in New York City, where competition for the most highly-regarded schools is especially fierce. Are these schools, many of which have copious scholarship funds that are intended to make the school more accessible, really offering all applicants a fair chance?

There are several positive aspects of bureaucracies. They are intended to improve efficiency, provide equal opportunities, and ensure that most people can be served. And there are times when rigid hierarchies are needed. But remember that many of our bureaucracies grew large at the same time that our school model was developed—during the Industrial Revolution. Young workers were trained, and

organizations were built for mass production, assembly line work, and factory jobs. In these scenarios, a clear chain of command was critical. Now, in the information age, this kind of rigid training and adherence to protocol can actually decrease both productivity and efficiency.

Today's workplace requires a faster pace, more problem solving, and a flexible approach. Too much adherence to explicit rules and a division of labor can leave an organization behind. And unfortunately, once established, bureaucracies can take on a life of their own. Maybe you have heard the expression "trying to turn a tanker around mid-ocean," which refers to the difficulties of changing direction with something large and set in its ways. State governments and current budget crises are examples of this challenge. It is almost impossible to make quick changes, leading states to continue, year after year, with increasingly unbalanced budgets. Finally, many bureaucracies, as mentioned, grew as institutions at a time when privileged white males held all the power. While ostensibly based on meritocracy, bureaucracies can perpetuate the existing balance of power by only recognizing the merit in traditionally male and privileged paths.

Sociologist Robert Michels (1911) suggested that all large organizations are characterized by the **iron rule of oligarchy,** wherein an entire organization is ruled by a few elites. Do you think this is true? Can a large organization be collaborative?

Watch It

Watch this Khan Academy video to learn more about types of organization.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=206

Watch the CrashCourse video "Formal Organizations" for yet another explanation of these concepts.

Secrets of the McJob

We often talk about bureaucracies disparagingly, and few enterprises receive more criticism than fast food restaurants. Several books and movies, such as *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* by Eric Schossler (2001), paint an ugly picture of what goes into, what goes on at, and what comes out of fast food chains. From their environmental impact to their role in the U.S. obesity epidemic, fast food chains are connected to numerous societal ills. Furthermore, working at a fast food restaurant is often referred to dismissively as having a "McJob" rather than a real job.

But business school professor Jerry Newman went undercover and worked behind the counter at seven fast food restaurants to discover what really goes on there. His book, *My Secret Life on the McJob* (2006), documents his experience. Unlike Schossler, Newman found that these restaurants offer much good alongside the bad. Specifically, he asserted that the employees were honest and hardworking, that management was often impressive, and that the jobs required a lot more skill and effort than most people imagined. In the book, Newman cites a pharmaceutical executive who says a fast-food service job on an applicant's résumé is a plus because it indicates the employee is reliable and can handle pressure.

Businesses like Chipotle, Panera, and Costco attempt to combat many of the effects of McDonaldization. In fact, Costco is known for paying its employees an average of $20 per hour, or slightly more than $40,000.00 per year. Nearly 90% of their employees receive company health insurance, a number that is unheard of in the retail sector.

While Chipotle is not known for high wages, it is known for attempting to sell higher-quality foods from responsibly sourced providers. This is a different approach from what Schossler describes among burger chains like McDonalds.

So what do you think? Are these McJobs and the organizations that offer them still serving a role in the economy and people's careers? Or are they dead-end jobs that typify all that is negative about large bureaucracies? Have you ever worked in one? Would you?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13338

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13339

Think It Over

- What do you think about the recent spotlight on fast food restaurants? Do you think they contribute to society's ills? Do you believe they provide a needed service? Have you ever worked a job like this? What did you learn?

Glossary

bureaucracies:
formal organizations characterized by a hierarchy of authority, a clear division of labor, explicit rules, and impersonality.

division of labor:
the fact that each individual in a bureaucracy has a specialized task to perform

coercive organizations:
organizations that people do not voluntarily join, such as prison or a mental hospital

explicit rules:
the types of rules in a bureaucracy; rules that are outlined, recorded, and standardized

formal organizations:
large, impersonal organizations

ideal-type:
a model or a collection of characteristics that could describe most examples of the item under discussion

impersonality:
the removal of personal feelings from a professional situation

iron rule of oligarchy:
the theory that an organization is ruled by a few elites rather than through collaboration

meritocracy:
a bureaucracy where membership and advancement is based on merit—proven and documented skills

normative or voluntary organizations:
organizations that people join to pursue shared interests or because they provide some intangible rewards

utilitarian organizations:
organizations that are joined to fill a specific material need

CC licensed content, Original

- College and university bureaucracy information . **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Formal Organizations. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:rrteLKgl@4/Formal-Organizations. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Introduction to Sociology: Organizations and Bureaucracies. **Authored by**: Brooke Miller. **Provided by**: Khan Academy. **Located at**: https://youtu.be/YS2IvKSWas4. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 8.10: Types of Formal Organizations is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.11: Types of Groups

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the functions of a variety of groups (i.e. primary/secondary, in-groups/out-groups, and reference groups)

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

Defining a Group

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

Interestingly, people within an aggregate or category can become a group. During disasters, people in a neighborhood (an aggregate) who did not know each other might become friendly and depend on each other at the local shelter. After the disaster ends and the people go back to simply living near each other, the feeling of cohesiveness may last since they have all shared an experience. They might remain a group, practicing emergency readiness, coordinating supplies for next time, or taking turns caring for neighbors who need extra help. Similarly, there may be many groups within a single category. Consider teachers, for example. Within this category, groups may exist like teachers’ unions, teachers who coach, or staff members who are involved with the PTA.

Types of Groups

Sociologist Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929) suggested that groups can broadly be divided into two categories: **primary groups** and **secondary groups** (Cooley 1909). According to Cooley, primary groups play the most critical role in our lives. The primary group is usually fairly small and is made up of individuals who generally engage face-to-face in long-term, emotionally significant ways. These interactions occurring within the primary group and which serve emotional needs are called **expressive functions**, which differ from merely pragmatic ones. The primary group is usually made up of significant others, those individuals who have the most impact on our socialization. The best example of a primary group is the family.

Secondary groups are often larger and impersonal. They may also be task-focused and time-limited. These groups serve an **instrumental function** rather than an expressive one, meaning that their role is more goal- or task-oriented than emotional. One’s fellow students or coworkers can be examples of a secondary group. Neither primary nor secondary groups are bound by strict definitions or set limits. In fact, people can move from one group to another. A graduate seminar, for example, can start as a secondary group focused on the class at hand, but as the students work together throughout their program, they may find common interests and strong ties that transform them into a more durable primary group.

Best Friends She’s Never Met

Writer Allison Levy worked alone. While she liked the freedom and flexibility of working from home, she sometimes missed having a community of coworkers, both for the practical purpose of brainstorming and the more social “water cooler” aspect. Levy did what many do in the Internet age: she found a group of other writers online through a web forum. Over time, a group of approximately twenty writers, who all wrote for a similar audience, broke off from the larger forum and started a private invitation-

only forum. While writers in general represent all genders, ages, and interests, it ended up being a collection of twenty- and thirty-something women who comprised the new forum; they all wrote fiction for children and young adults.

At first, the writers' forum was clearly a secondary group united by the members' professions and work situations. As Levy explained, "On the Internet, you can be present or absent as often as you want. No one is expecting you to show up." It was a useful place to research information about different publishers and about who had recently sold what and to track industry trends. But as time passed, Levy found it served a different purpose. Since the group shared other characteristics beyond their writing (such as age and gender), the online conversation naturally turned to matters such as child-rearing, aging parents, health, and exercise. Levy found it was a sympathetic place to talk about any number of subjects, not just writing. Further, when people didn't post for several days, others expressed concern, asking whether anyone had heard from the missing writers. It reached a point where most members would tell the group if they were traveling or needed to be offline for awhile.

The group continued to share. One member on the site who was going through a difficult family illness wrote, "I don't know where I'd be without you women. It is so great to have a place to vent that I know isn't hurting anyone." Others shared similar sentiments.

So is this a primary group? Most of these people have never met each other. They live in Hawaii, Australia, Minnesota, and across the world. They may never meet. Levy wrote recently to the group, saying, "Most of my 'real-life' friends and even my husband don't really get the writing thing. I don't know what I'd do without you." Despite the distance and the lack of physical contact, the group clearly provides an expressive function.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13340

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13341

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13342

In-Groups and Out-Groups



Figure 1. This driver and Yankees fan makes a clear statement about his or her in-group.

One of the ways that groups can be powerful is through inclusion, and its inverse, exclusion. The feeling that we belong in an elite or select group is a heady one, while the feeling of not being allowed in, or of being in competition with a group, can be motivating in a different way. Sociologist William Sumner (1840–1910) developed the concepts of **in-group** and **out-group** to explain this phenomenon (Sumner 1906). In short, an in-group is the group that an individual feels she belongs to, and which she believes to be an integral part of who she is. An out-group, conversely, is a group someone doesn't belong to. Often we may feel disdain or competition in relationship to an out-group. Sports teams, unions, and sororities are examples of in-groups and out-groups. People may belong to, or be an outsider to, any of these. Primary groups consist of both in-groups and out-groups, as do secondary groups.

While group affiliations can be neutral or even positive, such as the case of a team-based sporting competition, the concept of in-groups and out-groups can also explain some negative human behavior, such as white supremacist movements like the Ku Klux Klan, or the bullying of gay or lesbian students. By defining others as "not like us" and/or inferior, in-groups can end up practicing ethnocentrism, racism, sexism, ageism, and heterosexism—manners of judging others negatively based on their culture, race, sex, age, or sexuality. Often, in-groups can form within a secondary group. For instance, a workplace can have cliques of people, from senior executives who play golf together, to engineers who write code together, to young singles who socialize after hours. While these in-groups might show favoritism and affinity for other in-group members, the overall organization may be unable or unwilling to acknowledge it. Therefore, it pays to be wary of the politics of in-groups, since members may exclude others as a means of gaining status within the group.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13344

CyberBullying

In January of 2018, 12-year-old Gabriella Green (“Gabby”) committed suicide by hanging in her home in Panama City, Florida. Two 12-year-old students were charged with cyberstalking once the investigation delved into her social media accounts and cell phone texts. Cyberbullying is the use of interactive media by one person to torment another, and it is on the rise. Cyberbullying can mean sending threatening texts, harassing someone in a public forum (such as Facebook), hacking someone’s account and pretending to be him or her, posting embarrassing images online, and so on. Cyberbullying might have *contributed to* Gabby’s suicide, and her case is among those that have led to nationwide conversations about the need for education, prevention, and effective responses to young people who are actively being cyberbullied.

A study by the Cyberbullying Research Center found that 20 percent of middle school students admitted to “seriously thinking about committing suicide” as a result of online bullying (Hinduja and Patchin 2010). Whereas bullying face-to-face requires willingness to directly interact with your victim, cyberbullying allows bullies to harass others from the privacy of their homes without witnessing the damage firsthand. This form of bullying is particularly dangerous because it’s widely accessible and therefore easier to accomplish.

According to a report released in 2013 by the National Center for Educational Statistics, close to 1 in every 3 (27.8 percent) students report being bullied by their school peers. Seventeen percent of students reported being the victims of cyberbullying.

Measuring cyberbullying and its targets is quite difficult. Researchers have shown the way the questions are asked can lead to gender-specific responses. For example, if a survey asks about “rumor spreading or hurtful commenting behaviors,” females are more likely to be involved, but if the survey asks about “mistreatment in videos or via online gaming,” males are more likely to be involved. [1] In a survey of 5,000 respondents, cyberbullying in the past 30 days occurred most to multiracial high school females, then middle school multiracial females, and white middle school females as number three (Patchin 2019). Groups least likely to be victims of cyberbullying were Asian middle school males, Black female high schoolers, and Asian female high schoolers.

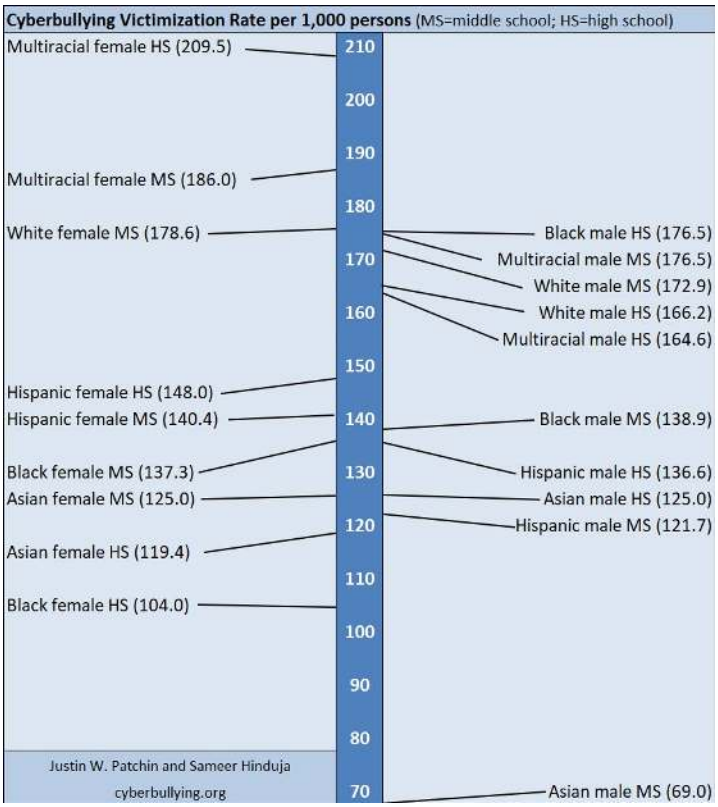


Figure 2. This chart shows the number of people from each group who reported cyberbullying.

Examining this issue is an area ripe for sociological research and has clear policy implications. When we consider demographic variables like race/ ethnicity, gender, and age, how does that help us understand this phenomenon? How does an understanding of groups reveal the behavior of the cyberbullies (who also report being more likely to commit suicide) and those who experience cyberbullying? Other than survey research, what other sociological research methods could be employed?

Reference Groups



Figure 2. Athletes are often viewed as a reference group for young people. (Photo courtesy of Johnny Bivera/U.S. Navy/Wikimedia Commons)

A **reference group** is a group that people compare themselves to—it provides a standard of measurement. In U.S. society, peer groups are common reference groups. Kids and adults pay attention to what their peers wear, what music they like, what they do with their free time—and they compare themselves to what they see. Most people have more than one reference group, so a middle school boy might look not just at his classmates but also at his older brother's friends and see a different set of norms. And he might observe the antics of his favorite athletes for yet another set of behaviors.

Some other examples of reference groups can be one's cultural center, workplace, family gathering, and even parents. Often, reference groups convey competing messages. For instance, on television and in movies, young adults often have wonderful apartments and cars and active social lives despite not holding a job. In music videos, young women might dance and sing in a sexually aggressive way that suggests experience beyond their years. At all ages, we use reference groups to help guide our behavior and show us social norms. So how important is it to surround yourself with positive reference groups? You may not recognize a reference group, but it still influences the way you act. Identifying your reference groups can help you understand the source of the social identities you aspire to or want to distance yourself from.

Types of Groups, Group Dynamics, and Leadership

Please watch this video to review the different types of groups and to preview what you will learn about on the next pages—group dynamics and leadership.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=208

College: A World of In-Groups, Out-Groups, and Reference Groups

f**Figure 3.** Which fraternity or sorority would you fit into, if any? Sorority recruitment day offers students an opportunity to learn about these different groups. (Photo courtesy of Murray State/flickr)

For a student entering college, the sociological study of groups takes on an immediate and practical meaning. After all, when we arrive someplace new, most of us glance around to see how well we fit in or stand out in the ways we want. This is a natural response to a reference group, and on a large campus, there can be many competing groups. Say you are a strong athlete who wants to play intramural sports, and your favorite musicians are a local punk band. You may find yourself engaged with two very different reference groups.

These reference groups can also become your in-groups or out-groups. For instance, different groups on campus might solicit you to join. Are there fraternities and sororities at your school? If so, chances are they will try to convince students—that is, students they deem worthy—to join them. And if you love playing soccer and want to play on a campus team, but you're wearing shredded jeans, combat boots, and a local band T-shirt, you might have a hard time convincing the soccer team to give you a chance. While most campus groups refrain from insulting competing groups, there is a definite sense of an in-group versus an out-group. "Them?" a member might say. "They're all right, but their parties are nowhere near as cool as ours." Or, "Only serious engineering geeks

join that group.” This immediate categorization into in-groups and out-groups means that students must choose carefully, since whatever group they associate with won’t just define their friends—it may also define their enemies.

Further Research

For more information about cyberbullying causes and statistics, check out cyberbullying.org.

Think It Over

- Make a list of all of the different groups in your social world. Then label each group making sure you have at least one example of a primary group, secondary group, in-group, out-group, and a reference group. Now write the instrumental and expressive functions of each group next to the group. Finally, after looking at this list and the functions of each group, which are most important to you? Why?
- How has technology changed your primary groups and secondary groups? Do you have more (and separate) primary groups due to online connectivity? Do you believe that someone, like Levy, can have a true primary group made up of people she has never met? Why, or why not?
- Groups can be formed based on exclusionary criteria and/or can transform into an in-group with clearly defined out-groups. Street gangs and motorcycle clubs are extreme examples, but what about fraternities and sororities or sports rivalries (i.e. Yankees/ Red Sox, Celtics/ Lakers, Real Madrid/ Barcelona, Duke/ North Carolina)? What are the instrumental and expressive functions of such in-group groups? What are the dysfunctions? How does this build upon Durkheim’s theory of society based on social solidarity?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13343

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13345

Glossary

aggregate:
a collection of people who exist in the same place at the same time, but who don’t interact or share a sense of identity

category:
people who share similar characteristics but who are not connected in any way

expressive function:
a group function that serves an emotional need

group:
any collection of at least two people who interact with some frequency and who share some sense of aligned identity

in-group:
a group a person belongs to and feels is an integral part of his identity

instrumental function:
being oriented toward a task or goal

out-group:
a group that an individual is not a member of, and may even compete with

primary groups:
small, informal groups of people who are closest to us

reference groups:
groups to which an individual compares herself

secondary groups:

larger and more impersonal groups that are task-focused and time limited

1. Patchin, J. 2019. "Cyberbullying victimization rates by race, sex, and age." Cyberbullying Research Center. https://cyberbullying.org/cyberbullying-victimization-rates-2016↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Types of Groups. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:2VBD87h5/6-1-Types-of-Groups. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Yankees fan license plate. **Authored by**: Eli Christman. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/gammaman/34637672205/. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

All rights reserved content

- Social Groups: Crash Course Sociology #16. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wFZ5Dbj8DA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 8.11: Types of Groups is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.12: Group Dynamics

Learning Outcomes

- Describe how size influences group dynamics
- Explain how conformity is impacted by groups



Figure 1. Cadets illustrate how strongly conformity can define groups. (Photo courtesy David Spender/flickr)

Now that we have learned about different types of groups, let's examine group dynamics, or the ways in which groups operate, and the impact these groups have on individual members.

Dyads, Triads, and Large Groups

A small group is typically one where the collection of people is small enough that all members of the group know each other and share simultaneous interaction, such as a nuclear family, a dyad, or a triad. Georg Simmel (1858–1915) wrote extensively about the difference between a **dyad**, or two-member group, and a **triad**, which is a three-member group (Simmel 1902). In the former, if one person withdraws, the group can no longer exist. The intensity is high but stability is low because the dyad is dependent upon both people being committed to the group of two. We can think of a divorce, which effectively ends the "group" of the married couple, or of two best friends never speaking again. In a triad, however, the dynamic is quite different. Intensity is lower but stability is higher because if one person withdraws, the group lives on. A triad has a different set of relationships. If there are three in the group, two-against-one dynamics can develop, and there exists the potential for a majority opinion on any issue. Consider a dyad (couple) that becomes a triad (new baby). We can often see a lessening of the intensity between parents as attention is diverted to a newborn who requires a lot of time and care. Often, the partner who does less caregiving (perhaps the male) feels left out and is less clear about their role in the group (family) and the person who does more caregiving (perhaps the female) might feel pulled too thin and find it difficult to give their partner and the new baby enough time and attention without feeling depleted. Similarly, when couples see their children off to college and experience an "empty nest," the dyad might feel like a new group with the intensity of a group of two resurfacing and stability decreasing now that children are no longer living in the home.

Small groups generally have strong internal cohesiveness and a sense of connection. The challenge, however, is for small groups to achieve large goals. They can struggle to be heard or to be a force for change if they are pushing against larger groups. In short, they are easier to ignore. It is difficult to define exactly when a small group becomes a large group. Perhaps it occurs when there are too many people to join in a simultaneous discussion. Or perhaps a group joins with other groups as part of a movement that unites them. These larger groups may share a geographic space, such as a fraternity or sorority on the same campus, or they might be spread out around the globe. The larger the group, the more attention it can garner, and the more pressure members can exert in the pursuit of goals the group wishes to achieve. At the same time, the larger the group becomes, the more the risk grows for division and lack of cohesion.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13346

Conformity

Sociologists study human behavior and social groups, but how do humans behave within these various groups? What social dynamics are at work within them? Most individuals see themselves as their own person, as unique, and as relatively uninfluenced by the outside. In the ongoing "nature versus nurture" debate, sociologists tend toward the nurture explanatory framework, and thus examine the forces around us that shape our behavior. A difficult concept, then, is **conformity**, which refers to the extent to which an individual complies with group norms or expectations.

Most people will agree that we all like to fit in to some degree. Likewise, when we want to stand out, we want to choose how we stand out and for what reasons. Since societal norms change over time, what was once non-conformist (i.e., tattoos, piercings, leather jackets, and even blue jeans) are now social norms. What was conformist (i.e., smoking cigarettes) is no longer an acceptable social norm in many places. Formal norms have relegated smoking to remote areas, whereas smoking on airplanes, in restaurants, and even in college classrooms was permissible until the 1980s and 1990s in some places (all domestic and international flights first became smoke-free in 2000).

As you might recall, we use reference groups to assess and understand how to act, to dress, and to behave. Not surprisingly, young people are particularly aware of who conforms and who does not. A high school boy whose mother makes him wear ironed button-down shirts might protest that he will look stupid—because everyone else wears T-shirts. Another high school boy might like wearing those shirts as a way of standing out. How much do you enjoy being noticed? Do you consciously prefer to conform to group norms so as not to be singled out? Are there people in your class who immediately come to mind when you think about those who don't want to conform?

Psychologist Solomon Asch (1907–1996) conducted experiments that illustrated how great the pressure to conform is, specifically within a small group (1956). After reading about his work in the following feature, ask yourself what you would do in Asch's experiment. Would you speak up? What would help you speak up and what would discourage it?

Conforming to Expectations

In 1951, psychologist Solomon Asch sat a small group of about eight people around a table. Only one of the people sitting there was the true subject; the rest were associates of the experimenter. However, the subject was led to believe that the others were all, like him, people brought in for an experiment in visual judgments. The group was shown two cards, the first card with a single vertical line, and the second card with three vertical lines differing in length. The experimenter polled the group and asked each participant one at a time which line on the second card matched up with the line on the first card.

However, this was not really a test of visual judgment. Rather, it was Asch's study on the pressures of conformity. He was curious to see what the effect of multiple wrong answers would be on the subject, who presumably was able to tell which lines matched. In order to test this, Asch had each planted respondent answer in a specific way. The subject was seated in such a way that he had to hear almost everyone else's answers before it was his turn. Sometimes the non-subject members would unanimously choose an answer that was clearly wrong.

So what was the conclusion? Asch found that thirty-seven out of fifty test subjects responded with an "obviously erroneous" answer at least once. When faced by a unanimous wrong answer from the rest of the group, the subject conformed to a mean of four of the staged answers. Asch revised the study and repeated it, wherein the subject still heard the staged wrong answers, but was allowed to write down his answer rather than speak it aloud. In this version, the number of examples of conformity—giving an incorrect answer so as not to contradict the group—fell by two thirds. He also found that group size had an impact on how much pressure the subject felt to conform.

The results showed that speaking up when only one other person gave an erroneous answer was far more common than when five or six people defended the incorrect position. Finally, Asch discovered that people were far more likely to give the correct answer in the face of near-unanimous consent if they had a single ally. If even one person in the group also dissented, the subject conformed only a quarter as often. Clearly, it was easier to be a minority of two than a minority of one.

Watch a clip from the experiment here:

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=210

Asch concluded that there are two main causes for conformity: people want to be liked by the group or they believe the group is better informed than they are. He found his study results disturbing. To him, they revealed that intelligent, well-educated people would, with very little coaxing, go along with an untruth. He believed this result highlighted real problems with the education system and values in our society (Asch 1956).

Stanley Milgram, a Yale psychologist, had similar results in his experiment that is now known simply as the Milgram Experiment. In 1962, Milgram found that research subjects were overwhelmingly willing to perform acts that directly conflicted with their

consciences when directed by a person of authority. In the experiment, subjects were willing to administer painful, even supposedly deadly, electrical shocks to invisible others who answered questions incorrectly.

Think It Over

- Imagine you are in Asch's study. Would you find it difficult to give the correct answer in that scenario? Why or why not? How would you change the study now to improve it?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13347

Glossary

conformity:
the extent to which an individual complies with group or societal norms

dyad:
a two-member group

triad:
a three-member group

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Group Size and Structure. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:orIMycR1@5/Group-Size-and-Structure. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- The Asch Experiment. **Authored by**: Question Everything. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA-gbpt7Ts8. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 8.12: Group Dynamics is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.13: Leadership Styles

Learning Outcomes

- Compare different styles of leadership

Group Leadership

Often, larger groups require some kind of leadership. In small, primary groups, leadership tends to be informal. After all, most families don't take a vote on who will rule the group, nor do most groups of friends. This is not to say that *de facto* leaders don't emerge, but formal leadership is rare. In secondary groups, leadership is usually more overt. There are often clearly outlined roles and responsibilities, with a chain of command to follow. Some secondary groups, like the military, have highly structured and clearly understood chains of command, and many lives depend on those. After all, how well could soldiers function in a battle if they had no idea whom to listen to or if different people were calling out orders? Other secondary groups, like co-workers or fellow students, also have formal leaders, but the styles and functions of leadership can vary significantly.

Leadership Function

What types of functions do leaders fulfill for a group or formal organization? An **instrumental leader** is one who is goal-oriented and largely concerned with accomplishing set tasks. We can imagine that an army general or a Fortune 500 CEO would be an instrumental leader. In contrast, **expressive leaders** are more concerned with promoting emotional strength and health, and ensuring that people feel supported. Social and religious leaders—rabbis, priests, imams, directors of youth homes and social service programs—are often perceived as expressive leaders.

There is a longstanding stereotype that men are more instrumental leaders, and women are more expressive leaders. And although gender roles have changed, even today many women and men who exhibit the opposite-gender manner can be seen as deviants and can encounter resistance. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's experiences provide an example of the way society reacts to a high-profile woman who is an instrumental leader. Despite the stereotype, Boatwright and Forrest (2000) have found that both men and women prefer leaders who use a combination of expressive and instrumental leadership.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13348

Leadership Styles

In addition to these leadership functions, there are three different leadership styles. **Democratic leaders** encourage group participation in all decision making. They work hard to build consensus before choosing a course of action and moving forward. This type of leader is particularly common, for example, in a club where the members vote on which activities or projects to pursue. Democratic leaders can be well liked, but there is often a danger that the input-gathering process will proceed slowly since consensus building is so labor intensive. A further risk is that group members might pick sides and entrench themselves into opposing factions rather than reaching a solution.

In contrast, a **laissez-faire leader** (French for "leave it alone") is hands-off, allowing group members to self-manage and make their own decisions. An example of this kind of leader might be an art teacher who opens the art cupboard, leaves materials on the shelves, and tells students to help themselves and make some art. While this style can work well with highly motivated and mature participants who have clear goals and guidelines, it risks group dissolution and a lack of progress.

As the name suggests, **authoritarian leaders** issue orders and assigns tasks. These leaders are clear instrumental leaders with a strong focus on meeting goals. Often, entrepreneurs fall into this mold, like Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. Not surprisingly, the authoritarian leader risks alienating the workers. There are times, however, when this style of leadership can be required. In different circumstances, each of these leadership styles can be effective and successful. Consider what leadership style you prefer. Why? Do you like the same style in different areas of your life, such as a classroom, a workplace, and a sports team?

Further Research

What is your leadership style? Take this Leadership Styles Quiz to help you find out!



Figure 1. Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton drew fire for her leadership style. (Photo courtesy marcn/flickr)

The 2008 presidential election marked a dynamic change when two female politicians entered the race to become the next President of the United States (POTUS). Of the 200 people who have run for president during the country's history, fewer than thirty have been women.

Democratic presidential candidate and former First Lady Hillary Clinton was both famously polarizing and popular. With an impressive resume as an experienced global diplomat, Clinton was attacked for being elitist, intellectual, abrasive, and wealthy. Consider that Hillary Clinton's popularity surged in her 2008 campaign after she cried on the campaign trail. It was enough for the *New York Times* to publish an editorial, "Can Hillary Cry Her Way Back to the White House?" (Dowd 2008). Harsh, but her approval ratings soared afterward. In fact, many compared it to how politically likable she was in the aftermath of President Bill Clinton's Monica Lewinsky scandal.



Figure 2. This gag gift demonstrates how female leaders may be viewed if they violate social norms. (Photo courtesy of istolethetv/flickr)

On the other side of the aisle was Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin. The former governor of Alaska, Palin was, to some, the perfect example of the modern woman. She juggled her political career with raising a growing family and relied heavily on the use of social media to spread her message. Palin was the opposite of Clinton in many ways–she had no national or international political experience and came across as friendly, upbeat, and even silly at times. Sarah Palin's expressive qualities were promoted to a greater degree. While she has benefited from the efforts of feminists before her, she self-identified as a traditional woman with traditional values, a point she illustrated by frequently bringing her young children up on stage with her.

When Clinton ran again in 2016, her lengthy political career worked against her as a number of actions she took as Secretary of State were used to criticize her. Her opponent, the reality-TV personality and real estate heir Donald Trump, had no political experience, but he positioned himself as an instrumental leader who demonstrated leadership in global business.

As we look to the 2020 election, a number of female candidates have entered the field. So what light have these candidates' emerging campaigns shed so far on the possibilities of a female presidency? According to some political analysts, women candidates face a paradox: they must be as tough as their male opponents on issues such as foreign policy, or they risk appearing weak. However, the stereotypical expectation of women as expressive leaders is still prevalent. How much of the rhetoric is about the female candidate's appearance (What is she wearing? Is she attractive?)? Compare this to the field of male candidates. In the workforce, being a mother can often limit a woman's upward mobility as we will see while being a father has the opposite effect for men. Do we see any evidence of this gender disparity in the 2020 Presidential Election?

Think It Over

- Compare and contrast the leadership styles of former President Obama and President Trump. What leadership style (democratic, *laissez-faire*, or authoritarian) do you see as being the best suited for the position? Why?
- Think of a scenario where an authoritarian leadership style would be beneficial. Explain. What are the reasons it would work well? What are the risks?
- Describe a time you were led by a leader using, in your opinion, a leadership style that didn't suit the situation. When and where was it? What could she or he have done better?
- What kind of leader do you tend to be? Do you embrace different leadership styles and functions as the situation changes? Give an example of a time you were in a position of leadership and what function and style you expressed.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13349

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13350

Glossary

authoritarian leader:
a leader who issues orders and assigns tasks

democratic leader:
a leader who encourages group participation and consensus-building before moving into action

expressive leader:
a leader who is concerned with process and with ensuring everyone's emotional wellbeing

instrumental leader:
a leader who is goal oriented with a primary focus on accomplishing tasks

laissez-faire leader:
a hands-off leader who allows members of the group to make their own decisions

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Group Size and Structure. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.1:orIMycR1@7/6-2-Group-Size-and-Structure. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 8.13: Leadership Styles is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.14: Putting It Together- Society and Groups

In this module, you learned about the interconnections between society, social institutions, and culture, then used the three theoretical paradigms to analyze society and its complexities. You also learned about groups, group dynamics, and leadership styles which operate within society, social institutions, and culture.

Groups like political parties are prevalent in our lives and provide a significant way for us to understand and define ourselves as individuals, often based on whether we are for or against the groups in question. Groups also play an important role in society. As enduring social units, they help foster shared value systems and are key to the structure of society as we know it. There are three primary sociological perspectives for studying society and groups: functionalist, conflict, and interactionist.

We can look at the Tea Party movement through the lenses of these methods to better understand the roles and challenges that groups offer. The Tea Party Movement is a conservative movement that began in 2009 after people became upset with President Obama's tax plans. While the movement's momentum peaked in 2010 and has declined in influence in recent years, there are still Tea Party chapters in every state. The followers of the Tea Party have charged themselves with calling "awareness to any issue which challenges the security, sovereignty, or domestic tranquility of our beloved nation, the United States of America" (Tea Party, Inc. 2014). The group takes its name from the famous Boston Tea Party of 1773. Its membership includes people from all walks of life who believe they are taking a necessary stand to protect certain values and beliefs. These beliefs tend to be anti-tax, anti-big government, pro-gun, and politically conservative.



Figure 1. The national tour of the Tea Party Express visited Minnesota and held a rally outside the state capitol building. (Photo courtesy of Fibonacci Blue/flickr).

The *functionalist perspective* is a big-picture, macro-level view that looks at how different aspects of society are intertwined. This perspective is based on the idea that society is a well-balanced system with all parts necessary to the whole, and it studies the roles these parts play in relation to the whole. In the case of the Tea Party Movement, a functionalist might look at what macro-level needs the movement serves. For example, a functionalist might ask how the party forces people to pay attention to the economy.

The *conflict perspective* is another macroanalytical view, one that focuses on the genesis and growth of inequality. A conflict theorist studying the Tea Party Movement might look at how business interests have manipulated the system over the last 30 years, leading to the gross inequality we see today. Or this perspective might explore how the massive redistribution of wealth from the working and middle classes to the upper class could lead to a resurgence in class consciousness, in keeping with Marxist theory.

A third perspective is the *symbolic Interaction* or *interactionist perspective*. This method of analyzing groups takes a micro-level view. Instead of studying the big picture, these researchers look at the day-to-day interactions within groups. Studying these details, the interactionist looks at issues like leadership style and group dynamics. In the case of the Tea Party Movement, interactionists might ask, "How does the group dynamic in New York differ from that in Atlanta?" Or, "What dictates who becomes the *de facto* leader in different cities—geography, social dynamics, economic circumstances?"

Watch It

Watch the following video for a review and summary on the theories of society. Consider how a theorist from each of these perspectives may explain the group dynamics surrounding the Yellow Jackets in France.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=214

Sociology is a holistic and interconnected discipline, so even while we are summarizing the contents of this module, you will continue to see overlap in the upcoming modules as we dive into social institutions and explore groups within a variety of macrosociological structures.

CC licensed content, Original

- Putting It Together: Society and Groups. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Groups and Organizations. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:dMF8i1Qt@4/Introduction-to-Groups-and-Organizations. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.

All rights reserved content

- Social Theories Overview. **Provided by**: Khan Academy. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpaLchFpJZ8&feature=youtu.be. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 8.14: Putting It Together- Society and Groups is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.15: Discussion- Society and Formal Organizations

Part 1: For this discussion, pick ONE of the following prompts and write a response between 200-300 words. Pull in examples and applications from your own life as well as the readings.

- What is a bureaucracy that most impacts your life? List the ideal-type characteristics outline by Weber in your reading on formal organizations, and evaluate Weber's ideal-type. Does it accurately describe the bureaucracy you selected? Why or why not?
- To what extent do you think our society is a meritocracy? Where do we see nepotism? The Kennedy and Bush Dynasties included multiple members of the same family serving in the most powerful positions in American government and many corporations also have extensive familial ties. What about in Ivy League institutions? Most have an alumni preference–does this take away from merit-based admissions?

Part 2: Comment on posts from at least two other people in a thoughtful and engaging way. These responses should be at least 75 words.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Society and Groups. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 8.15: Discussion- Society and Formal Organizations is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

8.16: Assignment- Society and Groups

STEP 1: Make a list of all of the different groups in your social world. Then label each group making sure you have at least one example of a primary group, secondary group, in-group, out-group, and a reference group. Now write the instrumental and expressive functions of each group next to the group. You may choose to copy and paste the table below to use during the assignment. Share either the table or your list in your assignment submission.

Groups	Group Label	Instrumental/Expressive Function

STEP 2: In a response between 300-500 words, write an essay that explains some of your own experience with types of groups. Analyze your table or list, and reflect on which groups you feel play a large role in your life, and why.

Rubric

Criteria	Ratings			Points
Identifies groups	Correctly identifies and labels at least five personal groups as a primary group, secondary group, in-group, out-group, and reference group	Identifies five groups but does not accurately label each group, or does not identify at least five groups	Does not identify groups or group type	__/7
Function	Identifies instrumental and expressive functions of groups	Partially identifies expressive functions of groups	Does not identify the expressive function of groups	__/3
Essay	Essay articulates the importance and role of each key group, using applicable terms. Essay is written in polished language with no to few errors.	Essay does not elaborate on the importance of each group or it not written in a cohesive or polished way.	Essay is difficult to follow or read and does not articulate on the importance of key groups.	__/10
				__/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Society and Groups. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Sociology 2E. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 8.16: Assignment- Society and Groups is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Module 6- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control

9.1: Why It Matters- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control
9.2: Introduction to Deviance
9.3: Deviance and Control
9.4: Introduction to Theories of Social Deviance
9.5: Functionalism and Deviance
9.6: Conflict Theory and Deviance
9.7: Symbolic Interactionism and Deviance
9.8: Reviewing Theories on Deviance
9.9: Introduction to Crime and The Law
9.10: The Criminal Justice System
9.11: Criminal Activity
9.12: Putting It Together- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control
9.13: Discussion- Deviance
9.14: Assignment- Deviance in the News

This page titled 9: Module 6- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.1: Why It Matters- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control

Why use sociological theories to explain deviance, conformity and social control?



Figure 1. Washington is one of several states where marijuana use has been legalized, decriminalized, or approved for medical use. (Photo courtesy of Dominic Simpson/flickr)

Thirty states in the United States and the District of Columbia have passed measures legalizing marijuana in some form; the majority of these states approve only medical use of marijuana, ten states and the District of Columbia approve recreational use as well (Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington). Colorado and California were the first states to pass legalization measures in 2012 but other states are working to legalize marijuana for a variety of reasons.

Wide partisan gap in opinions about legalizing marijuana use

% who say use of marijuana should be...

	Legal %	Illegal %	DK %
Total	61	37	3=100
Men	64	33	3=100
Women	57	41	3=100
White	62	36	2=100
Black	71	25	4=100
Hispanic	52	44	4=100
College grad+	65	32	3=100
Some college	65	32	3=100
HS or less	54	43	2=100
Republican	43	55	2=100
Democrat	69	28	3=100
Independent	65	32	3=100
White evangelical Protestant	38	60	2=100
White mainline Protestant	64	33	2=100
Catholic	52	45	4=100
Unaffiliated	78	20	2=100

Note: Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 25-30, 2017.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 2. Opinions about marijuana legalization differ among societal groups. "About six-in-ten Americans support marijuana legalization." Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (October 8, 2018, 2018). The Pew Research Center also found "Wide Partisan Gap in Opinions About Legalizing Marijuana Use." Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (January 5, 2018).

The Pew Research Center found that a majority of people in the United States (61 percent) now favor legalizing marijuana.[1] This 2017 finding was a follow-up survey to a 2013 Pew survey in which 52 percent of Americans favored legalization (and the first time that a majority of survey respondents supported making marijuana legal), which shows a substantial increase in just four years

and reflects the national pattern of state legalization. A question about marijuana's legal status was first asked in a 1969 Gallup poll, and only 12 percent of U.S. adults favored legalization at that time.

Decriminalization has even wider support. Pew also found that 76 percent of those surveyed currently do not favor jail time for individuals convicted of minor possession of marijuana (Motel 2014).

Even though many people favor legalization, 39 percent remain opposed (Geiger 2018) and the legalization of marijuana in any form remains controversial. Citizen's Against Legalizing Marijuana (CALM) is one of the largest political action committees (PACs) working to prevent or repeal legalization measures. There are distinctive patterns among groups in society and how they feel about marijuana legalization. As you can see in Figure 2, the groups within society least likely to support marijuana legalization are Republicans (55 percent oppose) and white evangelical Protestants (60 percent oppose). Age is also a factor, with 67 percent of Republicans ages 65 and over opposing legalization.

Tattoos, vegan lifestyles, single parenthood, breast implants, and even jogging were once considered deviant but are now widely accepted. As in many aspects of sociology, there are no absolute answers about deviance. What people agree is deviant differs in various societies and subcultures, and it may change over time.

The change process usually takes some time and may be accompanied by significant disagreement, especially for social norms that are viewed as essential. For example, divorce affects the social institution of family, and so divorce carried a deviant and stigmatized status at one time. Marijuana use was once seen as deviant and criminal, but U.S. social norms on this issue are changing.

In this module, you'll learn more about what is considered deviant behavior and then examine how societies work to control and prevent deviance through methods of social control. You'll also examine the U.S. criminal justice system and examine statistics related to crime in America. Why is the incarceration rate in the United States abnormally high, even though incidents of crime in the United States are not dramatically higher than they are elsewhere? Do you think the criminal justice system in the United States is effective? How might you explain the recidivism rate for those jailed in the United States (two-thirds of prison inmates will be convicted on another charge within three years of having been released and return to prison)? Keep these questions in mind as you read through the material in this module.

---

1. Geiger, A. 2018. "About six-in-ten-Americans support marijuana legalization." https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/08/americans-support-marijuana-legalization/↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Deviance, Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Prisoner population rate world map. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology/Deviance#/media/File:Prisoner_population_rate_world_map.svg. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*
- Deviance. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology/Deviance. **Project**: Introduction to Sociology. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Legality of cannabis by U.S. jurisdiction. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_cannabis_by_U.S._jurisdiction. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 9.1: Why It Matters- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.2: Introduction to Deviance

What you'll learn to do: define deviance and methods of social control



Figure 1. In studying deviance, sociologists consider who has the power and authority to define a behavior as being deviant. In 1969 the police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar, using anti cross-dressing and homophobic laws to arrest people. The community organized and fought back against the police and rioted in the streets in what is now known as the Stonewall Riots. Laws in the U.S. concerning LGBTQ rights have changed over time now allowing for gay couples to marry and for transgender people to access healthcare related to transitioning in some states. (Photo courtesy of Another Believer/Wikimedia Commons)

A thesaurus might list the following words about deviance: "abnormal, aberration, anomaly, weird, irregular, unnatural." Most references attest to the nature of deviance as being something that violates behaviors, thoughts, or actions.

For sociologists the answer is found by considering exactly who has the power and authority to define the behavior as being deviant. Throughout history, the United States government, religions, education, media, and family types have influenced and shaped what is considered "deviant" and, as illustrated with rapid marijuana legalization in the U.S., what is considered deviant changes over time.

Marijuana legalization provides an excellent example because the Trump administration is at odds with the majority of the country–Attorney General Jeff Sessions is working to enforce marijuana laws at the federal level while states are legalizing marijuana at the state level. Although the U.S. Attorney General is appointed by the U.S. President, the President is elected. State legislators are elected, which helps to explain why states are moving quickly to legalize marijuana, particularly during election years.

CC licensed content, Original

- Objectives and Activities. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Deviance introduction. **Provided by**: College of the Canyons. **Located at**: https://www.canyons.edu/Offices/DistanceLearning/OER/Pages/OERTextbooksSociology.aspx. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Stonewall Inn, NYC. **Authored by**: Another Believer. **Provided by**: Wikimedia Commons. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stonewall_Inn,_NYC_(May_2014)_-_2.JPG. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 9.2: Introduction to Deviance is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.3: Deviance and Control

Learning Outcomes

- Explain deviance and the nature of deviant behavior
- Differentiate between types of sanctions



Figure 1. Much of the appeal of watching entertainers perform in drag comes from the humor inherent in seeing everyday norms violated. (Photo courtesy of Cassiopeija/Wikimedia Commons)

What, exactly, is deviance? And what is the relationship between deviance and crime? According to sociologist William Graham Sumner, **deviance** is a violation of established contextual, cultural, or social norms, whether folkways, mores, or codified law (1906). Put simply, deviance is the violation of a norm.

In fact, from a structural functionalist perspective, one of the positive contributions of deviance is that it fosters social change. For example, during the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, Rosa Parks violated social norms when she refused to move to the "black section" of the bus, and the Little Rock Nine broke customs of segregation to attend an Arkansas public school.

"What is deviant behavior?" cannot be answered in a straightforward manner. Whether an act is labeled deviant or not depends on many factors, including location, audience, and the individual committing the act. According to sociologist Howard Becker, deviance is relative and "The deviant is one to whom that label has been successfully applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label" (Becker 1963). Listening to music on your phone on the way to class is considered acceptable behavior. Listening to music during your 2 p.m. sociology lecture is considered rude and might be met with a disapproving look and/or a request to put your phone away. Listening to music on your phone when on the witness stand before a judge may cause you to be held in contempt of court and consequently fined or jailed. In this example we can see that the individual actor remains constant while the location and audience changes, becoming in each instance increasingly at odds with established norms.

As norms vary across culture and time, it makes sense that notions of deviance change also. Fifty years ago, public schools in the United States had strict dress codes that, among other stipulations, often banned women from wearing pants to class. Today, it's socially acceptable for women to wear pants, but less so for men to wear skirts. In a time of war, acts usually considered morally reprehensible, such as taking the life of another, may actually be rewarded. Whether an act is deviant or not depends on society's response to that act.

Why I Drive a Hearse

When sociologist Todd Schoepflin ran into his childhood friend Bill, he was shocked to see him driving a hearse instead of an ordinary car. A professionally trained researcher, Schoepflin wondered what effect driving a hearse had on his friend and what effect it might have on others on the road. Would using such a vehicle for everyday errands be considered deviant by most people?



Figure 2. A hearse with the license plate "LASTRYD." How would you view the owner of this car? (Photo courtesy of Brian Teutsch/flickr)

Schoepflin interviewed Bill, curious first to know why he drove such an unconventional car. Bill had simply been on the lookout for a reliable winter car; on a tight budget, he searched used car ads and stumbled upon one for the hearse. The car ran well, and the price was right, so he bought it.

Bill admitted that others' reactions to the car had been mixed. His parents were appalled, and he received odd stares from his coworkers. A mechanic once refused to work on it, and stated that it was "a dead person machine." On the whole, however, Bill received mostly positive reactions. Strangers gave him a thumbs-up on the highway and stopped him in parking lots to chat about his car. His girlfriend loved it, his friends wanted to take it tailgating, and people offered to buy it. Could it be that driving a hearse isn't really so deviant after all?

Schoepflin theorized that, although viewed as outside conventional norms, driving a hearse is such a mild form of deviance that it actually becomes a mark of distinction. Conformists find the choice of vehicle intriguing or appealing, while nonconformists see a fellow oddball to whom they can relate. As one of Bill's friends remarked, "Every guy wants to own a unique car like this, and *you* can certainly pull it off." Such anecdotes remind us that although deviance is often viewed as a violation of norms, it's not always viewed in a negative light (Schoepflin 2011).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13351

Social Control

When a person violates a social norm, what happens? A driver caught speeding can receive a speeding ticket. A student who wears a bathrobe to class gets a warning from a professor. An adult belching loudly is avoided. All societies practice **social control**, the regulation and enforcement of norms. The underlying goal of social control is to maintain **social order**, an arrangement of practices and behaviors on which society's members base their daily lives. Think of social order as an employee handbook and social control as a manager. When a worker violates a workplace guideline, the manager steps in to enforce the rules; when an employee is doing an exceptionally good job at following the rules, the manager may praise or promote the employee.

The means of enforcing rules are known as **sanctions**. Sanctions can be positive as well as negative. **Positive sanctions** are rewards given for conforming to norms. A promotion at work is a positive sanction for working hard. **Negative sanctions** are punishments for violating norms. Being arrested is a punishment for shoplifting. Both types of sanctions play a role in social control.

Sociologists also classify sanctions as formal or informal. Although shoplifting, a form of social deviance, may be illegal, there are no laws dictating the proper way to scratch your nose. That doesn't mean picking your nose in public won't be punished; instead, you will encounter **informal sanctions**. Informal sanctions emerge in face-to-face social interactions. For example, wearing flip-flops to an opera or swearing loudly in church may draw disapproving looks or even verbal reprimands, whereas behavior that is seen as positive—such as helping an old man carry grocery bags across the street—may receive positive informal reactions, such as a smile or pat on the back.

Formal sanctions, on the other hand, are ways to officially recognize and enforce norm violations. If a student violates her college's code of conduct, for example, she might be expelled. Someone who speaks inappropriately to the boss could be fired. Someone who commits a crime may be arrested or imprisoned. On the positive side, a soldier who saves a life may receive an official commendation.

The table below shows the relationship between different types of sanctions.

Table 1. Informal/Formal Sanctions. Formal and informal sanctions may be positive or negative. Informal sanctions arise in social interactions, whereas formal sanctions officially enforce norms.

	Informal	Formal
Positive	An expression of thanks	A promotion at work
Negative	An angry comment	A parking fine

Further Research

Although we rarely think of it in this way, deviance can have a positive effect on society. Check out the Positive Deviance Initiative, a program initiated by Tufts University to promote social movements around the world that strive to improve people's lives, at positivedeviance.org.

Watch It

Watch the selected clip from this video to learn more about what deviant behavior looks like and how social control regulates social norms.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=226

Think It Over

- If given the choice, would you purchase an unusual car such as a hearse for everyday use? How would your friends, family, or significant other react? Since deviance is culturally defined, most of the decisions we make are dependent on the reactions of others. Is there anything the people in your life encourage you to do that you don't? Why don't you?
- Think of a recent time when you used informal negative sanctions. To what act of deviance were you responding? How did your actions affect the deviant person or persons? How did your reaction help maintain social control?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13352

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13353

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13354

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13355

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13356

Glossary

deviance:
a violation of contextual, cultural, or social norms

formal sanctions:
sanctions that are officially recognized and enforced

informal sanctions:
sanctions that occur in face-to-face interactions

negative sanctions:
punishments for violating norms

positive sanctions:
rewards given for conforming to norms

sanctions:
the means of enforcing rules

social control:

the regulation and enforcement of norms

social order:
an arrangement of practices and behaviors on which society's members base their daily lives

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Scott Barr for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Deviance: Crash Course Sociology #18. **Authored by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGq9zW9w3Fw&index=19&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Deviance and Control. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:zvIfM3pB@5/Deviance-and-Control. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 9.3: Deviance and Control is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.4: Introduction to Theories of Social Deviance

What you'll learn to do: contrast the varying theoretical perspectives on deviance



Since the early days of sociology, scholars have developed theories that attempt to explain what deviance and crime mean to society. These theories can be grouped according to the three major sociological paradigms: functionalism, symbolic interactionism, and conflict theory. Let's revisit marijuana legalization from a theoretical perspective. How can sociological theories help explain the trends and corresponding human behavior and group patterns we discussed in the first section?

Conflict theorists would focus their attention on power and inequality. Who has the power to criminalize, decriminalize, and legalize marijuana use? How has the criminalization of marijuana disproportionately affected minorities and the poor?

Functionalist theorists might examine how the legalization of marijuana might benefit state economies and also how this issue has served to increase social solidarity and redefine social norms.

Interactionist theorists would likely focus on the perceptions of marijuana use and the symbolic nature of the marijuana leaf over time. Labeling is also of interest to interactionists–*who* gets labeled (the *by whom* is examined by conflict theorists).

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Theories of Social Deviance. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction and objectives, modified from Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- **Authored by**: Get Budding. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/Bu6BSErSL_M. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 9.4: Introduction to Theories of Social Deviance is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.5: Functionalism and Deviance

Learning Outcomes

- Explain functionalist views on deviance



Figure 1. Functionalists believe that deviance plays an important role in society and can be used to challenge people's views. Protesters, such as these PETA members, often use this method to draw attention to their cause. (Photo courtesy of David Shankbone/flickr)

Functionalism

Sociologists who follow the functionalist approach are concerned with the way the different elements of a society contribute to the whole. They view deviance as a key component of a functioning society. Social disorganization theory, strain theory, and social control theory represent the main functionalist perspectives on deviance in society.

Émile Durkheim: The Essential Nature of Deviance

Émile Durkheim believed that deviance is a necessary part of a successful society and that it serves three functions: 1) it clarifies norms and increases conformity, 2) it strengthens social bonds among the people reacting to the deviant, and 3) it can help lead to positive social change and challenges to people's present views (1893).

For instance, segregation laws remained intact for nearly a century in the United States after slavery was abolished. Those who violated these norms reinforced their legitimacy for those in power, which often led to even harsher laws and sanctions, which in turn led to increased conformity or adherence to the norms. Norm violators were often severely punished, even lynched, which led to increased social bonds among racist whites. On the other hand, when norm violations became more widespread and collective, as a result of various historical and cultural factors (i.e. war in Vietnam, other social movements, televised police brutality, etc.), this cycle of continued deviance eventually led to social and legal change. A key example of this dynamic is the Civil Rights Movement, which corrected many historical wrongs by continuously challenging the dominant society's values and norms.

Social Disorganization Theory

Developed by researchers at the University of Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s, **social disorganization theory** asserts that crime is most likely to occur in communities with weak social ties and the absence of social control. Several sociologists at the time, who viewed the city as a laboratory for study, were dubbed "The Chicago School." These sociologists included Robert Park and Ernest Burgess (1916 and 1925) became the first to utilize an ecological approach, which examined society much as an ecologist examines an organism and their environment—by paying attention to the social, institutional, and cultural contexts of people-environment relations. They studied deviance by examining rapid changes to the neighborhoods, caused by population increases, immigration, and urbanization in Chicago. Park, a journalist and sociologist, suggested a program to increase the number of playgrounds to counteract social disorganization and juvenile delinquency.

Proponents of social disorganization theory believe that individuals who grow up in impoverished areas are more likely to participate in deviant or criminal behaviors than an individual from a wealthy neighborhood with a good school system and families who are involved positively in the community. Social disorganization theory points to broad social factors as the cause of deviance. A person isn't born a criminal but becomes one over time, often based on factors in his or her social environment.

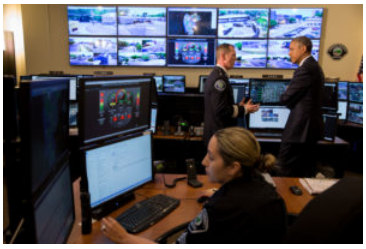




Figure 2. Camden, New Jersey. (Photo courtesy of Apollo 1758/Wikimedia Commons)

Although this theory sounds like common sense, critics argue that it places blame on the neighborhoods themselves, which opens the door for politicians to point out social issues like drug use, disrupted families, and violence as endemic to low-income neighborhoods, thus allowing them to circumvent the larger structural issues that give rise to these predicaments.

Let's examine Camden, New Jersey, once one of America's deadliest cities. As a city of 74,000, there were 58 homicide victims in 1995, and 67 in 2012 (a rate of about 87 murders per 100,000 residents), which ranked Camden fifth nationwide. In 2017, there were 22 homicides [1].



President Barack Obama, with Camden County Metro Police Chief John Scott Thomson, takes a tour of the Camden County Police Headquarters.

In 2013, the Camden Police Department was disbanded, reimagined, and renamed the Camden County Police Department, with fewer officers, lower pay—and a strategic shift toward "community policing" (Holder, 2018). The police chief, who has been on the Camden force for over 25 years, says "Nothing stops a bullet like a job" and stresses the importance of increasing access to social services, economic opportunities, and good public schools. In his emphasis on multiple causal factors, he sounds like a functionalist!

By strengthening essential social institutions in communities (a macro approach) and working to increase citizen-police relations, that is, how police see themselves and how residents view police (a micro intervention), Camden provides us an example of how sociological theories can help explain deviance but also inform social policy.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13357

Strain Theory/Anomie Theory of Deviance

In 1938 Robert Merton expanded on Durkheim's idea that deviance is an inherent part of a functioning society by developing **strain theory** (also called the **anomie theory of deviance**), which notes that access to the means of achieving socially acceptable goals plays a part in determining whether a person conforms and accepts these goals or rebels and rejects them. For example, from birth we're encouraged to achieve the American Dream of financial success. A woman who attends business school, receives her MBA, and goes on to make a million-dollar income as CEO of a company is said to be a success. However, not everyone in our society stands on equal footing. A person may have the socially acceptable goal of financial success but lack a socially acceptable way to reach that goal. Much more common might be the young person who wants financial security and success but attends a failing school and is not able to attend college, does not have connections in business or finance, and might not have any CEOs in their immediate circle. The young person might be attracted to other types of entrepreneurial activities outside of the corporate world that are more accessible, such as selling stolen goods and/or drugs, gambling, and/or other types of street-level commerce. Another path might be to embezzle from his employer. These types of crimes will be discussed later, but this is one example of the contrast between "crime in the streets" and "crime in the suites."

Merton defined five ways people respond to this gap between having a socially accepted goal and having no socially accepted way to pursue it.

1. *Conformity*: Those who conform choose not to deviate. Conformists pursue their goals to the extent that they can through socially accepted means. This is the most common option.
2. *Innovation*: Innovators pursue goals they cannot reach through legitimate means by instead using criminal or deviant means.

3. *Ritualism*: People who ritualize lower their goals until they can reach them through socially acceptable ways. These members of society focus on conformity rather than pursuing an unrealistic dream.
4. *Retreatism*: Others retreat and reject society's goals and means. For example, some beggars and street people have withdrawn from society's normative goal of financial success.
5. *Rebellion*: A handful of people rebel and replace a society's goals and means with their own. Terrorists or freedom fighters look to overthrow a society's goals through socially unacceptable means.

In Table 1, you can see how conformists accept societal goals and means, while innovators, ritualists, retreatists, and rebels reject either societal goals or societal means, or both.

Table 1. Strain Theory.

	Societal Goals	Societal Means	Examples
Conformists	Accept	Accept	college students, professionals who strive to do their best and excel at their job
Innovators	Reject	Reject	drug dealers, embezzlers, gamblers
Ritualists	Reject	Accept	workers who "punch the clock"
Retreatists	Reject	Accept	homeless, drug addicted
Rebels	Reject/ Replace	Reject/ Replace	radicals, revolutionaries, terrorists

Watch It

Watch the selected first four minutes of this video to learn about how structural functionalists think about deviance. You'll review how Durkheim emphasized the way that deviance has its purpose in society; it helps define cultural norms, clarify moral boundaries, bring people together, and encourage social change. Merton also recognized the role that deviance plays in society, and developed strain theory to explain why some people develop deviant solutions to reach socially acceptable goals.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=230

Deviant Subcultures

During the 1950s, a group of sociologists theorized deviance as subcultural. As you recall from an earlier module about culture, a subculture is a group that operates within larger society but is distinctive in the values and norms that govern membership (formal or informal). A subculture usually exhibits some type of resistance to the existing social structure and/or social norms. Oftentimes a subcultural group is visibly, aesthetically distinctive (i.e. goths, emo, skaters, etc.).

Much of this early research was a response to a growing concern about street gangs in Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s, with notorious gangsters like Al Capone in national headlines. In 1927, Frederick Thrasher's *The Gang: A Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago* highlighted the geography of gang activity within Chicago and examined the "Poverty Belt" as an area within which gang membership would be particularly enticing. Deviant subcultures theorists also utilized The Chicago School's models and methods to study delinquency.

Albert K. Cohen (1955) stated that "the crucial condition for the emergence of new cultural forms is the existence, *in effective interaction with one another, of a number of actors with similar problems of adjustment*" (no emphasis added, pp. 12 and 59). Cohen (1955) observed that a "sympathetic moral climate" within which actors' perception of norms and shared norms is a result of the subculture's benefit from those norms, which are a "repudiation of the middle class standards." Walter Miller (1958) broadened Cohen's framework by looking beyond the "delinquent boys" and using "over eight thousand pages of direct and observational data" in a "slum" district of Chicago. He lists the following six "focal concerns of lower-class culture": trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate, and autonomy.

This scholarship from the 1950s reflected a growing unrest in post-World War 2 America as the Cold War gained momentum, demonstrating both a fear of ideological dissent from within and a new concern with low income immigrant communities. The work was also implied a gendered exclusionary focus, negating the agency of females as potential deviant actors.

Marvin Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti published *The Subculture of Violence* in 1967, which blended criminology, psychology, and sociology in an attempt to theorize the causes of assaultive behavior and homicide. They used empirical data which showed violence as being localized among specific groups and said it "reflects differences in learning about violence as a problem-solving mechanism" (1967, p. 159). Wolfgang and Ferracuti suggest the value systems in subcultural groups, particularly inner city men, differ from central value systems and result in more violence (1967, 97).

Social Control Theory

Another functionalist theory of deviance is Travis Hirschi's (1969) **social control theory**. Similar to Comte's original question, "What holds society together?" Hirschi asked, "Why do people adhere to social norms?" In other words, why *aren't* people *more deviant*? Building from Durkheim's work on social solidarity, Hirschi looked at bonds to conventional social institutions as reasons people feel connected to society and thereby less likely to be deviant. He identified four types of bonds: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

Let's apply these types of bonds to an example. Say a high school student is trying to decide whether to skip a class to go to the mall with friends. He or she might consider the following:

- *Attachment*: how their teacher and school administration would think about them if they skipped school and/or how their parent/s' opinion would be affected ("If my parents find out they will be very disappointed").
- *Commitment*: how much they value their education and what they would miss ("I like my American history class and would miss the unit on school desegregation").
- *Involvement*: how much time has been invested in school up until this point ("Why spoil a "clean record" by skipping one class?").
- *Belief*: how the school's attendance policy reflects societal beliefs about the importance of education ("I want to go to college and know that attending class will be important to my success and future job prospects").

We can also imagine more serious forms of deviance and consider how attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief might operate in other scenarios. In what ways can this theory help inform prevention strategies, especially for young people? How can we strengthen attachment and commitment, for example?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13358

Glossary

social control theory:
a theory that states social control is directly affected by the strength of social bonds and that deviance results from a feeling of disconnection from society

deviant subcultures theory:
several theories that posit poverty and other community conditions give rise to certain subcultures through which adolescents acquire values that promote deviant behavior

social disorganization theory:
a theory that asserts crime occurs in communities with weak social ties and the absence of social control

strain theory:
a theory that addresses the relationship between having socially acceptable goals and having socially acceptable means to reach those goals

---

1. Holder, S. 2018. What happened to crime in Camden? City Lab. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Family dinner. **Authored by**: skeeze. **Provided by**: pixabay. **Located at**: https://pixabay.com/en/family-eating-at-the-table-dining-619142/. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Deviance. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:OY7OWJCz@6/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Deviance. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- **Authored by**: Pete Souza. **Provided by**: White House Archives. **Located at**: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2015/05/18/why-president-obama-taking-steps-demilitarize-local-police-forces. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/us/

All rights reserved content

- Theory & Deviance: Crash Course Sociology #19. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06IS_X7hWWI&index=20&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 9.5: Functionalism and Deviance is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.6: Conflict Theory and Deviance

Learning Outcomes

- Explain how conflict theorists understand deviance

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory looks to social and economic factors as the causes of crime and deviance. Unlike functionalists, conflict theorists don't see these factors as positive functions of society. They see them as evidence of inequality in the system. They also challenge social disorganization theory and control theory and argue that both ignore racial and socioeconomic issues and oversimplify social trends (Akers 1991). Conflict theorists also look for answers to the correlation of gender and race with wealth and crime.

Karl Marx: An Unequal System

Conflict theory was greatly influenced by the work of 19th-century German philosopher, economist, and social scientist Karl Marx. Marx believed that the general population was divided into two groups. He labeled the wealthy, who controlled the means of production and business, the *bourgeoisie*. He labeled the workers who depended on the bourgeoisie for employment and survival the *proletariat*. Marx believed that the bourgeoisie centralized their power and influence through government, laws, and other authority agencies in order to maintain and expand their positions of power in society. Thus, Marx viewed the laws as instruments of oppression for the proletariat that are written and enforced to maintain the economic status quo and to protect the interests of the ruling class. Though Marx spoke little of deviance, he wrote a great deal about laws and developed a legal theory that created the foundation for conflict theorists.

C. Wright Mills: The Power Elite

In his book *The Power Elite* (1956), sociologist C. Wright Mills described the existence of what he dubbed the **power elite**, a small group of wealthy and influential people at the top of society who disproportionately control power and resources. Wealthy executives, politicians, celebrities, and military leaders often have access to national and international power, and in some cases, their decisions affect everyone in society. Because of this, the rules of society are stacked in favor of a privileged few who then manipulate them to maintain their positions. It is these people who decide what is criminal and what is not, and the effects are often felt most by those who have little power. Mills' theories explain why celebrities such as Chris Brown and Paris Hilton, or once-powerful politicians such as Eliot Spitzer and Tom DeLay, can commit crimes and suffer little or no legal retribution.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13359

Crime, Social Class, and Race

While crime is often associated with the underprivileged, crimes committed by the wealthy and powerful remain an under-punished and costly problem within society. The American Sociological Association's 1939 President Edwin Sutherland coined the term "white-collar crime" in his address "White Collar Criminality," which was one of the few such addresses to make front-page news. [1] He defined the term as "crime committed by a person of respectability and high social status in the course of his occupation." Typically, these are "nonviolent crimes committed in commercial situations for financial gain" and according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), white-collar crime is estimated to cost the United States more than $300 billion annually. [2] When former advisor and financier Bernie Madoff was arrested in 2008, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission reported that the estimated losses of his financial Ponzi scheme fraud were close to $50 billion (SEC 2009). In contrast, property crimes, which include burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson, in 2015 resulted in losses estimated at $14.3 billion (FBI 2015).

Conflict theorists also quickly point out that "crime in the suites" is often committed by white men, whereas "crime in the streets" disproportionately affects communities of color as both perpetrators and victims of property crimes. Property crimes have fallen dramatically over the past twenty years (see chart below); it is also important to keep in mind that only 36 percent of property crimes are reported to police[3]

Crime rates have fallen since the early 1990s

Trends in violent crime and property crime, 1993-2016

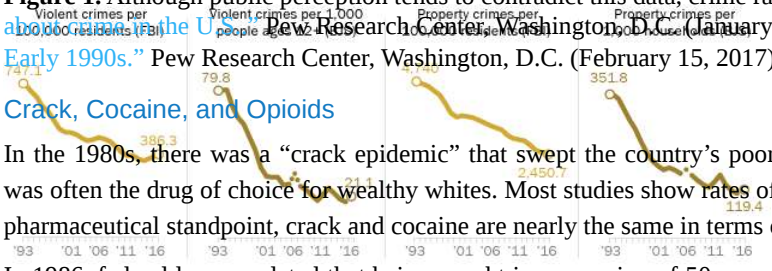


Figure 1. Although public perception tends to contradict this data, crime rates have fallen since the early 1990s. "5 facts about crime in the U.S." Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (January 30, 2018). "Crime Rates Have Fallen since the Early 1990s." Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (February 15, 2017).

Crack, Cocaine, and Opioids

In the 1980s, there was a "crack epidemic" that swept the country's poorest urban communities. Its pricier counterpart, cocaine, was often the drug of choice for wealthy whites. Most studies show rates of drug use among whites and blacks were similar. From a pharmaceutical standpoint, crack and cocaine are nearly the same in terms of effect.

In 1986, federal law mandated that being caught in possession of 50 grams of crack was punishable by a ten-year prison sentence. An equivalent prison sentence for cocaine possession, however, required possession of 5,000 grams. In other words, the sentencing disparity was 1 to 100 (New York Times Editorial Staff 2011). This inequality in the severity of punishment for crack versus cocaine paralleled the class and race of the respective users.

A conflict theorist would note that those in society who hold the power make the laws concerning crime that benefit their own interests, while the powerless classes who lack the resources to make such decisions suffer the consequences. Thus, since powder cocaine use was associated with wealthy whites, the laws were enacted to be lenient on powder cocaine but extremely punitive toward crack-cocaine. The crack-cocaine punishment disparity remained until 2010, when President Obama signed the Fair Sentencing Act, which decreased the disparity to 1 to 18 (The Sentencing Project 2010).

Today, we are in the midst of an "opioid epidemic." Unlike the 1980s crack epidemic, the opioid epidemic is considered a public health crisis and has widespread support for prevention and treatment programs. Since disproportionate numbers of drug overdose deaths have been among white Americans, conflict theorists would suggest that those in power are more likely to advocate policy changes to help these drug addicts rather than punish them. Why are whites more likely to overdose? The answer, ironically, might be racism; studies show that doctors are more reluctant to prescribe painkillers to minorities because they mistakenly believe minority patients feel less pain and/or are more likely to misuse or sell the prescribed drugs[4]

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=232

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13360

Feminist Theory and Deviance

Women who are regarded as criminally deviant are often seen as being **doubly deviant**. They have broken the laws but they have also violated gender norms governing appropriate female behavior, whereas men's criminal behavior is seen as consistent with their ostensibly aggressive, self-assertive character. This double standard also explains the tendency to *medicalize* women's deviance, to see it as the product of physiological or psychiatric pathology. For example, in the late 19th century, kleptomania was a diagnosis used in legal defenses that linked an extreme desire for department store commodities with various forms of female physiological or psychiatric illness. The fact that "good" middle- and upper-class women, who were at that time coincidentally beginning to experience the benefits of independence from men, would turn to stealing in department stores to obtain the new feminine consumer items on display there, could not be explained without resorting to diagnosing the activity as an illness of the "weaker" sex (Kramar 2011).

Feminist analysis focuses on the way gender inequality influences the opportunities to commit crime and the definition, detection, and prosecution of crime. In part the gender difference revolves around patriarchal attitudes toward women and the disregard for matters considered to be of a private or domestic nature.

For example, until 1969, abortion was illegal in Canada, meaning that hundreds of women died or were injured each year when they received illegal abortions (McLaren and McLaren 1997). It was not until the Canadian Supreme Court ruling in 1988 that struck down the law that it was acknowledged that women are capable of making their own choice, in consultation with a doctor, about the procedure. The U.S. Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) decided in a 7-2 decision that states cannot unduly restrict abortions. Since then, a plethora of restrictions including waiting periods, restrictions on public funding for abortions, mandated counseling, parental involvement for minors, and others have made it exceedingly difficult. The State of Mississippi, for example,

has one abortion clinic in the state, whereas California has 152 clinics as of 2014. Read about other differences between the most restrictive state, Mississippi, and the least restrictive state, California.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an African-American woman is almost five times as likely to have an abortion than a white woman, and a Latina more than twice as likely.[5]

Abortion has been declining with approximately 1.1 million abortions performed in 2011, at a rate of 16.9 abortions for every 1,000 women of childbearing age, down from a peak of 29.3 per 1,000 in 1981 (Dutton 2014). Low-income women in all racial groups are more likely to experience unintended pregnancies, largely due to a lack of health insurance and access to contraception. The most effective and long-term contraception, an intrauterine device or IUD, costs between $500-1000 and office visit fees are in addition to the cost of the IUD itself; community health centers and Medicaid typically do not cover 100% of the costs, but often IUDs are covered by private insurance.

Regulating women's bodies is nothing new, particularly when it comes to minority women in the U.S. White slaveowners raped black female slaves with impunity and then increased their "property" with the offspring. Nearly one-third of women of child-bearing age in Puerto Rico were sterilized between 1930 and 1970, as funded by the U.S. Department of Health, Welfare, and Funding to mitigate high levels of unemployment and poverty. Although this was "voluntary," women were often pressured to undergo sterilization after giving birth[6]

In addition to examining the ways in which the state regulates women's bodies, feminist theorists also look at violent crimes against women that are sexual in nature. In the #metoo era, women from many different groups (i.e. actors, gymnasts, students) have come forward to say that they were sexually harassed and/or sexually assaulted by a boss or supervisor, a team doctor, a university gynecologist, or other co-workers. The broadcast media and social media have been rife with stories of #metoo, which feminists are examining from a macrosociological approach (power and structures of power) and a microsociological approach (hashtag movement, personal identification with others who have similar experiences).

Sexual Assault in Canada: A Case Study

Until the 1970s, two major types of criminal deviance were largely ignored or were difficult to prosecute as crimes: sexual assault and spousal assault. Through the 1970s, women worked to change the criminal justice system and establish rape crisis centers and battered women's shelters, bringing attention to domestic violence. In 1983 the Criminal Code was amended to replace the crimes of rape and indecent assault with a three-tier structure of sexual assault (ranging from unwanted sexual touching that violates the integrity of the victim to sexual assault with a weapon or threats or causing bodily harm to aggravated sexual assault that results in wounding, maiming, disfiguring, or endangering the life of the victim) (Kong et al. 2003). Johnson (1996) reported that in the mid-1990s, when violence against women began to be surveyed systematically in Canada, 51 percent of Canadian women had been subject to at least one sexual or physical assault since the age of 16.

The goal of the amendments was to emphasize that sexual assault is an act of violence, not a sexual act. Previously, rape had been defined as an act that involved penetration and was perpetrated against a woman who was not the wife of the accused. This had excluded spousal sexual assault as a crime and had also exposed women to **secondary victimization** by the criminal justice system when they tried to bring charges. Secondary victimization occurs when the women's own sexual history and her willingness to consent are questioned in the process of laying charges and reaching a conviction, which as feminists pointed out, increased victims' reluctance to press charges.

In particular feminists challenged the **twin myths of rape** that were often the subtext of criminal justice proceedings presided over largely by men (Kramar 2011). The first myth is that women are untrustworthy and tend to lie about assault out of malice toward men, as a way of getting back at them for personal grievances. The second myth, is that women will say "no" to sexual relations when they really mean "yes." Typical of these types of issues was the judge's comment in a Manitoba Court of Appeals case in which a man pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting his twelve- or thirteen-year-old babysitter:

The girl, of course, could not consent in the legal sense, but nonetheless was a willing participant. She was apparently more sophisticated than many her age and was performing many household tasks including babysitting the accused's children. The accused and his wife were somewhat estranged (cited in Kramar 2011).

Because the girl was willing to perform household chores in place of the man's estranged wife, the judge assumed she was also willing to engage in sexual relations. In order to address this type of issue, feminists successfully pressed the Supreme Court to

deliver rulings that restricted a defense attorney's access to a victim's medical and counselling records, and rules of evidence were changed to prevent a woman's past sexual history from being used against her. Consent to sexual intercourse was redefined as what a woman actually says or does, not what the man believes to be signalling consent. Feminists also argued that spousal assault was a key component of patriarchal power. Typically it was hidden in the household and largely regarded as a private, domestic matter in which police were reluctant to get involved.

Interestingly, women and men report similar rates of spousal violence—in 2009, 6 percent had experienced spousal violence in the previous five years—but women are more likely to experience more severe forms of violence including multiple victimizations and violence leading to physical injury (Sinha 2013). In order to empower women, feminists pressed lawmakers to develop zero-tolerance policies that would support aggressive policing and prosecution of offenders. These policies oblige police to pursue charges in cases of domestic violence when a complaint is made, whether or not the victim wishes to press charges (Kramar 2011).

In 2009, 84 percent of violent spousal incidents reported by women to police resulted in charges being pursued. However, according to victimization surveys only 30 percent of actual incidents were reported to police. The majority of women who did not report incidents to the police stated that they either dealt with them in another way, felt they were a private matter, or did not think the incidents were important enough to report. A significant proportion, however, did not want anyone to find out (44 percent), did not want their spouse to be arrested (40 percent), or were too afraid of their spouse (19 percent) (Sinha 2013).

Watch It

Watch the selected clip from this video to examine how conflict theorists think about deviance.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=232

Think It Over

- Pick a famous politician, business leader, or celebrity who has been arrested recently. What crime did he or she allegedly commit? Who was the victim? Explain his or her actions from the point of view of one of the major sociological paradigms. What factors best explain how this person might be punished if convicted of the crime?
- In what ways do race and class intersect when theorizing deviance from a conflict perspective?

Glossary

conflict theory:
a theory that examines social and economic factors as the causes of criminal deviance

doubly deviant:
a term used to refer to females who have broken the law and gender norms about appropriate female behavior

power elite:
a small group of wealthy and influential people at the top of society who hold the power and resources

secondary victimization:
occurs when the women's own sexual history and her willingness to consent are questioned in the process of laying charges and reaching a conviction

twin myths of rape:
the first myth is that women are untrustworthy and tend to lie about assault out of malice toward men, as a way of getting back at them for personal grievances and the second myth is that women will say "no" to sexual relations when they really mean "yes"

1. Edwin H. Sutherland, ASA Presidents, ASA. http://www.asanet.org/edwin-h-sutherland↵
2. "White-collar crime." Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School. https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/white-collar_crime. ↵

3. Gramlich, J. "Five facts about crime," Pew Research Center.(2018) https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/10/17/facts-about-crime-in-the-u-s/ ↵
4. Lopez, G. (2016). Why are black Americans less affected," Vox. https://www.vox.com/2016/1/25/10826560/opioid-epidemic-race-black↵
5. Dutton, Z. (2014). Abortion's racial gap. https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/09/abortions-racial-gap/380251/↵
6. Andrews, K. (2017) The dark history of latina sterilization. https://www.panoramas.pitt.edu/health-and-society/dark-history-forced-sterilization-latina-women. ↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Deviance. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:OY7OWJCz@6/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Deviance. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- William Little. **Provided by**: BC Open Textbooks. **Located at**: https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter7-deviance-crime-and-social-control/. **Project**: Introduction to Sociology. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

All rights reserved content

- Pew Research Data, 5 facts about crime in the U.S.. **Authored by**: John Gramlich. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/30/5-facts-about-crime-in-the-u-s/. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- Theory & Deviance: Crash Course Sociology #19. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06IS_X7hWWI&index=20&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 9.6: Conflict Theory and Deviance is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.7: Symbolic Interactionism and Deviance

Learning Outcomes

- Describe and differentiate between symbolic interactionists' approach to deviance

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical approach that can be used to explain how societies and/or social groups come to view behaviors as deviant or conventional. Labeling theory and differential association theory fall within the realm of symbolic interactionism.

Labeling Theory

Although all of us violate norms from time to time, few people would consider themselves deviant. Those who do, however, have often been labeled "deviant" by society and have gradually come to believe it themselves. **Labeling theory** examines the ascribing of a deviant behavior to another person by members of society. Thus, what is considered deviant is determined not so much by the behaviors themselves or the people who commit them, but by the reactions of others to these behaviors. As a result, what is considered deviant changes over time and can vary significantly across cultures.

Watch It

This video explains labeling theory and gives an example of a cancer patient who is interested in using medical marijuana. Depending on where she lives, her behavior may be labeled as deviant. And depending on her experience, she may begin to think of herself differently after repeated deviance, resulting in secondary deviance or a change in her master status.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=234

Sociologist Edwin Lemert expanded on the concepts of labeling theory and identified two types of deviance that affect identity formation. **Primary deviance** is a violation of norms that does not result in any long-term effects on the individual's self-image or interactions with others. Speeding is a deviant act, but receiving a speeding ticket generally does not make others view you as a bad person, nor does it alter your own self-concept. Individuals who engage in primary deviance still maintain a feeling of belonging in society and are likely to continue to conform to norms in the future.

Sometimes, in more extreme cases, primary deviance can morph into secondary deviance. **Secondary deviance** occurs when a person's self-concept and behavior begin to change after his or her actions are labeled as deviant by members of society. The person may begin to take on and fulfill the role of a "deviant" as an act of rebellion against the society that has labeled that individual as such. For example, consider a high school student who often cuts class and gets into fights. The student is reprimanded frequently by teachers and school staff, and soon enough, he develops a reputation as a "troublemaker." As a result, the student starts acting out even more and breaking more rules; he has adopted the "troublemaker" label and embraced this deviant identity. Secondary deviance can be so strong that it bestows a **master status** on an individual. A master status is a label that describes the chief characteristic of an individual. Some people see themselves primarily as doctors, artists, or grandfathers. Others see themselves as beggars, convicts, or addicts.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13361

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13362

Differential Association Theory

One core premise of culture and socialization is that individuals *learn* the values and norms of a given culture and that this learning process is lifelong. This is particularly helpful when we think about deviance because differential association theorists apply this core premise to deviance. How many of you have committed a deviant act with someone else? A sibling? A friend? Consider something like underage drinking, which often occurs with peers and/or with older siblings. By the time many students arrive on college campuses (still underage), underage drinking has become normalized so that is seems "everyone" is doing it.

In criminology, **differential association** is a theory developed by Edwin Sutherland (1883–1950) proposing that through interaction with others, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques, and motives for criminal behavior. Differential association theory is the most talked-about of the learning theories of deviance. This theory focuses on *how* individuals learn to become criminals, but it does not concern itself with *why* they become criminals.

Differential association predicts that an individual will choose the criminal path when the balance of definitions for law-breaking exceeds those for law-abiding. This tendency will be reinforced if social association provides active people in the person's life. The earlier in life an individual comes under the influence high status people within a group, the more likely the individual is to follow in their footsteps. This does not deny that there may be practical motives for crime. If a person is hungry but has no money, there is a temptation to steal. But the use of "needs" and "values" is equivocal. To some extent, both non-criminal and criminal individuals are motivated by the need for money and social gain.

Sutherland's Nine Points

The principles of Sutherland's theory of differential association can be summarized into nine key points.

1. Criminal behavior is learned.
2. Criminal behavior is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication.
3. The principal part of the learning of criminal behavior occurs within intimate personal groups.
4. When criminal behavior is learned, the learning includes techniques of committing the crime (which are sometimes very complicated, sometimes simple) and the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes.
5. The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal codes as favorable or unfavorable.
6. A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of the law.
7. Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity.
8. The process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning.
9. While criminal behavior is an expression of general needs and values, it is not explained by those needs and values, since non-criminal behavior is an expression of the same needs and values.



Figure 1. Differential association theory predicts that an individual will choose the criminal path when the balance of definitions for law-breaking exceeds those for law-abiding.

An important quality of differential association theory is the frequency and intensity of interaction. The amount of time that a person is exposed to a particular definition and at what point the interaction began are both crucial for explaining criminal activity. The process of learning criminal behavior is really not any different from the process involved in learning any other type of behavior. Sutherland maintains that there is no unique learning process associated with acquiring non-normative ways of behaving.

One very unique aspect of this theory is that it works to explain more than just juvenile delinquency and crime committed by lower class individuals. Since crime is understood to be learned behavior, the theory is also applicable to white-collar, corporate, and organized crime.

One critique leveled against differential association stems from the idea that people can be independent, rational actors and individually motivated. This notion of one being a criminal based on his or her environment is problematic—the theory does not

take into account personality traits that might affect a person's susceptibility to these environmental influences.

The Right to Vote



Figure 2. Should a former felony conviction permanently strip a U.S. citizen of the right to vote? (Photo courtesy of Joshin Yamada/flickr.

Before she lost her job as an administrative assistant, Leola Strickland postdated and mailed a handful of checks for amounts ranging from $90 to $500. By the time she was able to find a new job, the checks had bounced, and she was convicted of fraud under Mississippi law. Strickland pleaded guilty to a felony charge and repaid her debts; in return, she was spared from serving prison time.

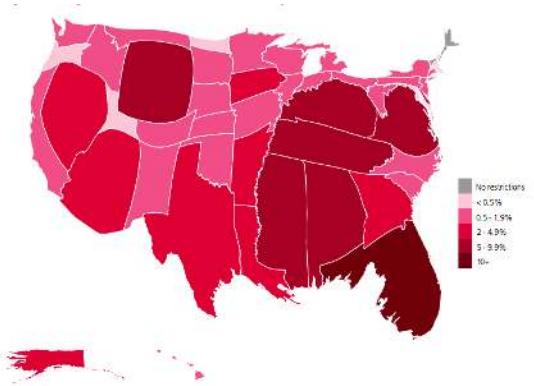


Figure 3. Cartogram of Total Disenfranchisement Rates by State, 2016. This Cartogram adjusts the size of the state to represent the number of persons disenfranchised in each state. You can see the the southeastern states have disproportionately high numbers of disenfranchised voters. Image from "6 million lost voters", https://www.sentencingproject.org/pu...hisement-2016/.

Strickland appeared in court in 2001. More than ten years later, she is still feeling the sting of her sentencing. Why? Because Mississippi is one of twelve states in the United States that bans convicted felons from voting (ProCon 2011).

To Strickland, who said she had always voted, the news came as a great shock. She isn't alone. As of 2016, an estimated 6.1 million people are disenfranchised due to a felony conviction which equates to approximately 2.5 percent of the total U.S. voting age population or 1 in every 40 adults [1] These individuals include inmates, parolees, probationers, and even people who have never been jailed, such as Leola Strickland.

While 1 in 40 voting age adults is disenfranchised, when we begin to break it down by racial and ethnic groups the picture becomes much more stark, as 1 in 13 African Americans are disenfranchised. Since felon disenfranchisement is a state-by-state law, African American disenfranchisement rates in Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia now exceed 20 percent of the adult voting age population (Uggen, Larson, & Shannon 2016).

6 Million Lost Voters: State-Level Estimates of Felony Disenfranchisement, 2016 Christopher Uggen, Ryan Larson, and Sarah Shannon October 2016

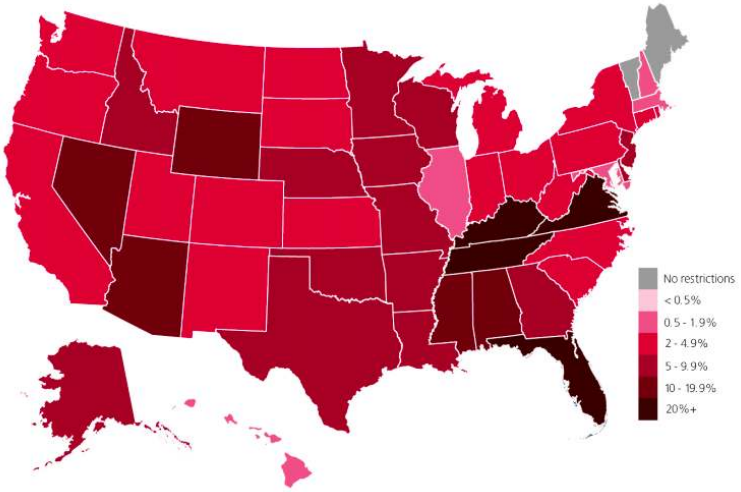


Figure 4.African American Felony Disenfranchisement Rates, 2016. African American disenfranchisement numbers are high in many states, but in Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, over 20% of the African American voting population is disenfranchised. Image from "6 million lost voters", https://www.sentencingproject.org/pu...hisement-2016/.

With two 21st century elections (2000 and 2016) in which the candidate with the most votes did not win (Al Gore in 2000 and Hillary Clinton in 2016), one of which led to an official recount (2000 Election), there has been increased pressure for states with prohibitive voting measures to examine them. Particularly in the State of Florida, a swing state, in which nearly 1.5 million individuals are currently disenfranchised post-sentence (Uggen, Larson & Shannon 2016). On January 23, 2018 Floridians for a Fair Democracy garnered 766,200 signatures to get an amendment on the 2018 ballot that would give the ability to vote back to Floridians with felony convictions that have completed their sentences. To see what happened track the results at the Brennan Center for Justice, which includes state by state updates on disenfranchisement.

Watch It

Watch the selected clip from this video to review the main theories held by symbolic interactionists to explain deviance.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=234

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13363

Think It Over

- Is it fair to deny citizens the right to vote? What factors are important? Should this be a federal issue or a state issue? Using your sociological imagination, what other states' rights issues have become federal or constitutional issues and why?

Glossary

differential association theory:
a theory that states individuals learn deviant behavior from those close to them who provide models of and opportunities for deviance

labeling theory:
the idea that the ascribing of a deviant behavior to another person by members of society affects how a person self-identifies and behaves; related to self-fulfilling prophecy

master status:

a label that describes the chief characteristic of an individual

primary deviance:
a violation of norms that does not result in any long-term effects on the individual's self-image or interactions with others

secondary deviance:
deviance that occurs when a person's self-concept and behavior begin to change after his or her actions are labeled as deviant by members of society

1. Uggen, C. Larson, R. and S. Shannon. (2016). 6 million lost voters. https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/6-million-lost-voters-state-level-estimates-felony-disenfranchisement-2016/↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Theory & Deviance: Crash Course Sociology #19. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06IS_X7hWWI&index=20&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Deviance. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:OY7OWJCz@6/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Deviance. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Criminal Silhouette. **Provided by**: Wikimedia. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Criminal_Silhouette_L.svg. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*

All rights reserved content

- labeling theory video. **Authored by**: Sociology Live!. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHSvZZ1pnm0. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- 6 million lost voters images. **Authored by**: Uggen, C. Larson, R. and S. Shannon. (2016). . **Located at**: https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/6-million-lost-voters-state-level-estimates-felony-disenfranchisement-2016. **Project**: The Sentencing Project. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 9.7: Symbolic Interactionism and Deviance is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.8: Reviewing Theories on Deviance

Learning Outcomes

- Differentiate between functionalist, conflict theorist, and symbolic interactionist explanations for deviance and crime

Summary of Theoretical Explanations of Deviance

The three major sociological paradigms offer different explanations for the motivation behind deviance and crime. Functionalists point out that deviance is a social necessity since it reinforces norms by reminding people of the consequences of violating them. Violating norms can open society's eyes to injustice in the system.

Conflict theorists argue that crime stems from a system of inequality that keeps those with power at the top and those without power at the bottom.

Symbolic interactionists focus attention on the socially constructed nature of the labels related to deviance. Crime and deviance are learned from the environment and enforced or discouraged by those around us.

Review each of the main theories associated with each perspective below.

Functionalism	**Associated Theorist**	**Deviance arises from:**
Strain Theory	Robert Merton	A lack of ways to reach socially accepted goals by accepted methods
Social Disorganization Theory	University of Chicago researchers	Weak social ties and a lack of social control; society has lost the ability to enforce norms with some groups
Social Control Theory	Travis Hirschi	Deviance results from a feeling of disconnection from society; social control is directly affected by the strength of social bonds
Conflict Theory	**Associated Theorist**	**Deviance arises from:**
Unequal System	Karl Marx	Inequalities in wealth and power that arise from the economic system
Power Elite	C. Wright Mills	Ability of those in power to define deviance in ways that maintain the status quo
Symbolic Interactionism	**Associated Theorist**	**Deviance arises from:**
Labeling Theory	Edwin Lemert	The reactions of others, particularly those in power who are able to determine labels
Differential Association Theory	Edwin Sutherlin	Learning and modeling deviant behavior seen in other people close to the individual

Watch It

Watch this video to review some of the major theories covered in this module. You'll examine the symbolic interactionist paradigms of differential association and labeling theory, and also the functionalist paradigm of strain theory.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=236

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13364

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13365

Think It Over

- Choose a public figure who has effected a major, controversial political and or legal change. To what extant were this person's actions or beliefs considered deviant when they first emerged? How can the process by which they were eventually accepted and became new norms be explained by applying the major sociological paradigms? What norms needed to be re-examined? Which paradigm seems most useful? Why?

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Scott Barr for Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Deviance. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:OY7OWJCz@6/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Deviance. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.

All rights reserved content

- Perspectives on Deviance: Differential Association, Labeling Theory, and Strain Theory. **Authored by**: Jeffrey Walsh. **Provided by**: Khan Academy. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSucylf4KhY. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 9.8: Reviewing Theories on Deviance is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.9: Introduction to Crime and The Law

What you'll learn to do: describe the U.S. criminal justice system and types of crimes



Sanctions (formal, informal, positive, and negative) are applied to control deviance and crime. For example, the death penalty is a formal negative sanction applied to those who commit murder in certain ways in specific states. In this section, you'll examine the organization of the U.S. criminal justice system and read about crime and punishment in the United States.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Crime and The Law. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Locked up, bar, cell and jail. **Authored by**: Matthew Ansley. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/ihl2Q5F-VYA. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 9.9: Introduction to Crime and The Law is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.10: The Criminal Justice System

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the three branches of the U.S. criminal justice system

The U.S. Criminal Justice System

A **criminal justice system** is an organization that exists to enforce a legal code. There are three branches of the U.S. criminal justice system: the police, the courts, and the corrections system.

Police

Police are a civil force in charge of enforcing laws and public order at a federal, state, or community level. No unified national police force exists in the United States, although there are federal law enforcement officers. Federal officers operate under specific government agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF); and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Federal officers can only deal with matters that are explicitly within the power of the federal government, and their field of expertise is usually narrow. A county police officer may spend time responding to emergency calls, working at the local jail, or patrolling areas as needed, whereas a federal officer would be more likely to investigate suspects in firearms trafficking or provide security for government officials.

State police have the authority to enforce statewide laws, including regulating traffic on highways. Local or county police, on the other hand, have a limited jurisdiction with authority only in the town or county in which they serve.



Figure 1. Here, Afghan National Police Crisis Response Unit members train in Surobi, Afghanistan. (Photo courtesy of isafmedia/flickr)

Courts

Once a crime has been committed and a violator has been identified by the police, the case goes to court. A **court** is a system that has the authority to make decisions based on law. 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. Judges who preside over federal courts are selected by the president with the consent of Congress.

State courts vary in their structure but generally include three levels: trial courts, appellate courts, and state supreme courts. In contrast to the large courtroom trials in TV shows, most noncriminal cases are decided by a judge without a jury present. Traffic court and small claims court are both types of trial courts that handle specific civil matters.

Criminal cases are heard by trial courts with general jurisdictions. Usually, a judge and jury are both present. It is the jury's responsibility to determine guilt and the judge's responsibility to determine the penalty, though in some states the jury may also decide the penalty. Unless a defendant is found "not guilty," any member of the prosecution or defense (whichever is the losing side) can appeal the case to a higher court. In some states, the case then goes to a special appellate court; in others it goes to the highest state court, often known as the state supreme court.



(a)



(b)

Figure 2. This county courthouse in Kansas (left) is a typical setting for a state trial court. Compare this to the courtroom of the Michigan Supreme Court (right). (Photo (a) courtesy of Ammodramus/Wikimedia Commons; Photo (b) courtesy of Steve & Christine/Wikimedia Commons)

Corrections

The **corrections system**, more commonly known as the prison system, is charged with supervising individuals who have been arrested, convicted, and sentenced for a criminal offense. At the end of 2010, approximately seven million U.S. men and women were behind bars (BJS 2011d); an estimated 6,613,500 persons were under the supervision of U.S. adult correctional systems in 2016 and the decline is due solely due to a declining probation population (the numbers of people in prison, jail, and on probation remain steady). [1].

The U.S. incarceration rate has grown considerably in the last hundred 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 (Liptak 2008b).

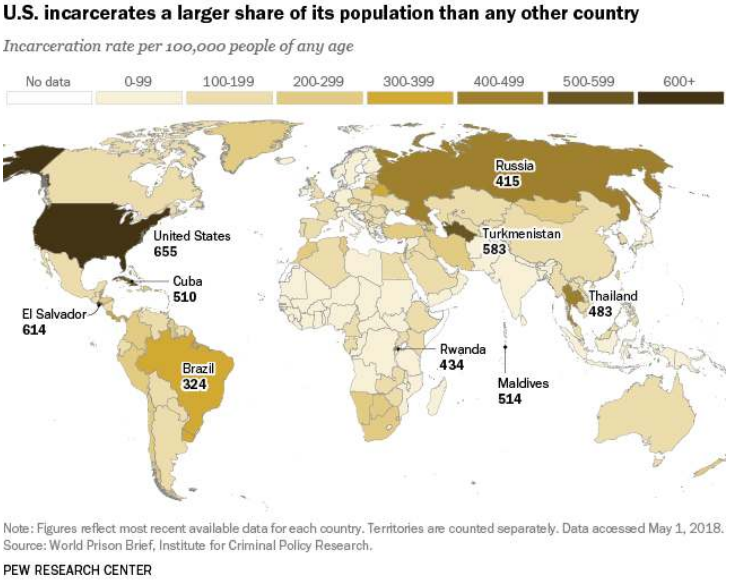


Figure 3. "America's incarceration rate is at a two-decade low." Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (May 2, 2018). "U.S. Incarcerates a Larger Share of Its Population than Any Other Country." Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (May 1, 2018).

Prison is different from jail. A jail provides temporary confinement, usually while an individual awaits trial or parole. Prisons are facilities built for individuals serving sentences of more than a year, whereas jails are small and local, prisons are large and run by either the state or the federal government. Increasingly jails operate more like larger prisons, as institutions like Los Angeles County Jail have nearly 20,000 inmates (63 percent of which are non-violent offenders) in seven facilities over 4,000 square miles. Rikers Island in New York City, which sits on a 40-acre complex with ten different facilities (including a juvenile facility), house nearly 14,000 inmates[2].

Parole refers to a temporary release from prison or jail that requires supervision and the consent of officials. Parole is different from probation, which is supervised time used as an alternative to prison. Probation and parole can both follow a period of incarceration in prison, especially if the prison sentence is shortened.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13366

Dig Deeper

Read this story about Kalief Browder, arrested at age 16 on a robbery charge, held at Rikers Island for more than 1,000 days, including two years in solitary confinement, and then released when his charges were dropped. Read about Kalief's experiences in jail and what occurred after he was released.

His story has been documented in a six-part Netflix series titled *The Kalief Browder Story*.

Watch it

Watch the following video from vlogger Hank Green about the messy situation that is mass incarceration in America.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=240

Glossary

corrections system:
the system tasked with supervising individuals who have been arrested for, convicted of, or sentenced for criminal offenses

court:
a system that has the authority to make decisions based on law

crime:
a behavior that violates official law and is punishable through formal sanctions

criminal justice system:
an organization that exists to enforce a legal code

legal codes:

codes that maintain formal social control through laws

police:
a civil force in charge of regulating laws and public order at a federal, state, or community level

---

1. Kaeble, D. & M. Cowhig (2018). Correctional Populations in the United States 2016. https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus16.pdf↵
2. Misachi, J. (updated 2017). The largest jails in the U.S. https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-largest-jails-in-the-united-states.html. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Mass Incarceration in the United States. **Authored by**: Hank Green. **Provided by**: vlogbrothers. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NaPBcUUqbew. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Crime and the Law. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:2_72NZjR/Crime-and-the-Law. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- u00a0Americau2019s incarceration rate is at a two-decade low. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: Home. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 9.10: The Criminal Justice System is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.11: Criminal Activity

Learning Outcomes

- Identify and differentiate types of crimes
- Evaluate U.S. crime statistics



Figure 1. How is a crime different from other types of deviance? (Photo courtesy of Duffman/Wikimedia Commons.)

Although deviance is a violation of social norms, it's not always punishable, and it's not necessarily bad. **Crime**, on the other hand, is a behavior that violates official law and is punishable through formal sanctions. Walking to class backward is a deviant behavior. Driving with a blood alcohol percentage over the state's limit is a crime. Like other forms of deviance, however, ambiguity exists concerning what constitutes a crime and whether all crimes are, in fact, "bad" and deserve punishment.

As you have learned, all societies have informal and formal ways of maintaining social control. Within these systems of norms, societies have **legal codes** that maintain formal social control through laws, which are rules adopted and enforced by a political authority. Those who violate these rules incur negative formal sanctions. Normally, punishments are relative to the degree of the crime and the importance to society of the value underlying the law. As we will see, however, there are other factors that influence criminal sentencing.

Types of Crimes

Not all crimes are given equal weight. Society generally socializes its members to view certain crimes as more severe than others. For example, most people would consider murdering someone to be far worse than stealing a wallet and would expect a murderer to be punished more severely than a thief. In modern U.S. society, crimes are classified as one of two types based on their severity. **Violent crimes** (also known as "crimes against a person") are based on the use of force or the threat of force. Rape, murder, and armed robbery fall under this category. **Nonviolent crimes** involve the destruction or theft of property but do not use force or the threat of force. Because of this, they are also sometimes called "property crimes." Larceny, car theft, and vandalism are all types of nonviolent crimes. If you use a crowbar to break into a car, you are committing a nonviolent crime; if you mug someone with the crowbar, you are committing a violent crime.

We discussed the differences between **street crime**, or offenses committed by ordinary people against other people or organizations, usually in public spaces, and **corporate crime**, or **white-collar crime,** which are committed by workers in a business environment. Embezzlement, insider trading, and identity theft are all types of corporate crime.

An often-debated third type of crime is **victimless crime**. Crimes are called victimless when the perpetrator is not explicitly harming another person. As opposed to battery or theft, which clearly have a victim, a crime like drinking a beer when someone is twenty years old or selling a sexual act do not result in injury to anyone other than the individual who engages in them, although they are illegal. While some claim acts like these are victimless, others argue that they actually do harm society. Prostitution may foster abuse toward women by clients or pimps. Drug use may increase the likelihood of employee absences. Such debates highlight how the deviant and criminal nature of actions develops through ongoing public discussion.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13369

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13370

Hate Crimes

The term “hate crime” refers to a “criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender’s bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity.”[1] Hate itself is not a crime—and the FBI is mindful of protecting freedom of speech and other civil liberties.

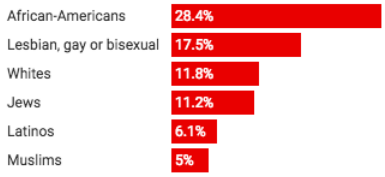


Figure 2.Hate Crime Victims in 2016. Chart: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND Source: FBI

From Roman persecution of Christians in the 1st century AD, to 6 million people, predominantly Jews, killed in the Holocaust in the 20th century, we find many examples of hate crimes. When hate crimes are state-sponsored, such as the Holocaust, the Indian Removal Act (1830), or slavery in the U.S. (1619-1865), we can see the state’s efforts to eliminate legal rights and deny citizen rights to certain people. The Nuremberg laws were enacted in Germany in 1935, which stripped Jews of any citizenship rights. In Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857), the U.S. Supreme Court decided that an African American did not qualify as a U.S. citizen and effectively said that even blacks in free territories had no rights and were still legally the property of white slaveowners. A series of laws and Supreme Court decisions in the 18th and 19th centuries rendered Native Americans landless and stripped them of citizenship rights, which allowed the U.S. government to take land from them with impunity.

In a contemporary context, reports of hate crimes have increased steadily since 2016. The FBI has been investigating hate crimes in the U.S. since World War I, but like many violent crimes, much of the available statistical data depends on how crimes are categorized and whether hate crimes are reported at all. Orlando, Florida reported just five (5) hate crimes in 2017. In 2016, a gay nightclub in Orlando, was the site of one of the deadliest mass shootings in U.S. history with 49 dead and 53 wounded, but is not included in the 2016 Florida Hate Crimes Report. Testimony by the shooter Omar Mateen’s wife seemed to affirm the fact that it was a terrorist act, but that the site was not chosen because of its LGBTQ population, but rather out of convenience and lack of security (the initial target being Disney Springs, which has far more security).[2]

A white man opened fire inside a historically Black church in Charleston, South Carolina, killing nine people in 2015. He was immediately charged with a hate crime and confessed to the shootings the morning after in hopes of starting a race war[3] (Wikipedia). South Carolina is one of a handful of states with no hate crime laws, so he was charged with nine counts of murder in South Carolina but also was tried in federal court and convicted of 33 federal hate crime and murder charges and sentenced to death.

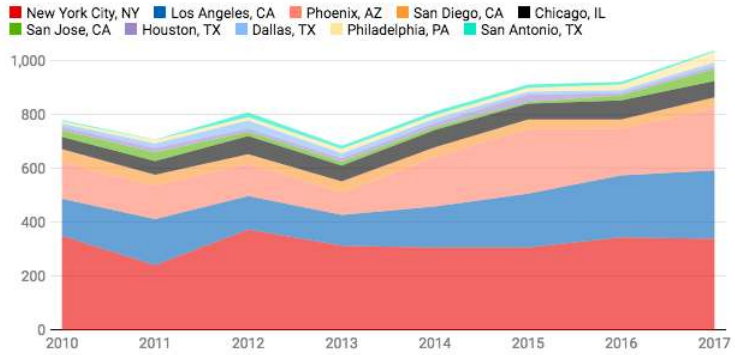


Figure 3.Hate Crimes in Top 10 U.S. Cities. Chart: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND Source: Brian Levin, James Nolan and John Reitzel

Crime Statistics

The FBI gathers data from approximately 17,000 law enforcement agencies, and the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) is the annual publication of this data (FBI 2011). The UCR has comprehensive information from police reports but fails to account for the many

crimes that go unreported, often due to victims' fear, shame, or distrust of the police. The quality of this data is also inconsistent because of differences in approaches to gathering victim data; important details are not always asked for or reported (Cantor and Lynch 2000).

Due to these issues, the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics publishes a separate self-report study known as the National Crime Victimization Report (NCVR). A **self-report study** is a collection of data gathered using voluntary response methods, such as questionnaires or telephone interviews. Self-report data are gathered each year, asking approximately 160,000 people in the United States about the frequency and types of crime they've experienced in their daily lives (BJS 2013). The NCVR reports a higher rate of crime than the UCR, likely picking up information on crimes that were experienced but never reported to the police. Age, race, gender, location, and income-level demographics are also analyzed (National Archive of Criminal Justice Data 2010).

The NCVR survey format allows people to more openly discuss their experiences and also provides a more-detailed examination of crimes, which may include information about consequences, relationship between victim and criminal, and substance abuse involved. One disadvantage is that the NCVR misses some groups of people, such as those who don't have telephones and those who move frequently. The quality of information may also be reduced by inaccurate victim recall of the crime (Cantor and Lynch 2000).

Public Perception of Crime

Neither the NCVR nor the UCR accounts for all crime in the United States, but general trends can be determined. Crime rates, particularly for violent and gun-related crimes, have been on the decline since peaking in the early 1990s (Cohn, Taylor, Lopez, Gallagher, Parker, and Maass 2013). However, the public believes crime rates are still high, or even worsening. Recent surveys (Saad 2011; Pew Research Center 2013, cited in Overburg and Hoyer 2013) have found U.S. adults believe crime is worse now than it was twenty years ago.

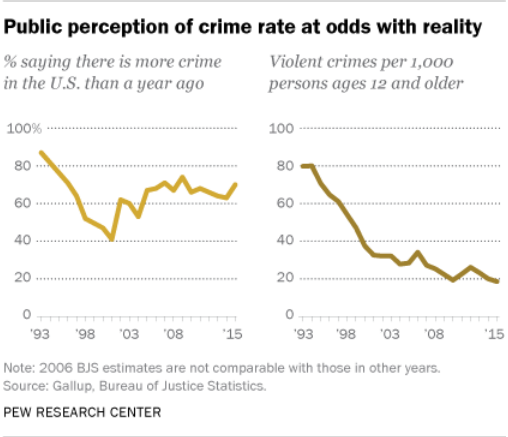


Figure 4. While public perception holds that crime rates are on the rise, violent crimes have, in fact, decreased significantly since the early 1990s. "Public perception of crime rate at odds with reality." Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (January 31, 2018).

Inaccurate public perception of crime may be heightened by popular crime shows such as *CSI*, *Criminal Minds* and *Law & Order* (Warr 2008) and by extensive and repeated media coverage of crime. Many researchers have found that people who closely follow media reports of crime are likely to estimate the crime rate as inaccurately high and more likely to feel fearful about the chances of experiencing crime (Chiricos, Padgett, and Gertz 2000). Recent research has also found that people who reported watching news coverage of 9/11 or the Boston Marathon Bombing for more than an hour daily became more fearful of future terrorism (Holman, Garfin, and Silver 2014).

Further Research

How is crime data collected in the United States? Read about the methods of data collection and take the National Crime Victimization Survey.

Think It Over

- How are crime statistics used by politicians to sway voters?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13367

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13368

Glossary

corporate crime:
crime committed by white-collar workers in a business environment

corrections system:
the system tasked with supervising individuals who have been arrested for, convicted of, or sentenced for criminal offenses

crime:
a behavior that violates official law and is punishable through formal sanctions

hate crimes:
attacks based on a person's race, religion, or other characteristics

legal codes:
codes that maintain formal social control through laws

nonviolent crimes:
crimes that involve the destruction or theft of property, but do not use force or the threat of force

self-report study:
a collection of data acquired using voluntary response methods, such as questionnaires or telephone interviews

street crime:
crime committed by average people against other people or organizations, usually in public spaces

victimless crime:
activities against the law, but that do not result in injury to any individual other than the person who engages in them

violent crimes:
crimes based on the use of force or the threat of force

1. What we investigate: Hate crimes. (2017). FBI. https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes↵
2. Jeltsen, M. 2018. How everyone got the pulse massacre completely wrong. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/noor-salman-pulse-massacre-wrong_us_5ac29ebae4b04646b6454dc2↵
3. Charleston church shooting. Wikipedia. https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Charleston_church_shooting↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Crime and the Law. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:2_72NZjR@6/Crime-and-the-Law. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Hate crime graphs, New data shows US hate crimes continued to rise in 2017. **Authored by**: Brian Levin, James J. Nolan, and John David Reitzel. **Provided by**: The Conversation. **Located at**: http://theconversation.com/new-data-shows-us-hate-crimes-continued-to-rise-in-2017-97989. **License**: *CC BY-ND: Attribution-NoDerivatives*

All rights reserved content

- Public perception of crime rate at odds with reality. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/16/voters-perceptions-of-crime-continue-to-conflict-with-reality/ft_16-11-

16_crime_trend-2/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 9.11: Criminal Activity is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.12: Putting It Together- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control



In this module, you learned about deviant behavior, how society decides what is deviant, and how deviance may change over time. You also learned about ways that society works to prevent deviance and implement social control. Specifically, you learned about crime in the United States and about the criminal justice system.

The criminal justice system, specifically the police force, has come under severe criticism in recent years for unnecessary use of force, racial profiling, and brutality (you can read more about police misconduct at the CATO Institute's National Police Misconduct Reporting Project). For example, tensions between citizens and police officers rose to extreme heights following videos that circulated online of police shootings of unarmed two black men, Alton Sterling and Philando Castile, in July 2016. A few days latter, at a Black Lives Matter protest in Dallas, Micah Xavier Johnson ambushed and fired upon a group of police officers in Dallas, Texas, killing five officers and injuring nine others. Less than two weeks later, on July 17th, three police offices were targeted and assassinated in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



(a) The protest outside of the governor's residence in Minnesota the day after Philando Castile, an unarmed black man, was shot and killed during a traffic stop. (b) The memorial services held for the five officers who were killed in Dallas on the day following the shooting of Philando Castile.

Consider the theoretical perspectives on deviance that you learned about in this module—functionalist, conflict, and interactionist–which one do you think best accounts for the tensions between citizens and the police force?

Next, examine each of the "Big 3" theories of deviance again. There are theories-within-the-theories that examine particular aspects of the larger paradigm. Which theorist or sub-theory do you think best explains this social phenomenon?

Finally, how does the sociological imagination inform your analysis? When have we seen this pattern before and what was the historical context? What social movements led to policy changes and what policy changes would you recommend now?

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- 2016 Shooting of Dallas Police Officers. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/2016_shooting_of_Dallas_police_officers. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Warning sign for police brutality. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://eu.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Poliziaren_gehiegikeria#/media/File:Warning_for_police_brutality.svg. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*
- Protest in response to the Philando Castile shooting. **Provided by**: Wikimedia. **Located at**: https://upload.wikimedia.org/Wikipedia/commons/d/d2/Protest_in_response_to_the_Philando_Castile_shooting_%2828121043226%29.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 9.12: Putting It Together- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.13: Discussion- Deviance

One of the biggest contributions to the sociology of deviance is Howard Becker's notion of the relativity of deviance and the importance of labeling theory. As we have seen in the module on crime, deviance, and social control, what constitutes deviance not only changes over time but also can vary based on who is doing the labeling and who is the deviant.

STEP 1: Research contemporary differences in terms of formal norms one method of social control (i.e. laws), among the 50 states. Select a behavior that is deviant in one state (or in many states) but not in others. Analyze these state-by-state restrictions on a particular deviant act.

In your post, include a description of the deviance you selected and a summary of what it looks like across the United States. Include a citation (minimally the website from which you gathered your information/ideally an in-text APA citation).

Write 1 paragraph explaining why it might be deviant in some areas but not others. You may include demographic information but remain objective and value-free.

Try to think outside the box and check to see what your peers post before you post to avoid duplication!

OPTIONAL: Include a global dimension by including a country-by-country comparison of this same deviant act in at least 3 other countries.

STEP 2: Comment on at least two other students' posts.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Deviance. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 9.13: Discussion- Deviance is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

9.14: Assignment- Deviance in the News

STEP 1: Find a current article about a crime that has been committed within the past three weeks. Look for language within the article that lends itself to a sociological explanation of the deviant behavior using one or more of the theories of deviance. You should not Google "crime" or "deviance" to find a current events article related to crime and deviance; rather, check reputable online news sources or an actual article about a crime or deviant behavior. There are always major deviant acts each week that make the national and local news.

Articles should be a minimum of 500 words, recent (within three weeks), relevant (related to crime, deviance, and social control), and from a reputable news source (many colleges provide free access to national news sources).

STEP 2: Write a thorough summary of the article.

STEP 3: Using your sociological imagination, write an analysis of the article that connects the main idea/s of the article to specific key terms and theories from this module on "Deviance, Crime and Social Control."

STEP 4: Include the link to your article, check for any writing errors, and submit your article with your response paper.

Rubric

High Quality	**Proficient**	**Approaching Proficiency**	**Not Proficient**	**Points**
The article chosen is recent, relevant, and reputable.	The article missing 1 of the requirements (recent, relevant, and reputable)	The article is missing 2 of the requirements.	The article is missing the requirements.	___/2
Summary is succinct, thorough, original, and accurate.	Summary is missing 1 of the requirements (succinct, thorough, original and accurate).	Summary is missing 2 of the requirements.	Summary is missing 3 or 4 of the requirements.	___/5
Analysis clearly relates the criminal or deviant act from the article to key terms from "Deviance, Crime, and Social Control."	Analysis includes one or more key terms but does not provide a clear link to the article and/or does not use the term with 100% accuracy.	Analysis includes a key term without proper connection to the article and/or misuses the term.	Analysis does not include key terms from Module 6 and/or uses key terms incorrectly.	___/5
Analysis includes a minimum of one theory of deviance and connects the theory to specific text in the article to explain the deviance.	Analysis includes one or more theories of deviance but does not provide a clear link to the article and/or does not use the theory in a way that explains the deviance.	Analysis includes a theory without proper connection to the article and/or misuses the theory.	Analysis does not include a sociological theory of deviance and/or does not include an explanation or application.	___/5
College-level writing grammar (spelling, punctuation, syntax, etc.) with 0-1 error.	College-level writing with 2-3 grammatical errors.	College-level writing with 3-4 grammatical errors.	College-level writing with 5+ grammatical errors.	___/3
			Total:	___/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Deviance in the News. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 9.14: Assignment- Deviance in the News is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Module 7- Stratification and Inequality

10.1: Why It Matters- Stratification and Inequality
10.2: Introduction to Stratification and Systems of Stratification
10.3: Social Stratification, Social Inequality, and Global Stratification
10.4: Systems of Global Classification
10.5: Systems of Social Stratification
10.6: Class in the United States
10.7: Introduction to Social Mobility and Poverty
10.8: Social Mobility
10.9: Global Poverty
10.10: Poverty in the U.S.
10.11: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Stratification
10.12: Theoretical Perspectives on Social Stratification
10.13: Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification
10.14: Putting It Together- Social Stratification and Inequality
10.15: Discussion- Stratification
10.16: Assignment- Stratification

This page titled 10: Module 7- Stratification and Inequality is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.1: Why It Matters- Stratification and Inequality

Why understand stratification and inequality?

Every society, both past and present, has a system of layering (or stratifying) people within that society. In most societies, there are a few at the top and many at the bottom. You may have heard of wealthy Americans such as Jeff Bezos (Amazon), Bill Gates (Microsoft), or Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook), but there are several other international billionaires who made the Forbes' top 10 list in 2018, including Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim Helu (American Movil), French billionaire Bernard Arnault (Louis Vuitton and Sephora), and Spanish billionaire Amancio Ortega (Zara).

How many of us can imagine a billion dollars? If one were to make one billion dollars in a year, that would amount to approximately $2,739,726 per day. Figure 1 helps us to "see" 1 billion dollars.



Figure 1. One billion dollars.

Now imagine Jeff Bezos' accumulated wealth–112 billion. ([1].It's quite mind boggling, isn't it? How much do employees at Bezos' largest company (Amazon) earn? According to company filings, the median Amazon worker was paid $28,446 in 2017, which is just above the federal poverty level for a family of four, and public records obtained by the New Food Economy show that thousands of Amazon employees rely on Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) to make ends meet, with as many as 1 in 3 Amazon employees in Arizona receiving food stamps[2]. The "Amazon Effect" has also been credited for the decline of brick-and-mortar stores, which affects small business owners in the United States and abroad. It has created new low wage service positions for people who want to utilize personal shoppers at Whole Foods, which Bezos bought in 2017, and/or utilize Amazon lockers, which are now found in Whole Foods stores across the country.

Another top five billionaire (worth $78.7 billion) is Frenchman Bernard Arnault, who is most famous for his brand Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy (LVMH). The high fashion items with the signature LV logo cost several thousand dollars, and the cognac brand Hennessy became a pop culture phenomenon with Busta Rhymes and P. Diddy's 2001 hit "Pass the Courvoisier" (which caused sales of Hennessy to jump 30 percent).[3]. Arnault oversees an empire of 70 brands. According to RankaBrand, a company dedicated to rating the performance of brands on sustainability and social responsibility, Arnault's company Louis Vuitton gets a "D" score (visit Louis Vuitton's website to see how these ethical ratings are calculated).



Figure 2. Rana Plaza collapse

High-end fashion like Louis Vuitton and low-end fashion companies like Walmart have both come under scrutiny for the exploitation of workers in factories around the world. The April 24, 2013 collapse of the Rana Plaza in Dhaka, Bangladesh killed over 1,100 people. It was the deadliest garment factory accident in history, and it was preventable (International Labour Organization, Department of Communication 2014).

In addition to the garment factories in the building that employed about 5,000 people, the building contained a bank, apartments, childcare facilities, and a variety of shops. Many of these closed the day before the collapse when cracks were discovered in the building walls. When some of the garment workers refused to enter the building, they were threatened with the loss of a month's pay. Most were young women, aged twenty or younger. They

typically worked over thirteen hours a day, with two days off each month. For this work, they took home between twelve and twenty-two cents an hour, or $10.56 to $12.48 a week. Without that pay, most would have been unable to feed their children. In contrast, the U.S. federal minimum wage is $7.25 an hour, and workers receive wages at time-and-a-half rates for work in excess of forty hours a week (though some employers of “temp” contract workers, seasonal employees, and persons employed in certain fields are by law exempted from the overtime pay requirement).

Bangladesh has a $28 billion dollar garment industry, second only to China. Efforts to increase openness and accountability through measures like the Transparency Pledge have only been adopted by 17 out of 72 clothing and shoe manufacturers in the wake of the Rana Plaza tragedy[4]

Did you buy clothes from Walmart in 2012? What about at The Children’s Place? Did you ever think about where those clothes came from? Of the outsourced garments made in the garment factories, thirty-two were intended for U.S., Canadian, and European stores. In the aftermath of the collapse, it was revealed that Walmart jeans were made in the Ether Tex garment factory on the fifth floor of the Rana Plaza building, while 120,000 pounds of clothing for The Children’s Place were produced in the New Wave Style Factory, also located in the building. Afterward, Walmart and The Children’s Place pledged $1 million and $450,000, respectively, to the Rana Plaza Trust Fund, but fifteen other companies with clothing made in the building have contributed nothing, including U.S. companies Cato and J.C. Penney (Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights 2014). Walmart has refused to sign the Transparency Pledge, maintaining that it has its own mechanisms in place for worker safety.

By looking at the interconnectedness of billionaires and their employees, or between owner-shareholders and workers, we can begin to uncover some of the key sociological issues related to stratification in societies all over the world. In an increasingly global market, we can see how the decisions of the 1% can impact tens of thousands of peoples’ social stratification. We can also see how consumers like ourselves contribute to stratification by purchasing goods and services through politically and economically powerful multinational corporations.

---

1. "Richest people in the world," 2018. CBS News. https://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/richest-people-in-world-forbes/21/↵
2. Bhattarai, A. "Thousands of Amazon workers," 2018. Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2018/08/24/thousands-amazon-workers-receive-food-stamps-now-bernie-sanders-wants-amazon-pay-up/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.0759b4326359↵
3. Mitenbuler, R. 2013. "Pass the Courvoisier," Slate. https://slate.com/human-interest/2013/12/cognac-in-african-american-culture-the-long-history-of-black-consumption-of-the-french-spirit.html↵
4. Westerman, A. "Four Years After" 2017. NPR. https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/04/30/525858799/4-years-after-rana-plaza-tragedy-whats-changed-for-bangladeshi-garment-workers↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Global Inequality. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:thZuao_-@2/Introduction-to-Global-Inequality. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.
- One billion dollars. **Authored by**: Michael Marcovici. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Oenbilliondollar.jpg. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Dhaka Savar Building Collapse. **Authored by**: rijans. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/rijans/8731789941. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 10.1: Why It Matters- Stratification and Inequality is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.2: Introduction to Stratification and Systems of Stratification

What you'll do: describe social stratification and social inequality, and identify systems of stratification



Figure 1. A demonstration of protest and mourning for the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911. (Photo courtesy of The U.S. National Archives/flickr)

Companies like Amazon, Louis Vuitton, Zara, Walmart, Microsoft, Facebook, and Apple (to name a few) help us to understand inequality because the CEOs of these companies are worth billions and many of their workers are living at or below the poverty line, even with safeguards like minimum wage laws and laws restricting the number of hours employees can work. These laws protecting worker rights have historically been won largely as a result of workplace disasters, such as the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire in 1911, which killed 146 workers at a garment factory in New York City. There have been other types of workplace disasters in the United States, particularly in the extractive mining, oil, and coal industries, and these have resulted in laws put in place to protect American workers. However, most workers in other countries that manufacture apparel, electronics, and other items for export are not afforded similar protections. Consider the working conditions and lack of protections given workers involved in the 2013 collapse of the garment factory inside of the Rana Plaza in Bangladesh.

While you read this section, think about the global system that allows U.S. companies to outsource their manufacturing to peripheral nations, where many women and children work in conditions that some characterize as slave labor. Do consumers in the United States have a responsibility to foreign workers? Should U.S. corporations be held accountable for what happens to garment factory workers who make their clothing? What can you do as a consumer and a voting citizen to help such workers? In this section, we'll learn about systemic social stratification and social inequality in the U.S. and around the world.

CC licensed content, Original

- Objectives and Activities. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Social Stratification in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:bi_khgk9@4/Introduction-to-Social-Stratification-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

Public domain content

- Demonstration of Protest and Mourning for Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of March 25, 1911. **Provided by**: The U.S. National Archives. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/11192161883. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 10.2: Introduction to Stratification and Systems of Stratification is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.3: Social Stratification, Social Inequality, and Global Stratification

Learning ObjectiveS

- Describe social stratification and social inequality
- Explain global stratification

Social Stratification



Figure 1. Strata in rock illustrate social stratification. People are sorted, or layered, into social categories. Many factors determine a person's social standing, such as income, education, occupation, geography, as well as age, race, gender, and even physical abilities. (Photo courtesy of Just a Prairie Boy/flickr)

Social stratification is a system of ranking individuals and groups within societies. It refers to a society's ranking of its people into socioeconomic tiers based on factors like wealth, income, race, education, and power. You may remember the word "stratification" from geology class. The distinct horizontal layers found in rock, called "strata," are an illustrative way to visualize social structure. Society's layers are made of people, and society's resources are distributed unevenly throughout the layers. Social stratification has been a part of all societies dating from the agricultural revolution, which took place in various parts of the world between 7,000-10,000 BCE. Unlike relatively even strata in rock, though, there are not equal numbers of people in each layer of society. There are typically very few at the top and a great many at the bottom, with some variously populated layers in the middle.

Social Inequality

Social inequality is the state of unequal distribution of valued goods and opportunities. All societies today have social inequality. Examining social stratification requires a macrosociological perspective in order to view societal systems that make inequalities visible. Although individuals may support or fight inequalities, social stratification is created and supported by society as a whole through values and norms and consistently durable systems of stratification.

Most of us are accustomed to thinking of stratification as economic inequality. For example, we can compare wages in the United States to wages in Mexico. Social inequality, however, is just as harmful as economic discrepancy. Prejudice and discrimination—whether against a certain race, ethnicity, religion, or the like—can become a causal factor by creating and aggravating conditions of economic inequality, both within and between nations.

Gender inequality is another global concern. Consider the controversy surrounding female circumcision (also known as female genital mutilation or FGM). Nations favoring this practice, often through systems of patriarchal authority, defend it as a longstanding cultural tradition among certain tribes and argue that the West shouldn't interfere. Western nations, however, decry the practice and are working to expose and stop it.

Inequalities based on sexual orientation and gender identity exist around the globe. According to Amnesty International, a range of crimes are commonly committed against individuals who do not conform to traditional gender roles or sexual orientations (however those are culturally defined). From culturally sanctioned rape to state-sanctioned executions, the abuses are serious. These legalized and culturally

accepted forms of prejudice, discrimination, and punishment exist everywhere—from the United States to Somalia to Tibet—restricting the freedom of individuals and often putting their lives at risk (Amnesty International 2012).

Watch It

Watch the selected first few minutes of this video to learn about stratification in general terms. You'll learn some key principles regarding social stratification, namely that:

- Stratification is universal, but varies between societies;
- It is a characteristic of society and not a matter of individual differences; in other words, we need to use the sociological imagination to understand social stratification and see it as a social issue and not just an individual problem;
- It persists across generations, although it often allows for some degree of social mobility;
- Stratification continues because of beliefs and attitudes *about* social stratification

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=256

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13371

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13372

Thinking Deeply about Inequality

How do you think wealth should best be distributed in the United States? Check out this interactive animation on economic inequality from the Economic Policy Institute.

Link to Learning

Imagine that the United States is divided into quintiles (bottom 20%, second 20%, middle 20%, fourth 20%, and top 20%).

- How do you think wealth is distributed in the United States? What percentage would you attribute to each quintile?
- What do you think is the ideal distribution?

Now watch the video "Wealth Inequality in America" and compare your responses to the actual distribution of wealth. Keep in mind that these numbers are from 2012, but the rates of inequality have not improved since then.

Global Stratification



Figure 2. (a) A family lives in this grass hut in Ethiopia. (b) Another family lives in a single-wide trailer in a trailer park in the United States. Both families are considered poor, or lower class. With such differences in global stratification, what constitutes poverty? (Photo (a) courtesy of Canned Muffins/flickr; Photo (b) courtesy of Herb Neufeld/flickr)

While stratification in the United States refers to the unequal distribution of resources among individuals, **global stratification** refers to this unequal distribution among nations. There are two dimensions to this stratification: gaps between nations and gaps within nations. When it comes to global inequality, both economic inequality and social inequality may concentrate the burden of poverty among certain segments of the earth's population (Myrdal 1970). As the chart below illustrates, people's life expectancy depends heavily on where they happen to be born.

Statistics such as infant mortality rates and life expectancy vary greatly by country of origin. (Central Intelligence Agency 2011)

Country	Infant Mortality Rate	Life Expectancy
Norway	2.48 deaths per 1000 live births	81 years
The United States	6.17 deaths per 1000 live births	79 years
North Korea	24.50 deaths per 1000 live births	70 years
Afghanistan	117.3 deaths per 1000 live births	50 years

Global stratification compares the wealth, economic stability, status, and power of countries across the world, and also highlights worldwide patterns of social inequality within nations.

In the early years of civilization, hunter-gatherer and agrarian societies lived off the earth and rarely interacted with other societies (except during times of war). As civilizations began to grow and emerging cities developed political and economic systems, trade increased, as did military conquest. Explorers went out in search of new land and resources as well as to trade goods, ideas, and customs. They eventually took land, people, and resources from all over the world, building empires and establishing networks of colonies with imperialist policies, foundational religious ideologies, and incredible economic and military power.

In the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution created unprecedented wealth in Western Europe and North America. Due to mechanical inventions and new means of production, people began working in factories—not only men, but women and children as well. The Industrial Revolution also saw the rise of vast inequalities between countries that were industrialized and those that were not. As some nations embraced technology and saw increased wealth and goods, others maintained their ways; as the gap widened, the non-industrialized nations fell further behind. Some social researchers, such as Walt Rostow, suggest that the disparity also resulted from power differences. Applying a conflict theory perspective, he asserts that industrializing nations appropriated and took advantage of the resources of traditional nations. As industrialized nations became rich, other nations became poor (Rostow 1960).

Sociologists studying global stratification analyze economic comparisons between nations. Income, purchasing power, and investment and ownership-based wealth are used to calculate global stratification. Global stratification also compares the quality of life that individual citizens and groups within a country's population can have.

Poverty levels have been shown to vary greatly. The poor in wealthy countries like the United States or Europe are much better off than the poor in less-industrialized countries such as Mali or India. In 2002, the UN implemented the Millennium Project, an attempt to cut poverty worldwide by the year 2015. To reach the project's goal, planners in 2006 estimated that industrialized nations must set aside 0.7 percent of their gross national income—the total value of the nation's good and service, plus or minus income received from and sent to other nations—to aid in developing countries (Landler and Sanger, 2009; Millennium Project 2006).

Although some successes have been realized from the Millennium Project, such as cutting the extreme global poverty rate in half, the United Nations has now moved ahead with their program of economic growth and sustainable development in their new project, Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in September of 2015.

Watch It

Watch this video to get a good understanding of how inequality looks around the world.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=256

Think It Over

- The wealthiest 300 individuals in the world have more wealth than the poorest 3 billion individuals. Does this surprise you? Why or why not?
- Why has the wealth gap between the wealthiest countries and the poorest countries grown larger? How is this different from dominant narratives in the media?
- What changes could be made to reduce global stratification and inequality?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13373

glossary

global stratification:

compares the unequal wealth, economic stability, status, and power of countries across the world

social inequality:

is the state of unequal distribution of valued goods and opportunities

social stratification:

a system of ranking individuals and groups within societies

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- What Is Social Stratification?. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:LYDnfp5S@3/What-Is-Social-Stratification. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Global Stratification and Classification. **Provided by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:7TCPamHd@3/Global-Stratification-and-Classification. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.

All rights reserved content

- Global Wealth Inequality. **Authored by**: TheRulesOrg. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWSxzjyMNpU. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Social Stratification: Crash Course Sociology #21. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlkIKCMt-Fs. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 10.3: Social Stratification, Social Inequality, and Global Stratification is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.4: Systems of Global Classification

Learning Outcomes

- Differentiate between and describe systems of global classification
- Explain how global stratification and inequality are measured

A major concern when discussing global inequality is how to avoid an ethnocentric bias implying that less-developed nations want to be like those who've attained post-industrial global power. Terms such as developing (nonindustrialized) and developed (industrialized) imply that unindustrialized countries are somehow inferior, and must improve to participate successfully in the "global economy," a label indicating that all aspects of the economy cross national borders. We must be mindful of how we describe and delineate different countries. Over time, terminology has shifted to enable a more inclusive view of the world.

Cold War Terminology

Cold War terminology was developed during the Cold War era (1945–1991), a period of geopolitical conflict between the democratic, capitalist nations of the world and the more authoritarian communist nations that were primarily controlled by the former U.S.S.R (now, in part, present-day Russia). Familiar and still used by many, it classifies countries into first world, second world, and third world nations based on their respective economic development and standards of living. When this nomenclature was developed, capitalist democracies such as the United States and Japan were considered part of the **first world**. The poorest, most undeveloped countries were referred to as the **third world** and included most of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Control of these developing countries was often contested between capitalist and communist powers, sometimes with politically and economically destabilizing results. The **second world** was the economically in-between category: nations not as limited in development as the third world, but not as well off as the first world, having moderate economies and living standards, and typically being aligned with the communist powers. Much of Eastern Europe, China, and Cuba are key examples. In addition to these earlier categories, sociologist Manual Castells (1998) added the term **fourth world** to refer to stigmatized minority groups that were denied a political voice all over the globe (indigenous minority populations, prisoners, and the homeless, for example).

Also during the Cold War, global inequality was described in terms of economic development. Along with developing and developed nations, the terms less-developed nation and underdeveloped nation were used. This was the era when the idea of *noblesse oblige* (first-world responsibility to help the less fortunate) took root, suggesting that the so-termed developed nations should provide foreign aid to the less-developed and underdeveloped nations in order to raise their **standard of living**.

Immanuel Wallerstein: World Systems Approach

Immanuel Wallerstein's (1979) world systems approach uses an economic basis to understand global inequality. Wallerstein conceived of the global economy as a complex system that supports an economic hierarchy placing some nations in positions of power with considerable resources while placing other nations in a state of economic subordination. Those that were in a state of subordination faced significant obstacles to development and self-determination.

Wallerstein proposed the following categories:

Core nations are dominant capitalist countries, highly industrialized, technological, and urbanized. For example, Wallerstein contends that the United States is an economic powerhouse that can support or deny support to important economic legislation with far-reaching implications, thus exerting control over every aspect of the global economy and exploiting both semi-peripheral and peripheral nations. We can look at free trade agreements such as the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as an example of how a core nation is able to leverage its power to gain the most advantageous position within the system of global trade.

Peripheral nations have very little industrialization; what they do have often represents the outdated castoffs of core nations or the factories and means of production owned by core nations. They typically have unstable governments, inadequate social programs, and are economically dependent on core nations for jobs and aid. There are abundant examples of countries in this category, such as Vietnam and Cuba. We can be sure the workers in Cuban cigar factories, for example, which are owned or leased by global core nation companies, are not enjoying the same privileges and rights as U.S. workers.

Semi-peripheral nations are in-between nations, not powerful enough to dictate policy but nevertheless acting as a major source for raw material and an expanding middle-class marketplace for core nations, while also exploiting peripheral nations. Mexico is an example, providing abundant cheap agricultural labor to the U.S., and supplying goods to the United States market at a rate dictated by the U.S. without the legal protections offered to United States workers.

World Bank Economic Classification by Income

While the World Bank is often criticized, both for its policies and its method of calculating data, 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.



Figure 1. This world map shows advanced, transitioning, less, and least developed countries. (Map courtesy of Sbw01f, data obtained from the CIA World Factbook/Wikimedia Commons).

High-Income Nations

The World Bank defines high-income nations as having a gross national income of at least $12,746 per capita. The OECD (Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development) countries make up a group of thirty-four nations whose governments work together to promote economic growth and sustainability. According to the World Bank (2014b), in 2013 the average **gross national income(GNI) per capita**, or the mean income of the people in a nation, found by dividing total GNI by the total population, of a high-income nation belonging to the OECD was $43,903 per capita and the total population was over one billion (1.045 billion). On average, 81 percent of the population in these nations was urban. Some of these countries include the United States, Germany, Canada, and the United Kingdom (World Bank 2014b).

High-income countries face two major issues: capital flight and deindustrialization. **Capital flight** refers to the movement (flight) of capital from one nation to another, as when General Motors automotive company closed U.S. factories in Michigan and opened factories in Mexico. **Deindustrialization**, a related issue, occurs as a consequence of capital flight, as no new companies open to replace jobs lost to foreign nations. As expected, global companies move their industrial processes to the places where they can get the most production with the least cost, including the building of infrastructure, training of workers, shipping of goods, and, of course, paying employee wages. This means that as emerging economies create their own industrial zones, global companies see the opportunity for utilizing existing infrastructure and for producing goods at lower costs. Those opportunities lead to businesses closing the factories that provide jobs to the middle class within core nations and moving their industrial production to peripheral and semi-peripheral nations.

Middle-Income Nations

The World Bank defines middle-income economies areas those with a GNI per capita of more than $1,045 but less than $12,746. According to the World Bank (2014), in 2013 the average GNI per capita of an upper middle income nation was $7,594, with a total population of 2.049 billion, of which 62 percent was urban. Thailand, China, and Namibia are examples of middle-income nations (World Bank 2014a).

Perhaps the most pressing issue for middle-income nations is the problem of debt accumulation. As the name suggests, **debt accumulation** is the buildup of external debt, wherein countries borrow money from other nations to fund their expansion or growth goals. As the uncertainties of the global economy make repaying these debts, or even paying the interest on them, more challenging, nations can find themselves in trouble. Once global markets have reduced the value of a country's goods, it can be very difficult to ever manage the debt burden. Such issues have plagued middle-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as East Asian and Pacific nations (Dogruel and Dogruel 2007). For example, even in the European Union, which is composed of more core nations than semi-peripheral nations, the semi-peripheral nations of Italy and Greece face increasing debt burdens. The economic downturns in both Greece and Italy still threaten the economy of the entire European Union.

Low-Income Nations

The World Bank defines low-income countries as nations whose per capita GNI was $1,045 per capita or less in 2013. According to the World Bank (2014a), in 2013 the average per capita GNI of a low-income nation was $528 per capita and the total population was 796,261,360, with 28 percent located in urban areas. For example, Myanmar, Ethiopia, and Somalia are considered low-income countries. Low-income economies are primarily found in Asia and Africa (World Bank 2014a), where most of the world's population lives. There are two major challenges that these countries face: women are disproportionately affected by poverty and much of the population lives in absolute poverty.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13374

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13375

How is global stratification measured?

Just as the United States' wealth is increasingly concentrated among its richest citizens while the middle class slowly disappears, **global inequality** is concentrating resources in certain nations and is significantly affecting the opportunities of individuals in poorer and less powerful countries. In fact, a recent Oxfam (2014) report suggested that the richest eighty-five people in the world are worth more than the poorest 3.5 billion combined.

Various models of global stratification all have one thing in common: they rank countries according to their relative economic status, or gross national product (GNP).

There are three primary ways to measure global stratification:

- The **GINI coefficient** measures income inequality between countries using a 100-point scale on which 1 represents complete equality and 100 represents the highest possible inequality. In 2007, the global GINI coefficient that measured the wealth gap between the core nations in the northern part of the world and the mostly peripheral nations in the southern part of the world was 75.5 percent (Korseniewicz and Moran 2009).

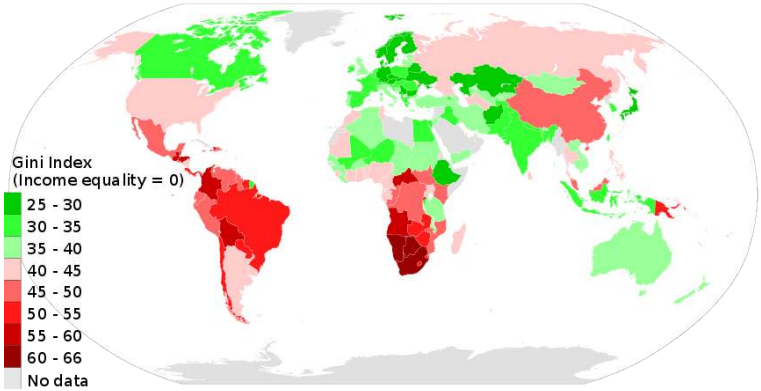


Figure 2. Countries' income inequality (2014) according to their Gini coefficients measured in percentages. Nations shown in red have higher than average income inequality, and those shown in green have lower than average income inequality.

- Another model separates countries into two groups: more developed and less developed. More-developed nations have higher wealth, such as Canada, Japan, and Australia. Less-developed nations have less wealth to distribute among higher populations, including many countries in central Africa, South America, and some island nations.
- Yet another system of global classification defines countries based on the per capita gross domestic product (GDP), a country's average national wealth per person. The GDP is calculated (usually annually) one of two ways: by totaling either the income of all citizens or the value of all goods and services produced in the country during the year. It also includes government spending. 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. The figures also establish a country's standard of living. You can see country ratings of GDP per capita here.

The Big Picture: COMPARING Global Stratification

A few organizations take on the job of comparing the wealth of nations. The Population Reference Bureau (PRB) is one of them. Besides a focus on population data, the PRB publishes an annual report that measures the relative economic well-being of all the world's countries. It's called the **Gross National Income (GNI)** and Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).

The GNI measures the current value of goods and services produced by a country. The PPP measures the relative power a country has to purchase those same goods and services. So, GNI refers to productive output and PPP refers to buying power. The total figure is divided by the number of residents living in a country to establish the average income of a resident of that country.

Because costs of goods and services vary from one country to the next, the GNI PPP converts figures into a relative international unit. Calculating GNI PPP figures helps researchers accurately compare countries' standard of living. They allow the United Nations and Population Reference Bureau to compare and rank the wealth of all countries and consider international stratification issues.

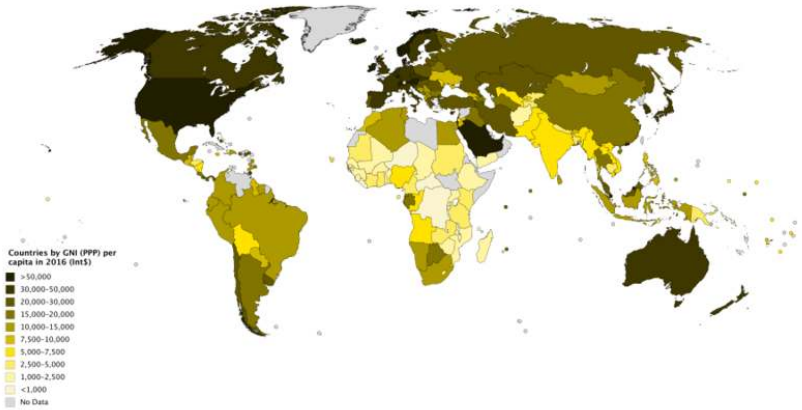


Figure 3. Countries by GNI (PPP) per capita in 2016.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13376

Watch It

Watch the selected first few minutes of this video (around the 4 minute and thirty second mark) to learn about social classification, and how and why these categories developed. We'll finish the video when we learn more about poverty in a later section.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=258

Further Research

Watch this Ted talk by Richard Wilkinson to see examples of how economic inequality harms societies.

To learn more about the existence and impact of global poverty, peruse the data at The World Bank Poverty & Equity Data.

Think It Over

- Why is it important to understand and be aware of global stratification? Make a list of specific issues that are related to global stratification. For inspiration, turn on a news channel or read the newspaper. Next, choose a topic from your list, and look at it more closely. Who is affected by this issue? How is the issue specifically related to global stratification?
- Why do you think some scholars find Cold War terminology ("first world" and so on) objectionable?

Glossary

capital flight:
the movement (flight) of capital from one nation to another, via jobs and resources

core nations:
dominant capitalist countries

debt accumulation:
the buildup of external debt, wherein countries borrow money from other nations to fund their expansion or growth goals

deindustrialization:
the loss of industrial production, usually to peripheral and semi-peripheral nations where the costs are lower

first world:
a term from the Cold War era (1945-1991) that is used to describe industrialized capitalist nations

fourth world:
a term that describes stigmatized minority groups who have no voice or representation on the world stage

global stratification:
a comparison of the wealth, economic stability, status, and power of countries as a whole

gross national income (GNI):
the income of a nation calculated based on goods and services produced, plus income earned by citizens and corporations headquartered in that country

peripheral nations:
nations on the fringes of the global economy, dominated by core nations, with very little industrialization

second world:
a term from the Cold War era (1945-1991) that describes nations with moderate economies and standards of living which were aligned with communist state power during that period

semi-peripheral nations:
in-between nations, not powerful enough to dictate policy but acting as a major source of raw materials and an expanding middle class marketplace

standard of living:
the level of wealth available to acquire material goods and comforts to maintain a particular socioeconomic lifestyle

third world:
a term from the Cold War era (1945-1991) that refers to poor, unindustrialized countries that were often not aligned with either capitalist or communist state power during that period

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Global Stratification and Classification. **Authored by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:7TCPamHd@3/Global-Stratification-and-Classification. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.
- 2014 Gini Index World Map. **Authored by**: M Tracy Hunter. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_income_equality#/media/File:2014_Gini_Index_World_Map,_income_inequality_distribution_by_country_per_World_Bank.svg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- List of countries by GNI (PPP) per capita. **Authored by**: JackintheBox. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GNI_(PPP)_per_capita. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Global Stratification & Poverty: Crash Course Sociology #27. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rts_PWIVTU&feature=youtu.be. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 10.4: Systems of Global Classification is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.5: Systems of Social Stratification

Learning Outcomes

- Differentiate between social stratification systems

Systems of Stratification

Sociologists distinguish between two systems of stratification. **Closed systems** accommodate little change in social position and are typically based on ascribed status or some trait from birth. They do not allow people to shift levels and do not permit social relationships between levels. **Open systems**, which are based on achievement, allow movement and interaction between layers and classes. These different systems reflect, emphasize, and foster certain cultural values and shape individual beliefs. Some stratification systems include slavery, caste systems, feudal/estate systems, and class systems.

Slavery

In examining social stratification, we can begin by looking at slavery in the U.S., which was based on race and resulted in a social stratification system—people were not enslaved because of crimes they committed, debts they owed, or lost wars. **Chattel slavery** occurs when one person owns another as property. Slaves were taken from West Africa beginning in the 17th century and brought to U.S. colonies, mostly to work as laborers in the growing agricultural economy. The system was maintained by birth, so children born to slaves were automatically slaves and considered property–or "chattel"–of the slaveowner.

While the slave trade was discontinued in 1808, slavery was not abolished until the 13th Amendment was ratified in 1865 (the same year the Civil War ended), and vestiges of slavery persisted through the Reconstruction era and beyond[1]. The racial stratification of Americans continued through Jim Crow segregation laws, which faded in the 1950s and 1960s as the Civil Rights Movement emerged, and through the convict lease system, which was also gradually phased out in the 20th century. The South African apartheid system is another example of social stratification based on race, or skin color. Apartheid officially began in 1948, and gave the minority white population political and cultural power, while oppressing Blacks, "Coloured" (i.e., people of mixed race), Indian, and Asian peoples. It did not end until 1994. Both of these systems used race to justify closed systems of stratification.

The global watchdog group Anti-Slavery International recognizes other forms of slavery: human trafficking (in which people are moved away from their communities and forced to work against their will), child domestic work and child labor, and certain forms of servile marriage, in which women are effectively property, or chattel slaves (Anti-Slavery International 2012).

Another type of slavery is **debt bondage**, or bonded labor, in which the poor pledge themselves as servants in exchange for the cost of basic necessities like transportation, room, and board. In this scenario, people are paid less than they are charged for room and board. When travel is required, they can arrive in debt for their travel expenses and be unable to work their way free, since their wages do not allow them to ever get ahead.

Further REsearch

People often think that the United States is immune to the atrocity of human trafficking. Learn more about trafficking in the United States.

Learn more information about ongoing practices of slavery in the modern world.

The Estate System

The ninth century gave rise to feudal societies. These societies contained a strict hierarchical system of power based around land ownership and protection. The nobility, known as lords, placed vassals in charge of pieces of land called fiefdoms. In return for the resources that the land provided and a guaranteed place to live, vassals promised to fight for their lords. Feudalism was a closed system where land ownership was inherited. The peasants who worked the land served lords for generations and generations as the estate system hierarchy was automatically reproduced at birth.

Like slavery in the U.S., a person's birth determined his or her social standing. In the estate system, this meant a person could be born a peasant, a commoner, or with access to more property and opportunity, such as a member of the clergy or nobility might have. The justification for this rigid hierarchy was often based on certain religious beliefs, especially that of "divine right," or the

idea that some men rule by God's will. Ultimately, the social and economic system of feudalism failed and was replaced by capitalism and the technological advances of the industrial era.

The Caste System



Figure 1. India used to have a rigid caste system. The people in the lowest caste suffered from extreme poverty and were shunned by society. Some aspects of India's defunct caste system remain socially relevant. In this photo, an Indian woman of a specific Hindu caste works in construction, and she demolishes and builds houses. (Photo courtesy of Elessar/flickr)

Caste systems are closed stratification systems in which people can do little or nothing to change their social standing. A **caste system** is one in which people are born into their social standing category, or "caste," and will remain in it their whole lives. People are assigned occupations regardless of their talents, interests, or potential. There are virtually no opportunities to improve a person's social position.

In the Hindu caste tradition, people were expected to work in the occupation of their caste and to enter into marriage according to their caste. **Endogamy** refers to the practice of marrying within one's own caste category. Accepting this social standing was considered a moral duty. Cultural values reinforced the system. Caste systems promote beliefs in fate, destiny, and the will of a higher power, rather than promoting individual freedom as a value. A person who lived in a caste society was socialized to accept his or her social standing.

Although the caste system in India has been officially dismantled, its residual presence in Indian society is deeply embedded. In rural areas, aspects of the tradition are more likely to remain, while urban centers show less evidence of this past. In India's larger cities, people now have more opportunities to choose their own career paths and marriage partners. With India's emergence as an economic power, corporations have introduced merit-based hiring and employment standards to the nation.

Watch It

Finish watching the selected clip from this video to learn more about types of stratification systems.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=260

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13378

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13377

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13379

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13380

The Class System

A **class system**is an open system based on both social factors and individual achievement. Individuals within a class system are free to gain a different level of education or employment from that of their parents, and can socialize with and marry members of other classes. The class system has fluid boundaries–think of "rags to riches" stories, or stories of wealthy and powerful people being brought low through criminal conviction for crimes such as fraud, insider trading, murder, or extortion.

Class is determined by **wealth** and **income** and is considered an achieved status, or one which is earned. Wealth refers to the total value of money and assets such as property and stocks, whereas income refers to the money a person earns from work and/or investments. A person can have a lot of wealth but little income (i.e., someone with a trust fund or inheritance), and conversely, someone can have a large income but very little wealth (i.e., someone who spends as much as they make, but does not purchase property or invest).

Max Weber identified the following three components in class systems of stratification: class, status, and power (1922). Class, as stated above, includes wealth and income. Status is the prestige or honor accorded to one's position and/or to one's name. Power is the ability to exert one's will over others. One can examine President Donald Trump as an individual who has reached some of the highest levels of class, status, and power. The President of the United States (POTUS) is often described as the most powerful politician in the world, and one of the main duties of POTUS is to oversee the U.S. armed forces, which itself entails an extraordinary amount of power.

Weber's views on class differed with those held by Marx, who viewed society as composed of the two classes of bourgeoisie (owners of the means of production) and the proletariat (workers). Weber thought economic position was important, but also emphasized status and power as important components for understanding the class system. An Olympic Gold Medalist for example, might enjoy a high status, and may also increase her income and wealth through endorsements with big brands like Nike or Adidas, but this does not necessarily make them *powerful*.

Another sociological perspective distinguishes the classes, in part, according to the relative power and control they have over their own lives. In this view, the upper classes not only have power and control over their own lives but their social status also gives them power and control over the lives of others. Consider the 1% and the disproportionate political power that billionaires hold in making decisions that affect other peoples' lives.

The Weberian framework is particularly helpful in examining the interconnectedness of class, status, and power, and how these components influence class stratification. Consider decisions regarding health care. Most middle class jobs include health and dental insurance, which allow individuals and families to have a greater degree of control over health-related decisions. In contrast, the working class and the working poor have less control over their work or health care decisions, and often struggle to acquire and maintain access to health insurance. The lowest classes are made up of people in society who have the least amount of control over their lives.

Meritocracy

Meritocracy is an ideal system based on the belief that social stratification is the result of personal effort—or demonstrated merit—that determines social standing. High levels of effort will lead to a high socio-economic position, and vice versa. The concept of meritocracy is an ideal—because a society has never existed where social rank was based purely on merit. Because of the complex structure of societies, processes like socialization, and the realities of economic systems, social standing is influenced by multiple factors—not merit alone. Inheritance and pressure to conform to norms, for instance, disrupt the notion of a pure meritocracy. While an entirely untroubled meritocracy has never existed, sociologists see traces of meritocracy throughout modern societies when they study the role of academic and job performance rating, as well as the systems used for evaluating and rewarding achievement in these areas.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13381

Watch It

One good way to examine stratification in the United States is to break down the population in quintiles, or five groups each representing 20% of the population. This CrashCourse video explains general information related to each quintile, then examines ways that class, status, and power all play into stratification in the U.S.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=260

Think It Over

- In what ways does the class system support the myth of a pure meritocracy? Who is helped and who is hurt by this ideology?
- Using your sociological imagination, consider how a history of colonialism and/or imperialism and/or slavery residually affects a country's system of stratification. Please consider the United States and at least one other country.

glossary

caste system:
a system in which people are born into a social standing that they will retain their entire lives

chattel slavery:
a form of slavery in which one person owns another ("chattel" means "property")

class:
a group that shares a common social status based on factors like wealth, income, education, and occupation

class system:
social standing based on social factors and individual accomplishments

debt bondage:
the act of people pledging themselves as servants in exchange for money for passage, and are subsequently paid too little to regain their freedom

endogamy:
refers to the practice of marrying within one's own caste category

income:
the money a person earns from work or from dividend-paying investments

meritocracy:
an ideal system in which demonstrated personal effort and ability—or merit—determines social standing

wealth:
the value of money and assets a person has, perhaps due to inheritance

1. Congress abolishes the African slave trade. History.com. https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/congress-abolishes-the-african-slave-trade↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- What Is Social Stratification?. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Slavery from Global Wealth and Poverty. **Authored by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:18GPu-VJ@3/Global-Wealth-and-Poverty. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.
- Social Stratification in the US: Crash Course Sociology #23. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeiHz5tzlws&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=24. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

All rights reserved content

- Social Stratification: Crash Course Sociology #21. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlkIKCMt-Fs. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 10.5: Systems of Social Stratification is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.6: Class in the United States

Learning Outcomes

- Describe social classes in the United States

Below, we will explore the major divisions of social class in the United States and their key subcategories.

Upper Class



Figure 1. Members of the upper class can afford to live, work, and play in exclusive places designed for luxury and comfort. (Photo courtesy of PrimeImageMedia.com/flickr)

The upper class is considered the top, and only the elite get to see the view from there. Money provides not just access to material goods, but also access to power and status, as Max Weber described. As corporate leaders, members of the upper class make decisions that affect the job status and security of millions of people. As media owners, they influence the collective identity of the nation. They run the major network television stations, radio broadcasts, newspapers, magazines, multi-media publishing companies, and sports franchises. As board members of the most prestigious colleges and universities, they influence cultural attitudes and values. As philanthropists, they establish foundations to support social causes. As campaign contributors, they sway politicians, sometimes to protect their own economic interests.

The “Middle” Class



Figure 2. These members of a club likely consider themselves middle class. (Photo courtesy of United Way Canada-Centraide Canada/flickr)

Many people, including a majority of Americans, consider themselves middle class, but there are differing ideas about what that means. People with annual incomes of $150,000 call themselves middle class, as do people who annually earn $30,000. That helps explain why, in the United States, the middle class is broken into upper and lower subcategories.

The Upper Middle Class

Upper-middle-class people tend to hold bachelor’s and postgraduate degrees. They’ve studied subjects such as business, management, law, or medicine.

Comfort is a key concept for this group, as they work hard and live materially secure lives. Upper-middle-class people tend to pursue careers that earn higher incomes. They provide their families with large homes and nice cars. They may go skiing or boating on vacation, and their children receive high-quality education and healthcare (Gilbert 2010).

The Average Middle Class

In the average middle class, people hold jobs supervised by members of the upper middle class. They fill administrative support positions, or work as teachers, as office or bank clerks and assistants, and are often in lower-level "white collar" jobs. Average middle class members generally hold bachelor's degrees from four-year colleges or associate's degrees from two-year community or technical colleges.

Compared to lower class work, average middle class jobs carry more prestige and come with slightly higher paychecks. With these incomes, people can afford a decent, mainstream lifestyle, but may struggle to maintain it. They generally don't have enough income to build significant savings. In addition, their grip on class status is more precarious than in the upper tiers of the class system. They tend to own their own homes but the mortgages are often more cumbersome, leaving less money for travel, investments, and private schools.

Watch It

Watch this video to learn about how the middle class in America has shrunk in recent years.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=262

The Lower Middle Class or Working Class

Working-class people often hold jobs in manual labor, or so called "blue collar" work. These jobs are often hands-on and might include physically demanding occupations such as factory work, machine maintenance, or construction. These people work jobs that may initially require little prior skill or experience and they often perform routine tasks under close supervision. At the more advanced level, these workers may hold certifications and be qualified as better paid "skilled" workers. These jobs are sensitive to recessions and other economic downturns, as well as to global movement of production overseas and the automation of factory work. When budgets are tight, this group is often the most likely to lose their jobs.

Most often working class people have less formal education and earn less money compared to the average middle class individual.



Figure 3. This man is a custodian at a restaurant. His job, which is crucial to the business, is considered lower class. (Photo courtesy of Frederick Md Publicity/flickr)

The Lower Class

The lower class is comprised of the working poor. Like some members of the working class, they often have unskilled, low-paying employment with hourly wages. However, their jobs rarely offer benefits such as healthcare or retirement planning, and their positions are often seasonal or temporary. They work as sharecroppers, migrant farm workers, housecleaners, entry-level retail and service staff, and day laborers. Some are high school dropouts. Some are illiterate, unable to read job ads.

How can people work full-time and still be poor? Even working full-time, millions of the working poor earn incomes too meager to support a family. While the federal minimum wage is $7.25 per hour, the actual minimum wage varies from state to state, with a 2018 maximum, for example, of $11.50 in Washington. However, in many states the average is about $8.00 per hour (Department of Labor 2014). At that rate, working 40 hours a week earns $320. That comes to $16,640 a year, before tax and deductions. Even for a single person, the pay is low. A married couple with children would have a very hard time covering expenses.

The underclass is the United States' lowest tier. Members of the underclass live mainly in inner cities and many are unemployed or underemployed. Those who do hold jobs typically perform menial tasks (i.e., picking up plastic bottles) for little pay. Some of the underclass are homeless. For many, welfare systems provide a much-needed support through food assistance, medical care, housing, and the like.

Watch It

Watch the selected clip from this CrashCourse video to review the social classes in the United States: upper class, upper middle class, average middle class, working class, and lower class.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=262

Status Consistency

Social stratification systems determine social position based on factors like income, education, and occupation. Sociologists use the term **status consistency** to describe the consistency, or lack thereof, of an individual's rank across these factors. Caste systems correlate with high status consistency, whereas the more flexible meritocracy class system has lower status consistency.

To illustrate, let's consider Susan. Susan earned her high school degree but did not go to college. That factor is a trait of the lower-middle class. She began doing landscaping work, which as manual labor is also a trait of the lower-middle class or even of the lower class. However, over time, Susan started her own company. She hired employees. She won larger contracts. She became a business owner and earned a lot of money. Those traits represent the upper-middle class. There are inconsistencies between Susan's educational level, her occupation, and her income. In a class system, a person can work hard and have little education and still be middle or upper class, whereas in a caste system that mobility would not be possible. In a class system, low status consistency correlates with having more choices and opportunities.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13382

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13383

Think It Over

- Why do you think so many Americans describe themselves "middle class"?
- What could be problematic with the way middle class status is calculated? In the documentary, the range for middle class inclusion for a single person is $24,000-$73,000. What factors are not being taken into account?

glossary

status consistency:

the consistency, or lack thereof, of an individual's rank across social categories like income, education, and occupation

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- What Is Social Stratification?. **Authored by**: OpenStax. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.

All rights reserved content

- Social Class & Poverty in the US: Crash Course Sociology #24. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8PEv5SV4sU&t=319s&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=26. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Why the Middle Class Matters. **Authored by**: Frontline PBS. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MMKZSQaKxU. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 10.6: Class in the United States is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.7: Introduction to Social Mobility and Poverty

What you'll learn to do: examine social mobility and poverty

Do you believe in the American Dream? How plausible do you think it is for someone to grow up in poverty and to become a millionaire? Watch this video from popular vlogger John Green to ponder how "open" our "open system" of stratification is in the United States. How does it compare to other open systems of stratification like those found in Denmark and Canada? How does systemic inequality of opportunity, particularly for racial and ethnic minorities, and for women, affect one's ability to move up the social class ladder?

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=264

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Social Mobility and Poverty. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Is the American Dream Real?. **Authored by**: vlogbrothers. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYGc8-L_NmE. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 10.7: Introduction to Social Mobility and Poverty is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.8: Social Mobility

Learning Outcomes

- Describe how inequality of opportunity is measured through life chances and standard of living
- Describe types of social mobility

Life Chances

Max Weber's conceptualization of social class examines class, status, and power. We know by now that all societies have a mechanism to rank, or stratify, its members and that this stratification is unequal in terms of rewards and benefits. Weber used the term **life chances** (*Lebenschancen* in German) to describe the opportunities to increase one's position in the social class structure. Categories that affect life chances include the social class one is born into, geographic location, family ancestry, race, ethnicity, age, and gender.

Consider the life chances of a child born in Syria today. Syria is one of the most violent countries in the world, and millions of Syrians have been displaced or are refugees seeking asylum in other countries. What kinds of life chances are afforded to Syrian children?

Consider the life chances of a child born into the Kennedy family in Massachusetts, which has been called "America's top dynasty" [1] versus the life chances of a child born to a poor family in Mississippi. The Kennedy child is born into class, status, and power, having a U.S. President, three U.S. Senators, four U.S. Representatives, and one U.S. Cabinet member within his or her extended family. This boy or girl will attend elite private boarding schools, will travel the world, and will be exposed to possibilities largely unknown to his or her counterpart in Mississippi. Now imagine that the child born in Mississippi is African-American and has ancestors who were sharecroppers that lived under Jim Crow Laws, and whose more recent forebearers struggled through the Civil Rights Movement. This child will likely attend underfunded public schools and watch his or her parents struggle economically to find sustainable work and obtain health care. More than likely, he or she will experience racism from a very young age.

Watch It

Watch this video to see how things such as class, status, race, and geography shape life chances. Social stratification affects a wide range of life chances, including things like parenting, educational attainment, and health.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=266

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13384

Social Mobility

Social mobility refers to the ability to change positions within a social stratification system. When people improve or diminish their economic status in a way that affects social class, they experience social mobility. Social mobility is one way to attempt to measure opportunity. In a perfectly mobile society, parents' resources would be completely irrelevant to a child's prospects; in a perfectly immobile society (like a caste system), parents' resources rigidly determine a child's trajectory.

Individuals can experience upward or downward social mobility for a variety of reasons. **Upward mobility** refers to an increase—or upward shift—in social class. In the United States, people applaud the rags-to-riches achievements of celebrities like Jennifer Lopez or Michael Jordan. Bestselling author Stephen King worked as a janitor prior to being published. Oprah Winfrey grew up in poverty in rural Mississippi before becoming a powerful media personality. There are many stories of people rising from modest beginnings to fame and fortune. But the truth is that relative to the overall population, the number of people who rise from poverty to wealth is very small. Still, upward mobility is not only about becoming rich and famous. In the United States, people who earn a college degree, get a job promotion, or marry someone with a good income may also move up socially. In contrast, **downward mobility** indicates a lowering of one's social class. Some people move downward because of business setbacks, unemployment, or illness. Dropping out of school, losing a job, or getting a divorce may result in a loss of income or status and, therefore, lead to downward social mobility.

It is not uncommon for different generations of a family to belong to varying social classes. This is known as **intergenerational mobility**. For example, an upper-class executive may have parents who belonged to the middle class. In turn, those parents may have been raised in the lower class. Patterns of intergenerational mobility can reflect long-term societal changes.

Similarly, **intragenerational mobility** refers to mobility within one's own lifetime. For example, someone who is born into the lower working class could be the first in their family to obtain a college degree and move from the lower working class to the lower middle class and work as a teacher or other type of professional.

Structural mobility happens when societal changes enable a whole group of people to move up or down the social class ladder. Structural mobility is attributable to changes in society as a whole, not individual changes. In the first half of the twentieth century, industrialization expanded the U.S. economy, raising the standard of living and leading to upward structural mobility. In today's work economy, the recent recession, increasing automation, and the outsourcing of jobs overseas have contributed to a decade of historically high unemployment rates. Many people have experienced economic setbacks, creating a wave of downward structural mobility.

When analyzing the trends and movements in social mobility, sociologists consider all modes of mobility. Scholars recognize that mobility is not as common or easy to achieve as many people think. In fact, some consider social mobility a myth.

Standard of Living

In order to examine social mobility, it is important to understand **standard of living**, which refers to the level of wealth available to a certain socioeconomic class in order to acquire the material necessities and comforts to maintain its lifestyle. The standard of living is based on factors such as income, employment, class, poverty rates, and housing affordability. Because standard of living is closely related to quality of life, it can represent factors such as the ability to afford a home, own a car, and take vacations.

Women who are single heads of household tend to have a lower income and lower standard of living than their married or male counterparts. This is a worldwide phenomenon known as the **feminization of poverty**—which acknowledges that women disproportionately make up the majority of individuals in poverty across the globe.

In the United States, as in most high-income nations, social stratifications and standards of living are in part based on occupation (Lin and Xie 1988). Aside from the obvious impact that income has on someone's standard of living, occupations also influence social standing through the relative levels of prestige they afford. Employment in medicine, law, or engineering confers high status. Teachers and police officers are generally respected, though their jobs are not considered particularly prestigious. At the other end of the scale, some of the lowest rankings apply to positions like waitress, janitor, and bus driver.

The most significant threat to the relatively high standard of living we're accustomed to in the United States is the decline of the middle class, as discussed above. The size, income, and wealth of the middle class have all been declining since the 1970s. This is occurring at a time when corporate profits have increased more than 141 percent, and CEO pay has risen by more than 298 percent (Popken 2007).

G. William Domhoff, of the University of California at Santa Cruz, reports that "In 2010, the top 1% of households (the upper class) owned 35.4% of all privately held wealth, and the next 19% (the managerial, professional, and small business stratum) had 53.5%, which means that just 20% of the people owned a remarkable 89%, leaving only 11% of the wealth for the bottom 80% (wage and salary workers)" (Domhoff 2013).

Thus, sociologists are interested in examining both social mobility among individuals and the likelihood of groups to move up or down within the U.S. class system over time. Within these categories one can also consider what the standard of living might be for individuals within each of the social classes.

Watch It

Watch this video to learn more about social mobility. The video highlights research that began in 1982 by Karl Alexander, Doris Entwisle, and Linda Olson. They followed 800 first grade students in Baltimore for twenty five years and examined the impact their socioeconomic status had throughout their lives.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=266

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13385

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13387

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13388

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13386

Think It Over

- Track the social stratification of your family tree. Did the social standing of your parents differ from the social standing of your grandparents and great-grandparents? Does your class differ from your social standing, and, if so, how? What aspects of your societal situation establish you in a social class?
- How does the longitudinal research conducted by Alexander and Entwisle help us understand the “long shadow of poverty,” particularly among racial minorities?

glossary

downward mobility:
a lowering of one’s social class

feminization of poverty:
the high and rising percentage of women who bear the burden of poverty across the globe

intergenerational mobility:
a difference in social class between different generations of a family

intragenerational mobility:
a difference in social class between different members of the same generation

life chances:
opportunities for an individual to improve his or her quality of life

social mobility:
the ability to change positions within a social stratification system

structural mobility:
a societal change that enables a whole group of people to move up or down the class ladder

upward mobility:
an increase—or upward shift—in social class

1. Hess, S. 2019. "America's Top Dynasty?" http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/11/AR2009091101831.html?noredirect=on↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Social Stratification and Mobility in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Social Mobility: Crash Course Sociology #26. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjuV-XdYHhA&index=27&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- The Impacts of Social Class: Crash Course Sociology #25. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=0a21mndoORE. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 10.8: Social Mobility is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.9: Global Poverty

Learning Outcomes

- Distinguish between relative and absolute poverty
- Describe the economic situation of some of the world's most impoverished areas

What does it mean to be poor? Does it mean being a single mother with two kids in New York City, waiting for the next paycheck in order to buy groceries? Does it mean living with almost no furniture in your apartment because your income doesn't allow for extras like beds or chairs? Or does it mean having to live with the distended bellies of the chronically malnourished throughout the peripheral nations of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia? Poverty has a thousand faces and a thousand gradations; there is no single definition that pulls together every part of the spectrum. You might feel you are poor if you can't afford cable television or buy your own car. Every time you see a fellow student with a new laptop and smartphone you might feel that you, with your ten-year-old desktop computer, are barely keeping up. However, someone else might look at the clothes you wear and the calories you consume and consider you rich.



Figure 1. How poor is poor for these beggar children in Vietnam? (Photo courtesy of Augapfel/flickr)

Types of Poverty

Social scientists define global poverty in different ways and take into account the complexities and the issues of relativism described above. **Relative poverty** is a state of living where people can afford necessities but are unable to meet their society's average standard of living. People often disparage "keeping up with the Joneses"—the idea that you must achieve at least your neighbors' observable standard of living in order to not feel or appear deprived. Less abstractly, you might feel "poor" if you are living without a car to drive to and from work, or without an economic safety net should a family member fall ill, and without any "extras" beyond just making ends meet.



Figure 2. Slums in India illustrate absolute poverty all too well. (Photo courtesy of Emmanuelle Dyan/flickr)

Contrary to relative poverty, people who live in **absolute poverty** lack even the basic necessities, which typically include adequate food, clean water, safe housing, and access to healthcare. Absolute poverty is defined by the World Bank (2014a) as when someone lives on less than $1.25 a day. According to the most recent estimates, in 2011, about 17 percent of people in the developing world lived at or below $1.25 a day, a decrease of 26 percent compared to ten years ago, and an overall decrease of 35 percent compared to twenty years ago. A shocking number of people—88 million—live in absolute poverty, and close to 3 billion people live on less than $2.50 a day (Shah 2011).

While several economic factors can be improved in the United States (inequitable distribution of income and wealth, feminization of poverty, stagnant wages for most workers while executive pay and profits soar, a declining middle class), we are fortunate that

the poverty experienced here is most often relative poverty and not absolute poverty. Whereas absolute poverty is deprivation so severe that it puts one's survival in jeopardy, relative poverty is not having the means to achieve the lifestyle of the average person in your country.

Subjective poverty describes poverty that is composed of many dimensions; it is subjectively present when your actual income does not meet your expectations and perceptions. With the concept of subjective poverty, the poor themselves have a greater say in recognizing when poverty is present. In short, subjective poverty has more to do with how a person or a family defines themselves. This means that a family subsisting on a few dollars a day in Nepal might think of themselves as doing well, within their perception of normal. However, a Westerner traveling to Nepal might visit the same family and see extreme need.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13389

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13390

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13391

Absolute Poverty Around the World

Who are the impoverished? Who is living in absolute poverty? The poorest people in the world are women and those in peripheral and semi-peripheral nations. For women, the rate of poverty is particularly worsened by familial-domestic and broader societal pressures on their time. In general, time is one of the few luxuries the very poor have, but studies have shown that women in poverty, who are often responsible for cooking and housekeeping and other labor-intensive family comforts, as well as for earning income, have less free time. The result is that while men and women may have the same rate of economic poverty, women are suffering more in terms of overall well-being (Buvinic 1997). It is harder for females to get credit to expand businesses, to take the time to learn a new skill, or to spend extra hours improving their existing skills so as to be able to earn higher pay.

Africa

The majority of the poorest countries in the world are in Africa. That is not to say there is not diversity within the countries of that continent; countries like South Africa and Egypt have much lower rates of poverty than Angola and Ethiopia, for instance. Overall, African income levels have been dropping compared to the rest of the world, meaning that Africa as a whole is getting relatively poorer. Making the problem worse, 2014 saw an outbreak of the *Ebola* virus in West Africa, leading to both a public health crisis and an economic downturn due to a loss of workers and tourist dollars.

Why is Africa in such dire straits? Much of the continent's poverty can be traced to the availability of land, especially arable land (land that can be farmed). Centuries of struggle over land ownership have meant that much useable land has been ruined or left unfarmed, while many countries with inadequate rainfall have never set up an infrastructure to irrigate. Many of Africa's natural resources were long ago taken by colonial forces, leaving little agricultural and mineral wealth on the continent.

Further, African poverty is worsened by civil wars and inadequate governance that are the result of a continent reshaped by colonial borders and leaders. Consider the example of Rwanda. There, two ethnic groups cohabitated with their own system of hierarchy and management until Belgian colonists took control of the country in 1915 and rigidly confined members of the population into two unequal ethnic groups. Historically, members of the Tutsi group held positions of power, but the involvement of the Belgian colonizers led to the Hutus seizing power during a 1960s revolt. This ultimately produced a repressive government and a genocide against the Tutsis that left hundreds of thousands of Rwandans dead or living in a broad geographical displacement called a diaspora (U.S. Department of State 2011c). Ten years after the civil war, researchers estimated that the conflict resulted in a 20-30% reduction of per capita GDP in the nation.[1] The painful rebirth of a self-ruled Africa has meant many countries bear ongoing scars as they try to see their way towards the future (World Poverty 2012a).

Asia

While the majority of the world's poorest countries are in Africa, the majority of the world's poorest people are in Asia. As in Africa, Asia finds itself with disparities in the distribution of poverty, with Japan and South Korea holding much more wealth than India and Cambodia. In fact, most poverty is concentrated in South Asia. One of the most pressing causes of poverty in Asia is simply the pressure that the size of the population puts on its resources. In fact, many believe that China's success in recent times has much to do with its draconian population control rules, which strongly encourage families to have only one child. According to

the U.S. State Department, China's market-oriented reforms have contributed to its significant reduction of poverty and to the speed at which it has experienced an increase in income levels (U.S. Department of State 2011b).

Similar to many African countries, Asian countries have suffered from the legacy of imperialism and colonialism, as seen in the Philippines, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Subsequent wars and U.S. intervention have deepened economic problems.

MENA

The Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) includes oil-rich countries in the Gulf, such as Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait, but also countries that are relatively resource-poor in relation to their populations, such as Morocco and Yemen. These countries are predominantly Islamic. For the last quarter-century, economic growth was slower in MENA than in other developing economies, and almost a quarter of the 300 million people who make up the population live on less than $2.00 a day (World Bank 2013).

The International Labour Organization tracks the way income inequality influences social unrest. The two regions with the highest risk of social unrest are Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East-North Africa region (International Labour Organization 2012). Increasing unemployment and high socioeconomic inequality in MENA were major factors in the Arab Spring, which—beginning in 2010—toppled dictatorships throughout the Middle East in favor of democratically elected government. Adding to the prospects for social unrest is the fact that unemployment and income inequalities are often blamed on immigrants, foreign nationals, and ethnic/religious minorities.

Watch It

Watch the selected second half of this video to learn more about absolute poverty around the world.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=268

Global Feminization of Poverty

In some ways, the phrase "global feminization of poverty" says it all: around the world women are disproportionately bearing the burden of poverty. This means more women live in poor conditions, receive inadequate healthcare, bear the brunt of malnutrition and inadequate drinking water, and so on. Throughout the 1990s, data indicated that while overall poverty rates were rising, especially in peripheral nations, the rates of impoverishment increased for women nearly 20 percent more than for men (Mogadham 2005).

Why is this happening? While myriad variables affect women's poverty, research specializing in this issue identifies three causes (Mogadham 2005):

1. The expansion in the number of female-headed households
2. The persistence and consequences of intra-household inequalities and biases against women
3. The implementation of neoliberal economic policies (with limited governmental intervention) around the world

While women are living longer and healthier lives today compared to ten years ago, around the world many women are denied basic rights, particularly in the workplace. In peripheral nations, they accumulate fewer assets, farm less land, make less money, and face restricted civil rights and liberties. Women can stimulate the economic growth of peripheral nations, but they are often undereducated and lack access to credit needed to start small businesses.

In 2013, the United Nations assessed its progress toward achieving its Millennium Development Goals. Goal 3 was to promote gender equality and empower women, and there were encouraging advances in this area. While women's employment outside the agricultural sector remains under 20 percent in Western Asia, Northern Africa, and Southern Asia, worldwide it increased from 35–40 percent over the twenty-year period ending in 2010 (United Nations 2013).

Addressing Poverty

Click through these slides to learn about one popular solution for alleviating poverty.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=268

Consequences of Poverty



Figure 3. For this child at a refugee camp in Ethiopia, poverty and malnutrition are a way of life. (Photo courtesy of DFID – UK Department for International Development/flickr)

Not surprisingly, the consequences of poverty are often also causes. The poor often experience inadequate healthcare, limited education, and lack of access to birth control. But those born into these conditions are also incredibly challenged in their efforts to better their circumstances because these consequences of poverty are also causes of poverty, which perpetuate an ongoing cycle of disadvantage.

In their analysis of global inequality studies, sociologists Neckerman and Torche (2007) have divided the consequences of poverty into three areas. The first, termed "the sedimentation of global inequality," proposes that once poverty becomes entrenched in an area it is typically very difficult to reverse. As mentioned above, poverty exists in a cycle where the consequences and causes are intertwined and mutually reinforced. The second consequence of poverty is its effect on physical and mental health. Poor people face physical health challenges, including malnutrition and high infant mortality rates. Mental health is also detrimentally affected by the emotional stresses of poverty, with relative deprivation carrying the most robust effect. Again, as with the ongoing inequality, the effects of poverty on mental and physical health become more entrenched as time goes on. Neckerman and Torche's third consequence of poverty is the prevalence of crime. Cross-nationally, crime rates are higher, particularly for violent crime, in countries with higher levels of income inequality (Fajnzylber, Lederman, and Loayza 2002).

The Underground Economy Around the World

What do the driver of an unlicensed "hack" cab in New York, a piecework seamstress laboring in her home in Mumbai, and a street tortilla vendor in Mexico City have in common? They are all members of the **underground economy**, a loosely defined unregulated market unhindered by taxes, government permits, or human protections. Official statistics before the worldwide 2008 recession posit that the underground economy accounted for over 50 percent of nonagricultural work in Latin America; the figure went as high as 80 percent in parts of Asia and Africa (Chen 2001). A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* discusses the challenges, parameters, and surprising benefits of this informal marketplace. The wages earned in most underground economy jobs, especially in peripheral nations, are a pittance—a few rupees for a handmade bracelet at a market, or maybe 250 rupees ($5 U.S.) for a day's worth of fruit and vegetable sales (Barta 2009). But these tiny sums mark the difference between survival and extinction for the world's poor.

The underground economy has never been viewed very positively by global economists. After all, its members don't pay taxes, don't take out loans to grow their businesses, and rarely earn enough to put money back into the economy through consumer spending. But according to the International Labor Organization (an agency of the United Nations), some 52 million people worldwide will lose their jobs due to the ongoing and unevenly addressed worldwide recession. And while those in core nations know that high unemployment rates and limited government safety nets can be frightening, their situation is nothing compared to the loss of a job for those barely eking out an existence. Once that job disappears, the chance of staying afloat is very slim.

Within the context of this recession, some see the underground economy as a key player in keeping people alive. Indeed, an economist at the World Bank credits jobs created by the informal economy as a primary reason why peripheral nations are not in worse shape. Women in particular benefit from the informal sector. The majority of economically active women in peripheral nations are engaged in the informal sector, which is somewhat buffered from the economic downturn. The flip side, of course, is that it is equally buffered from the possibility of economic growth.

Even in the United States, the informal economy exists, although not on the same scale as in peripheral and semi-peripheral nations. It might include under-the-table nannies, gardeners, and housecleaners, as well as unlicensed street vendors and taxi

drivers. There are also those who run informal businesses, like daycares or salons, from their houses. Analysts estimate that this type of labor may make up 10 percent of the overall U.S. economy, a number that will likely grow as companies reduce their number of employees, leaving more workers to seek other options. In the end, the article suggests that whether selling medicinal wines in Thailand or woven bracelets in India, the workers of the underground economy at least have what most people want most of all: a chance to stay afloat (Barta 2009).

Think It Over

- Consider the concept of subjective poverty. Does it make sense that poverty is in the eye of the beholder? When you see a homeless person, is your reaction different if he or she is seemingly content versus begging? Why?
- Go to your campus bookstore or visit its web site. Find out who manufactures apparel and novelty items with your school's insignias. In what countries are these produced? Conduct some research to determine how well your school adheres to the principles advocated by USAS.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13392

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13380

Glossary

absolute poverty:
the state where one is barely able, or unable, to afford basic necessities

relative poverty:
the state of poverty where one is unable to live the lifestyle of the average person in their country

subjective poverty:
a state of poverty composed of many dimensions, subjectively present when one's actual income does not meet one's expectations

underground economy:
an unregulated economy of labor and goods that operates outside of governance, regulatory systems, or human protections

---

1. Lopez, Humberto; Wodon, Quentin; Bannon, Ian; Lopez, Humberto; Wodon, Quentin; Bannon, Ian. 2004. *Rwanda : the impact of conflict on growth and poverty (English)*. Social Development Notes ; no. 18. Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction. Washington, DC: World Bank. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/591321468777614741/Rwanda-the-impact-of-conflict-on-growth-and-poverty↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Alleviating Poverty interactive. **Authored by**: Scott Barr for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Global Wealth and Poverty. **Provided by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.16:18GPu-VJ@5/Global-Wealth-and-Poverty. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.

All rights reserved content

- Global Stratification & Poverty: Crash Course Sociology #27. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rts_PWIVTU&feature=youtu.be. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Social Class & Poverty in the US: Crash Course Sociology #24. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8PEv5SV4sU&t=319s&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=26. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 10.9: Global Poverty is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.10: Poverty in the U.S.

Learning Outcomes

- Examine poverty in the United States

Drawing the Poverty Line

The federal poverty level is based on relative poverty. Poverty in the United States is measured by the number of people who fall below a certain level of income—called the **poverty line**—that defines the income needed for a basic standard of living.

In the United States, the official definition of the poverty line traces back to a single person: Mollie Orshansky. In 1963, Orshansky, who was working for the Social Security Administration, published an article called "Children of the Poor" in a highly useful, but dry publication called the *Social Security Bulletin*. Orshansky's idea was to define a poverty line based on the cost of a healthy diet.

Her previous job had been at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, where she had worked in an agency called the Bureau of Home Economics and Human Nutrition. One task of this bureau had been to calculate how much it would cost to feed a nutritionally adequate diet to a family. Orshansky found that the average family spent one-third of its income on food. She then proposed that the poverty line be the amount needed to buy a nutritionally adequate diet, given the size of the family, multiplied by three.

The current U.S. poverty line is essentially the same as the Orshansky poverty line, although the government adjusts the dollar amounts to represent the same buying power over time. The U.S. poverty line in 2015 ranged from $11,790 for a single individual to $25,240 for a household of four people.

Figure 1 shows the number in poverty and the U.S. poverty rate over time; that is, the percentage of the population below the poverty line in any given year. While the number in poverty has grown over time, the poverty rate declined through the 1960s, rose in the early 1980s and early 1990s, but seems to have been slightly lower since the mid-1990s. However, in no year in the last four decades has the poverty rate been less than 13.5% of the U.S. population—that is, at best about one American in nine is below the poverty line.

The federal poverty line in the U.S. is an example of relative poverty (not absolute poverty). The cost of living is not taken into consideration, so the federal poverty level is standard across the United States and fails to account for the fact that some cities are vastly more expensive than others. The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) created this family budget calculator (click on it to see how your city measures up to the federal poverty line). According to the EPI, in 615 U.S. cities, it takes a total income at least twice the federal poverty line for any type of family with three children or fewer to afford basic expenses. [1]

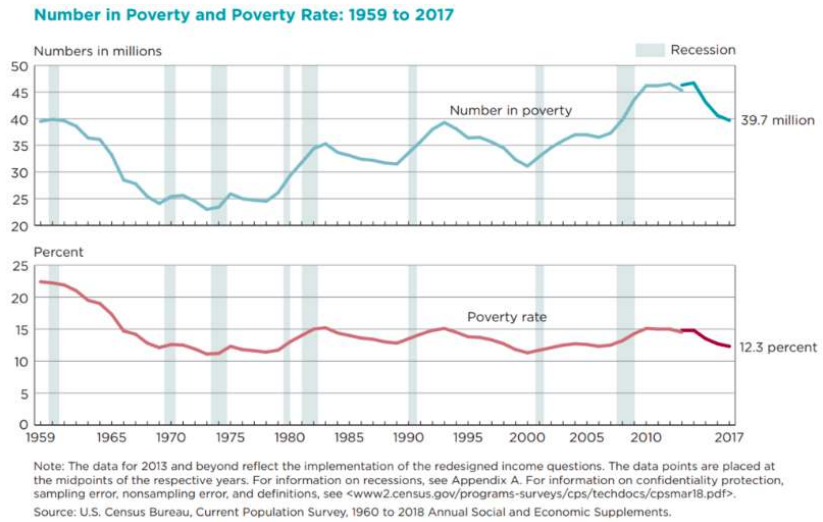


Figure 1. Changes in the number in poverty and the poverty rate.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13394

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13393

Watch It

Watch the selected clip from this CrashCourse video to understand how poverty looks within the United States.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=270

Causes of poverty

Poverty as a personal failing

When it comes to poverty in the United States, there are two main lines of thought. The most common line of thought within the U.S. is that a person is poor because of personal traits–things like personality characteristics, motivation, and education. This viewpoint puts the blame on an individual's personal failure not to climb out of poverty and is centered around the belief that anyone can succeed if they try hard enough. This thought pattern stems from the idea of meritocracy, or the belief that individuals are selected and moved ahead based primarily on their achievements and intellectual abilities.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Secretary of Labor and sociologist, completed a report titled "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action" (known as the Moynihan Report) in 1965. The intent was to show that civil rights legislation alone would not produce racial equality, and to advocate for additional policies to address structural discrimination. Unfortunately, the report was interpreted as focusing on the internal dynamics of Black families, as it seemed to identity racially disproportionate rates of divorce, "illegitimate" children, welfare dependence, and unemployment as primary factors. This reading allowed many conservatives to argue that racial self-help was both adequate and necessary, with some some commentators straying into judgement instead of analysis so as to focus on "loose morality among African Americans" as a way to blame Black families themselves for inequality [2].

Poverty as a structural failing

Another explanation for poverty is that it results from structural inequality. For example, the job market fails to provide a proper number of jobs which pay enough to keep families out of poverty. Even if unemployment is low, the labor market may be saturated with low paying, part-time work that lacks benefits such as health insurance coverage or employee retirement contributions (thus limiting the number of full-time, good paying jobs). Low minimum wages and the increasing prevalence of part-time jobs that offer no benefits have contributed to the labor market's inability to produce enough jobs sufficient for keeping a family out of poverty. This is an example of an economic structural failure. It exists independently of any one individual's actions or priorities, and as such it is an apt object of analysis for sociologists.

Poverty is not equally distributed among racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Although whites make up the largest total number of people in poverty, Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans are disproportionately likely to be poor by comparison.

The 1965 Moynihan Report began with the following rationale for why Blacks were not experiencing equality as a group: "There are two reasons. First, the racist virus in the American bloodstream still afflicts us: Negroes will encounter serious personal prejudice for at least another generation. Second, three centuries of sometimes unimaginable mistreatment have taken their toll on the Negro people" (as reprinted in Geary 2015).

Sociologist William Julius Wilson has written extensively about the institutional barriers Black Americans face, and has examined structural causes of poverty. His books *The Declining Significance of Race* (1972), *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987) and *When Work Disappears* (1996) examine what he calls the "underclass." In one case study, Wilson documents the economic and social changes in the North Lawndale area of West Chicago over several years. He notes that North Lawndale lost 75 percent of its businesses from 1960-1970, resulting in unprecedented levels of unemployment. While 70 percent of Black men nationwide worked full-time, year-round in the 1970s, by the 1980s, only half did (1996). Although Wilson's books have won numerous awards and have been widely read, he has been heavily criticized for prioritizing the role of social class over that of race and institutional racism.

Poverty and Race in Chicago

One way to examine structural failings is to examine Chicago, a city with high unemployment and murder rates that have made national headlines for several years. In the 2017 Great Cities Institute report, the institute estimated that 40 percent of Black 20 to 24-year-olds in Chicago are out of work and out of school, compared with 7 percent of their white counterparts in the same city. The unemployment rate for blacks in Chicago was 16.2 percent in 2018, compared with under 5% for whites. Thirty-four percent of African Americans in Chicago are living in relative poverty as compared to 24 percent for Blacks nationally (which is already disproportionate since Blacks make up 12 percent of the U.S. population)[3].

Few jobs are located close to the most segregated and the most violent neighborhoods in South Chicago, and some researchers credit the tremendous increase in violence to a lack of economic opportunities. According to the University of Chicago Crime Lab, murders in Chicago increased by 58 percent between 2015 and 2016. High poverty areas, especially historically segregated areas, also often have low performing schools. In 2013, 50 Chicago public schools were closed, which affected 12,000 students, nearly 88 percent of whom were Black. In a 2018 summary report, students who were forced to transfer schools experienced more suspensions and absences across the board, and were subject to both short and long-term negative learning effects [4]. Better-educated people are less likely to be poor, but how do we begin to improve public schools in the poorest neighborhoods when much of their funding is determined by property taxes? We will continue to examine poverty as it relates to race, ethnicity, gender, and education in subsequent modules.

A recent survey by the U.S. Federal Reserve found that 47 percent of Americans would have a difficult time raising $400 cash in an emergency[5] This supports recent census data, which shows that half the population qualifies as poor or low income. Poverty rates are persistently higher in rural and inner city parts of the country as compared to suburban areas. Children, the disabled, the elderly, and minority populations are particularly vulnerable to poverty.

Most people tend to think about poverty as "cyclical" or generational poverty, but in a recent study conducted by the Center for Poverty Research at the University of California, Davis, the average "spell of poverty" lasted 2.8 years, and although most people become poor due to less money being earned by a head of household, 25 percent entered into poverty as the result of a breadwinner's death or through divorce[6]. The effects of poverty on children are many, including an increased likelihood of reduced life chances.

WAtch It

Watch as Dr. Ann Huff Stevens, Director of the Center for Poverty Research and Chairperson of Economics at UC Davis, describes one way to address poverty among children and to reduce its long-term effects.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=270

Should We Raise the Minimum Wage?

In 2001, Barbara Ehrenreich published *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* in which she conducted an experiment by working a series of minimum wage jobs in three states and documenting her experiences. She focused especially on the challenges facing women among the working poor, who often hold the types of "service" jobs she herself sought out and analyzed.

A tenth anniversary edition was published in 2011, and Ehrenreich followed up with many of the minimum wage workers she had met a decade before during her participant observation research. In this edition she writes "In what has become a familiar pattern, the government defunds services that might help the poor while ramping up law enforcement. Shut down public housing, then make it a crime to be homeless. Generate no public-sector jobs, then penalize people for falling into debt. The experience of the poor, and especially poor people of color, comes to resemble that of a rat in a cage scrambling to avoid erratically administered electric shocks. And if you should try to escape this nightmare reality into a brief, drug-induced high, it's 'gotcha' all over again, because that of course is illegal too."

In the 2014 State of the Union Address, President Obama called on Congress to raise the national minimum wage, and then signed an executive order doing exactly that for individuals working on new federal service contracts. However, Congress did not pass legislation to change the national minimum wage for all workers. This has proved controversial, with various economists taking different sides on the issue, and with public protests being staged by several groups of minimum-wage workers, often with the assistance of unions and other advocates.

Opponents of raising the minimum wage argue that some workers would get larger paychecks while others would lose their jobs, and companies would be less likely to hire new workers because of the increased cost of paying them (Bernstein 2014; cited in CNN).

Proponents of raising the minimum wage contend that some job loss would be greatly offset by the positive effects on the economy of low-wage workers having more income (Hassett 2014; cited in CNN). In 2018, Amazon raised the minimum wage for its employees to $15 an hour, doubling the federal rate and resulting in higher wages for its 250,000 workers (plus an additional 100,000 seasonal employees).[7]

Sociologists may also consider the minimum wage issue from differing perspectives. How much of an impact would a minimum wage raise have for a single mother? Some might study the economic effects, such as her ability to pay bills and keep food on the table. Others might look at how reduced economic stress could improve family relationships. Some sociologists might research the impact on small business owners. These could all be examples of public sociology, a branch of sociology that strives to bring sociological dialogue to public forums. The goals of public sociology are to increase understanding of the social factors that underlie social problems and to assist in finding solutions. Ehrenreich's book is a compelling example of public sociology. According to Michael Burawoy (2005), the challenge of public sociology is to engage multiple publics in multiple ways.

WAtch iT

Watch this video to hear from Princeton sociologist Kathryn Edin as she describes her research on welfare programs in the United States. She explains that single parents experienced a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" set of choices under the governmental assistance program of the 1990s, since working meant they were given less aid. That changed in 1997 with the creation of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and the expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). These programs are designed to prioritize work, but there are still more people than ever living on less than $2 a day. Edin recommends raising the minimum wage and expanding EITC to include caretakers of children. The latter proposal would mean categorizing unpaid domestic work as qualifying labor for the purposes of such programs.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=270

Further Research: Stratified Monopoly



Figure 2. In Monopoly the game, unlike in real life, all players start on equal footing.

Many sociologists and economists have used the classic board game Monopoly to illustrate poverty, social mobility, and the principles of a market economy. The game, nearly a century old, was originally designed to show the benefits of a limited tax system as well as those of a *monopoly*, or owning all of a particular type of property, utility, or transportation system.

However, if we consider Monopoly as an example we can see that several aspects of the game do not in fact translate to everyday life.

1. Each player begins at "GO" with the same amount of money and an opportunity to buy property as soon as one lands on it.
2. Each player "earns" the same amount of money when they pass "GO."
3. Each player has the same likelihood of rolling the die, going to jail, and bailing themselves out.

When we consider players who are unsuccessful at Monopoly, we often say they have had "bad luck."

You can play your own game of stratified Monopoly following the rules found here.

- What does Stratified Monopoly show us about wealth and poverty in the U.S.?
- Which version of Monopoly is closer to reality in the U.S.?

Think It Over

- The “Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)” is not often described as “welfare.” Does this categorization change the way people view government assistance?

Glossary

poverty line:
the minimum level of income deemed adequate to maintain a decent standard of living

---

1. Berman, J. 2015. "Federal poverty line doesn't reflect" https://www.huffpost.com/entry/federal-poverty-line-afford-to-live_n_3541338↵
2. Geary, D. 2015. "The Moynihan Report: An Annotated Edition." The Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/the-moynihan-report-an-annotated-edition/404632/↵
3. Semuels, A. (2018). "Chicago's Awful Divide." The Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2018/03/chicago-segregation-poverty/556649/↵
4. Strauss, V. 2018. "Chicago Promised," Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2018/05/24/chicago-promised-that-closing-nearly-50-schools-would-help-kids-in-2013-a-new-report-says-it-didnt/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.e9a1d7ec34d7↵
5. Gabler, N. 2018. "The Secret Shame." The Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/05/my-secret-shame/476415/. ↵
6. Stevens, A.H. "Transitions In and Out of Poverty," UC Davis Center for Poverty Research. https://poverty.ucdavis.edu/policy-brief/transitions-out-poverty-united-states. ↵
7. Danielle Wiener-Bronner and Chris Isidore. (October 2, 2018). Amazon announces $15 minimum wage for all US employees. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2018/10/02/tech/amazon-minimum-wage/index.html↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Increasing Income for Families in Need. **Provided by**: Center for Poverty Research. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fADKBjpWoh0&feature=youtu.be. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Drawing the Poverty Line. **Authored by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/vEmOH-_p@4.41:LIOHA92T@3/Drawing-the-Poverty-Line. **Project**: Economics. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/bc498e1f-efe...569ad09a82@4.4
- Number in Poverty and Poverty Rate: 1959 to 2017. United States.. **Authored by**: Soibangla. **Provided by**: Wikpedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_in_the_United_States#/media/File:Screenshot-www.census.gov-2018.09.15-10-25-15.png. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Theories of Poverty. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Theories_of_poverty#Causes_of_poverty_in_the_United_States. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Monopoly board. **Authored by**: William Warby. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/wwarby/11513424364. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

All rights reserved content

- Living in Poverty: Kathryn Edin. **Provided by**: Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HycFaUbaoLM&feature=youtu.be. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 10.10: Poverty in the U.S. is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.11: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Stratification

What you'll learn to do: describe theoretical perspectives on stratification



Figure 1. Stephen Curry and Marcin Gortat playing basketball. (Photo courtesy of Keith Allison/flickr)

While basketball is one of the highest-paying professional sports, there is stratification among teams and especially among players. For example, the Sacramento Kings hand out the lowest annual payroll, while the Golden State Warriors reportedly pay the highest. In 2018, Stephen Curry, a Golden State Warriors point guard, was the highest paid athlete in the NBA, earning around $34.7 million a year[1]. Within specific fields from all walks of life, layers are stratified and members are ranked. Sociological theories can help us explain social phenomena such as different salaries within the same high status profession. Functionalists would examine the purpose of such high salaries, while conflict theorists would study the exorbitant salaries as an unfair distribution of money, and might also explore the role of economic pressures arising from corporate-sponsored arenas, network ratings, owners, and managers. Interactionist theorists might examine how name-recognition is symbolic and important for particular teams and cities, such as LeBron James' recent move from his hometown of Cleveland to Los Angeles. Social stratification takes on new meanings when it is examined from these different sociological perspectives.

---

1. Cork Gaines. (Jun. 5, 2018)."The 27 highest-paid players in the NBA for the 2017-18 season." Business Insider https://www.businessinsider.com/nba-highest-paid-players-2017-10 and "NBA Team Salaries." Basketball Insiders. http://www.basketballinsiders.com/nba-team-salaries-at-a-glance/↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Stratification. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Stratification Introduction from Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*
- Warriors at Wizards 2/28/17. **Authored by**: Keith Allison. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/keithallison/33140701266/in/photolist-9npYbV-9nsxF7-9nq6QK-DBJ6Rb-CQK9De-SuwKT9-qS9e2a-dZYZKh-F6s2kr-dZTffi-CQAArA-cQ8Kto-dZTo1t-9npr1r-6T1pDw-sufi14-DBJpgm-dTAv4n-edHvxR-DkYEd1-8Lh3J2-dTG4SE-DeDcbi-CQBmKA-f1HRLU-ujKMzd-bgdCbg-ZmgKx6-8Xy8yJ-6Bxx8t-jscSpt-e1Pizg-qurz6a-dnFb3Z-dymvbt-dnEWt3-dL4UC7-5rd4FS-dKYpup-quxSiA-dymv74-JaWCVD-nnXRkR-dTApMR-dTG51j-auRiQ2-4T5Tei-dTAqpc-buWvMB-224H3B6/. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 10.11: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Stratification is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.12: Theoretical Perspectives on Social Stratification

Learning Outcomes

- Describe functionalist views of social stratification
- Describe conflict theorists' explanations of social stratification
- Explain how symbolic interactionists conceptualize social stratification
- Differentiate between conflict, interactionist, and functionalist explanations of social stratification

Functionalism

In sociology, the functionalist perspective examines how society's parts operate. It is a macroanalytical view that focuses on the way that all aspects of society are integral to the continued health and viability of the whole. According to functionalism, different aspects of society exist because they serve a needed purpose. What is the function of social stratification?

In 1945, sociologists Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore published the **Davis-Moore thesis**, which argued that the greater the functional importance of a social role, the greater must be the reward. The theory posits that social stratification represents the inherently unequal value of different work. Certain tasks in society are more valuable than others. Qualified people who fill those positions must be rewarded more than others.

According to Davis and Moore, a firefighter's job is more important than, for instance, a grocery store cashier's. The cashier position does not require the same skill and training level as firefighting. Without the incentive of higher pay and better benefits, why would someone be willing to rush into burning buildings? If pay levels were the same, the firefighter might as well work as a grocery store cashier. Davis and Moore believed that rewarding more important work with higher levels of income, prestige, and power encourages people to work harder and longer.

Davis and Moore stated that, in most cases, the degree of skill required for a job determines that job's importance. They also stated that the more skill required for a job, the fewer qualified people there would be to do that job. Certain jobs, such as cleaning hallways or answering phones, do not require much skill. The employees don't need a college degree. Other work, like designing a highway system or delivering a baby, requires immense skill.

In 1953, Melvin Tumin countered the Davis-Moore thesis in "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis." Tumin questioned what determined a job's degree of importance. The Davis-Moore thesis does not explain, he argued, why a media personality with little education or talent becomes famous and rich on a television show or politically successful on the campaign trail. The thesis also does not explain inequalities in the education system or inequalities due to race or gender. Tumin believed social stratification prevented qualified people from attempting to fill roles (Tumin 1953). For example, an underprivileged youth has less of a chance to become a scientist, no matter how smart she is, because of the relative lack of opportunity available to her. The Davis-Moore thesis also does not explain why a basketball player earns millions of dollars a year when a doctor who saves lives, a soldier who fights for others' rights, and a teacher who helps form the minds of tomorrow will likely not make millions over the course of their careers.

The Davis-Moore thesis, though open for debate, was an early attempt to explain why stratification exists. The thesis states that social stratification is necessary to promote excellence, productivity, and efficiency, thus giving people something to strive for. Davis and Moore believed that the system serves society as a whole because it allows everyone to benefit to a certain extent. This supports meritocracy as an ideological system.

A functionalist might also focus on why we have global inequality and what social purposes it serves. This view might assert, for example, that we have global inequality because some nations are better than others at adapting to new technologies and profiting from a globalized economy, and that when core nation companies locate new operations in peripheral nations, they expand the local economy and benefit the workers.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13395

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13396

Conflict Theory



Figure 1. These people are protesting a decision made by Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tennessee, to lay off custodians and outsource the jobs to a private firm to avoid paying employee benefits. Private job agencies often pay lower hourly wages and do not offer retirement benefits or health insurance. Is the decision fair? (Photo courtesy of Brian Stansberry/Wikimedia Commons)

Conflict theory focuses on the creation and reproduction of inequality. Conflict theorists are deeply critical of social stratification, asserting that it benefits only some people, not all of society. For instance, to a conflict theorist, it seems wrong that a basketball player is paid millions for an annual contract while a public school teacher earns $35,000 a year. Stratification, conflict theorists believe, perpetuates inequality. Conflict theorists try to bring awareness to inequalities, such as how a rich society can have so many poor members.

Many conflict theorists draw on the work of Karl Marx. During the nineteenth-century era of industrialization, Marx believed social stratification resulted from workers' relationship to the means of production. People were divided by a single line: they either owned factories or worked in them. In Marx's time, bourgeois capitalists owned high-producing businesses, factories, and land, as they still do today. Proletarians were the workers who performed the manual labor to produce goods. Upper-class capitalists raked in profits and got rich, while working-class proletarians earned meager wages and struggled to survive. With such opposing interests, the two groups were divided by differences of wealth and power. Marx theorized that workers experienced deep alienation, isolation and misery resulting from their sense of powerlessness and inferior status (Marx 1848). Marx argued that the proletarians were oppressed by the bourgeois.

Today, while working conditions have improved, conflict theorists believe that the strained working relationship between employers and employees still exists. Capitalists own the means of production, and a system is in place to make business owners rich and keep workers poor. According to conflict theorists, the resulting stratification creates class conflict. If he were alive in today's economy–one still recovering from a prolonged recession–Marx would likely argue that the recession resulted from the greed of capitalists, who profited at the expense of working people.

When examining global stratification, a conflict theorist would likely address the systematic inequality created when core nations exploit the resources of peripheral nations. For example, how many U.S. companies take advantage of overseas workers who lack the constitutional protections and guaranteed minimum wages that exist in the United States? And how many establish overseas operations in countries with weak or nonexistent environmental protections? Doing so allows them to maximize profits, but at what cost?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13330

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13397

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a theory that uses everyday interactions of individuals to explain society as a whole. Symbolic interactionism examines stratification from a micro-level perspective. This analysis strives to explain how people's social standing affects their everyday interactions.

In most communities, people interact primarily with others who share the same social standing. It is precisely because of social stratification that people tend to live, work, and associate with others like themselves, people who share their income level, educational background, or racial background, and even tastes in food, music, and clothing. The built-in system of social stratification groups people together. This is one of the reasons why it was rare for a royal prince like England's Prince William to marry a commoner.

Symbolic interactionists also note that people's appearance reflects their perceived social standing. Housing, clothing, and transportation indicate social status, as do hairstyles, taste in accessories, and other symbolic elements of personal style.



Figure 2. (a) A group of construction workers on the job site, and (b) a group of businessmen. What categories of stratification do these construction workers share? How do construction workers differ from executives or custodians? Who is more skilled? Who has greater prestige in society? (Photo (a) courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; Photo (b) courtesy of Chun Kit/flickr)

To symbolically communicate social standing, people often engage in **conspicuous consumption**, which is the purchase, use, and display of certain products to make a social statement about status. Carrying pricey but eco-friendly water bottles could indicate a person's social standing. Some people buy expensive, trendy sneakers even though they will never wear them to jog or play sports. A $17,000 car provides transportation as effectively as a $100,000 vehicle, but the luxury model makes a social statement that the less expensive car does not. All these symbols of stratification are worthy of examination by an interactionist.

When examining global stratification, a symbolic interactionist would study the day-to-day impact of global inequality, the meanings individuals attach to global stratification, and the subjective nature of poverty. Someone applying this view to global inequality would probably focus on understanding the difference between what someone living in a core nation defines as poverty (relative poverty, defined as being unable to live the lifestyle of the average person in your country) and what someone living in a peripheral nation defines as poverty (absolute poverty, defined as being barely able, or unable, to afford basic necessities such as food).

FACTORY GIRLS

In the book *Factory Girls: From Village to City in Changing China*, Leslie T. Chang uses the symbolic interactionist approach to study global inequality. Chang follows two young women (Min and Chunming) employed at a handbag plant. They help manufacture coveted purses and bags for the global market. As part of the growing population of young people who are leaving behind the homesteads and farms of rural China, these female factory workers are ready to enter the urban fray and pursue an ambitious income.

Although Chang's study is based in a town many have never heard of (Dongguan), this city produces one-third of all the shoes on the planet (Nike and Reebok are major manufacturers here), and 30 percent of the world's computer disk drives, in addition to an abundance of apparel (Chang 2008).

But Chang's focus is centered less on this large-scale global phenomenon itself than on how it affects these two women. As a symbolic interactionist would do, Chang examines the daily lives and interactions of Min and Chunming—their workplace friendships, family relationships, gadgets and goods—in this evolving global space where young women can leave tradition behind and shape their own futures. Their story is one that all people, not just scholars, can learn from as we contemplate sociological issues like global economies, cultural traditions and innovations, and opportunities for women in the workforce.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13399

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13400

Watch IT

Watch this video to review the ways that each of the three main paradigms explain social stratification.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=274

Think It Over

- Analyze the Davis-Moore thesis. Do you agree with Davis and Moore? Does social stratification play an important function in society? What examples can you think of that support the thesis? What examples can you think of that refute the thesis?
- Consider social stratification from the symbolic interactionist perspective. How does social stratification influence the daily interactions of individuals? How do systems of class, based on factors such as prestige, power, income, and wealth, influence your own daily routines, as well as your beliefs and attitudes? Illustrate your ideas with specific examples and anecdotes from your own life and the lives of people in your community.

Key takeaways

conspicuous consumption:
the act of buying and using products to make a statement about social standing

Davis-Moore thesis:
a thesis that argues some social stratification is a social necessity

CC licensed content, Original

- Why is there Social Stratification?: Crash Course Sociology #22. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtxtI5IGrfw&index=23&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Social Stratification. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:NPqtAPW1@2/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Social-Stratification. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Global Stratification and Classification. **Provided by**: OpenStax. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:7TCPamHd@3/Global-Stratification-and-Classification. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.
- Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification. **Authored by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:yXcMwYQV@2/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Global-Stratification. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.

This page titled 10.12: Theoretical Perspectives on Social Stratification is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.13: Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification

Learning Outcomes

- Explain global stratification using modernization theory and dependency theory

While the three main sociological paradigms all help explain global stratification, there are two major theories that developed out of the structural-functional and conflict theories that are best positioned to explain global inequality: modernization theory and dependency theory. Modernization theory posits that countries go through evolutionary stages and that industrialization and improved technology are the keys to forward progress. Dependency theory, on the other hand, sees modernization theory as Eurocentric and patronizing. According to dependency theory, global inequality is the result of core nations creating a cycle of dependence by exploiting resources and labor in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries.

Macrosociological Theories of Global Stratification

Modernization Theory

Modernization theory comes out of the structural-functional viewpoint, as it frames inequality as a function of industrial and cultural differences between nations. It holds that low-income nations were left out of the industrial gains that followed both the Columbian Exchange, which produced a transfer of goods and technologies between Europe and the "New World" beginning in the late 15th century, and the Industrial Revolution, due to an inability or reluctance to adopt new technologies. According to modernization theory, low-income countries are affected by their lack of industrialization and can improve their global economic standing through (Armer and Katsillis 2010):

- an adjustment of cultural values and attitudes toward work
- industrialization and other forms of economic growth

Critics point out the inherent ethnocentric bias of this theory. 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.

There is, of course, some basis for this assumption. Data show that core nations tend to have lower maternal and child mortality rates, longer life spans, and less absolute poverty. It is also true that in the poorest countries, millions of people die from the lack of clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, which are benefits most of us take for granted. At the same time, the issue is more complex than the numbers might suggest. Cultural equality, history, community, and local traditions are all at risk as modernization pushes into peripheral countries. The challenge, then, is to allow the benefits of modernization while maintaining a cultural sensitivity to what already exists.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13401

Dependency Theory

Dependency theory coincides with the conflict viewpoint, as it focuses on ways that poor nations have been wronged by rich nations. It was created in part as a response to the Western-centric mindset of modernization theory. It states that global inequality is primarily caused by core nations (or high-income nations) exploiting semi-peripheral and peripheral nations (or middle-income and low-income nations), which creates a cycle of dependence (Hendricks 2010). As long as peripheral nations are dependent on core nations for economic stimulus and access to a larger piece of the global economy, they will never achieve stable and consistent economic growth in a self-determined sense. Further, the theory states that since core nations, as well as the World Bank, choose which countries are eligible for loans, as well as deciding what types of projects the loans may finance, they are creating highly segmented labor markets that are built to primarily benefit the dominant market countries.

At first glance, it seems this theory ignores the formerly low-income nations that are now considered middle-income nations and are on their way to becoming high-income nations and major players in the global economy, such as China. But some dependency theorists would state that it is in the best interests of core nations to ensure the long-term usefulness of their peripheral and semi-peripheral partners. Following that theory, sociologists have found that entities are more likely to outsource a significant portion of

a company's work if they are the dominant player in the equation; in other words, companies want to see their partner countries healthy enough to provide work, but not so healthy as to establish a threat (Caniels and Roeleveld 2009).

Watch IT

Watch this video to learn more about modernization and dependency theories. It explains how modernization developed through four stages: the traditional stage, the take-off stage, the drive to technological maturity, and then high-mass consumption. Modernization theory holds that increases in technology will increase wealth throughout the globe, and that low-income nations can follow the path taken by wealthier, modernized nations. Dependency theory holds that some nations gained wealth at the expense of other nations, especially through colonization.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=276

Further Research

For more information about economic modernization, check out the Hudson Institute.

Learn more about economic dependency at the University of Texas Inequality Project.

Think It Over

- There is much criticism that modernization theory is Eurocentric. Do you think dependency theory is also biased? Why, or why not?
- Compare and contrast modernization theory and dependency theory. Which do you think is more useful for explaining global inequality? Explain, using examples.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13402

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13403

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13404

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13405

Key Takeaways

dependency theory:

a theory which states that global inequity is due to the exploitation of peripheral and semi-peripheral nations by core nations

modernization theory:

a theory that low-income countries can improve their global economic standing by industrialization of infrastructure and a shift in cultural attitudes towards work

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification. **Provided by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:yXcMwYQV@2/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Global-Stratification. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.
- Theories of Global Stratification: Crash Course Sociology #28. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b350ljkYWrU&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=29. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 10.13: Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.14: Putting It Together- Social Stratification and Inequality

In this module, you learned about how social position and status affect our life chances, whether based on class, gender, race or ethnicity, or a combination of these statuses. Our status in society seems to matter as each of these aspects interacts with the others, creating our identity and impacting our lives in many ways. While we may each have a certain vision of who we are, the society in which we live views us in certain stereotyped ways.



Figure 1. Favelas in Brazil.

Think about the following exercise this professor uses in the classroom in the light of what you've learned in this module. How would you explain the differences in the distribution of wealth and opportunity throughout the world? How do you think your socioeconomic status has impacted your life?

Every semester, I use an activity to introduce my students to economic inequalities. First, I split them into groups of 3 to 5 people. Next, I put a series of average costs for living in our county on the board in the form of an easily readable Powerpoint slide (i.e., average rent, average cost of transportation with and without a car, average utility bill, average health insurance cost, etc.). Then, I assign each group a household income (i.e., an income the 3 – 5 of them make together and must live off of as a family). The household income I give them varies due to official variations, but it is always just barely above the cutoff for receiving aid so the students have to try to "make due" without any handouts. Finally, I have the students design a budget for their family based upon the combination of average costs and their total income.

After they are finished, we discuss their budgets as a class.While this exercise is rudimentary and will not actually cause them any real world trouble, I find it fascinating that the most "just work harder," "self made American," and "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" students very quickly decide they will run meth labs out of their houses, figure out ways to scam other people out of money, beg for money on the streets, or otherwise suggest the only way they could survive managing wages and costs typical among the working poor of America would be by breaking the law or (in the words of more than one student so far) "living like an animal." After a bit of discussion, I ask them why don't they "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" and they very quickly realize that's not really possible when you can't even afford the bootstraps. Finally, I ask them how the money their families had (or didn't have) contributed to the difference between them sitting in a college classroom or starting their own meth lab out of desperation.

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Stratification. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology/Stratification. **Project**: Introduction to Sociology. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Favela image. **Authored by**: Milton Jung. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/cbnsp/6605979025. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 10.14: Putting It Together- Social Stratification and Inequality is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.15: Discussion- Stratification

Sociologist Thorstein Veblen introduced the concept of conspicuous consumption in 1899 to describe the act of buying and using (and displaying) products to make a statement about social standing.

STEP 1: Over a two-day period, be on the lookout for examples of conspicuous consumption that you see on display in your own environment (i.e, as possessed by actual people in real settings, and not on TV or online). Choose one that seems especially expressive or noteworthy.

In a post of at least 200 words, describe this object first in terms of its visual or aesthetic features and then in terms of what it might be thought to symbolize in terms of status. What reasoning has to be entered into to arrive at these meanings? What frames of reference must be shared in order for these qualities and characteristics to be meaningful? What objects might be considered categorically similar but above or below this object in a particular hierarchy? To help your colleagues understand your points and then write up their responses, it might be helpful to find an image of your object (or one identical to it) and to use the text box to paste your images directly into the thread with your first post.

STEP 2: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their examples and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way. Be sure to cite relevant concepts and key terms from the reading.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Stratification. **Authored by**: Scott Barr and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 10.15: Discussion- Stratification is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

10.16: Assignment- Stratification

STEP 1: Select three television ads that are each promoting a different make and model of automobile. Closely analyze the details in these sales pitches and take some notes. Be sure to focus on what characteristics and priorities the "characters" in the ads are presumed to have based on the ad's rationale or particular "angle."

STEP 2: Review the sections from the module about class, social mobility, and theoretical perspectives on stratification. Choose 3 or 4 concepts from these sections and apply them to the sales pitches you've analyzed. Consider questions such as:

- What class statuses do you think are on display?
- What aspirations or identities do you think are being appealed to?
- To what extent is the viewer being asked to identify with a given social and/or economic status?
- What does ownership of these particular vehicles presumably signify about these potential customers?

These are just some suggested lines of inquiry, and there are of course other worthwhile questions and useful concepts from the module readings that can help you think about advertising pitches and stratification from a sociological perspective. Be sure to use the specialized vocabulary you've been learning about in the reading.

STEP 3: Once you've sketched out some initial responses to these questions, and drawn connections between the imagery, narration (if any), dialogue, characterization, setting, etc., in the ads, focus on one individual from each one, and assign that person a name.

Now, hypothesize a short list of characteristics for each person that can be inferred from how they're portrayed in the ads. What do you think they do for a living? What types of status–say, monetary or cultural–are associated with that work? How do you imagine their living situation? House? Apartment? What do the ads imply about this person's possible background or future in terms of their status? Do the ads suggest that purchasing this particular car will alter that status in some measurable way?

In addition to analyzing the "pitch" made in the ads, also be sure to include your own perspective based on your personal experience and observations. What statuses or class-specific lifestyles do you associate with these types of cars? Why?

STEP 4: Submit your work in two sections: (1) a brief analysis of each commercial; and (2) a short description of each "character" you've chosen to name. On a more nuts-and-bolts level: your paper should be between 500-750 words and should be carefully edited for clarity and readability.

Criteria	Ratings			Points
Concepts	Relevant concepts from reading are accurately and thoughtfully applied.	Relative concepts are applied in an unclear or too general sense. Student understanding not adequately demonstrated.	Relevant concepts are only vaguely or unclearly addressed.	___/10
Application	Student's own views are clearly and substantively articulated.	Student's views are unclearly or too briefly stated.	Student's views largely or completely absent.	___/6
Readability	Paper has been carefully edited for clarity and readability. Paper meets minimum length requirements.	Some editing issues remain, affecting clarity and readability. Paper is below the minimum length.	Paper has substantial editing issues that make the student's thinking hard to follow. Paper is far too short.	___/4
			Total:	___/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Stratification. **Authored by**: Scott Barr and Lumen Learning. **Located at**: Home. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 10.16: Assignment- Stratification is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Module 8- Race and Ethnicity

11.1: Why It Matters- Race and Ethnicity
11.2: Introduction to Race, Ethnicity, and Discrimination
11.3: Racial, Ethnic, and Minority Groups
11.4: Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination
11.5: Intergroup Relationships
11.6: Introduction to Race and Ethnicity in the United States
11.7: Native Americans
11.8: African Americans
11.9: Asian Americans
11.10: Hispanic
11.10.1: Hispanic/Latino Americans
11.11: Arab Americans
11.12: White Americans
11.13: Introduction to Theories of Racial Inequality
11.14: Theoretical Perspectives of Race and Ethnicity
11.15: Putting It Together- Race and Ethnicity
11.16: Discussion- The Race Card Project
11.17: Assignment- Race and Ethnicity

This page titled 11: Module 8- Race and Ethnicity is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.1: Why It Matters- Race and Ethnicity

Why understand the social construction of race and its implications for minority groups in America?

Concerns about racism and discrimination are at the forefront of American media, particularly in light of unfair and unjust police brutality against many unarmed black men and boys. Following the 2013 acquittal of George Zimmerman for the 2012 shooting death of African-American teen Trayvon Martin, three women (Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi) created a movement and took it to social media with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. Black Lives Matter (BLM) became nationally recognized for its street demonstrations following the 2014 deaths of two African Americans: Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner in New York City. Since the Ferguson protests, participants in the movement have demonstrated against the deaths of numerous other African Americans by police actions or while in police custody, including those of Tamir Rice, Eric Harris, Walter Scott, Jonathan Ferrell, Sandra Bland, Samuel DuBose, Freddie Gray, Alton Sterling, and Philando Castile. In the summer of 2015, BLM began to publicly challenge politicians—including those in the 2016 United States presidential election—to state their positions on BLM issues. The movement returned to national headlines and gained further international attention during the global George Floyd protests in 2020 following Floyd's death by police officer Derek Chauvin in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Black Lives Matter Movement, combined with other media, reports on issues like the June 2015 controversy regarding the head of the Spokane Washington National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter, Rachel Dolezal, who resigned after her biological parents revealed in 2015 that her ancestry was predominantly white with some Native American heritage. Her story is just the latest chapter in a long, tangled history of racial identity in America—encompassing issues and categories that go well beyond black and white. For example, research has found that after the 9/11 attacks there was a substantial decrease in the probability that Arab and Muslim Americans would self-identify as white. Even among sub-groups, such as Cuban-Americans, there are long-running, intra-community debates over ethnicity and race.

Racial and ethnic issues as well as heated political debates surrounding immigration make the information in this module about racial identity and the experiences of ethnic groups within the United States even more pertinent. Consider the example of Jose Antonio Vargas, who was born in the Philippines and moved to the United States at age 12, became a successful journalist, but later discovered that he was an undocumented immigrant.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=286

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Race, ethnicity and identity in America: Research roundup. **Authored by**: Harvard Kennedy School. **Provided by**: Journalist's Resource . **Located at**: http://journalistsresource.org/studies/society/race-society/race-ethnicity-and-identity-in-the-american-21st-century-research-roundup. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Black Lives Matter. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Lives_Matter. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Define American: Jose's Story. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJH1IKqF8PA&list=PLc0poAPuof5c5UiTMgZARRbSdM_jRiqWq&index=5. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 11.1: Why It Matters- Race and Ethnicity is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.2: Introduction to Race, Ethnicity, and Discrimination

What you'll learn to do: define and differentiate between race, ethnicity, majority/minority groups, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination



Figure 1. The Black Lives Matters movement started gaining attention in 2013 for its resistance and activism protesting police brutality and racial discrimination against black people. (Photo courtesy of Johnny Silvercloud/Wikimedia Commons)

In this section, we will focus on understanding race and ethnicity and the distinctions between commonly confused words like prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination.

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Introduction. **Authored by**: Cathy Matresse and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Racial, Ethnic, and Minority Groups. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:pVynETUs@2/Racial-Ethnic-and-Minority-Groups. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Millennials participating in a Black Lives Matter protest. **Authored by**: Johnny Silvercloud . **Provided by**: Wikimedia Commons. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Black_Lives_Matter_Protest.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 11.2: Introduction to Race, Ethnicity, and Discrimination is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.3: Racial, Ethnic, and Minority Groups

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the difference between race and ethnicity
- Describe minority groups and scapegoat theory

While many students first entering a sociology classroom are accustomed to conflating, or using interchangeably, the terms “race,” “ethnicity,” and “minority group,” these three terms have distinct meanings for sociologists. If you recall some terms discussed in the module on social interaction, race is one example of a **social construct.** According to the Thomas Theorem, once individuals define situations as real, they become real in their consequences. For this reason, assumptions based on race can have materially and politically real effects. In this section, we will discuss these complex terms as both social constructs and as lived realities.

Following the shooting of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, elementary school teacher Jane Elliot sought to teach her white elementary students in rural Iowa about racism. She convinced her third grade students that students with brown eyes were superior to blue eyed students with a (false) scientific explanation saying that more melanin meant greater intelligence. The students quickly exhibited discriminatory behaviors against their peers, and antagonisms between groups were further exacerbated by Elliot’s new classroom policies for dominant and subordinate groups based on eye color.

Often referred to as the “Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes” exercise, Jane Elliott’s experiment allows us to see how once students in her classroom began to define the situation as real, the consequences of being brown eyed and blue eyed became real. She received national attention and was heavily criticized, especially by people in Riceville, Iowa (population 840), with many saying the experiment was cruel to her all-white class. Elliot replied, “Why are we so worried about the fragile egos of white children who experience a couple of hours of made-up racism one day when blacks experience real racism every day of their lives?”[1]

What is Race?

Biological anthropologists examine race through an evolutionary lens in which all Anatomically Modern Humans (AMHs) came from a common origin in Africa and had dark skin due to proximity to the equator and as a natural defense again the sun’s rays. The relative darkness or fairness of skin is an evolutionary adaptation to the available sunlight in different regions of the world. All scientists agree that there is no biological basis for racial differences, and in fact, people who consider themselves “white” actually have more melanin (a pigment that determines skin color) in their skin than other people who identify as ”black.”

Social science organizations including the American Association of Anthropologists, the American Sociological Association, and the American Psychological Association have all taken an official position rejecting the biological explanations of race. Over time, the typology of race that developed based on phenotype or physical characteristics has fallen into disuse in social and behavioral sciences (although examining melanin is still important in natural sciences), and the **social construction of race** has become the primary lens through which sociologists examine race. **Race** is a socially constructed category that produces real effects on the actors who are racialized [2] and refers to physical differences that a particular society considers significant, such as skin color. In other words, a physical marker such as skin color, eye shape, hair type, or cheekbone shape, when paired with some other element(s) of social significance, could become a social cue for inclusion or exclusion in a certain group.

Using the sociological imagination, we can delve into how racial categories were arbitrarily assigned, based on pseudoscience, and subsequently used to justify racist practices (Omi and Winant 1994; Graves 2003). Elliot’s classroom exercise is not too far from what happened in American history. Science and religion were both used to create and justify racial categories and racist ideologies. The “One Drop Rule,” which states that someone is black if they have “one drop” of African blood is uniquely American (no other country defines race in this way) and a way to illustrate the social construction of race. For example, many people who appeared white and could “pass” as such in a social setting, could not pass in a legal sense because of the rule of hypo-descent, which meant that racially mixed people were automatically assigned the minority group status. There were strict prohibitions against miscegenation (or mixed offspring) in spite of centuries of white men raping enslaved black women. During slavery, this allowed intergenerational slavery to persist irrespective of skin color, and after slavery was abolished, segregationist Jim Crow laws were applied to many mixed-race Americans.

Further Research

Explore aspects of race and ethnicity at this PBS site, “What Is Race?”

The social construction of race is reflected in the way names for racial categories change over time. It's worth noting that race, in this sense, is also a system of labeling that provides a source of identity; specific labels fall in and out of favor during different social eras. For example, the category "negroid," popular in the nineteenth century, evolved into the term "negro" by the 1960s, and then this term fell from use and was replaced with "African American." This latter term was intended to celebrate the multiple identities that a black person might hold, but the word choice is a poor one, as it lumps together a large variety of ethnic groups regardless of geographical origin.

For example, Jamaicans, Haitians, and other dark skinned Caribbean groups living in the U.S. are Black but they are not African American. Calling any person with dark skin African American highlights the importance of language while at the same time illustrating the challenges of racial categorization. We do not refer to Lupita Nyong'o (Nakia in *Black Panther* 2018), who has Kenyan parents but was born in Mexico City and has dual citizenship in Kenya and Mexico, as African American. The U.S. Census includes "Black" or "African American" as a racial category to include "any person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa."[3].

If race is a social construction, doesn't collecting information on artificial racial categories through the U.S. Census perpetuate the notion of biologically distinct racial categories? Why do we continue to categorize Americans based on race? Collecting information on race informs policy decisions related to civil rights, including voting and redistricting procedures at the state level; furthermore, "race data also are used to promote equal employment opportunities and to assess racial disparities in health and environmental risks" (U.S. Census 2018).

What is Ethnicity?

Ethnicity is a term that describes shared culture—the practices, values, and beliefs of a group. This culture might include shared language, religion, and traditions, among other commonalities and is often based on country of origin.

The largest ethnic group in the United States, Latinos or Hispanics, are more likely to identify by their country of origin (i.e., Cuban, Puerto Rican, Mexican) than by an overarching ethnicity like "Latino" or "Hispanic." If you recall, language is one of the most important components of culture, and Spanish unifies many different ethnic groups within the Latino category. However, distinctive cultural practices and very different histories result in unique ethnic identities and strong ties to countries of origin that may warrant a hyphenated identity (i.e., Mexican-American, Cuban-American) or a new term altogether such as Nuyorican (New Yorker and Puerto Rican). These examples illustrate the complexity and overlap of these identifying terms.

Individuals may be identified or self-identify with ethnicities in complex, even contradictory, ways. For example, ethnic groups such as Irish, Italian American, Russian, Jewish, and Serbian might all be groups whose members are predominantly included in the "white" racial category. Depending on when they immigrated to the United States, many of these ethnic whites were treated as minority groups and were not afforded the same status as the White Anglo Saxon Protestants (WASPs), who were typically the privileged whites throughout American history. For example, Irish immigrants were "white" in appearance and spoke English, but they were also predominantly Catholic, and made this made them suspect in terms of their prospective allegiance to the Pope in preference to the United States government. Italian immigrants were often olive-skinned, Catholic, and did not speak English, all of which made them seem even more foreign and, perhaps, unassimilable.

If we consider the British or the French as ethnicities with a common culture and geographic boundary, we see many ethnic groups within each country. Both countries have struggled with national identity as globalization and immigration, often originating in formerly colonized nations, change their demographics. For example, France won the 2018 World Cup with the help of star player Kylian Mbappe, a teenager born in Paris, whose father is from Cameroon and whose mother is Algerian.

Ethnicities and the Census

Read more about Latino opinions about the census data and identity in the article "When Labels Don't Fit: Hispanics and Their Views of Identity" from the Pew Research Center.

Ethnicity, like race, continues to be an identification method that individuals and institutions use today—whether through the U.S. Census, affirmative action initiatives, nondiscrimination laws, or simply in personal day-to-day relations. We celebrate ethnicity in the United States through a variety of holidays (i.e., St. Patrick's Day), enjoying different types of cuisine, and through popular cultural forms such as film, television, and music.

Watch It

Review the ideas presented in this section about race and ethnicity in the following Khan Academy video.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=290

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13406

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13407

What are Minority Groups?

Sociologist Louis Wirth (1945) defined a **minority group** as "any group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination." According to Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris (1958), a minority group is distinguished by five characteristics:

1. unequal treatment and less power over their lives
2. distinguishing physical or cultural traits like skin color or language
3. involuntary membership in the group
4. awareness of subordination
5. high rate of in-group marriage

Additional examples of minority groups might include the LGBTQ community, religious practitioners whose faith is not widely practiced where they live, and people with disabilities.

Subordinate group can be used interchangeably with the term minority, while the term **dominant group** is often substituted for the group that's in the majority. These definitions correlate to the concept that the dominant group is that which holds the most power in a given society, while subordinate groups are those who lack power by comparison.

When we hear the word "minority" we often think of a group with a smaller number of members than the dominant group, but in some cases the "minority" is not a numerical minority. Women have been treated as a minority group even though they outnumber men in the U.S. What differentiates a minority group is that its members are disadvantaged in some way by the dominant group, such as when women are paid less than men for the same job even though they may have similar qualifications and levels of experience as their male co-workers. Consider apartheid in South Africa, in which a numerical majority (the black inhabitants of the country) were exploited and oppressed by the politically dominant white minority.

In the contemporary United States, the elderly might be considered a minority group due to a diminished status that results from popular prejudice and discrimination against them. Ten percent of nursing home staff admitted to physically abusing an elderly person in the past year, and 40 percent admitted to committing psychological abuse (World Health Organization 2011).

Scapegoat theory, developed initially from psychologist John Dollard's (1939) Frustration-Aggression theory, suggests that the dominant group will displace its unfocused aggression onto a subordinate group. History has shown us many examples of the scapegoating of a subordinate group. An example from the last century is the way Adolf Hitler was able to blame the Jewish population for Germany's social and economic problems. In the United States, recent immigrants have frequently been the scapegoat for the nation's—or an individual's—woes. Many states have enacted laws to disenfranchise immigrants; these laws are popular because they let the dominant group scapegoat a subordinate group.

Exercises

Take a look at the racial dot map from the Demographics Research Group at the University of Virginia. The map shows a dot for each of the 308 million who were counted in the 2010 census, and displays each dot based on a person's race and ethnicity.

Think It Over

- Why do you think the term "minority" has persisted when the word "subordinate" is more descriptive?

- How do you describe your ethnicity? Do you include your family's country of origin? Do you consider yourself multiethnic? How does your ethnicity compare to that of the people you spend most of your time with?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13410

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13409

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13408

glossary

dominant group:
a group of people who have more power in a society than any of the subordinate groups

ethnicity:
shared culture, which may include heritage, language, religion, and more

minority group:
any group of people who are singled out from the others for differential and unequal treatment

race:
a socially constructed category that produces real effects on the actors who are racially categorized

scapegoat theory:
a theory that suggests that the dominant group will displace its unfocused aggression onto a subordinate group

social construction of race:
the school of thought that race is not biologically identifiable

subordinate group:
a group of people who have less power than the dominant group

1. Bloom, S. 2015. "Lesson of a Lifetime." Smithsonian Magazine. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/lesson-of-a-lifetime-72754306/. ↵
2. Bonilla-Silva, E. 2003. Racism without Racists. Lanham: Rownman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. ↵
3. "Race," U.S. Census. last updated Jan. 23, 2018. https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html. ↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Racial, Ethnic, and Minority Groups. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:pVynETUs@2/Racial-Ethnic-and-Minority-Groups. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Demographic structure of society- race and ethnicity. **Authored by**: Sydney Brown. **Provided by**: Khan Academy. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WIiConeatM. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 11.3: Racial, Ethnic, and Minority Groups is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.4: Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the difference between stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and racism
- Describe white privilege

The terms stereotype, prejudice, discrimination, and racism are often used interchangeably in everyday conversation. Let us explore the differences between these concepts. Stereotypes are oversimplified generalizations about groups of people. **Stereotypes** can be based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation—almost any characteristic. They may be positive (usually about one's own group, such as when women suggest they are less likely to complain about physical pain) but are often negative (usually toward other groups, such as when members of a dominant racial group suggest that a subordinate racial group is stupid or lazy). In either case, the stereotype is a sweeping overview that doesn't take individual differences into account. Where do stereotypes come from? In fact new stereotypes are rarely created, but are instead recycled from earlier applications to subordinate groups that have since assimilated into society. They are then reused to describe newly subordinate groups. For example, many stereotypes that are currently used to characterize black people were used earlier in American history to characterize Irish and Eastern European immigrants.

Watch It

Watch this video to learn about racism, prejudice, and discrimination in the United States. We'll learn about each of these terms in more detail in the reading that follows.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=292

Prejudice and Racism

Prejudice refers to the beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes someone holds about a group. A prejudice is not based on experience. Instead, it is a prejudgment, originating outside actual experience.

While prejudice is not necessarily specific to race, **racism** is a stronger type of prejudice used to justify the belief that one racial category is somehow superior or inferior to others. It is also a set of practices used by a racial majority to disadvantage a racial minority. The Ku Klux Klan is an example of a racist organization. Its members' belief in white supremacy has encouraged over a century of hate crime and hate speech.

Other types of racism are much more difficult to perceive. **Institutional racism** refers to the way in which racism is embedded in the fabric of society. For example, the disproportionate number of black men arrested, charged, and convicted of crimes may reflect **racial profiling**, a form of institutional racism in which the practice of law enforcement in determining whether to stop and detain someone is based on race alone. **Color-blind racism** refers to "contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003), which is generally professed as, "I don't see race–I see everyone as equal." The vast majority of Americans (some sociologists suggest up to three-quarters) profess to be "color blind," which sociologists see as deeply problematic because it fails to recognize the social reality of minority groups in the U.S.

Watch It

Watch this clip and consider how the media can shape the stories that are told and reaffirm stereotypes and prejudices. Note that this media coverage advances a prejudice that black men (and even young boys) are violent and/or prone to aggression.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=292

Colorism is another kind of prejudice, in which someone believes one degree of skin tone is superior or inferior to another within a racial group. Studies suggest that darker skinned African Americans experience more discrimination than lighter skinned African Americans (Herring, Keith, and Horton 2004; Klonoff and Landrine 2000). At least one study suggested colorism affected racial socialization, with darker-skinned black male adolescents receiving more warnings about the danger of interacting with members of other racial groups than did lighter-skinned black male adolescents (Landor et al. 2013).

Whitewashing and the Academy Awards

The 2015 and 2016 Academy Awards brought attention to Hollywood's practice of whitewashing, or casting white characters in historically non-white roles. Soon after the 2015 nominations were announced, the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite began trending, where a number of people pointed out that this was in fact the second time in 20 years that the nominations list featured exclusively white actors. But pull back the Academy's plush red carpet a little further, and one finds it was the fifth time in 30 years this has happened.[1] Pull it back even further and one finds that in the years between 1927 and 2012, 99 percent of women who have won "Best Actress" have been white, and the same is true for 91 percent of men who have won "Best Actor."

The charge leveled against the Oscars is of racism; that consciously or not, members of the Academy consistently fail to appreciate and honor the work of non-white actors. The basis for the charge is that there have been enough nominations and enough awards given to detect institutional discrimination or systemic biases that resulted in real consequences for minorities in film. That is, if Oscars were awarded like lottery winnings, by sheer chance alone non-white actors would take home a more proportionate share of the little statues, so there is cause to believe that somehow the creep of racial bias is contaminating the nomination process. The fact that 94 percent of voting members are white doesn't exactly ease fears that the Academy is playing racial favorites.

Discrimination

While prejudice refers to biased thinking, **discrimination** consists of actions against a group of people. Discrimination can be based on age, religion, health, and other indicators. Race-based laws against discrimination strive to address these social problems.

Discrimination based on race or ethnicity can take many forms, from unfair housing practices to biased hiring systems. Overt discrimination has long been a part of U.S. history. In the late nineteenth century, it was not uncommon for business owners to hang signs that read, "Help Wanted: No Irish Need Apply." And southern Jim Crow laws, with their "Whites Only" signs, exemplified overt discrimination that is not tolerated today.

However, we cannot erase discrimination from our culture just by enacting laws to abolish it. Even if a magic pill managed to eradicate racism from each individual's psyche, society itself would maintain it. Sociologist Émile Durkheim calls racism a social fact, meaning that it does not require the action of individuals to continue. The reasons for this are complex and relate to the educational, legal, economic, and political systems that exist in our society.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13411

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13412

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13413

For example, when a newspaper identifies by race individuals accused of a crime, it may enhance stereotypes of a certain minority. Another example of racist practices is **racial steering**, in which real estate agents direct prospective homeowners toward or away from certain neighborhoods based on their race. Racist attitudes and beliefs are often more insidious and harder to pin down than specific racist practices.

Prejudice and discrimination can overlap and intersect in many ways. To illustrate, here are four examples of how prejudice and discrimination can occur. Unprejudiced nondiscriminators are open-minded, tolerant, and accepting individuals. Unprejudiced discriminators might be those who unthinkingly practice sexism in their workplace by not considering females for certain positions that have traditionally been held by men. Prejudiced nondiscriminators are those who hold racist beliefs but don't act on them, such as a racist store owner who serves minority customers. Prejudiced discriminators include those who actively make disparaging remarks about others or who perpetuate hate crimes.

Discrimination also manifests in different ways. The scenarios above are examples of individual discrimination, but other types exist. Institutional discrimination occurs when a societal system has developed with embedded disenfranchisement of a group, such as the U.S. military's historical nonacceptance of minority sexualities (the "don't ask, don't tell" policy reflected this norm).

Institutional discrimination can also include the promotion of a group's status, as in the case of **white privilege**, which refers to the automatic benefits people receive simply by being part of a dominant group. While most white people are willing to admit that

nonwhite people live with a set of disadvantages due to the color of their skin, very few are willing to acknowledge the benefits they receive.

Watch It

Watch this video to learn more about white privilege.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=292

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13414

Racial Tensions in the United States



Figure 1. Golfer Tiger Woods has Chinese, Thai, African American, Native American, and Dutch heritage. Individuals with multiple ethnic backgrounds are becoming more common. (Photo courtesy of familymwr/flickr)

The death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO on August 9, 2014 illustrates racial tensions in the United States as well as the overlap between prejudice, discrimination, and institutional racism. On that day, Brown, a young unarmed black man, was killed by a white police officer named Darren Wilson. During the incident, Wilson directed Brown and his friend to walk on the sidewalk instead of in the street. While eyewitness accounts vary, they agree that an altercation occurred between Wilson and Brown. Wilson's version has him shooting Brown in self-defense after Brown assaulted him, while Dorian Johnson, a friend of Brown also present at the time, claimed that Brown first ran away, then turned with his hands in the air to surrender, after which Johnson shot him repeatedly (Nobles and Bosman 2014). Three autopsies independently confirmed that Brown was shot six times (Lowery and Fears 2014).

The shooting focused attention on a number of race-related tensions in the United States. First, members of the predominantly black community viewed Brown's death as the result of a white police officer racially profiling a black man (Nobles and Bosman 2014). In the days after, it was revealed that only three members of the town's fifty-three-member police force were black (Nobles and Bosman 2014). The national dialogue shifted during the next few weeks, with some commentators pointing to a nationwide sedimentation of racial inequality and identifying redlining in Ferguson as a cause of the unbalanced racial composition in the community, in local political establishments, and in the police force (Bouie 2014). Redlining is the practice of routinely refusing mortgages for households and businesses located in predominantly minority communities, while sedimentation of racial inequality describes the intergenerational impact of both practical and legalized racism that limits the abilities of black people and other racial minorities to accumulate wealth.

Ferguson's racial imbalance may explain in part why, even though in 2010 only about 63 percent of its population was black, in 2013 blacks were detained in 86 percent of stops, 92 percent of searches, and 93 percent of arrests (Missouri Attorney General's Office 2014). In addition, de facto segregation in Ferguson's schools, a race-based wealth gap, urban sprawl, and a black

unemployment rate three times that of the white unemployment rate worsened existing racial tensions in Ferguson, while also reflecting nationwide racial inequalities (Bouie 2014).

TrayVon Martin

On the evening of February 26, 2012, Trayvon Martin, a seventeen-year-old black teenager was visiting with his father and his father's fiancée in the Sanford, Florida gated community where his father's fiancée lived. Trayvon left her home on foot to buy a snack from a nearby convenience store. As he was returning, George Zimmerman, the community's neighborhood watch program coordinator, noticed him. In light of a recent rash of break-ins, Zimmerman called the police to report a person acting suspiciously, which he had done on many other occasions. The 911 operator told Zimmerman not to follow the teen, but soon after Zimmerman and Martin had a physical confrontation. According to Zimmerman, Martin attacked him, and in the ensuing scuffle Martin was shot and killed (CNN Library 2014).



Figure 2. Do you think race played a role in Trayvon Martin's death or in the public reaction to it? Do you think race had any influence on the initial decision not to arrest George Zimmerman, or on his later acquittal? (Photo courtesy of Ryan Vaarsi/flickr)

A public outcry followed Martin's death. Florida's Stand Your Ground Law immediately came into the center of a national debate on 2nd Amendment rights and self-defense. Zimmerman was not arrested until April 11, when he was charged with second-degree murder by special prosecutor Angela Corey. In the ensuing trial, he was found not guilty (CNN Library 2014).

The shooting, the public response, and the trial that followed offer a snapshot of the sociology of race. Do you think race played a role in Martin's death or in the public's reaction to it? Do you think race had any influence on the initial decision not to arrest Zimmerman, a white Hispanic male, or on his later acquittal? Does society fear black men, leading to self-defense justifications with unarmed youth? What about the role of the media? Was there a deliberate attempt to manipulate public opinion? If you were a member of the jury, would you have convicted George Zimmerman?

In 2020, racial inequality and tensions again rose to the forefront of American lives and media attention following the deaths of several unarmed black men and women. On February 23, 2020, Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed 25-year-old African-American man, was fatally shot while jogging in Glynn County, Georgia. Arbery had been pursued, confronted, and killed by two white residents, a father and son.

On March 13, 2020, Louisville police officers knocked down the apartment door of 26-year old African American Breonna Taylor, serving a no-knock search warrant for drug suspicions. Police fired several shots during the encounter which led to her death. Her boyfriend who was present at the time had called 911 and said, "someone kicked in the door and shot my girlfriend." Protests were held in Louisville with calls for police reform.

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, during an arrest for allegedly using a counterfeit bill. Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, knelt on Floyd's neck for almost nine minutes while Floyd was handcuffed and lying face down, begging for his life and repeatedly saying "I can't breathe." Chauvin was initially charged with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter, to which was later added second-degree murder; the three other officers were charged with aiding and abetting second-degree murder.

Floyd's death triggered demonstrations and protests in over 2,000 U.S. cities and around the world against police brutality, police racism, and lack of police accountability. In early June, the Minneapolis City Council took action to ban chokeholds and require police officers to intervene against the use of excessive force by other officers. Amidst protests to "defund to police" Minneapolis also voted for an intent to replace the police department with a "new community-based system of public safety." Other cities announced similar plans to re-examine their police departments, such as the city of Atlanta following the killing of Rayshard Brooks on June 12, 2020. Brooks, an unarmed 27-year-old black man, was shot and killed by an Atlanta Police Department officer,

Garrett Rolfe, while running away from the officers following a scuffle after a complaint about Brooks asleep in a car blocking a fast-food drive-through lane.

Multiple Identities

Prior to the twentieth century, racial intermarriage (referred to as miscegenation) was extremely rare, and in many places, illegal. In the later part of the twentieth century and in the twenty-first century, attitudes have changed for the better. While the sexual subordination of slaves did result in children of mixed race, these children were usually considered black, and therefore, property. There was no concept of multiple racial identities, with the possible exception of the Creole. Creole society developed in the port city of New Orleans, where a mixed-race culture grew from French and African inhabitants. Unlike in other parts of the country, "Creoles of color" had greater social, economic, and educational opportunities than most African Americans.

Increasingly during the modern era, the removal of miscegenation laws and a trend toward equal rights and legal protection against racism have steadily reduced the social stigma attached to racial exogamy (exogamy refers to marriage outside a person's core social unit). It is now common for the children of racially mixed parents to acknowledge and celebrate their various ethnic identities. Golfer Tiger Woods, for instance, has Chinese, Thai, African American, Native American, and Dutch heritage; he jokingly refers to his ethnicity as "Cablinasian," a term he coined to combine several of his ethnic backgrounds. While this is the trend, it is not yet evident in all aspects of our society. For example, the U.S. Census only recently added more nuanced additional categories such as non-white Hispanic. A growing number of people chose multiple races to describe themselves on the 2010 Census, paving the way for the 2020 Census to provide yet more choices.

The Confederate Flag vs. the First Amendment



Figure 3. To some, the Confederate flag is a symbol of pride in Southern history. To others, it is a grim reminder of a degrading period of the United States' past. (Photo courtesy of Eyeliam/flickr)

In January 2006, two girls walked into Burleson High School in Texas carrying purses that displayed large images of Confederate flags. School administrators told the girls that they were in violation of the dress code, which prohibited apparel with inappropriate symbolism or clothing that discriminated based on race. To stay in school, they'd have to have someone pick up their purses or leave them in the office. The girls chose to go home for the day but then challenged the school's decision, appealing first to the principal, then to the district superintendent, then to the U.S. District Court, and finally to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Why did the school ban the purses, and why did it stand behind that ban, even when being sued? Why did the girls, identified anonymously in court documents as A.M. and A.T., pursue such strong legal measures for their right to carry the purses? The issue, of course, is not the purses; it is the Confederate flag that adorns them. The parties in this case join a long line of people and institutions that have fought for their right to display it, saying such a display is covered by the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech. In the end, the court sided with the district and noted that the Confederate flag carried symbolism significant enough to disrupt normal school activities.

While many young people in the United States like to believe that racism is mostly in the country's past, this case illustrates that the symbols and iconography associated with the history of slavery are still potently meaningful. If the Confederate flag is synonymous with slavery, is there any place for its display in modern society? Those who fight for their right to display the flag say such a display should be covered by the First Amendment: the right to free speech. But others say the flag is equivalent to hate speech, which is not covered by the First Amendment. Do you think that displaying the Confederate flag should be considered free speech or hate speech?

Further Research

- How far should First Amendment rights extend? Read more about the subject at the First Amendment Center.
- Learn more about institutional racism at the Southern Poverty Law Center.
- What does white privilege mean to you? Why do you think it is a difficult concept for whites to acknowledge? Explore the concept of white privilege with this checklist to see how much of it holds true for you or others.

Think It Over

- How do redlining and racial steering contribute to institutionalized racism?
- Give an example of stereotyping that you see in everyday life. Explain what would need to happen for this to be eliminated.
- Consider this video example "Why I'm Not Buying Adele's 25" of why some say that white soul singers have an unfair advantage over black singers. Give three examples of white privilege. Do you agree or disagree with the argument? Can you give any other examples of white privilege?

Glossary

colorism:
the belief that one type of skin tone is superior or inferior to another within a racial group

color-blind racism:
the belief that one doesn't "see" race

discrimination:
prejudiced action against a group of people

institutional racism:
racism embedded in social institutions

prejudice:
biased thought based on flawed assumptions about a group of people

racial steering:
the act of real estate agents directing prospective homeowners toward or away from certain neighborhoods based on their race

racial profiling:
the use by law enforcement by looking at race alone when determining whether to stop and detain

racism: a set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices that are used to justify the belief that one racial category is somehow superior or inferior to others

redlining:
the practice of routinely refusing mortgages for households and business located in predominately minority communities

sedimentation of racial inequality:
the intergenerational impact of de facto (a matter of custom) and de jure (a matter of law) racism that limits the abilities of black people to accumulate wealth

stereotypes:
oversimplified generalizations about groups of people

white privilege:
the benefits people automatically receive simply by being part of the dominant group

1. Griffiths, Kadeen. "The 2015 Oscar Nominees are the Whitest in 17 Years & We're to Blame." Bustle. January 15, 2015. Accessed October 9, 2019. http://www.bustle.com/articles/58773-the-2015-oscar-nominees-are-the-whitest-in-17-years-were-all-to-blame↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:0xCpCOuT@7/Stereotypes-Prejudice-and-Discrimination. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Whitewashing and the Academy Awards section, from What Is Whitewashing and Why Does It Matter?, modified by Lumen Learning. **Authored by**: Lester Andrist. **Provided by**: The Sociological Cinema. **Located at**: http://www.thesociologicalcinema.com/blog/category/raceethnicity50b7e59aa9. **License**: *CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike*
- Killing of George Floyd. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Killing_of_George_Floyd. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Killing of Rayshard Brooks. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Killing_of_Rayshard_Brooks. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Black Lives Matter. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Lives_Matter#2020. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- White Privilege. **Authored by**: Sociology Live!. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLgbw_A1mLI. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Racial/Ethnic Prejudice & Discrimination: Crash Course Sociology #35. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSddUPkVD24&index=36&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- WBBM Criminalizes 4-Year Old. **Authored by**: Bob Butler. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mu_LK_iEFE8. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 11.4: Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.5: Intergroup Relationships

Learning Outcomes

- Explain different intergroup relations, ranging from extreme levels of intolerance (i.e. genocide) to tolerance (pluralism)

Intergroup relations (relationships between different groups of people) range along a spectrum between tolerance and intolerance. The most tolerant form of intergroup relations is pluralism, in which no distinction is made between minority and majority groups, but instead there is equal standing. At the other end of the continuum are amalgamation, expulsion, and even genocide—stark examples of intolerant intergroup relations.

Genocide

Genocide, the deliberate annihilation of a targeted (usually subordinate) group, is the most toxic intergroup relationship. Historically, we can see that genocide has included both the intent to exterminate a group as well as the function of effectively exterminating a group–whether this was intentional or not.

Possibly the most well-known case of genocide is Adolf Hitler's attempt to exterminate the Jewish people both immediately before and during World War Two. Also known as the Holocaust, the explicit goal of Hitler's "Final Solution" was the programmatic eradication of European Jewry, as well as the decimation of other minority groups such as Catholics, people with disabilities, and homosexuals. With forced emigration, concentration camps, and mass executions in gas chambers, Hitler's Nazi regime was responsible for the deaths of 12 million people, 6 million of whom were Jewish. Hitler's intent was clear, and the high Jewish death toll certainly indicates that his regime committed genocide. But how do we understand genocide that is not so overt and deliberate?

The treatment of Aboriginal Australians is also an example of genocide, in this case one that was committed against indigenous people. Historical accounts suggest that between 1824 and 1908, white settlers killed more than 10,000 Aborigines in Tasmania and Australia (Tatz 2006). Another example is the European colonization of North America. Some historians estimate that Native American populations dwindled from approximately 12 million in the year 1500 to barely 237,000 by the year 1900 (Lewy 2004). European settlers coerced Native Americans from their lands, often causing thousands of deaths in forced removals, such as occurred in the Cherokee or Potawatomi Trail of Tears. Settlers also enslaved Native Americans and forced them to give up their religious and cultural practices, but the major cause of Native American deaths was neither slavery, nor war, nor forced removal: it was the introduction of European diseases and Native Americans' lack of immunity to them. Smallpox, diphtheria, and measles flourished among indigenous American tribes who had no exposure to the diseases and no ability to fight them. Quite simply, these diseases decimated the tribes. How planned this genocide was remains a topic of contention. Some argue that the spread of disease was an unintended effect of conquest, while others believe it was intentional, citing rumors of smallpox-infected blankets being distributed as "gifts" to tribes.

Genocide is not a just a distant historical footnote; it is practiced today. Recently, ethnic and geographic conflicts in the Darfur region of Sudan have led to hundreds of thousands of deaths. As part of an ongoing land conflict, the Sudanese government and their state-sponsored Janjaweed militia have led a campaign of killing, forced displacement, and systematic rape of Darfuri people. Although a treaty was signed in 2011, the peace is fragile.

Expulsion

Expulsion refers to a subordinate group being forced, by a dominant group, to leave a certain area or country. As seen in the examples of the Trail of Tears and the Holocaust, expulsion can be a factor in genocide; however, it can also stand on its own as a destructive group interaction. Historically, expulsion has often occurred with an ethnic or racial basis. In the United States, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 in 1942, after the Japanese government's attack on Pearl Harbor. The Order authorized the establishment of internment camps for anyone with as little as one-eighth Japanese ancestry (i.e., one great-grandparent who was Japanese). Over 120,000 legal Japanese residents and Japanese U.S. citizens, many of them children, were held in these camps for up to four years, despite the fact that there was never any evidence of collusion or espionage. (In fact, many Japanese Americans continued to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States by serving in the U.S. military during the War.) In the 1990s, the U.S. executive branch issued a formal apology for this expulsion; reparation efforts continue today.

Segregation



Figure 1. In the "Jim Crow" South, it was legal to have "separate but equal" facilities for blacks and whites. (Photo courtesy of Library of Congress/Wikimedia Commons)

Segregation refers to the physical separation of two groups, particularly in residence, but also in workplace and social functions. It is important to distinguish between *de jure* segregation (segregation that is enforced by law) and *de facto* segregation (segregation that occurs without laws but because of other factors). A stark example of *de jure* segregation is the apartheid movement of South Africa, which existed from 1948 to 1994. Under apartheid, black South Africans were stripped of their civil rights and forcibly relocated to areas that segregated them physically from their white compatriots. Only after decades of degradation, violent uprisings, and international advocacy was apartheid finally abolished.

De jure segregation occurred in the United States for many years after the Civil War. During this time, many former Confederate states passed Jim Crow laws that required segregated facilities for blacks and whites. These laws were codified in 1896's landmark Supreme Court case *Plessey v. Ferguson*, which stated that "separate but equal" facilities were constitutional. For the next five decades, blacks were subjected to legalized discrimination, forced to live, work, and go to school in separate—but *unequal*—facilities. It wasn't until 1954 and the *Brown v. Board of Education* case that the Supreme Court declared that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal," thus ending *de jure* segregation in the United States.

De facto segregation, however, cannot be abolished by any court mandate. Segregation is still alive and well in the United States, with different racial or ethnic groups often segregated by neighborhood, borough, or parish. Sociologists use segregation indices to measure racial segregation of different races in different areas. The indices employ a scale from zero to 100, where zero is the most integrated and 100 is the least. In the New York metropolitan area, for instance, the black-white segregation index was seventy-nine for the years 2005–2009. This means that 79 percent of either blacks or whites would have to move in order for each neighborhood to have the same racial balance as the whole metro region (Population Studies Center 2010).

Pluralism

Pluralism is represented by the ideal of the United States as a "salad bowl": a great mixture of different cultures where each culture retains its own identity and yet adds to the flavor of the whole. True pluralism is characterized by mutual respect on the part of all cultures, both dominant and subordinate, creating a multicultural environment of acceptance. In reality, true pluralism is a difficult goal to reach. In the United States, the mutual respect required by pluralism is often missing, and the nation's past pluralist model of a "melting pot" posits a society where cultural differences aren't embraced as much as erased.



Figure 2. For many immigrants to the United States, the Statue of Liberty is a symbol of freedom and a new life. Unfortunately, they often encounter prejudice and discrimination. (Photo courtesy of Mark Heard/flickr)

Assimilation

Assimilation describes the process by which a minority individual or group gives up its own identity by taking on the characteristics of the dominant culture. In the United States, which has a history of welcoming and absorbing immigrants from different lands, assimilation has been a function of immigration.

Most people in the United States have immigrant ancestors. In relatively recent history, between 1890 and 1920, the United States became home to around 24 million immigrants. In the decades since then, further waves of immigrants have come to these shores and have eventually been absorbed into U.S. culture, sometimes after facing extended periods of prejudice and discrimination. Assimilation may lead to the loss of the minority group's cultural identity as they become absorbed into the dominant culture, but assimilation has minimal to no impact on the majority group's cultural identity.

Some groups may keep only symbolic gestures of their original ethnicity. For instance, many Irish Americans may celebrate Saint Patrick's Day, many Hindu Americans enjoy a Diwali festival, and many Mexican Americans may celebrate the Day of the Dead; however, for the rest of the year, other aspects of their originating culture may be forgotten.

Assimilation is antithetical to the "salad bowl" created by pluralism; rather than maintaining their own cultural flavor, subordinate cultures give up their own traditions in order to conform to their new environment. Sociologists measure the degree to which immigrants have assimilated to a new culture with four benchmarks: socioeconomic status, spatial concentration, language assimilation, and intermarriage. When faced with racial and ethnic discrimination, it can be difficult for new immigrants to fully assimilate. Language assimilation, in particular, can be a formidable barrier, limiting employment and educational options and therefore constraining growth in socioeconomic status.

Watch It

Consider Frantz Fanon's theory about the inherent racism behind assimilation, as explained in his book, *Black Skin, White Masks.*

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=294

Amalgamation

Amalgamation is the process by which a minority group and a majority group combine to form a new group. Amalgamation is reflected in the classic "melting pot" analogy. Unlike the "salad bowl," in which each culture retains its individuality, the "melting pot" ideal sees the combination of cultures mixing together and becoming more homogeneous.

Though the term is rarely used today in a racial sense, Amalgamation was also once a synonym for miscegenation. Recall that this term refers to intermarriage between races or to the mixed-race offspring of such unions. In the United States, antimiscegenation laws flourished in the South during the Jim Crow era. It wasn't until 1967's *Loving v. Virginia* that the last antimiscegenation law was struck from the books, making these laws unconstitutional.

Further Research

So you think you know your own assumptions? Check and find out with the Implicit Association Test.

What do you know about the treatment of Australia's aboriginal population? Find out more by viewing the feature-length documentary *Our Generation.*

Think It Over

- Do you believe immigration laws should foster an approach of pluralism, assimilation, or amalgamation? Which perspective do you think is most supported by current U.S. immigration policies?
- Which intergroup relation do you think is the most beneficial to the subordinate group? To society as a whole? Why?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13415

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13416

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13417

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13418

glossary

amalgamation:
the process by which a minority group and a majority group combine to form a new group

assimilation:
the process by which a minority individual or group takes on the characteristics of the dominant culture

expulsion:
the act of a dominant group forcing a subordinate group to leave a certain area or even the country

genocide:
the deliberate annihilation of a targeted (usually subordinate) group

pluralism:
the ideal of the United States as a “salad bowl:” a mixture of different cultures where each culture retains its own identity and yet adds to the “flavor” of the whole (compare with “melting pot”)

segregation:
the physical separation of two groups, particularly in residence, but also in workplace and social functions

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Intergroup Relationships. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:E0217W5T@7/Intergroup-Relationships. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- An Introduction to Frantz Fanon's Black Skin White Masks. **Provided by**: Macat. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TR3hcm41Nb8&list=PLRXstY5OaIwcj5m-boMjMhMUd6b1hnCmF&index=6. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 11.5: Intergroup Relationships is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.6: Introduction to Race and Ethnicity in the United States

What you'll learn: compare and contrast the experiences of racial and ethnic groups in the United States



Figure 1. The Freedom Riders were a civil rights activist group that rode interstate buses into southern states in the U.S. that refused to enforce anti-segregation laws even after segregation was nationally outlawed. The Freedom Riders were often arrested in these states while challenging the continuing local practice of segregation. (Photo courtesy of Adam Jones/Wikimedia Commons)

When the first European explorers came to the New World in 1492, Native Americans had been on the continent for 15,000 years. The brutal suppression of Native American tribes all over the United States is unfortunately not so different from the treatment of other minority groups in U.S. history. Slavery began with the forced importation of slaves in 1619 and continued until 1865, but mistreatment and abuse persisted well into the post-slavery era.

Like the Native Americans, other groups had their lands stolen, or obtained through forced treaties. Consider the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) in which Mexico signed away 525,000 square miles, including what is today Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. The Treaty guaranteed both land rights and citizenship (retain Mexican citizenship or become U.S. citizens) and official documents were bilingual; the first "English-only" rule was created thirty years later in 1878 [1]. The reality, however, was quite different. Most Mexican landowners lost their land within a few decades and had little or no legal recourse. We hear a lot about immigration today, but much less about the history of these groups, or about how that history helps us to understand the contemporary experiences of minority groups in the U.S.

Waves of immigrants came from various parts of the world for a variety of reasons; see a timeline showing push and pull factors affecting immigration. Most of these groups underwent a period of disenfranchisement in which they were relegated to the bottom of the social hierarchy. In the same period, racist ideologies persisted, and often resulted in discrimination and systemic inequalities that still affect black and brown peoples in the U.S. today.

Our society is multicultural and filled with diverse groups that are reflected in American culture, but we must use our sociological imaginations to examine history and biography to truly understand race and ethnicity in the United States today. Similar to the example of "Stratified Monopoly" from the social stratification readings, racial and ethnic minority groups do not start at "GO" with the same resources. For Native American, Mexican American and African American peoples, a variety of mechanisms prevented them from owning land, a significant source of wealth and power in the United States that has generational socioeconomic effects.

This section will describe how several groups became part of U.S. society, discuss the history of intergroup relations, and briefly assess each group's status today.

WAtch It

Watch this video for a review of some of the basics about race and ethnicity we've already learned about, but also for an overview about the main minority races in the United States. The U.S. Census currently identifies six races: White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. You can see current statistics about the racial composition of the U.S. at the United States Census Bureau.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=296

---

1. Oliver, P. 2017. "What the Treaty of Guadalupe Really Says." University of Wisconsin Madison. https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/soc/racepoliticsjustice/2017/07/12/what-the-treaty-of-guadalupe-actually-says/↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Race and Ethnicity in the United States. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Race and Ethnicity in the United States Derived from Race and Ethnicity in the United States by OpenStax. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:s8uQ57XX@8/Race-and-Ethnicity-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Exhibit on Freedom Riders - Center for Civil and Human Rights - Atlanta - Georgia. **Authored by**: Adam Jones. **Provided by**: Wikimedia Commons. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exhibit_on_Freedom_Riders_-_Center_for_Civil_and_Human_Rights_-_Atlanta_-_Georgia_-_USA_(33468216774).jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Race & Ethnicity: Crash Course Sociology #34. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7myLgdZhzjo&index=35&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 11.6: Introduction to Race and Ethnicity in the United States is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.7: Native Americans

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the historical context and current experience of Native Americans in the United States

Native Americans

The only nonimmigrant ethnic group in the United States, Native Americans once dominated the North American continent but by 2010 made up only 0.9 percent of U.S. populace (U.S. Census 2010). Currently, about 2.9 million people identify themselves as Native American alone, while an additional 2.3 million identify them as Native American mixed with another ethnic group (Norris, Vines, and Hoeffel 2012).

How and Why They Came

The earliest immigrants to America arrived millennia before European immigrants. Dates of the migration are debated, with estimates ranging from between 45,000 and 12,000 BCE. It is thought that these early migrants came across a land bridge from present-day Siberia in search of big game to hunt, which they found in huge herds of grazing herbivores in the Americas. Over the centuries and then the millennia, Native American culture blossomed into an intricate web of hundreds of interconnected tribes, each with its own customs, traditions, languages, and religions.

History of Intergroup Relations

Native American culture prior to European settlement is referred to as Pre-Columbian; that is, prior to the coming of Christopher Columbus in 1492. Mistakenly believing that he had landed in the East Indies, Columbus named the indigenous people "Indians," a name that has persisted for centuries, despite being a geographical misnomer and one used to blanket 500 distinct groups who each have their own languages and traditions.

The history of intergroup relations between European colonists and Native Americans is a brutal one. As discussed in the section on genocide, one effect of European settlement in the Americas was to nearly destroy the indigenous population. Native Americans' lack of immunity to European diseases caused the most deaths, but overt mistreatment of Native Americans by Europeans was devastating as well.

From the first Spanish colonists to the French, English, and Dutch who followed, European settlers took what land they wanted and expanded across the continent at will. If indigenous people tried to retain their stewardship of the land, Europeans fought them off with superior weapons. A key element of this issue is the indigenous view of land and land ownership. Most tribes considered the earth a living entity whose resources they were the stewards of. Europeans' domination of the Americas was one of conquest. One scholar points out that Native Americans are the only minority group in the United States whose subordination occurred purely through conquest by the dominant group (Marger 1993).

After the establishment of the United States government, discrimination against Native Americans was codified and formalized in a series of laws intended to subjugate them and keep them from gaining any power. For example:

- The Indian Removal Act of 1930 forced the relocation of any native tribes east of the Mississippi River to lands west of the river.
- The Indian Appropriation Acts (1851, 1871, 1885, and 1889) funded further removals and declared that no Indian tribe could be recognized as an independent nation with which the U.S. government would have to make treaties. This made it even easier for the U.S. government to take land.
- The Dawes Act of 1887 reversed the policy of isolating Native Americans on reservations, instead forcing them onto individual properties that were intermingled with white settlers, thereby reducing their capacity for power as a group.

Native American culture was further eroded by the establishment of Indian boarding schools in the late nineteenth century. These schools, run by both Christian missionaries and the United States government, had the express purpose of "civilizing" Native American children and assimilating them into white society with the infamous slogan, "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." The boarding schools were located off-reservation to ensure that children were separated from their families and culture. Schools forced children to cut their hair, speak English, and practice Christianity. Physical and sexual abuses were rampant for decades; only in 1987 did the Bureau of Indian Affairs issue a policy on sexual abuse in boarding schools. Some scholars argue that many of the problems that Native Americans face today result from almost a century of mistreatment at these boarding schools.

Although many Native Americans were already U.S. citizens through marriage, military service, or accepting land allotments, it wasn't until 1924 and the Indian Citizenship Act that all Native Americans were granted citizenship. American Indians today have all the rights guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution, can vote in elections, and run for political office, but controversies remain over how much jurisdiction the federal government has over tribal affairs, sovereignty, and cultural practices. Many Native Americans served in the American armed forces during World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945). Hundreds of Cherokee, Choctaw, and Navajo service members (among others) utilized their tribal languages in the unique and vital "code talker" program, which provided a means of transmitting messages during combat operations that could not be deciphered by enemy forces.

Current Status

The eradication of Native American culture continued until the 1960s, when Native Americans were able to participate in and benefit from the Civil Rights Movement. The Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 guaranteed Native American tribes most of the rights enumerated in the United States Bill of Rights. New laws like the Indian Self-Determination Act and the Education Assistance Act (both 1975) recognized tribal governments and gave them more power. Indian boarding schools have dwindled to only a few, and Native American cultural groups are striving to preserve and maintain old traditions and tribal languages to keep them from being lost forever.

It wasn't until 2009 that an "apology to Native Peoples of the United States" was included in the text of the 2010 Defense Appropriations Act. It states that the U.S. "apologizes on behalf of the people of the United States to all Native Peoples for the many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by citizens of the United States."

Today, Native Americans (some of whom now wished to be called "American Indians" so as to avoid the "savage" connotations of the term "native") still suffer the effects of centuries of degradation. There are over five million Native Americans in the United States, 78% of whom live outside reservations. Generational poverty, inadequate education, cultural dislocation, and high rates of unemployment contribute to Native American populations falling to the bottom of the economic spectrum.

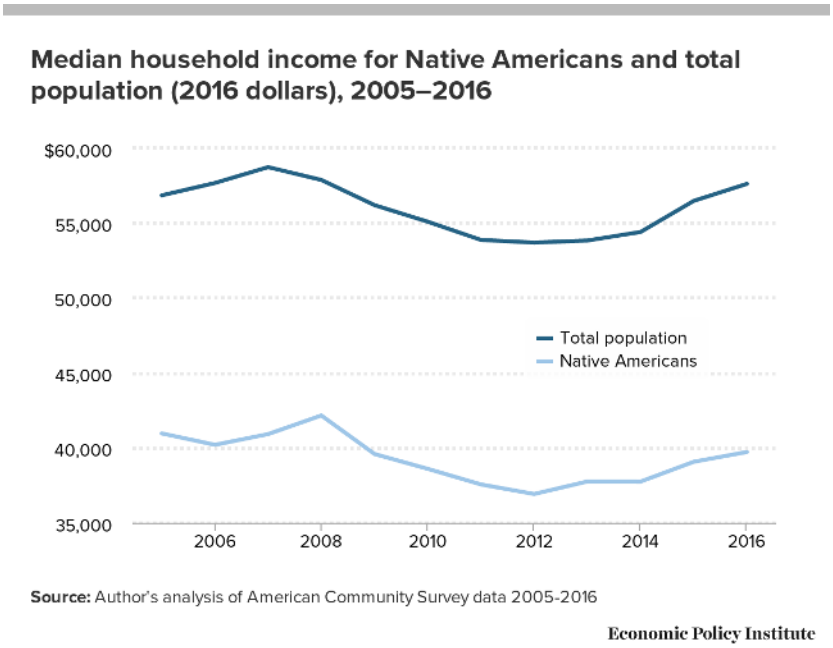


Figure 1. Median household income of Native Americans remains significantly lower than the total population. Source: The Economic Policy Institute, https://www.epi.org/chart/acs-data-2...aign=charts_v2.

Native American populations also have lower life expectancies than most groups in the United States, and high rates of suicide, particularly among 18-24 year olds, is a growing concern. Recent large-scale research from the University of Arizona has found comparable rates of alcohol use between Native Americans and other racial groups, which calls into question the stereotypes of rampant alcoholism among Native Americans (for more information on the study, watch a summary video clip of the University of Arizona research).

Native Americans continue to have a complicated relationship with the U.S. government. Much can be learned from the variety of Native American tribes, including a worldview that sees the natural environment as something we are entrusted to care for and maintain for future generations, an ethos expressed by the following: "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

Sports Teams with Native American Names

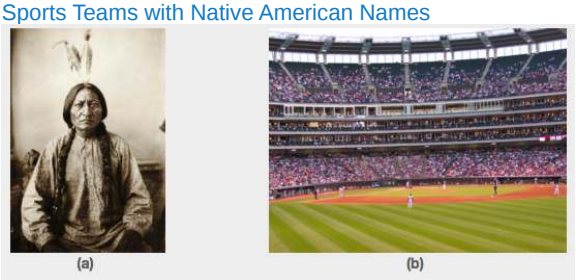


Figure 2. Many Native Americans (and others) believe sports teams with names like the Indians, Braves, and Warriors perpetuate unwelcome stereotypes. (Photo (a) courtesy of public domain/Wikimedia Commons; Photo (b) courtesy of Chris Brown/flickr)

The sports world abounds with team names like Indians, Warriors, Braves, Seminoles, and even Savages and Redskins. These names arise from historically prejudiced views of Native Americans as fierce, brave savages, attributes that might be beneficial to a sports team, but which are offensive to many Native Americans and others in the United States who seek to distance themselves from these stereotypical views. In college sports, the Florida State Seminoles' fans do a "tomahawk chop." Many see this as an instance of cultural appropriation and a de-contextualization of Native American history.

Since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) has been campaigning against the use of such mascots, asserting that the "warrior savage myth . . . reinforces the racist view that Indians are uncivilized and uneducated and it has been used to justify policies of forced assimilation and destruction of Indian culture" (NCAI Resolution #TUL-05-087 2005). The campaign has met with only limited success. While some teams have changed their names, hundreds of professional, college, and K–12 school teams still have names derived from this stereotype. Another group, American Indian Cultural Support (AICS), is

especially concerned with the use of such names at K–12 schools, where this practice might influence children and young adults in the very place where they should be gaining a fuller and more realistic understanding of Native American history and culture.

What do you think about such names and/or gestures? Should they be allowed or banned? What argument would a symbolic interactionist make on this topic? How would a functionalist or conflict theorist approach this topic?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13419

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Native Americans in the United States. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_Americans_in_the_United_States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Race and Ethnicity in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:s8uQ57XX@8/Race-and-Ethnicity-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 11.7: Native Americans is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.8: African Americans

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the historical context and current experience of blacks and African Americans in the United States

African Americans

As discussed in the section on race, the term African American can be a misnomer for many individuals, and needs to be carefully examined when applied in scholarly contexts. Many people with dark skin may have more recent roots in Europe, the Caribbean, or South America, and are, for example, Haitian, Afro-Puerto Rican (also known as Afro Borinquen), or Brazilian. The **African diaspora** refers to the scattering of people with African ancestry all over the world, but predominantly to populations in North and South America.

Further, African immigrants themselves may feel that African American is a misclassification that does not apply to their own identity and does not accurately describe the identity of Blacks who have been in the western hemisphere for generations. In academia, the distinction between "African-American Studies," "Black Studies," and "Africana Studies" (among other names in departments ranging from history to humanities to English) is hotly debated, and holds importance not only to the faculty who dedicate their lives to this work, but also to those individuals and groups that identify as Black or African American. Because race is a social construction with real consequences, it is important to closely scrutinize the language we use to categorize people.

This section will focus on the experience of the slaves who were transported from Africa to the United States, and their progeny. Currently, the U.S. Census Bureau (2014) estimates that 13.2 percent of the United States' population is Black or African American.

How and Why They Came

If Native Americans are the only minority group whose subordinate status occurred by conquest, African Americans are the exemplar minority group in the United States whose ancestors did not come here by choice. A Dutch sea captain brought the first Africans to the Virginia colony of Jamestown in 1619, and sold them as indentured servants. This was not an uncommon practice for either blacks or whites, and indentured servants were in high demand. For the next century, black and white indentured servants worked side by side, but the growing agricultural economy demanded greater and cheaper labor. By 1705, Virginia passed the slave codes declaring that any foreign-born, non-Christian could be a slave, and that slaves were considered property.

The next 150 years saw the rise of U.S. slavery, with Africans being kidnapped from their own lands and shipped to the New World on the trans-Atlantic journey known as the Middle Passage. Once in the Americas, the black population grew until U.S.-born blacks outnumbered those born in Africa. Early colonial slave codes, which were eventually replaced by U.S. laws, declared that the child of a slave was a slave, thus ensuring the practice of intergenerational slavery.

History of Intergroup Relations

There is no starker illustration of the dominant-subordinate group relationship than that of slavery. In order to justify their discriminatory behavior, slaveholders and their supporters had to view blacks as innately inferior. Slaves were denied even the most basic rights of citizenship, a crucial enabling factor for slaveholders and their supporters. Slavery poses an illustrative example of conflict theory's perspective on race relations, as the dominant group needed complete control over the subordinate group in order to maintain power. Extreme corporal punishments were common, including whippings, lashings, and branding. Crimes of war such as rape, family separation, and public executions were part of a larger system of social control, and slaves were prohibited from reading or obtaining an education. In the 1848 U.S. Supreme Court case *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, the court declared that slaves were property and that slave owners and protected in this legal arrangement by the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment (which effectively meant that slaves were still considered property even in free territories). The Dred Scott decision also established that persons of African descent (whether freed or enslaved) had no legal standing as citizens, and therefore could not sue–for their freedom or anything else–in federal court.

Slavery eventually became an issue over which the nation divided into geographically and ideologically distinct factions, which among other factors led to the Civil War (1861-1865). The institution of slavery was crucial to the Southern economy, whose production of crops like rice, cotton, and tobacco relied on the virtually limitless and cheap labor that slavery provided. In contrast,

the North's economy did not directly depend on slavery, though Northern banks did handle capital derived from the practice of slavery. Thus, it should be noted that segregation and discrimination, to varying degrees, were common in both the North and the South. During the post-Civil War Reconstruction period, the Thirteenth Amendment (1863) was ratified to abolish involuntary servitude, the Fourteenth Amendment (1868) to guarantee birthright citizenship, and the Fifteenth Amendment (1870) to bar racial discrimination in voting.

In the South, what developed in the aftermath of the war was essentially slavery by a different name. Some of the practices that enabled the continuation of disenfranchisement and economic oppression included sharecropping, tenant farming, the convict lease system, voter suppression (i.e., the Black Codes), outright violence and intimidation, and gerrymandering, which is the drawing of Congressional districts in a way that reduces the power of black votes.

Watch It

In 2010, Michele Alexander published a book titled *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, in which she argues that blacks and other minority populations are kept in an inferior position in the United States because of the disproportionate and unfair number of minorities who are imprisoned.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=300

The twentieth century (1900s) included a number of social movements that worked to create equality for Blacks in the United States. Sociologist W.E.B. DuBois was at the forefront of the Niagara Movement (1905-1909), which sought to bring about legal change and equal economic and educational opportunities for African Americans. The 1908 Springfield Race Riot galvanized a group of activists including white Jewish socialists (male and female), white suffragists, and African Americans (including DuBois and Ida B. Wells) to create the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. The NAACP still exists today and continues its mission to "ensure a society in which all individuals have equal rights without discrimination based on race."[1] DuBois also served as editor of *The Crisis*, a journal that reported news on civil rights activism and black art, writing, and poetry, "with the vision of challenging mainstream stereotypes of African Americans"[2].

A half-century later, the Civil Rights Movement was characterized by boycotts, marches, sit-ins, and "freedom rides," all forms of activism practiced by a subordinate group no longer willing to submit to domination. In 1954, the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education* resulted in a Supreme Court decision that interpreted segregated schools as a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, which is meant to guarantee equal protection before the law. A major blow to America's formally institutionalized racism was the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This Act banned discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and was followed one year later by the Voting Rights Act, which outlawed discriminatory voting practices. Despite these crucial laws, some sociologists would argue that institutionalized racism persists to this day.

Current Status

Most sociologists point out that institutionalized racism persists in social institutions such as public schools and the criminal justice system (laws, policing, and sentencing). Some states have also found different ways to limit the franchise (i.e., voting rights) for minority groups. These methods including mandatory requirements for IDs, fewer polling places in rural and poor areas, and felon disenfranchisement in states with large black populations. Schools today are more segregated in some areas than ever. This is an example of *de facto* segregation. As we will see in the module on education, black children are more likely to be labeled as deviant, and are suspended and/or expelled at rates far greater than for whites who commit the same or similar offenses. This state of affairs has led some to argue that a "school-to-prison pipeline" begins as early as pre-k within public schools.

The National Urban League's *Equality Index* reports that blacks' overall equality level with whites was 72.5 percent in 2018, which means that rather than having a whole pie (100 percent), or full equality with whites, over a quarter of the pie is missing. The *Index*, which has been published since 2005, notes very little change in total equality over time (.4% *less* in 2018 than in 2005) within categories like economics, health, education, social justice, and civic engagement.

To what degree do racism and prejudice contribute to this continued inequality? The answer is complex. The year 2008 saw the election of this country's first African American president: Barack Hussein Obama. Despite being popularly identified as black, former President Obama is of mixed heritage; his mother was a white anthropologist from Kansas and his father was Kenyan. Obama was raised in Hawaii and Indonesia, so culturally his background is steeped in Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian influences. The fact that Obama is referred to as "the first black president" reflects the logic of the "one-drop rule," or the tendency to view someone's racial status as wholly corresponding to the *minority* status within the individual's heritage.

Although all presidents have been publicly mocked at times (Gerald Ford was depicted as a klutz, Bill Clinton as someone who could not control his libido), a startling percentage of the critiques of Obama have been based on his race. The most blatant of these was the controversy over his birth certificate, where the “birther” movement questioned his citizenship and thus his right to hold office. Although blacks have come a long way from slavery, the echoes of centuries of disempowerment are still evident.

Glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]African diaspora:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]the dispersion of African peoples into other communities, especially those in North and South America, from the 16th to the 19th centuries[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

---

1. "What is the Mission of the NAACP?" NAACP. https://www.naacp.org/about-us/↵
2. Bragg, S. 2009. "The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," BlackPast.org. https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/national-association-advancement-colored-people-and-long-struggle-civil-rights-united-s/↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Race and Ethnicity in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.1:s8uQ57XX@11/Race-and-Ethnicity-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.

All rights reserved content

- An Introduction to Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow . **Authored by**: A Macat Sociology Analysis. **Provided by**: Macat. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWU6ZfnqNHM&list=PLRXstY5OaIwcj5m-boMjMhMUd6b1hnCmF&index=13. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 11.8: African Americans is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.9: Asian Americans

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the historical context and current experience of Asian Americans in the United States

Asian Americans

Like many groups discussed in this module, Asian Americans represent a great diversity of cultures and backgrounds. The experience of a Japanese American whose family has been in the United States for three generations will be drastically different from a Laotian American who has only been in the United States for a few years.

The most recent estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau (2017) suggests that about 5.8 percent of the population identify themselves as Asian. While this number may be a relatively small percentage of the current U.S. population, Asians are projected to become the largest immigrant group in the country, surpassing Hispanics in 2055. In 50 years, Asians are projected to make up 38 percent of all U.S. immigrants, while Hispanics will make up 31 percent of the nation's immigrant population[1]

How and Why They Came

The national and ethnic diversity of Asian American immigration history is reflected in the variety of their experiences in joining U.S. society. Asian immigrants have come to the United States primarily in the third wave (1880-1914) and fourth wave (1965-present), but also in the second wave (1820-1860). The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act removed national-origin quotas established in 1921, resulting in marked population growth during this period with 491,000 Asian immigrants in 1960 and 12.8 million Asian immigrants in 2014, which accounts from a 2,597 percent increase[2]. As of 2014, the top five origin countries of Asian immigrants were India, China, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Korea.

The first Asian immigrants to come to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century were Chinese. These immigrants were primarily men whose intention was to work for several years in order to earn incomes to send back to their families in China. Their main destination was the American West, where the Gold Rush ('49 ers) was drawing people with its lure of abundant money. The construction of the Transcontinental Railroad was underway at this time, and the Central Pacific section hired thousands of migrant Chinese men to complete the laying of rails across the rugged Sierra Nevada mountain range. Chinese men also engaged in other manual labor like mining and agricultural work. This work was grueling and underpaid, but like many immigrants, they persevered.

Japanese immigration began in the 1880s, on the heels of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Many Japanese immigrants came to Hawaii to work in the sugar industry; others came to the mainland, especially to California. Unlike the Chinese, however, the Japanese had a strong government in their country of origin that negotiated with the U.S. government to ensure the well-being of their immigrants. Japanese men were able to bring their wives and families to the United States, and were thus able to produce second- and third-generation Japanese Americans more quickly than their Chinese counterparts.

Filipinos migrated to the United States after the U.S. annexed the Philippines in 1899. As U.S. nationals, they were not subjected to the same restrictions as other groups. Many settled in California and Hawaii and worked in agricultural jobs. Immigration slowed as a result of restrictions for several decades, but after World War II "war brides" began to arrive with returning U.S. servicemen. Although the Philippines obtained its independence in 1946 in the Treaty of Manila, the U.S. still became home to a large number of Filipino immigrants, with the number of immigrants quadrupling from 501,000 in 1980 to 1,942,000 in 2016.[3]

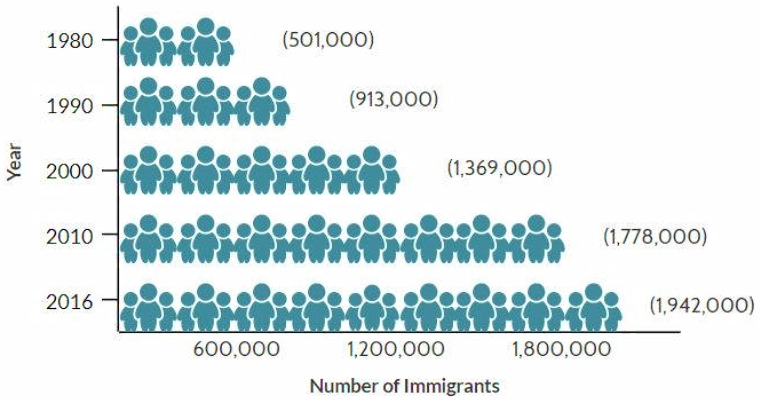


Figure 1. Filipino Immigrant Population in the United States, 1980-2016. Sources: Data from U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2016 American Community Surveys (ACS), and Campbell J. Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-born Population of the

United States: 1850-2000" (Working Paper no. 81, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, February 2006), https://www.census.gov/population/ww.../twps0029.html.

Fourth wave Asian immigration included immigrants from India, Korea, Vietnam, and the Philippines. As you can see in Figure 2, Indian immigration grew between 1980 and 2010 more than eleven-fold, roughly doubling every decade. It is composed primarily of English-speaking, highly educated immigrants, many of whom qualified for an H-1B (a temporary visa for highly skilled immigrants)[4]. In 2013, India and China supplanted Mexico as the top sources of newly arriving immigrants in the United States (Zong and Batalova 2017).

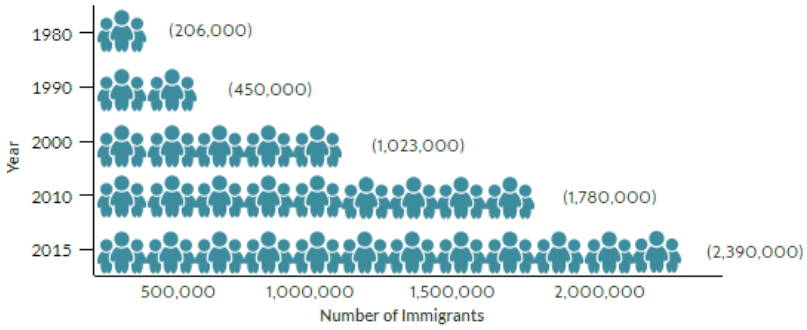


Figure 2. Indian Immigrant Population in the United States, 1980-2015. Sources: Data from U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2015 American Community Surveys (ACS), and 1980, 1990, and 2000 Decennial Census, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/arti...-united-states.

Wars in Korea and Vietnam led to increased immigration from those countries after 1965. While Korean immigration has been fairly gradual, Vietnamese immigration was more concentrated after 1975, when the formerly U.S.-backed city of Saigon fell and a restrictive communist government was established. Whereas many Asian immigrants came to the United States to seek better economic opportunities, Vietnamese immigrants came as political refugees, seeking asylum from repressive conditions in their homeland. The Refugee Act of 1980 helped them settle in the United States, with large numbers coming from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Many of these refugees settled in California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, forming ethnic enclaves in urban areas.



Figure 3. Thirty-five Vietnamese refugees wait to be taken aboard the amphibious USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19). They are being rescued from a thirty-five-foot fishing boat 350 miles northeast of Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, after spending eight days at sea. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy/Wikimedia Commons)

History of Intergroup Relations

We hear a lot about opium use today as opiate-related deaths have sharply risen, though opium use is nothing new in America. Although its popularity has varied over time, opium use spread, especially on the west coast, because many Chinese immigrants brought the knowledge and familiarity of opium dens to the United States. San Francisco passed an ordinance against opium dens in 1875, making it a misdemeanor to keep or visit any place where opium was smoked, though the law also served to discriminate against the Chinese. For example, the *San Francisco Chronicle* explained that the Board of Supervisors acted to ban opium dens after learning of "opium-smoking establishments kept by Chinese, for the exclusive use of white men and women" and of "young men and women of respectable parentage" going there.[5]

This early act of discrimination was quickly followed by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which restricted immigration from China. This act was a result of anti-Chinese sentiment, which was further exacerbated by a depressed economy and loss of jobs. White workers blamed Chinese migrants for taking jobs, and the passage of the Act meant the number of available Chinese workers decreased. Chinese men did not have the funds to return to China or to bring their families to the United States, so they remained physically and culturally segregated in the Chinatowns of large cities. Nevertheless, some eventually opened businesses such as laundromats or other service establishments.

In *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* (1886), the Supreme Court ruled that it is a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to administer a law that is ostensibly race-neutral in a prejudicial way with regard to a particular group of people. The plaintiff, Yick Wo, a non-citizen Chinese immigrant who owned a laundry in a wooden building (common in San Francisco, though technically illegal) was denied a permit (along with every other Chinese-owned laundromat), though whites in the same situation were granted permits. This was a landmark case because it established equal protection for non-citizens residing in the U.S.

Although Japanese Americans have deep, long-reaching roots in the United States, their history here has not always been smooth. Restrictions on Japanese immigration took the form of the Gentleman's Agreement in 1907 between the U.S. and Japan, wherein President Theodore Roosevelt agreed to urge the City of San Francisco to end a school segregation order affecting Japanese students, and the Japanese emperor agreed in turn not to issue any new passports for Japanese citizens looking to work in the U.S. (although it did not prevent "picture brides" from coming to the U.S. to marry Japanese men).
The California Alien Land Law of 1913 was aimed at the Japanese and other Asian immigrants, and it prohibited aliens from owning land. The Immigration Act of 1924 completely excluded Asian immigrants from entering the United States. The Act included the race-based National Origins Act, which was aimed at keeping U.S. ethnic stock as undiluted as possible by reducing "undesirable" immigrants. It was not until after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that Chinese immigration again increased, and many Chinese families were reunited. Another notoriously discriminatory policy against the Japanese were the internment camps of World War II, discussed earlier as an illustration of expulsion.

Current Status

Asian Americans are a rapidly growing part of the population. The New York University (NYU) Center for the Study of Asian American Health examines growth in New York City. Researchers there found that New York City (NYC) is home to nearly 1.2 million documented and undocumented Asian Americans, representing more than 13% of the total NYC population. This diverse population (more than 20 countries of origin and 45 languages and dialects) grew by 110% from 1990 to 2010.

Immigrant and Emigrant Populations by Country of Origin and Destination

Use this interactive map on immigrant and emigrant populations to examine where many of the world's 258 million international migrants moved. You can use the dropdown menu to select a country of origin to see where emigrants have settled.



Asian Americans certainly have been subject to their share of racial prejudice, despite seemingly positive stereotype as the model minority. The **model minority** stereotype is applied to a group that is seen as achieving significant educational, professional, and socioeconomic success without challenging the existing establishment. This stereotype is typically applied to Asian groups in the United States, and it can result in unrealistic expectations by putting a stigma on those who do not meet the presumed standard. Stereotyping all Asians as smart and capable can also limit much-needed government assistance, and can result in educational and professional discrimination.

The reality is quite different for most Asian Americans, especially recent immigrants. Although there are stories of Chinese billionaires buying properties for their children studying in the U.S. and about the influx of educated, highly-skilled Asians seeking employment in STEM fields, many of the poorest Asian groups in the U.S. have a vastly different quality of life. Although unemployment remains low among Asian Americans, 12.3 percent live below the federal poverty level, with almost 20 percent of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders living in poverty (according to the American Community Survey (ACS), an annual survey similar to the U.S. Census, conducted every ten years).[6] According to the NYC Opportunity tabulations, 17.9 percent of people living in poverty in New York City were Asian Americans, and they had the highest poverty rate of *any* racial or ethnic group at 29 percent. Contradictorily, Asian American community organizations received only 1.4 percent of the city's social service contract dollars from the Department of Social Services (Tran 2018).

Crazy Rich Asians (2018)

Please watch the trailer from the blockbuster hit Crazy *Rich Asians* (2018) for one example of the elite Asian American immigrant. Then consider the questions that follow.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=302

- Why do you think there is such a disconnect between numbers of Asian Americans in poverty and funding for Asian community organizations?
- What would be the unique challenges of obtaining survey data in Asian communities that might not pose the same challenges in other minority communities? How would you suggest addressing these sampling challenges?
- In what ways is the **model minority** an ideology to justify inequality and racism?
- Do you think dark-skinned Asian Americans might be subjected to more prejudice and discrimination than light-skinned Asian Americans?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13420

glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]model minority:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]the stereotype applied to a minority group that is seen as reaching higher educational, professional, and socioeconomic levels without challenging the majority establishment[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

---

1. Lopez, G., Ruiz, N., and E. Patten. 2017. "Key facts about Asian Americans," http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/08/key-facts-about-asian-americans/↵
2. Zong, J. and J. Batalova. 2017. "Indian Immigrants in the United States," https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/indian-immigrants-united-states. ↵
3. Zong, J. and J. Batalova, 2018. "Filipino Immigrants in the United States," Migration Policy Institute. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/filipino-immigrants-united-states. ↵
4. Zong, J. and J. Batalova. 2017. "Indian Immigrants in the United States," https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/indian-immigrants-united-states. ↵
5. Fisher, G. 2014. "The Drug War at 100." Stanford Law School Aggregate Blog. https://law.stanford.edu/2014/12/19/the-drug-war-at-100/. ↵
6. Tran, V. 2018. "Asian Americans are Falling Through the Cracks," Urban Wire. https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/asian-americans-are-falling-through-cracks-data-representation-and-social-services. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Race and Ethnicity in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.1:s8uQ57XX@11/Race-and-Ethnicity-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Migration Policy Institute Map. **Located at**: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-and-emigrant-populations-country-origin-and-destination. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- CRAZY RICH ASIANS - Official Trailer. **Provided by**: Warner Bros. Pictures. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQ-YX-5bAs0. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Filipino Immigrants in the United States. **Authored by**: Zong, J. and J. Batalova. **Provided by**: Migration Policy Institute. **Located at**: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/filipino-immigrants-united-states. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- Indian Immigrants in the United States. **Authored by**: Zong, J. and J. Batalova. **Provided by**: Migration Policy Institute. **Located at**: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/indian-immigrants-united-states. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 11.9: Asian Americans is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.10: Hispanic

This page was auto-generated because a user created a sub-page to this page.

This page titled 11.10: Hispanic is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.10.1: Hispanic/Latino Americans

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the historical context and current experience of Hispanic/Latino Americans in the United States

Latino/Hispanic Americans

The segment of the U.S. population that self-identifies as Hispanic in 2017 was estimated at 18.1 percent of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau 2017). Like Asian Americans, Latino/Hispanic Americans encompass many different ethnic groups (see Figure 1). But unlike other ethnic groups who share a Pan-Asian or Pan-African identity among various members from different countries of origin, a majority of Hispanics don't view themselves as simply "Hispanic" or "Latino", but feel a stronger connection with their family's country of origin. [1].

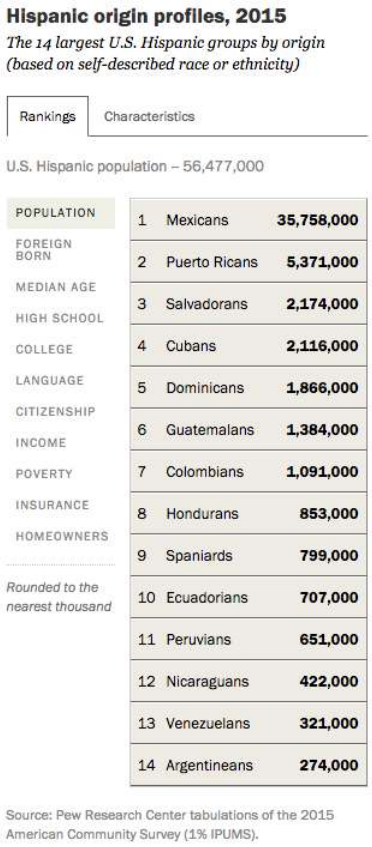


Figure 1. The origin country of Hispanics in the United States from 2015. From Antionio Flores "How the U.S. Hispanic population is changing", Pew Research Center.

A large majority of Latinos live in two metropolitan areas: Los Angeles/Long Beach/Anaheim in California, and New York City/Newark/Jersey City in New York and New Jersey—with 6 million and 4.8 million respectively. However, four other metropolitan areas (Miami, Houston, Riverdale, and Chicago) are each home to over 2 million Latinos.[2]

Not only are there broad differences among the different national origins that make up the Hispanic American population, but there are also different names for the group itself. The 2010 U.S. Census states that "Hispanic" or "Latino" refers to a person of "Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race." There have been some disagreements over whether Hispanic or Latino is the correct term for a group this diverse, and whether it would be better for people to refer to themselves as being of their national origin specifically, for example, Mexican American or Dominican American. This section will compare the experiences of Mexican Americans and Cuban Americans.

How and Why They Came

As discussed in the introduction to this section, many Mexicans who became American citizens didn't "come" to the United States. They lived in areas of Mexico that became part of the United States as a result of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. They didn't immigrate (or even move); some became U.S. citizens and some remained citizens of Mexico living in the U.S. Since then, Mexican migration was often in response to the need for cheap agricultural labor, and often coincided with seasonal crop cycles.

The 1898 Treaty of Paris resulted in the purchase of the Philippines and to Spain ceding Puerto Rico, Guam, and Cuba to the U.S. Puerto Rico is the largest U.S. territory and Puerto Ricans are legally U.S. citizens. Like the Philippines, Puerto Rico was under Spanish control prior to the treaty, so the island went from one colonizer to another; however, unlike the Philippines, which became independent in 1946, Puerto Rico continues to be a U.S. territory.

Salvadorians comprise the third largest of the Latino subgroups, and are the largest group from the "Northern Triangle," which also includes Guatemala (#6) and Honduras (#8). The number of immigrants from this region rose by 25 percent from 2007 to 2015.[3]. Immigrants from this area of Central America cite economic opportunity as the primary reason why they come to the United States, but many also cite the growing violence in their home nations as a reason for leaving.

Cuban Americans are the fourth largest Hispanic subgroup, and their history is quite different from the aforementioned groups of Latinos. The main wave of Cuban immigration to the United States started after Fidel Castro came to power in 1959. In fact, Cubans were granted political asylum in the 1960s and were given an easier path to U.S. citizenship. This immigrant wave crested in 1980 with the Mariel Boatlift, which resulted in 125,000 Cubans leaving the island with Castro's blessing, including many prisoners and people released from mental asylums. Castro's revolution ushered in an era of communism that continues to this day. To avoid having their assets seized by the government, many wealthy and educated Cubans migrated north, generally to the Miami area.

History of Intergroup Relations

For decades, Mexican workers crossed the long border into the United States, both legally and illegally, to work in the agricultural fields of the developing United States. Western growers needed a steady supply of labor, and the 1940s and 1950s saw the official federal Bracero Program (*bracero* is Spanish for *strong-arm*) that offered protection to Mexican guest workers. Interestingly, 1954 also saw the enactment of "Operation Wetback," which deported thousands of illegal Mexican workers. From these examples, we can see the U.S. treatment of immigration from Mexico has been ambivalent at best.

Sociologist Douglas Massey (2006) suggests that although the average standard of living in Mexico may be lower than in the United States, it is not so low as to make permanent migration the goal of most Mexicans. However, the strengthening of the border that began with 1986's Immigration Reform and Control Act has made one-way migration the rule for most Mexicans. Massey argues that the rise of illegal one-way immigration of Mexicans is a direct outcome of the law that was intended to reduce it.

The United States' original interest in Puerto Rico was economic and related to the production and export of sugar cane. In 1901, the Supreme Court, in a series of cases known as the Insular Cases said that "alien races" that might not be able to understand Anglo-Saxon laws, therefore the protections of the U.S. Constitution wouldn't apply to them. Puerto Rico had no legal standing as U.S. citizens until 1917, which was the same year the U.S. entered World War I. Approximately 236,000 Puerto Ricans registered for the draft and nearly 20,000 served in the war, according to the U.S. Department of Defense.[4] One of New York City's most famous Puerto Ricans, Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, was repeatedly described as "the daughter of Puerto Rican immigrants." Although *migrants* versus *immigrants* might seem like an unimportant distinction to some, the common confusion of these terms highlights the fact that nearly half of all Americans don't realize (or know) that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens. Comedian and *Last Week Tonight* host John Oliver exclaimed, "She is the daughter of Americans who moved from Puerto Rico!" (watch the *Last Week Tonight* clip "U.S. Territories").

During the Cold War (1945-1991), as the world's capitalist nations faced off against the communist U.S.S.R. and its satellite states, the U.S. funneled billions of dollars into El Salvador (a country with a population of 4.7 million in 1980) in an effort to suppress communist-affiliated revolutionary movements in Central America. Leftist peasants and civilians fought against the El Salvadorian military (which was supported by the U.S.), and over 75,000 people were killed during the ensuing civil war. In the aftermath of this conflict, fleeing Salvadorians were given Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in 1990, which allowed them to legally live and

work in the U.S. This program was meant to expire in 1992, but has been extended several times and continues to be a point of contention today as part of the larger debate concerning immigration policy.

Cuban Americans, perhaps because of their relative wealth and education level at the time of immigration, have fared better than many other immigrant groups. Further, because they were fleeing a newly established communist country (which was backed by America's Cold War adversary the U.S.S.R.), they were given refugee status and offered protection and social services. The Cuban Migration Agreement of 1995 has curtailed legal immigration from Cuba, leading many Cubans to try to immigrate illegally by boat. According to a 2009 report from the Congressional Research Service, the U.S. government applies a "wet foot/dry foot" policy toward Cuban immigrants; Cubans who are intercepted while still at sea will be returned to Cuba, while those who reach the shore will be permitted to stay in the United States.

Current Status

Mexican Americans, especially those who are here illegally, are at the center of a national debate about immigration. Myers (2007) observes that no other minority group (except the Chinese) has immigrated to the United States in such an environment of illegality. He notes that in some years, three times as many Mexican immigrants may have entered the United States illegally as those who arrived legally. It should be noted that this is due to an enormous disparity of economic opportunity on two sides of an open border, not because of any inherent inclination to break laws. In his report, "Measuring Immigrant Assimilation in the United States," Jacob Vigdor (2008) states that Mexican immigrants experience relatively low rates of economic and civil assimilation. He further suggests that "the slow rates of economic and civic assimilation set Mexicans apart from other immigrants, and may reflect the fact that the large numbers of Mexican immigrants residing in the United States illegally have few opportunities to advance themselves along these dimensions."

The current status of Puerto Ricans today is that more live on the mainland than on the island, with the majority of Puerto Ricans (1 million) living in New York City. The status of American citizens living on the island will be explored below in the context of Hurricane María.

Blackout in Puerto Rico

The storm season of 2017 resulted in three Category 4 storms, Harvey (Texas), Irma (Florida), and María (Puerto Rico), that occurred within 4 weeks of each other. Despite their similarities, the government response to the storms varied dramatically. For example, nine days following the hurricanes, 5.1 million meals were provided in Texas, 10.9 million meals in Florida, and only 1.6 million in Puerto rico; 4.5 liters of water were given in Texas, 7 million liters of water were given in Florida, and only 2.8 million to Puerto Rico. Within this same time period, there were 30,000 federal workers deployed to Texas, 22,000 to Florida, and only 10,000 to Puerto Rico.

Look at this comparative analysis on hurricane response to read more about how the U.S. government responded to the 2017 hurricanes in Florida, Texas, and Puerto Rico. You can also watch "Blackout in Puerto Rico" to get a closer look at the difficulties on the island following the hurricane.

Some more recent immigrants from El Salvador were granted TPS in the wake of several earthquakes in 2001. In January 2018, President Trump announced that this program will expire, leaving nearly 200,000 Salvadorians in danger of deportation. In October 2018, a federal judge blocked the administration's decision, and a new deadline of January 2020 has been set.

By contrast, Cuban Americans are often touted as models of a Latino immigrant success story. Many Cubans had higher socioeconomic status when they arrived in this country, and their anti-Communist agenda has made them valuable symbols of the superiority of Western capitalist democracy. In south Florida, especially, Cuban Americans are active in local politics and professional life.

While immigration is slowing, there is evidence to suggest a growing number of Hispanics are experiencing positive gains and upward social mobility, especially in the second and third generations. In 2015, almost 40 percent of Hispanics have attended some college, which is up from 30 percent in 2000. [5].

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13421

Arizona's Senate Bill 1070



Figure 2. Protesters in Arizona dispute the harsh new anti-immigration law. (Photo courtesy of rprathap/flickr)

As both legal and illegal immigrants, and with high population numbers, Mexican Americans are often the target of stereotyping, racism, and discrimination. Arizona has been at the forefront of a national debate over immigration laws. In 2010, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed Senate Bill 1070 (SB 1070), which required that Arizona police officers establish the immigration status of anyone they suspected to be undocumented during a lawful stop, detention, or arrest.

Federal law already requires aliens older than 18 to possess proper identification, with failure to do so classified as a federal misdemeanor; what SB 1070 added was police officers' discretion to detain people they suspected might be undocumented. The minimum fine for a first offense under SB 1070 was $500, with a minimum of $1000 for a second violation and a maximum jail sentence of six months; a violation of the federal law carries a fine of up to $100 for a first offense, plus court costs and up to 20 days in jail. Subsequent offenses may include a penalty of up to 30 days in jail.

To many, the most troublesome aspect of this law is the latitude it affords police officers. Having "reasonable suspicion that the person is an alien who is unlawfully present in the United States" is reason enough to demand immigration papers (Senate Bill 1070 2010). Like "stop and frisk" in New York City, racial profiling is the likely result, making it hazardous to be caught "Driving While Brown," a takeoff on the legal term Driving While Intoxicated (DWI), or the slang reference of "Driving While Black (DWB)."

After its passage, several legal challenges were mounted against SB 1070. Courts agued about issues in the bill pertaining to the Supremacy Clause (a federal law is paramount over a state law), the Equal Protection Clause and Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, First Amendment freedom of speech protections (since one's accent could result in racial profiling), and Fourth Amendment prohibitions against unreasonable searches and seizures

A complex chain of legal filings and lawsuits at the state and federal level ensued and in 2012, *Arizona v. United States* was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. Some of the most controversial provisions were pre-empted by federal law, but the Supreme Court unanimously upheld the portion of the law that required Arizona law enforcement to verify the citizenship or alien status of anyone who was lawfully arrested or detained. [6]

How can sociological theories help us to understand the tension between state and federal laws or between the dominant and subordinate racial/ ethnic groups in Arizona? Try examining SB 1070 from a conflict perspective and compare that to a functionalist perspective.

In what ways do you think the law could be seen as a symbol of "law and order" or as a symbol of racial profiling? What does it mean to different groups?

---

1. Cohn, D. 2017. "Seeking better data on Hispanics," http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/20/seeking-better-data-on-hispanics-census-bureau-may-change-how-it-asks-about-race/. ↵
2. Stepler, R. and M. Lozpez. 2016. "U.S. Latino population growth and dispersion," Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2016/09/08/5-ranking-the-latino-population-in-metropolitan-areas/ ↵
3. Cohn, D., Passel, J., and A. Gonzalez-Barrera. (2017). "Rise in U.S. Immigrants From El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras Outpaces Growth from Elsewhere." Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2017/12/07/rise-in-u-s-immigrants-from-el-salvador-guatemala-and-honduras-outpaces-growth-from-elsewhere/. ↵
4. "Collins, Shannon. Puerto Ricans Represented Throughout U.S. Military History," U.S. Department of Defense. https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/News/Article/Article/974518/puerto-ricans-represented-throughout-us-military-history/↵

5. Flores, A. 2017. "How the U.S. Hispanic population is changing," Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/18/how-the-u-s-hispanic-population-is-changing/. ↵
6. "Arizona v. U.S.", Legal Information Institute. Cornell Law School. https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/11-182. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Race and Ethnicity in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

All rights reserved content

- How the U.S. Hispanic population is changing. **Authored by**: Antonio Flores. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/18/how-the-u-s-hispanic-population-is-changing/#. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 11.10.1: Hispanic/Latino Americans is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.11: Arab Americans

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the historical context and current experience of Arab Americans in the United States

Arab Americans

The category of Arab Americans may be among the most difficult to define. For Arab Americans, their country of origin—Arabia—has not existed for centuries, although millions of people speak Arabic and it is the sixth most commonly spoken language worldwide. Geographically, the Arab region comprises the Middle East and parts of northern Africa. People whose ancestry lies in that area, or who speak primarily Arabic may consider themselves Arabs.

In addition, Arab Americans represent all religious practices, despite the stereotype that all Arabic people practice Islam. As Myers (2007) asserts, not all Arabs are Muslim, and not all Muslims are Arab, complicating the definition of what it means to be an Arab American. Although Islam will be discussed more fully in the module on religion, it is important to note that Muslims make up a small portion of the U.S. population, just 0.9 percent. They are one of the most racially diverse groups in the country, with 41 percent of the Muslim population being white, 20 percent black, 28 percent Asian, and 8 percent Hispanic.[1]

The U.S. Census has struggled with the issue of Arab identity. The 2010 Census, as in previous years, did not offer an "Arab" box to check under the question of race. Individuals who want to be counted as Arabs had to check the box for "Some other race" and then write in their race. However, when the Census data is tallied, they will be marked as white. This classification is problematic, however, as it denies Arab Americans opportunities for nearly $400 billion in federal assistance.[2]

According to the best estimates of the U.S. Census Bureau, the Arabic population in the United States grew from 850,000 in 1990 to 1.2 million in 2000, an increase of .07 percent (Asi and Beaulieu 2013). The American Community Survey (ACS) showed the Arab American population to be around 1.8 million in 2011, an increase of 47 percent from 2000, but the Arab Institute estimates the U.S. Arab population to be 3.7 million. The Arab Institute criticized the decision to reject a Middle East/North Africa (MENA) category to the 2020 U.S. Census, a category that was added to the ACS [3]

Regardless of the exact size, the community is enormously diverse. The Arab American population has ancestral ties to 22 countries, varying religious backgrounds, and complex historical, cultural, and political identities. The U.S. population is concentrated in five regions: the Detroit/Dearborn area, Los Angeles, New York/New Jersey, Chicago, and Washington D.C., but segments of the population live in all 50 states. [4]

Why They Came

The first Arab immigrants came to this country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They were predominantly Syrian, Lebanese, and Jordanian Christians who were fleeing persecution and hoping to make a better life. These early immigrants and their descendants, who were more likely to think of themselves as Syrian or Lebanese than Arab, represent almost half of the Arab American population today (Myers 2007). Restrictive immigration policies from the 1920s until 1965 curtailed all immigration, but Arab immigration since 1965 has been steady. Immigrants from this time period have been more likely to be Muslim and more highly educated, often escaping political unrest and looking for better opportunities.

Between 1980 and 2010, the size of the MENA immigrant population quadrupled, from 223,000 to 861,000. And from 2010 to 2016, the MENA population increased another 36 percent, to 1,167,000.[5] Wars in Syria and Yemen have resulted in humanitarian crises causing refugees to seek asylum in the U.S. and in other countries.

History of Intergroup Relations

Relations between Arab Americans and the dominant majority have been marked by mistrust, misinformation, and deeply entrenched beliefs. Helen Samhan of the Arab American Institute suggests that Arab-Israeli conflicts in the 1970s contributed significantly to cultural and political anti-Arab sentiment in the United States (2001). The United States has historically supported the State of Israel, while some Middle Eastern countries deny the legitimacy of the Israeli state. Disputes over these issues have involved Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine.

In 2018, the U.S. Embassy in Israel was moved from Tel Aviv, the nation's capital, to Jerusalem, which houses sacred religious sites for Muslims, Jews, and Christians. This controversial move resulted in days of protests, with 55 Palestinians killed by the Israeli Army and 2,770 injured.[6]



Figure 1. The proposed Park51 Muslim Community Center generated heated controversy due to its close proximity to Ground Zero. In these photos, people march in protest against the center, while counter-protesters demonstrate their support. (Photos (a) and (b) courtesy of David Shankbone/Wikimedia Commons)

As is often the case with stereotyping and prejudice, the actions of extremists come to define the entire group, regardless of the fact that most U.S. citizens with ties to the Middle East condemn terrorist actions, as do most inhabitants of the Middle East itself. The United States was deeply affected by the attacks of September 11, 2001. This event has left a deep scar on the American psyche, and it has fortified anti-Arab sentiment. In the first month after 9/11, hundreds of hate crimes were perpetrated against people who looked like they might be of Arab descent, including many Sikhs (a religious minority with origins in India). According to the FBI, anti-Muslim hate crimes (against Muslims or people mistaken to be Muslim), surged 67 percent in 2016, a level not seen since 2001.[7]

The United States has had business interests in Saudi Arabia's oil industry since 1933, when Standard Oil, now Chevron, explored the area and discovered oil. By 1980, Saudi Arabia had bought out foreign shareholders and established what is known today as Saudi Aramco, though U.S. companies like Chevron, Dow Chemical, and ExxonMobil continue to have deep business ties with Saudi Arabia. As the second-largest holder of crude oil reserves in the world, Saudi Arabia enjoys a close political relationship with the United States.

Current Status

Although the rate of hate crimes against Arab Americans has slowed, they are still victims of racism and prejudice. Racial profiling has proceeded against Arab Americans as a matter of course since 9/11. Particularly when engaged in air travel, being young and Arab-looking is enough to warrant a special search or detainment. This Islamophobia (irrational fear of or hatred against Muslims) does not show signs of abating. Scholars note that white domestic terrorists like Timothy McVeigh, who detonated a bomb at an

Oklahoma courthouse in 1995, have not inspired similar racial profiling of or hate crimes against whites. Executive Orders enacted by President Donald Trump in 2017 have drastically reduced U.S. entry from several Muslim-majority countries and created other restrictions on refugees and resettlement. The “Muslim Ban” has faced multiple legal challenges but has resulted in reduced immigration. As discussed earlier, there has been a 67 percent increase in attacks against Arab Americans since 2016.

The United States’ close political and economic ties with Israel and Saudi Arabia have led to increasing tensions when violence continues to erupt. Saudi-supported attacks in Yemen have led to what the European Union called “the worst humanitarian crisis in the world” in 2018. Whether the U.S. will continue to support Saudi Arabian attacks in what many are calling a genocide in Yemen is unknown, but a surge in civilian deaths in the summer of 2018 has resulted in a call for intervention. Yemen is one of the seven countries included in Executive Order 13769 (otherwise known as the “Muslim Ban”).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13422

---

1. Huda, 2018. "The World's Muslim Population," Thought Co. https://www.learnreligions.com/worlds-muslim-population-2004480 ↵
2. "Uses of Census Bureau Data," 2017. https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/program-management/working-papers/Uses-of-Census-Bureau-Data-in-Federal-Funds-Distribution.pdf. ↵
3. Harb, A. 2018. "U.S. Fails to Add MENA to the U.S. Census." Middle East Eye. https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/us-census-fails-add-mena-category-arabs-remain-white-count. ↵
4. Brown, Heather, Emily Guskin, and Amy Mitchell. "Arab-American Population Growth." Pew Research Center. November 28, 2012. https://www.journalism.org/2012/11/28/arabamerican-population-growth/↵
5. Cumoletti, M. and J. Batalova. 2018. "Middle Eastern and North African Immigrants in the U.S." https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/middle-eastern-and-north-african-immigrants-united-states. ↵
6. Chapell, B. 2018. "55 Palestinian Protesters Killed." NPR. https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/05/14/610934534/18-palestinian-protesters-die-gaza-officials-say-as-u-s-opens-jerusalem-embassy. ↵
7. Suri, M. & H. Wu. 2017. "Religious Minority Target of Hate Crimes." CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/06/asia/sikh-hate-crimes-us-muslims/index.html. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Race and Ethnicity in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:s8uQ57XX@8/Race-and-Ethnicity-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 11.11: Arab Americans is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.12: White Americans

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the historical context and current experience of white Americans

White Americans

As we have seen, there is no minority group that fits easily in a category or that can be described in simple terms. While sociologists believe that individual experiences can often be understood in light of their social characteristics (such as race, class, or gender), we must balance this perspective with awareness that no two individuals' experiences are alike. Making generalizations can lead to stereotypes and prejudice. The same is true for whites, who come from diverse backgrounds and have had a great variety of experiences. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2014), 77.7 percent of U.S. adults currently identify themselves as white alone. Although there has been discussion about including ethnic groups under the racial category of white on the 2020 Census, ethnicity has not previously been measured on the Census and likely will not be part of the 2020 form. In this section, we will focus on German, Irish, Italian, and Eastern European immigrants.

Why They Came

White Europeans formed the second and third great waves of immigration, from the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. They joined a recently established United States that was primarily made up of Protestants from England, known as WASPS (White Anglo Saxon Protestants). While most immigrants came searching for a better life, their experiences were not all the same.

The first major influx of European immigrants came from Germany and Ireland, starting in the 1820s. Germans came both for economic opportunity and to escape political unrest and military conscription, especially after the 1848 Revolutions. Many German immigrants of this period were political refugees, liberals who wanted to escape from an oppressive government. They were sufficiently well-off to make their way inland, and they formed heavily German enclaves in the Midwest that exist to this day.

The Irish immigrants of the same time period were not always as affluent, especially after the Irish Potato Famine of 1845. Irish immigrants settled mainly in the cities of the East Coast, where they were employed as laborers and where they faced significant discrimination.

German and Irish immigration continued into the late 19th century and early 20th century, at which point the numbers for Southern and Eastern European immigrants started growing as well. Italians, mainly from the southern part of the country, began arriving in large numbers in the 1890s. Eastern European immigrants from Russia, Poland, Bulgaria, and Austria-Hungary started arriving around the same time. Many of these Eastern Europeans were peasants forced into a hardscrabble existence in their native lands; political unrest, land shortages, and crop failures drove them to seek better opportunities in the United States. The Eastern European immigration wave also included Jewish people escaping the pogroms (anti-Jewish uprisings) of Eastern Europe and the Pale of Settlement, in what was then Poland and Russia (a "pale" is a border marker, whether literal or figurative). Although Jews are considered "White" on the U.S. Census, being Jewish is considered an *ethnicity* as well as a religion because of the importance of cultural components of Judaism for both practicing (or religious) and non-practicing American Jews.

History of Intergroup Relations

In a broad sense, German immigrants were not discriminated against to the same degree as many of the other subordinate groups discussed in this section. While they may not have been welcomed with open arms, they were able to settle in enclaves and establish roots. A notable exception to this was during the lead up to World War I and through World War II, when anti-German sentiment was pervasive.

Irish immigrants, many of whom were very poor, were more of an underclass than the Germans. In Ireland, the English had oppressed the Irish for centuries, eradicating their language and culture and discriminating against their religion (Catholicism). Although the Irish had a larger population than the English, they were a subordinate group. This dynamic reached into the new world, where Anglo Americans saw Irish immigrants as a race apart: dirty, lacking ambition, and suitable for only the most menial jobs. In fact, Irish immigrants were subject to criticism identical to that with which the dominant group characterized African Americans. By necessity, Irish immigrants formed tight communities segregated from their Anglo neighbors.

The later wave of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe was also subject to intense discrimination and prejudice. In particular, the dominant group—which now included second- and third-generation Germans and Irish—saw Italian immigrants as the dregs of Europe and worried about the purity of the American race (Myers 2007). Italian immigrants lived in segregated slums in Northeastern cities, and in some cases were even victims of violence and lynchings. They worked harder and were paid less than other workers, often doing the dangerous work that other laborers were reluctant to take on.

Although groups of whites were treated unfairly, white skin color afforded all members of this group white privilege**,** or the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed upon people solely because they are white. In the nineteen-thirties, W. E. B. Du Bois wrote about the "psychological wage" that enabled poor whites to feel superior to poor blacks. Peggy McIntosh cemented this concept with her "invisible knapsack" or the list of privileges whites carry around without realizing them. Explore the concept of white privilege with McIntosh's checklist to see how much of it holds true for you or others.

White supremacy, or the belief that whites are racially superior and should dominate all races, has made itself visible through the words and actions of groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the Aryan Brotherhood. Individuals like Dylann Roof, who shot and killed nine people at a church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015, highlight the often violent hatred that undergirds white supremacy.

Watch It

Watch this video from anti-racism activist Tim Wise and consider how he describes white privilege as related to the history of race relations.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=308

Current Status

Americans with German, Irish, Italian, and Eastern European heritage often strongly identify with that background, even though many are now several generations removed from the original waves of immigration that occurred up to or more than a century ago. Elements of each region's culture remain important, and can be seen in festivals like Oktoberfest, holidays like St. Patrick's Day, or Italian feast days and Columbus Day, which are celebrated with ethnic cuisines and within ethnic enclaves such as Little Italy. Support for national teams may also be on enthusiastic display during the World Cup or the Olympics.

Unlike many other racial and ethnic groups, whites are numerically declining, with more people in the demographic dying than are being born. Fewer babies were born during and after the 2008 recession, and increasing numbers of women are choosing to remain childless, often due to the lingering economic effects of the downturn. Mortality rates among whites aged 30-59, in what are being called "deaths of despair" such as suicide and drug overdoses, have also increased, particularly in economically depressed areas of rural America.

Further Research

Are people interested in reclaiming their ethnic identities? Read this article "The White Ethnic Revival" and decide what you think.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13423

Think It Over

- In your opinion, which group had the easiest time coming to this country? Which group had the hardest time? Why?
- Which group has made the most socioeconomic gains? Why do you think that group has had more success than others?
- Why do you think it is difficult for whites to recognize white privilege?

Glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]white supremacy:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]the belief that whites are racially superior and should dominate all other races[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Race and Ethnicity in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:s8uQ57XX@8/Race-and-Ethnicity-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Tim Wise. **Authored by**: Tim Wise: On White Privilege (Clip). **Provided by**: ChallengingMedia. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=J3Xe1kX7Wsc. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 11.12: White Americans is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.13: Introduction to Theories of Racial Inequality

What you'll learn to do: summarize the key ideas behind the three theoretical perspectives on racial inequality



Figure 1. The 1950s waved in a flurry of theories surrounding prejudice in the wake of the Holocaust. Some of these were psychological theories, which focused on how an individual may come to develop, or not develop, prejudices. In his book, The Authoritarian Personality (1950), psychologist Theodor Adorno (in the foreground on the right of this photo) concluded that excessively strict authoritarian parenting caused children to feel immense anger towards their parents, but instead of confronting their parents, they idolized authority figures. (Photo courtesy of Jeremy J. Shapiro/Wikimedia Commons)

We can examine issues of race and ethnicity through three major sociological perspectives: functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. As you read through these theories, ask yourself which one makes the most sense and why. Do we need more than one theory to explain racism, prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination?

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Theories of Racial Inequality. **Authored by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Adorno Horkheimer Habermas by Jeremy J Shapiro 2. **Authored by**: Jeremy J Shapiro. **Provided by**: Wikimedia Commons. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AdornoHorkheimerHabermasbyJeremyJShapiro2.png. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 11.13: Introduction to Theories of Racial Inequality is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.14: Theoretical Perspectives of Race and Ethnicity

Learning Outcomes

- Describe functionalist views on race and ethnicity
- Describe conflict theorists' views on race and ethnicity
- Explain symbolic interactionist views on race and ethnicity
- Explain and differentiate between theories of prejudice

Psychological Theories of Prejudice

Scholars in the 1950s produced a number of theories addressing racial, ethnic, and nationalist prejudices in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Some of these were psychological theories, which focused on how an individual may come to develop, or not develop, prejudices. In his book, *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), Theodor Adorno concluded that excessively strict authoritarian parenting caused children to feel immense anger towards their parents, but instead of confronting their parents, they idolized authority figures. Adorno said this led to increased levels of prejudice and the likelihood for these people to feel more connected to what he called the "F-scale," (a pre-fascist personality), or to right-wing ideologies.

Psychologist Gordon Allport developed the **contact hypothesis** or intergroup contact theory in the 1950s, which posits if two groups with equal status and common goals come together, with cooperation, structural supports (i.e., existing laws or customs), and interpersonal communication, they can reduce stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination.

According to Henri Tajfel's **social identity theory** (1979), people examine their own identity in light of perceived group membership. He says that we tend to increase our self-image by enhancing the status of the group to which we belong. Therefore, we divide the world into "them" and "us" or in-groups and out-groups with heightened prejudicial attitudes toward the out-groups.

Sociological Theories of Prejudice

Functionalism

In the view of functionalism, racial and ethnic inequalities must have served an important function in order to exist as long as they have. This concept, of course, is problematic. How can racism and discrimination contribute positively to society? A functionalist might look at "functions" and "dysfunctions" caused by racial inequality. Nash (1964) focused his argument on the way racism is functional for the dominant group; for example, suggesting that racism morally justifies a racially unequal society. Consider the ways in which slave owners justified slavery in the antebellum South, by suggesting black people were fundamentally inferior to whites, that they preferred slavery to freedom, that many were "like family," and/or that the Bible justified slavery. Today, we can look at how people explain or justify racial inequalities in the criminal justice system ("Black and Brown men commit more crimes") or racially segregated neighborhoods ("people choose where they live") or shooting of unarmed people of color ("they appeared threatening" or "I was protecting myself or my neighborhood").

Another way to apply the functionalist perspective to racism is to discuss the way racism can contribute positively to the functioning of society by strengthening bonds between in-groups members (dominant group) through the ostracism of out-group members (minority group members). Consider how a community might increase solidarity by refusing to allow outsiders access. For example, gated communities or neighborhoods with covenants might include no-rent clauses, which can have a *de facto* (in fact) discriminatory effect although they are not *du jure* (by law) discriminatory. Additionally, "Not in My Backyard" or NIMBY groups often are effective at limiting developments that could be viewed as reducing one's property value. These movements and restrictive covenants are also "inescapably, about race"[1]

Dysfunctions associated with racism include the failure to take advantage of talent in the subjugated group, and that society must divert from other purposes the time and effort needed to maintain artificially constructed racial boundaries (Rose 1951). Imagine the talent that is lost in minority areas with poor public schools and few job opportunities and then consider how much money, time, and effort went toward maintaining separate and unequal educational systems prior to the Civil Rights Movement. Consider the $1 trillion spent on the "War on Drugs" over the past four decades, which has resulted in disproportionate numbers of racial minorities being locked up for nonviolent drug offenses, which costs society not only talent and productive taxpayers, but also vast amounts of taxpayer money to expand and operate jails and prisons.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13424

Conflict Theory

Conflict theories are often applied to inequalities of gender, social class, education, race, and ethnicity. A conflict theorist would examine struggles between the white ruling class and racial and ethnic minorities and use that history to analyze everyday life for racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S., paying special attention to power and inequality. Prejudice is a tool for maintaining power, and in many cases throughout U.S. history, prejudicial policies have become laws. The years since the Civil War have showed a pattern of attempted disenfranchisement, with gerrymandering (redrawing congressional districts to favor one political party over another) and voter suppression efforts, such as voter ID laws, aimed at predominantly minority neighborhoods. In the late nineteenth century, the rising political power of blacks after the Civil War resulted in draconian Black Codes and Jim Crow laws that severely limited black political and social power.

Vivien Thomas (1910–1985), the black surgical technician who helped develop a groundbreaking technique that saves the lives of "blue babies," was classified as a janitor for many years, and was paid as such, despite the fact that he was conducting complicated surgical experiments. The popular film *Hidden Figures* (2016) shed light on the unrecognized work that black women did for NASA during the Space Race in the 1960s. It highlights many of the institutional discriminations that women of color faced, like being denied admission to study calculus and advanced mathematics, being overlooked for supervisory roles, and suffering the effects of Jim Crow segregation in the workplace.

Feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (1990) elaborated on ideas related to the inseparability of various social characteristics in **intersection theory**, or intersectionality. The term was first used by Columbia Law Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in a 1980 paper to describe the oppression of black women and how their experiences during the feminist movement were uniquely different from the mainstream feminist movement, which mostly represented middle-class white women. Intersection theory suggests we cannot separate the effects of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other attributes. When we examine race and how it can bring us both advantages and disadvantages, it is important to acknowledge that the way we experience race is shaped, for example, by our gender and class. Multiple layers of disadvantage intersect to create the way we experience race. For example, if we want to understand prejudice, we must understand that the prejudice focused on a white woman because of her gender is very different from the layered prejudice focused on a poor Asian woman, who is affected by stereotypes related to being poor, being a woman, and to her ethnic status.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13425

Symbolic Interactionism

As discussed in the opening module, W.E.B. DuBois was one of the first sociologists to examine race and **double consciousness** (the feeling that one's identity is divided because of race) and how that influences the sense of self. For symbolic interactionists, race and ethnicity provide strong symbols as sources of identity.

In fact, some interactionists propose that the symbols of race, not race itself, are what lead to racism. Famed Interactionist Herbert Blumer (1958) suggested that racial prejudice is formed through interactions between members of the dominant group; without these interactions, individuals in the dominant group would not hold racist views. These interactions contribute to an abstract picture of the subordinate group that allows the dominant group to support its view of the subordinate group, and thus maintains the status quo. An example of this might be an individual whose beliefs about a particular group are based on images encountered through popular media, which are then unquestionably believed because the individual has never personally met a member of that group.

Another way to apply the interactionist perspective is to look at how people define their races and the race of others. As we discussed in relation to the social construction of race, did Latinos "become White" because the Census removed the Hispanic category as a race? Are Arab-Americans White? What does it mean to be biracial? We discussed that President Obama is considered the "first Black President" and sometimes the "first African American President" even though his mother was white, his father was Kenyan, and the 44th President of the United States grew up surrounded by Hawaiian and Asian culture in Honolulu.

Sociologists like Kathleen Blee have studied racism (Blee studied women in hate groups) and found that racism is *learned*. This is supported by other social psychology experiments, and Blee reached her conclusions by conducting life history interviews with women in white supremacist groups. She found that most women were not racist when they joined the group; rather, they learned to be racist.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13426

Culture of Prejudice

Culture of prejudice refers to the theory that prejudice is embedded in our culture. We grow up surrounded by images of stereotypes and casual expressions of racism and prejudice. Consider the casually racist imagery on grocery store shelves or the stereotypes that fill popular movies and advertisements. It is easy to see how someone living in the Northeastern United States, who may not know any Mexican Americans personally, might gain a stereotyped impression from such sources as Speedy Gonzalez or Taco Bell's talking Chihuahua. Because we are all more or less exposed to these images and thoughts, it is impossible to know to what extent they have influenced our thought processes.

Think it Over

- What is the worst example of culture of prejudice you can think of? What are your reasons for thinking it is the worst?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13427

Glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]contact hypothesis:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]Gordon Allport's theory that emphasizes the importance of interpersonal communication in reducing stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]culture of prejudice:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]the theory that prejudice is embedded in our culture[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]double consciousness:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]the feeling that one's identity is divided because of race[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]intersection theory:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]theory that suggests we cannot separate the effects of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other attributes[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]social identity theory:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]people examine their own identity as based on group membership (in-groups and out-groups)[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

---

1. Badger, E. 2018. "How 'Not in My Backyard' Became 'Not in My Neighborhood.'" New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/03/upshot/zoning-housing-property-rights-nimby-us.html. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

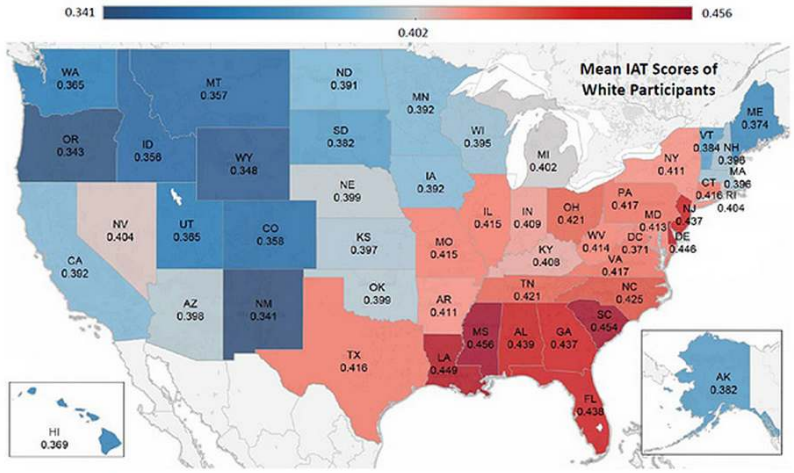
- Theories of Race and Ethnicity. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:sa__n8SF@4/Theories-of-Race-and-Ethnicity. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 11.14: Theoretical Perspectives of Race and Ethnicity is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.15: Putting It Together- Race and Ethnicity

In this module, you learned about stereotyping, prejudices, and discrimination in regards to race and ethnicity. Surely you have seen examples of each of these in your own life, but now you hopefully feel better equipped to acknowledge and correct discriminatory behavior. While most people in the U.S. today are not explicitly and overtly racist, subtle messages still embed themselves into our subconscious through all types of avenues. Extensive research shows that we are not aware of these beliefs, but they are activated in split second decisions when we judge people and situations. Even those who don't practice overt racism may find that they hold a negative implicit bias against non-whites, as demonstrated by researchers at Harvard and the Ohio State University. See Harvard's implicit bias website and Ohio State University's implicit bias website. Test your own subconscious tendencies through Harvard's Project Implicit.

Over 1.5 million (nonrandom) people have taken the IAT since it appeared online. The tests show higher IAT scores, reflecting a greater negative racial bias against blacks and darker skin people, in southern states.



Courtesy of Project Implicit.

It is not just advertising but also, and likely even more so, the news media that contributes to the development of negative implicit racial bias. Research shows a correlation between the minutes of news media watched by whites and the level of negative implicit bias against blacks. Other studies have shown that U.S. news media over-represents blacks as criminals.

This has very real consequences when applied to police officers and the use of deadly force on unarmed citizens. Research shows that officers are initially more likely to mistakenly shoot unarmed black suspects compared to white suspects, and recent media reports have brought many of these shootings to national attention, as discussed at the beginning of this module.

CC licensed content, Original

- Putting It Together: Race and Ethnicity. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Implicit Racial Bias: Where Do We Learn Whom We Should Perceive Negatively?. **Authored by**: Todd Beer. **Located at**: https://thesocietypages.org/toolbox/implicit-bias/. **Project**: Sociology Toolbox. **License**: *CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike*

This page titled 11.15: Putting It Together- Race and Ethnicity is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.16: Discussion- The Race Card Project

STEP 1: Please review the following website: The Race Card Project and read a variety of six word novels about race. You can see more examples of the race card project here.

STEP 2: Upload your own race card using the form: Make Your Race Card and include a brief description in the comments with your school name.

STEP 3: Share your race card, or a copy of your race card, in the discussion forum. Add a paragraph explaining why you chose those six words for your race card.

STEP 4: After reading a variety of posts on the Race Wall, imagine what it's like to be a different race/ethnicity and write a letter to your own racial/ethnic group describing what it's like to be a member of a different group. You might also include gender and consider how gender and race are intertwined. You can consider your own life and experiences you've had dealing with race or racism. How has racism impacted your life, and what have you learned from that experience? How could you address these issues in the letter to your own race.

- Ex. A Caucasian student wants to consider Native American identity. The letter is "Dear White People" and is written from the viewpoint of a Native American man or woman.
- Ex. An Arab student wants to consider Caucasian identity. The letter is addressed "Dear Arab-Americans" and takes the point of view of a white man or woman.

The letter should be carefully constructed, courteous, and at between 250-500 words long.

STEP 5: Comment on at least TWO classmates' posts in a response of 75 words or more.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: The Race Card Project. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 11.16: Discussion- The Race Card Project is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

11.17: Assignment- Race and Ethnicity

STEP 1: Watch Chimananda Adiche's TED Talk "The Danger of a Single Story"

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=318

STEP 2: Write down examples of the single stories Adiche pointed out about Africa and Africans. Include direct quotes wherever possible (the transcript for "The Danger of a Single Story" is available here). What single stories did she hold of other groups?

How do these stereotypes relate to socialization? In other words, where how do we develop single stories?

STEP 3: Interview someone with one or more statuses that are different from your own (it doesn't have to be someone of a racial or ethnic background; ascribed or achieved statuses could include age, gender, sexual orientation, differently abled, religious minorities, etc.). Ask them to identity any stereotypes. It could be a classmate, neighbor, roommate, co-worker, or even a family member.

Maintaining anonymity (use a pseudonym) and with the person's permission, write a narrative story (minimum 300 words) describing the stories and stereotypes from this person's life, similar to the stories told by Chimananda Adiche.

Include a paragraph with your reflection on the interview and what you heard and anything you learned as a result of the TEDTalk and/or the interview, specifically related to how stereotypes and prejudices are learned through the socialization process using the interactionist perspective.

OR

STEP 3: Autoethnography: Think about the single stories that are told about your culture, race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc. Tell these stories in narrative form. Include a paragraph with a reflection and analysis of what you learned from the TEDTalk and your own examination of single stories.

Criteria	High Quality	Proficient	Approaching Proficiency	Not Proficient
Video summary	Describes Adiche's experience using multiple examples and a thorough examination of socialization.	Describes Adiche's experience including several general examples and a general link to socialization.	Describe's Adiche's experience to includevague examples and weak link to socialization.	Summary of Adiche's talk doe examples and/or does not incl socialization.
Narrative	Narrative blog post includes a clear, detailed account of the person's experience (using a pseudonym) with direct quotes from interviewee OR auto-ethnographical account of single stories.	Narrative blog post generally summarizes a person's experience with stereotypes and single stories without direct quotes and/or specific examples.	Narrative blog post provides vague or unclear examples of single stories.	Narrative blog post does not p examples of single stories.
Reflection	Reflective paragraph that interrogates how single stories/ stereotypes are learned using the interactionist perspective.	Reflective paragraph that makes some connections between learning and stereotypes but without a clear theoretical explanation.	Reflective paragraph does not demonstrate proficiency in examining the connection between learning and stereotypes.	Reflective paragraph does not examples of learning nor any t examination.
Writing	College-level writing grammar (spelling, punctuation, syntax, etc.) with 0-1 errors.	College-level writing with 2-3 grammatical errors.	College-level writing with 3-4 grammatical errors.	College-level writing with 5+ errors.
				Total:

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Race and Ethnicity. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- The Dangers of a Single Story. **Authored by**: Chimananda Adiche. **Provided by**: TED. **Located at**: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 11.17: Assignment- Race and Ethnicity is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Module 9- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

12.1: Why It Matters- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality
12.2: Introduction to Gender
12.3: Sex and Gender
12.4: Gender and Socialization
12.5: Introduction to Sex and Sexuality
12.6: Sex and Sexuality
12.7: Sexual Orientation
12.8: Introduction to Theories of Gender and Sex
12.9: Feminist Movements and Feminist Theory
12.10: Theoretical Perspectives on Gender
12.11: Theoretical Perspectives on Sex
12.12: Putting It Together- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality
12.13: Discussion- Gender
12.14: Assignment- Gender and Advertising

This page titled 12: Module 9- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.1: Why It Matters- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

Why understand gender, sex, and sexuality?

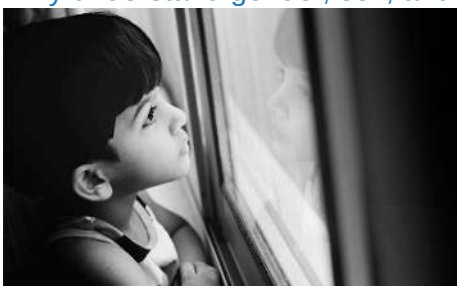


Figure 1. Some children may learn at an early age that their gender does not correspond with their sex. (Photo courtesy of Rajesh Kumar/flickr)

In 2009, the eighteen-year old South African athlete, Caster Semenya, won the women's 800-meter world championship in track and field. Her time of 1:55:45, a surprising improvement from her 2008 time of 2:08:00, caused officials from the International Association of Athletics Foundation (IAAF) to question whether her win was legitimate. If this questioning were based on suspicion of steroid use, the case would be no different from that of Roger Clemens or Mark McGuire, or even track and field Olympic gold medal winner Marion Jones, but the questioning and eventual testing were based on allegations that Caster Semenya was biologically a male.

You may be thinking that determining sex is surely a simple matter—just conduct some DNA or hormonal testing, throw in a physical examination, and you'll have the answer; however, it is not that simple. Men and women produce a certain amount of testosterone (a hormone attributed to increased strength, speed, and aggression in men), and different laboratories have different testing methods, which makes it difficult to set a specific threshold for the amount of male hormones produced by a female that would render her sex male.

To provide further context, during the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, eight female athletes with XY chromosomes underwent testing and were ultimately confirmed as eligible to compete as women (Maugh 2009). To date, no males have undergone this sort of testing. Doesn't that imply that when women perform better than expected, they are assumed to possess an inordinate or excessive amount of testosterone, but when men perform well they are simply superior athletes and not men with more testosterone than other men? Can you imagine Usain Bolt, the world's fastest man, being examined by doctors to prove he was biologically male? Conversely, if a male underperforms, can you imagine broad inferences that could be attributed to his sex?

Since November 1, 2018, there are new "Eligibility Classifications for Female Classification" determined by the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF), which require females who have elevated testosterone levels (this is naturally occurring in 7.10 out of 1000 elite female athletes) to reduce the testosterone to the level specified using hormone balance similar to female contraception or "the Pill." [1]

In this module, we will discuss the differences between sex and gender, along with issues like gender identity and sexuality. We will also explore various theoretical perspectives on the subjects of gender and sexuality, including the social construction of sexuality and queer theory. Can you explain how sex, sexuality, and gender are different from each other?

---

1. "IAFF introduces new eligibility regulations for female classification." https://www.iaaf.org/news/press-release/eligibility-regulations-for-female-classifica. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland with Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Gender, Sex, and Sexuality. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:T_-LTWXd@3/Introduction-to-Gender-Sex-and-Sexuality. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 12.1: Why It Matters- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.2: Introduction to Gender

What you'll learn to do: differentiate between sex and gender, understand gender identity, and describe the socialization of gender



Figure 1. Some parents will host a gender reveal party when the learn the sex of their baby. Sometimes they use cakes dyed with pink or blue food coloring to announce they are having a girl or boy when they cut the cake and reveal the inside color. These gender reveal parties often conflate the baby's sex with the baby's gender in a way that doesn't account for transgender, genderqueer, or other gender non-confirming experiences. (Photo courtesy of Jim/flickr)

The terms "sex" and "gender" refer to two different identifiers. Sex denotes biological characteristics differentiating males and females, while gender denotes social and cultural characteristics of masculine and feminine behavior. As you'll read in this section, sex and gender are not always synchronous.

You'll also read more about gender, and the ways that children become aware of gender roles in their earliest years. Children come to understand and perform these gender roles through socialization, which occurs through the following four major agents of socialization: family, education, peer groups, and mass media. These roles are reflected in our culture and result in the differentiation of males and females.

Watch It

Consider the following segment from *Ellen* to examine how gender stereotyping is utilized in advertising.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=324

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Gender. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Sex and Gender. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:JvZuwiUn@5/Sex-and-Gender. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Gender Reveal Cake. **Authored by**: Jim. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/22606730@N02/28005690402/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

All rights reserved content

- Bic Pens for Women. **Provided by**: The Ellen Show. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCyw3prIWhc&list=PLc0poAPuof5c5UiTMgZARRbSdM_jRiqWq. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 12.2: Introduction to Gender is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.3: Sex and Gender

Learning Outcomes

- Define and differentiate between sex and gender
- Discuss what is meant by gender identity; differentiate between cisgender, transgender, binary, and non-binary gender identities



Figure 1. Sex describes the physical differences between males and females, while gender is a concept describing a person's internal perception about their sex. (Photo courtesy of FaceMePLS/flickr)

Sociologists and most other social scientists view sex and gender as conceptually distinct. **Sex** refers to physical or physiological differences between males and females, including both primary sex characteristics (organs, chromosomes, and hormones) and secondary characteristics such as height and muscularity. **Gender** is a person's deeply held internal perception of their behavior and attitudes as related to social expectations and accompanying physiological aspects of sex. A person's sex, as determined by his or her biology, does not always correspond with his or her gender. Therefore, the terms *sex* and *gender* are not interchangeable.

Sex

A baby boy who is born with male genitalia will be identified as male. Since the term *sex* refers to biological or physical distinctions, characteristics of sex do not vary significantly between different human societies. Males have a penis, testes, and XY chromosomes. During puberty, most males will experience changes in testicle, scrotum, and penis size and color, as well as voice dropping, and underarm, leg, and facial hair growth. Generally, persons of the female sex have a vagina, ovaries, and XX chromosomes. During puberty, most females will menstruate, develop breasts that can lactate, and grow vaginal, underarm, and leg hair. Both sexes might experience increased sweating, acne, and mood changes, among other biological changes, during puberty.

Males typically have XY sex chromosomes, and females XX. These chromosomes trigger the development of the sex steroids, of which testosterone is found in higher levels in males and estradiol in higher levels in females. As you read in the opening example about Caster Semenya, some females have naturally occurring high levels of testosterone, which becomes an issue for elite athletes when milliseconds matter because increased testosterone levels can be attributed to performance boosts of 10 to 13 percent.[1]

Intersex refers to a combination of primary sex characteristics, an umbrella term that can describe any individual who doesn't fit binary sexual distinctions. It can also be referred to as Differences of Sexual Development (DSD). Intersex or DSD individuals were once called hermaphrodites, a term that is no longer used. According to the Human Rights Watch, approximately 1.7 percent of babies are born with chromosomes, gonads, internal or external sex organs that are atypical. Some of these are apparent at birth and others do not show themselves until puberty, and irreversible surgeries can cause infertility, pain, loss of sensation, and, more importantly, can take away an individual's choice when they are performed on children.[2]

Link to Learning

Read and watch this NBC story about Ori, an intersex child, and how they (the neutral pronoun for Ori) feel about cosmetic surgery.

Gender

Gender is deeply cultural. Like race, it is a social construction with real consequences, particularly for those who do not conform to gender binaries. In order to describe gender as a concept, we need to expand the language we use to describe gender beyond "masculine" or "feminine." **Gender identity**, or the way that one thinks about gender and self-identifies, can be woman, man, or

genderqueer. **Cisgender** is an umbrella terms used to describe people whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex, while **transgender** is a term used to describe people whose sense of personal identity does not correspond with their birth sex. **Genderexpression**, or how one demonstrates gender (based on traditional gender role norms related to clothing, behavior, and interactions) can be feminine, masculine, androgynous, or somewhere along a spectrum.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13428

Gender Identity

Although gender has traditionally been considered in binary terms (male or female), increasingly gender is being seen as a spectrum; however, our vocabulary is still limited in terms of the ways in which we describe gender identity.

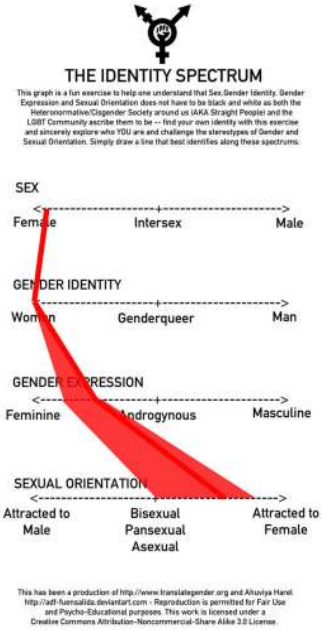


Figure 2. This identity spectrum shows the fluidity between sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

Individuals who identify with the role that is the different from their biological sex are called **transgender**. Transgender is not synonymous with sexuality, a distinction that will be made in this module. Approximately 1.4 million U.S. adults or .6 percent of the population are transgender according to a 2016 report.[3]

Transgender individuals who attempt to alter their bodies through medical interventions such as surgery and hormonal therapy—so that their physical being is better aligned with gender identity—are often called **transsexual** (transexual man or transexual woman), although some find this term outdated and prefer the term transgender. They may also be known as male-to-female (MTF) or female-to-male (FTM). Not all transgender individuals choose to alter their bodies; many will maintain their original anatomy but may present themselves to society as another gender. This is typically done by adopting the dress, hairstyle, mannerisms, or other characteristic typically assigned to another gender. It is important to note that people who cross-dress, or wear clothing that is traditionally assigned to a gender different are not the same as those identifying as trans. Cross-dressing is typically a form of self-expression, entertainment, or personal style, and it is not necessarily an expression against one's assigned gender (APA 2008).

Some people choose not to adhere to conventional expressions of masculinity or femininity and are considered gender non-conforming. Non-binary and genderqueer are other terms used by individuals who feel that their gender identity and/or gender expression fall outside the categories of man and woman.[4]

After years of controversy over the treatment of sex and gender in the *American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders* (Drescher 2010), the most recent edition, DSM-5, responds to allegations that the term "gender identity disorder" is stigmatizing by replacing it with "**gender dysphoria**." Gender identity disorder as a diagnostic category

stigmatized the patient by implying there was something “disordered” about them. Gender dysphoria, on the other hand, removes some of that stigma by taking the word “disorder” out while maintaining a category that will protect patient access to care, including hormone therapy and gender reassignment surgery. In the DSM-5, Gender dysphoria is a condition of people whose gender at birth is contrary to the one they identify with. For a person to be diagnosed with gender dysphoria, there must be a marked difference between the individual’s expressed/experienced gender and the gender others would assign him or her, and it must continue for at least six months. In children, the desire to be of the other gender must be present and verbalized. This diagnosis is now a separate category from sexual dysfunction and paraphilia, another important part of removing stigma from the diagnosis (APA 2013).

Changing the clinical description may contribute to a larger acceptance of transgender people in society. A 2017 poll showed that 54 percent of Americans believe gender is determined by sex at birth and 32 percent say society as “gone too far” in accepting transgender people; views are sharply divided along political and religious lines.[5]

Studies show that people who identify as transgender are twice as likely to experience assault or discrimination as nontransgender individuals, and they are also one and a half times more likely to experience intimidation (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs 2010; Giovanniello 2013). Trans women of color are most likely be to victims of abuse. A practice called “deadnaming” by the American Civil Liberties Union, whereby trans people who are murdered are referred to by their birth name and gender, is a discriminatory tool that effectively erases a person’s trans identity, and also prevents investigations into their deaths and knowledge of their deaths.[6] Organizations such as the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs and Global Action for Trans Equality work to prevent, respond to, and end all types of violence against transgender, transsexual, and homosexual individuals. Read about organizations educating the public about gender identity and empowering transgender and transsexual individuals. These organizations hope that educating the public will help lead to the end of this violence.

Gender Expression

U.S. society allows for some level of flexibility when it comes to acting out gender roles or gender expression. To a certain extent, men can assume some feminine roles and women can assume some masculine roles without interfering with their gender identity. Males who work as teachers, nurses, and social workers, traditionally female-dominated occupations, often adopt norms that are traditionally feminine. Many women in the U.S. workforce who are in male-dominated occupations must take on more traditionally masculine forms of dress (i.e., fire department or police department or military) and often adopt a set of behaviors that fit that job requirements that are traditionally masculine. In most cases, the gender identity remains cisgender although the gender expression might be more fluid.



Figure 3. A portrait of We-Wa, a Zuni berdache, taken sometime in the late 1800s.

The dichotomous view of gender (the notion that someone is either male or female) is specific to certain cultures and is not universal. In some cultures gender is viewed as being fluid. In the past, some anthropologists used the term *berdache* to refer to individuals who occasionally or permanently dressed and lived as a different gender. The practice has been noted among certain Native American tribes (Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang 1997). The more current term used by indigenous people in the United States is “Two-Spirit” (Estrada, Gabriel S. 2011). Also, in this regard, some of these indigenous groups believe that there are at least four

genders. In some tribes, Two-Spirits hold positions of higher social status because of they were believed to possess supernatural powers. In general, Native American groups viewed sex and gender as a spectrum as opposed to the binary view held by European colonists.

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. Fa'afafines are considered an important part of Samoan culture. Individuals from other cultures may mislabel them as homosexuals because fa'afafines have a varied sexual life that may include men and women (Poasa 1992). As we will see in this module, the tendency to label one's sexuality because of sex and gender can lead to many misconceptions and inaccurate labels.

Sex, Gender, and the Legal System

The terms sex and gender have not always been differentiated in the English language. It was not until the 1950s that U.S. and British psychologists and other professionals working with intersex and transsexual patients formally began distinguishing between sex and gender. Since then, psychological and physiological professionals have increasingly used the term gender (Moi 2005). By the end of the twenty-first century, expanding the proper usage of the term gender to everyday language became more challenging—particularly where legal language is concerned. In an effort to clarify usage of the terms sex and gender, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia wrote in a 1994 briefing, "The word gender has acquired the new and useful connotation of cultural or attitudinal characteristics (as opposed to physical characteristics) distinctive to the sexes. That is to say, gender is to sex as feminine is to female and masculine is to male" (J.E.B. v. Alabama, 144 S. Ct. 1436 [1994]).

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had a different take, however. Viewing the words as synonymous, she freely swapped them in her briefings so as to avoid having the word "sex" pop up too often. It is thought that her secretary supported this practice by suggestions to Ginsberg that "those nine men" (the other Supreme Court justices), "hear that word and their first association is not the way you want them to be thinking" (Case 1995). This anecdote reveals that both sex and gender are actually socially defined variables whose definitions change over time.

In 2018, thirteen state attorneys general and governors of three other states filed amicus briefs asked the Supreme Court to overturn a federal appeals court's ruling protecting transgender people from employment discrimination by Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits sex discrimination in employment. This would also go against three dozen federal appeals court decisions protecting the rights of transgender people in the workplace.[7]

The hit series Orange is the New Black (2013-present) has brought issues of trans people in the U.S. prison system into everyday life. Award-winning actor Laverne Cox, a trans advocate and the first openly transgender person to be nominated for an Emmy Award for acting, through the character of Sophia Burset, has brought issues of trans women into millions of households. Recently, the U.S. Department of Justice revised its guidelines for federal prisons eliminating "will recommend housing by gender identity when appropriate" with "will use biological sex as the initial determination" for facility assignment for transgender inmates" [8]

Watch It

Watch the first half of this video to review the differences between sex and gender.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=326

Think It Over

- Why do you think many doctors and parents have opted for cosmetic surgery for intersex children? What are the ethical implications of irreversible surgery?
- What do you think are some of the concerns for non-binary individuals in the workplace, in the military, in schools, in prisons?
- In what ways does gender identity and gender expression become politicized?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13429

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13430

glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]cisgender:[/glossary-term]

[glossary-definition]an umbrella terms used to describe people whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]gender:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]a term that refers to social or cultural distinctions of behaviors that are considered male or female[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]gender dysphoria:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]a condition listed in the DSM-5 in which people whose gender at birth is contrary to the one they identify with. This condition replaces “gender identity disorder”[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]gender expression:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition] how one demonstrates gender (based on traditional gender role norms related to clothing, behavior, and interactions) can be feminine, masculine, androgynous, or somewhere along a spectrum
[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]gender identity:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]the way that one thinks about gender and self-identifies, can be woman, man, or genderqueer[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]intersex:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]refers to a combination of primary sex characteristics[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]sex:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]a term that denotes the presence of physical or physiological differences between males and females[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]transgender:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]a term used to describe people whose sense of personal identity does not correspond with their birth sex[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]transsexuals:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]transgender individuals who attempt to alter their bodies through medical interventions such as surgery and hormonal therapy[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

1. Block, M. 2016. "The sensitive question of intersex athletes. NPR. https://www.npr.org/sections/thetorch/2016/08/16/490236620/south-african-star-raises-sensitive-questions-about-intersex-athletes. ↵
2. "U.S.: Harmful surgery on intersex children," 2017. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/25/us-harmful-surgery-intersex-children. ↵
3. Flores, A., J. Herman, G. Gates, and T. N.T. Brown. "How many adults identify as transgender." The Williams Institute. http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/How-Many-Adults-Identify-as-Transgender-in-the-United-States.pdf. ↵
4. GLAAD Media Reference Guide - Transgender. Retrieved from https://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender↵
5. Salam, M. "For transgender Americans, the political gets even more personal" (2018). The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/26/us/transgender-lgbt-rights-trump.html. ↵
6. Strangio, C. 2018. "Deadly violence against transgender people." ACLU. https://www.aclu.org/blog/lgbt-rights/criminal-justice-reform-lgbt-people/deadly-violence-against-transgender-people-rise. ↵
7. "16 states ask supreme court to limit transgender" (2018). https://transequality.org/press/releases/16-states-ask-supreme-court-to-limit-transgender-legal-protections. ↵
8. Gathright, J. 2018. "The guidelines for protection of transgender prisoners just got rewritten." NPR. https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/05/12/610692321/the-guidelines-for-protection-of-transgender-prisoners-just-got-rewritten. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Cathy Matresse and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

- gender and sexuality identity spectrum chart. **Authored by**: Beth Granter. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/trucknroll/5387638645. **License**: *CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike*
- Revisions and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Sex and Gender. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.1:JvZuwiUn@7/Sex-and-Gender. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Updated information on same sex marriage. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Same-sex_marriage_in_the_United_States. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Sex & Sexuality: Crash Course Sociology #31. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kqt-_ILgv5c&t=0s&index=33&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

Public domain content

- We-Wa, Zuni Berdache. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:We-Wa,_a_Zuni_berdache,_full_length_portrait_-_NARA_-_523798.jpg. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 12.3: Sex and Gender is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.4: Gender and Socialization

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the influence of socialization on gender roles in the United States
- Explain and give examples of sexism



Figure 1. Traditional images of U.S. gender roles reinforce the idea that women should be subordinate to men. (Photo courtesy of Sport Suburban/flickr)

Gender Roles

As we grow, we learn how to behave from those around us. In this socialization process, children are introduced to certain roles that are typically linked to their biological sex. The term **gender role** refers to society's concept of how people are expected to look and behave based on societally created norms for masculinity and femininity. In U.S. culture, masculine roles are usually associated with strength, aggression, and dominance, while feminine roles are usually associated with passivity, nurturing, and subordination.

Gender role socialization begins at birth and continues throughout the life course. Our society is quick to outfit male infants in blue and girls in pink, even applying these color-coded gender labels while a baby is in the womb. This color differentiation is quite new—prior to the 1940s, boys wore pink and girls wore blue. In the 19th century and early 20th century, boys and girls wore dresses (mostly white) until the age of 6 or 7, which was also time for the first haircut.[1]



Figure 2. Fathers tend to be more involved when their sons engage in gender-appropriate activities such as sports. (Photo courtesy of Shawn Lea/flickr)

Thus, gender, like race is a social construction with very real consequences. The drive to adhere to masculine and feminine gender roles continues later in life. Men tend to outnumber women in professions such as law enforcement, the military, and politics. Women tend to outnumber men in care-related occupations such as childcare, healthcare (even though the term "doctor" still conjures the image of a man), and social work. These occupational roles are examples of typical U.S. male and female behavior, derived from our culture's traditions. Adherence to them demonstrates fulfillment of social expectations but not necessarily personal preference (Diamond 2002).

Gender and Socialization

The phrase “boys will be boys” is often used to justify behavior such as pushing, shoving, or other forms of aggression from young boys. The phrase implies that such behavior is unchangeable and something that is part of a boy’s nature. Aggressive behavior, when it does not inflict significant harm, is often accepted from boys and men because it is congruent with the cultural script for masculinity. The “script” written by society is in some ways similar to a script written by a playwright. Just as a playwright expects actors to adhere to a prescribed script, society expects women and men to behave according to the expectations of their respective gender roles.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13431

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13432

Socialization

Children learn at a young age that there are distinct expectations for boys and girls. Cross-cultural studies reveal that children are aware of gender roles by age two or three. At four or five, most children are firmly entrenched in culturally appropriate gender roles (Kane 1996). Children acquire these roles through socialization, a process in which people learn to behave in a particular way as dictated by societal values, beliefs, and attitudes.



Figure 3. Although our society may have a stereotype that associates motorcycles with men, female bikers demonstrate that a woman’s place extends far beyond the kitchen in the modern United States. (Photo courtesy of Robert Couse-Baker/flickr)

For example, society often views riding a motorcycle as a masculine activity and, therefore, considers it to be part of the male gender role. Attitudes such as this are typically based on stereotypes, which are oversimplified notions about members of a group. Gender stereotyping involves overgeneralizing about the attitudes, traits, or behavior patterns of women or men. For example, women may be thought of as too timid or weak to ride a motorcycle.

Mimicking the actions of significant others is the first step in the development of a separate sense of self (Mead 1934). Recall that according to Mead’s theory of development, children up to the age of 2 are in the preparatory stage, in which they copy actions of those around them, then the play stage (between 2-6) when they play pretend and have a difficult time following established rules, and then the game stage (ages 7 and up), when they can play by a set of rules and understand different roles.

Like adults, children become agents who actively facilitate and apply normative gender expectations to those around them. When children do not conform to the appropriate gender role, they may face negative sanctions such as being criticized or marginalized by their peers. Though many of these sanctions are informal, they can be quite severe. For example, a girl who wishes to take karate class instead of dance lessons may be called a “tomboy,” and face difficulty gaining acceptance from both male and female peer groups (Ready 2001). Boys, especially, are subject to intense ridicule for gender nonconformity (Coltrane and Adams 2004; Kimmel 2000).

One way children learn gender roles is through play. Parents typically supply boys with trucks, toy guns, and superhero paraphernalia, which are active toys that promote motor skills, aggression, and solitary play. Daughters are often given dolls and dress-up apparel that foster nurturing, social proximity, and role play. Studies have shown that children will most likely choose to play with “gender appropriate” toys (or same-gender toys) even when cross-gender toys are available, because parents give

children positive feedback (in the form of praise, involvement, and physical closeness) for gender normative behavior (Caldera, Huston, and O'Brien 1998). Charles Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self applies to gender socialization because it is through this interactive, interpretive process with the social world that individuals develop a sense of gender identity.

Gender socialization occurs through four major agents of socialization: family, schools, peer groups, and mass media. Each agent reinforces gender roles by creating and maintaining normative expectations for gender-specific behavior. Exposure also occurs through secondary agents such as religion and the workplace. Repeated exposure to these agents over time leads men and women into a false sense that they are acting naturally rather than following a socially constructed role.

Family is the first agent of socialization. There is considerable evidence that parents socialize sons and daughters differently. Generally speaking, girls are given more latitude to step outside of their prescribed gender role (Coltrane and Adams 2004; Kimmel 2000; Raffaelli and Ontai 2004). However, differential socialization typically results in greater privileges afforded to sons. For instance, boys are allowed more autonomy and independence at an earlier age than daughters. They may be given fewer restrictions on appropriate clothing, dating habits, or curfew. Sons are also often free from performing domestic duties such as cleaning or cooking and other household tasks that are considered feminine. Daughters are limited by their expectation to be passive and nurturing, generally obedient, and to assume domestic responsibilities.

Even when parents set gender equality as a goal, there may be underlying indications of inequality. For example, boys may be asked to take out the garbage or perform other tasks that require strength or toughness, while girls may be asked to fold laundry or perform duties that require neatness and care. It has been found that fathers are firmer in their expectations for gender conformity than are mothers, and their expectations are stronger for sons than they are for daughters (Kimmel 2000). This is true in many types of activities, including preference for toys, play styles, discipline, chores, and personal achievements. As a result, boys tend to be particularly attuned to their father's disapproval when engaging in an activity that might be considered feminine, like dancing or singing (Coltraine and Adams 2008). Parental socialization and normative expectations also vary along lines of social class, race, and ethnicity. African American families, for instance, are more likely than Caucasians to model an egalitarian role structure for their children (Staples and Boulin Johnson 2004).

The reinforcement of gender roles and stereotypes continues once a child reaches school age. Until very recently, schools were rather explicit in their efforts to stratify boys and girls. The first step toward stratification was segregation. Girls were encouraged to take home economics or humanities courses and boys to take math and science. Studies suggest that gender socialization still occurs in schools today, perhaps in less obvious forms (Lips 2004). Teachers may not even realize they are acting in ways that reproduce gender differentiated behavior patterns. Yet any time they ask students to arrange their seats or line up according to gender, teachers may be asserting that boys and girls should be treated differently (Thorne 1993).

Schools subtly convey messages to girls indicating that they are less intelligent or less important than boys. For example, in a study of teacher responses to male and female students, data indicated that teachers praised male students far more than female students. Teachers interrupted girls more often and gave boys more opportunities to expand on their ideas (Sadker and Sadker 1994). Further, in social as well as academic situations, teachers have traditionally treated boys and girls in opposite ways, reinforcing a sense of competition rather than collaboration (Thorne 1993). Boys are also permitted a greater degree of freedom to break rules or commit minor acts of deviance, whereas girls are expected to follow rules carefully and adopt an obedient role (Ready 2001).

Mass media serves as another significant agent of gender socialization. In television and movies, women tend to have less significant roles and are often portrayed as wives or mothers. When women are given a lead role, it often falls into one of two extremes: a wholesome, saint-like figure or a malevolent, hypersexual figure (Etaugh and Bridges 2003). Gender inequalities are also pervasive in children's movies (Smith 2008). Research indicates that in the ten top-grossing G-rated movies released between 1991 and 2013, nine out of ten characters were male (Smith 2008).

Television commercials and other forms of advertising also reinforce inequality and gender-based stereotypes. Women are almost exclusively present in ads promoting cooking, cleaning, or childcare-related products (Davis 1993). Think about the last time you saw a man star in a dishwasher or laundry detergent commercial. In general, women are underrepresented in roles that involve leadership, intelligence, or a balanced psyche. Of particular concern is the depiction of women in ways that are dehumanizing, especially in music videos. Even in mainstream advertising, however, themes intermingling violence and sexuality are quite common (Kilbourne 2000).

Watch It

Watch the following video to think more about the social construct of gender.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=328

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13433

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13434

Further Research

Watch this CrashCourse video to learn more about gender stratification.

Sexism

Gender stereotypes form the basis of sexism. **Sexism** refers to prejudiced beliefs that value one sex over another. Like racism, sexism has been a part of U.S. culture for centuries. Here is a brief timeline of "firsts" in the United States:

- Before 1809—Women could not execute a will
- Before 1840—Women were not allowed to own or control property
- Before 1920—Women were not permitted to vote
- Before 1963—Employers could legally pay a woman less than a man for the same work
- Before 1973—Women did not have the right to a safe and legal abortion
- Before 1981—No woman had served on the U.S. Supreme Court
- Before 2009—No African American woman had been CEO of a U.S. Fortune 500 corporation
- Before 2016—No Latina had served as a U.S. Senator
- Before 2017—No openly transgender person had been elected in a state legislature

While it is illegal in the United States when practiced as overt discrimination, unequal treatment of women continues to pervade social life. It should be noted that discrimination based on sex occurs at both the micro- and macro-levels. Many sociologists focus on discrimination that is built into the social structure; this type of discrimination is known as institutional discrimination (Pincus 2008).



Figure 4. In some cultures, women do all of the household chores with no help from men, as doing housework is a sign of weakness, considered by society as a feminine trait. (Photo courtesy of Evil Erin/flickr)

Like racism, sexism has very real consequences. Stereotypes about females, such as being "too soft" to make financial decisions about things like wills or property, have morphed into a lack of female leadership in Fortune 500 Companies (only 24 were headed up by women in 2018!). We also see gender discrepancies in politics and in legal matters, as the laws regarding women's reproductive health are made by a largely male legislative body at both the state and federal levels.

One of the most tangible effects of sexism is the gender wage gap. Despite making up half (49.8 percent) of payroll employment, men disproportionately outnumber women in authoritative, powerful, and, therefore, high-earning jobs (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Even when a woman's employment status is equal to a man's, she will generally make only 77 cents for every dollar made by her male counterpart (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Women in the paid labor force also still do the majority of the unpaid work at home. On an average day, 84 percent of women (compared to 67 percent of men) undertake household management activities (U.S.

Census Bureau 2011). This double duty keeps working women in a subordinate role within the family structure (Hochschild and Machung 1989).

Global Sexism

Gender stratification through the division of labor is not exclusive to the United States. According to George Murdock's classic work, *Outline of World Cultures* (1954), all societies classify work by gender. When a pattern appears in all societies, it is called a cultural universal. While the phenomenon of assigning work by gender is universal, its specifics are not. The same task is not assigned to either men or women worldwide. But the way each task's associated gender is valued is notable. In Murdock's examination of the division of labor among 324 societies around the world, he found that in nearly all cases the jobs assigned to men were given greater prestige (Murdock and White 1968). Even if the job types were very similar and the differences slight, men's work was still considered more vital.

In parts of the world where women are strongly undervalued, young girls may not be given the same access to nutrition, healthcare, and education as boys. Further, they will grow up believing they deserve to be treated differently from boys (UNICEF 2011; Thorne 1993).

Watch It

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=328

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13435

Think It Over

- In what way do parents treat sons and daughters differently? How do sons and daughters typically respond to this treatment?
- How is children's play influenced by gender roles? Think back to your childhood. How "gendered" were the toys and activities available to you? Do you remember gender expectations being conveyed through the approval or disapproval of your playtime choice?
- What can be done to lessen the sexism in the workplace? How does it harm society?

Glossary

gender role:
society's concept of how men and women should behave

sexism: the prejudiced belief that one sex should be valued over another

---

1. Maglaty, J. 2011. "When did girls first start wearing pink?" The Smithsonian. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/when-did-girls-start-wearing-pink-1370097/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Gender. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.1:IThELyrX@5/Gender. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.
- Gender Equality: Now. **Provided by**: WorldFish. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4viXOGvvu0Y. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Gender Equality: Now. **Provided by**: WorldFish. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4viXOGvvu0Y. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

All rights reserved content

- Is Gender Real? -8-bit Philosophy. **Provided by**: Wisecrack. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkilQ87UUj8&index=50&list=PL93FF46F5BC6A27CF. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 12.4: Gender and Socialization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.5: Introduction to Sex and Sexuality

What you'll learn to do: explain sexual attitudes and practices



Figure 1. Purity rings signal that the wearer is waiting until marriage to have sex. This practice is typically associated with a religious belief that sex should only happen between two people who are married. (Photo courtesy of Bibleknowledge/Wikimedia Commons)

When studying sex and sexuality, sociologists focus their attention on sexual attitudes and practices, not on physiology or anatomy. Norms regarding sexual orientation and sexuality vary across cultures and are taught from early ages just like gender role norms. Compared to its Western counterparts, especially European countries, the United States tends to be fairly conservative in its sexual attitudes; however, compared to some other countries' norms—like Indonesia's disapproval of premarital sex, Afghanistan's average age of marriage (20 years of age for women), or the prohibition on masturbation in certain cultures, the U.S. seems quite open in its acceptance of sexuality.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Sex and Sexuality. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Sex and Sexuality. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.1:Zy3RJpzj@5/Sex-and-Sexuality. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Purity rings. **Authored by**: Bibleknowledge. **Provided by**: Wikimedia Commons. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Purity-Rings.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 12.5: Introduction to Sex and Sexuality is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.6: Sex and Sexuality

Learning Outcomes

- Examine sexual attitudes and practices around the world, including perspectives on sex education

Sexual Attitudes and Practices

In the area of sexuality, sociologists focus their attention on sexual attitudes and practices, not on physiology or anatomy. **Sexuality** is viewed as a person's capacity for sexual feelings. Studying sexual attitudes and practices is a particularly interesting field of sociology because sexual behavior is a cultural universal. Throughout time and place, the vast majority of human beings have participated in sexual relationships (Broude 2003). Each society, however, interprets sexuality and sexual activity in different ways. Many societies around the world have different attitudes about premarital sex, the age of sexual consent, homosexuality, masturbation, and other sexual behaviors (Widmer, Treas, and Newcomb 1998). At the same time, sociologists have learned that certain norms are shared among most societies. The incest taboo is present in every society, though which relative is deemed unacceptable for sex varies widely from culture to culture. For example, sometimes the relatives of the father are considered acceptable sexual partners for a woman while the relatives of the mother are not. Likewise, societies generally have norms that reinforce their accepted social system of sexuality

What is considered "normal" in terms of sexual behavior is based on the mores and values of the society. Societies that value monogamy, for example, would likely oppose extramarital sex. Individuals are socialized to sexual attitudes by their family, education system, peers, media, and religion. Historically, religion has been the greatest influence on sexual behavior in most societies, but in more recent years, peers and the media have emerged as two of the strongest influences, particularly among U.S. teens (Potard, Courtois, and Rusch 2008). Let us take a closer look at sexual attitudes in the around the world and in the United States.

Try It

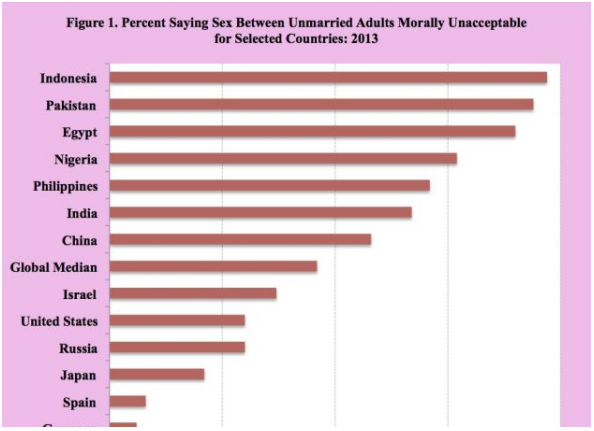
https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13438

Sexuality around the World

Historically, premarital sex was considered a moral issue which was taboo in many cultures and sinful according to a number of religions, but since about the 1960s, it has become more widely accepted, especially in Western countries. A 2014 Pew study on global morality found that premarital sex was considered particularly unacceptable in "predominantly Muslim nations," such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Jordan, Pakistan and Egypt, each having over 90% disapproval, while people in Western European countries were the most accepting, with Spain, Germany and France expressing less than 10% disapproval.

As you can see from the figure below, 97% of those in Indonesia found premarital sex unacceptable. Approximately 87% of the population is Muslim.[1] Similarly 95-98% of Pakistanis and 90% of Egyptians are Muslim. Islam has strict prohibitions against sex outside of marriage. Christianity and Roman Catholicism also have strict rules about sex outside of marriage. Approximately 50% of Nigerians are Muslim, 40% are Christian, and 10% adhere to local religions. In the Philippines, 92% of the population identifies as Christian.

The amount of religiosity in a country is not a magical key to understanding sexual norms around the globe, though. Clearly a country's distinctive history and the people who make up the population today are essential to understanding its norms and values. In other words, we need to utilize our sociological imaginations to understand attitudes about sexuality and sexual behavior.



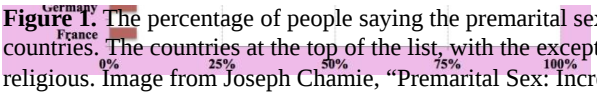


Figure 1. The percentage of people saying the premarital sex is morally unacceptable in various countries. The countries at the top of the list, with the exception of China, are overwhelmingly religious. Image from Joseph Chamie, "Premarital Sex: Increasing Worldwide." www.ipsnews.net/2018/04/premarital-sex-increasing-worldwide

Many societies that have strict rules against sex outside of marriage are in countries that have low average ages for marriage. Countries with higher average ages for marriage generally have higher income levels and are more liberal in their views on marriage (see Figure 2).

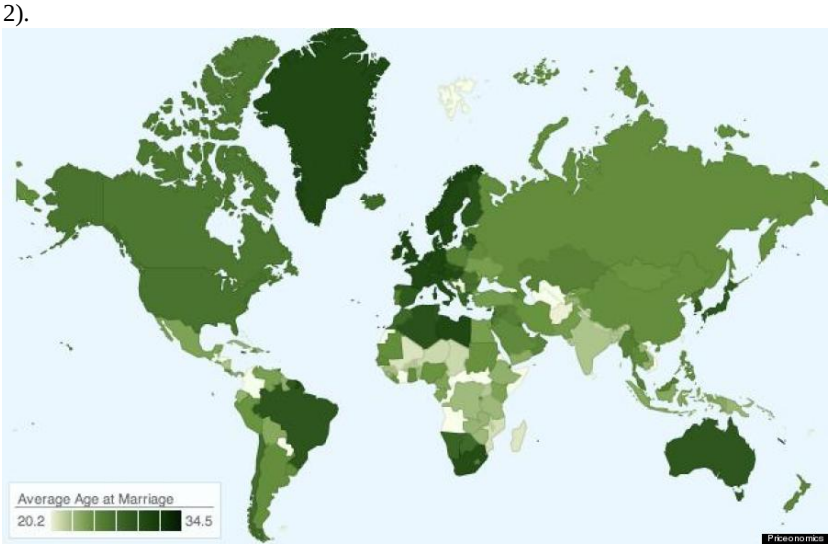


Figure 2. "At What Age Do People Get Married Around the World?" by Alex Mayyasi, Priceonomics. https://priceonomics.com/at-what-age...und-the-world/

A gender gap also exists with women, on average, marrying younger than their male counterparts. According to the United Nations, 39 countries have data showing that 20% of women are married by the age of 18 and in 20 of these countries 10% of women are married by age 15, whereas only 2 countries have 10% of men married before the age of 18.[2]

Of industrialized nations, Sweden is thought to be the most liberal when it comes to attitudes about sex, including sexual practices and sexual openness. The country has very few regulations on sexual images in the media, and sex education, which starts around age six, is a compulsory part of Swedish school curricula. Sweden's permissive approach to sex has helped the country avoid some of the major social problems associated with sex. For example, rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease are among the world's lowest (Grose 2007). It would appear that Sweden is a model for the benefits of sexual freedom and frankness. However, implementing Swedish ideals and policies regarding sexuality in other, more politically conservative nations, would likely be met with resistance.

Let's look at Israel as an example. The State of Israel was established in 1948, and is approximately 75% Jewish, 21% Arab, and 5% other. In Judaism, masturbation (or sexually pleasuring oneself) is strictly forbidden in the Talmud, which is a compilation of centuries of rabbis' interpretations of the Torah (or the five books of Moses). Jewish women, on the other hand, are not forbidden from masturbation. The reasons are complex, but one interpretation is that ejaculation, or dispelling semen, is a loss of "life energy" or impurities[3]. Many modern Jews do not follow the strict laws of Orthodox Judaism, however, and with many Jews (outside of Orthodox communities) postponing marriage, it is unclear to what extent masturbation is prohibited in contemporary Israel. *Sacred Sperm* is a 2015 documentary created by religiously observant father Ori Gruder, who examines the various ways in which religiously observant boys and men avoid masturbation.

Further Research

Learn more about gender and sexuality at the Kinsey Institute.

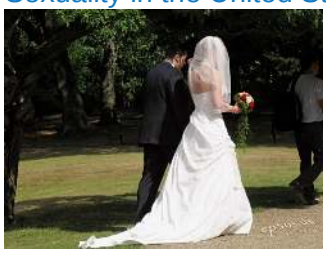


Figure 3. Sexual practices can differ greatly among groups. Recent trends include the finding that married couples have sex more frequently than do singles and that 27 percent of married couples in their 30s have sex at least twice a week (NSSHB 2010). (Photo courtesy of epSos.de/flickr)

Prior to the 20th century, most American physicians regarded masturbation as "dangerous" and believed that it could cause illness including insanity, epilepsy, acne, weight loss, decreased mental capacity, weakness, lethargy, and early death. This "myth" was not permanently disproved until the book *Sex and Human Loving* (Masters and Johnson 1988), even though Alfred Kinsey's research in the 1940s had established that masturbation was common, with up to 92% of men reporting.[4]

The United States prides itself on being the "land of the free," but it is rather restrictive when it comes to its citizens' general attitudes about sex compared to other industrialized nations. In an international survey, 29 percent of U.S. respondents stated that premarital sex is always wrong, while the average among the 24 countries surveyed was 17 percent. Similar discrepancies were found in questions about the condemnation of sex before the age of 16, extramarital sex, and homosexuality, with total disapproval of these acts being 12, 13, and 11 percent higher, respectively, in the United States, than the study's average (Widmer, Treas, and Newcomb 1998).

In the 1970s, only 29% of people felt that premarital sex was "not wrong at all," but that number gradually increased so that by the 1980s and 1990s, 42% of the population said that premarital sex is "not wrong at all." In 2012, that number increased to 58%. Interestingly, results from the General Social Survey also revealed that although millennials (born 1981-1996) were more accepting of premarital sex, they had fewer sexual partners (average 8) than both Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) and GenXers (born 1965-1980) who averaged 11 partners.[5]

U.S. culture is particularly restrictive in its attitudes about sex when it comes to women and sexuality. It is widely believed that men are more sexual than women. In fact, there is a popular notion that men think about sex every seven seconds. One study tracked the number of times that college men and women thought about food, sleep, and sex, and although the numbers varied widely, they found that men thought about sex an average of 19 times per day, compared to 10 times per day for women (Fisher, Moore, and Pittenger 2011). What the study did not measure was the duration of sexual thoughts for men or for women (or for sleep or food). Also, the frequencies were self-reporting, so female participants might have been less likely to report sexual thoughts due to societal norms surrounding females and sexuality.

Belief that men have—or have the right to—more sexual urges than women creates a double standard. Ira Reiss, a pioneer researcher in the field of sexual studies, defined the *double standard* as prohibiting premarital sexual intercourse for women but allowing it for men (Reiss 1960). This standard has evolved into allowing women to engage in premarital sex only within committed love relationships, but allowing men to engage in unconditional sexual relationships with as many partners as they wish (Milhausen and Herold 1999). Due to this double standard, a woman is likely to have fewer sexual partners in her lifetime than a man. According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) survey, the average thirty-five-year-old woman has had three opposite-sex sexual partners while the average thirty-five-year-old man has had twice as many (Centers for Disease Control 2011).

The future of a society's sexual attitudes may be somewhat predicted by the values and beliefs that a country's youth expresses about sex and sexuality. Data from the most recent National Survey of Family Growth reveals that 70 percent of boys and 78 percent of girls ages fifteen to nineteen said they "agree" or "strongly agree" that "it's okay for an unmarried female to have a child" (National Survey of Family Growth 2013). In a separate survey, 65 percent of teens stated that they "strongly agreed" or "somewhat agreed" that although waiting until marriage for sex is a nice idea, it's not realistic (NBC News 2005). This does not mean that today's youth have given up traditional sexual values such as monogamy. Nearly all college men (98.9 percent) and women (99.2 percent) who participated in a 2002 study on sexual attitudes stated they wished to settle down with one mutually exclusive sexual partner at some point in their lives, ideally within the next five years (Pedersen et al. 2002).

Sex Education

One of the biggest controversies regarding sexual attitudes is sexual education in U.S. classrooms. Unlike in Sweden, sex education is not required in all public school curricula in the United States. The heart of the controversy is not about whether sex education should be taught in school (studies have shown that only seven percent of U.S. adults oppose sex education in schools); it is about the *type* of sex education that should be taught.

Much of the debate is over the issue of abstinence. In a 2005 survey, 15 percent of U.S. respondents believed that schools should teach abstinence exclusively and should not provide contraceptives or information on how to obtain them. Forty-six percent believed schools should institute an abstinence-plus approach, which teaches children that abstinence is best but still gives information about protected sex. Thirty-six percent believed teaching about abstinence is not important and that sex education should focus on sexual safety and responsibility (NPR 2010).

Research suggests that while government officials may still be debating about the content of sexual education in public schools, the majority of U.S. adults are not. Those who advocated abstinence-only programs may be the proverbial squeaky wheel when it comes to this controversy, since they represent only 15 percent of parents. Fifty-five percent of respondents feel giving teens information about sex and how to obtain and use protection will not encourage them to have sexual relations earlier than they would under an abstinence program. About 77 percent think such a curriculum would make teens more likely to practice safe sex now and in the future (NPR 2004).

Sweden, whose comprehensive sex education program in its public schools educates participants about safe sex, can serve as a model for this approach. The teenage birthrate in Sweden is 7 per 1,000 births, compared with 49 per 1,000 births in the United States. Among fifteen to nineteen year olds, reported cases of gonorrhea in Sweden are nearly 600 times lower than in the United States (Grose 2007).

Sex Ed in the United States

A sociologist using the sociological perspective would want to look at the correlation between sex ed curricula and outcomes such as teen pregnancies and STDs. Arkansas has the highest rates of teen pregnancy with 38 births per 1,000 women ages 15-19. What does Arkansas' sex ed legislation look like? Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas are next in line with just under 35 births per 1,000 women ages 15-19. What does sex ed look like in those states? Is there a correlation? What other factors could influence teen pregnancy in these states?

What is the sex ed legislation in your state? Teen pregnancy rates? Instances of STDs? Consider these trends and read this blog post to learn more about the pitfalls of sex education in the United States.

The District of Columbia tops the states with the highest STD rates with just over 55 per 1,00 teens ages 15-24 with Louisiana in 2nd place with just over 40/1,000. Sex Ed is mandated in D.C., and schools provide information on contraceptives there, while in Louisiana, there is no comprehensive sex ed, and there remains an emphasis on abstinence.[6]

Watch It

Watch this video to learn more about sex education in America.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=332

Think It Over

- Identify three examples of how U.S. society is heteronormative.
- Consider the types of derogatory labeling that sociologists study and explain how these might apply to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13436

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13437

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13439

Glossary

double standard:

the concept that prohibits premarital sexual intercourse for women but allows it for men

sexuality:

a person’s capacity for sexual feelings

1. Hays, J. 2015. "Religion in Indonesia." http://factsanddetails.com/indonesia/History_and_Religion/sub6_1f/entry-3975.html. ↵
2. Mayyasi, A. 2016. "At what age do people get married around the world?" Priceonomics. https://priceonomics.com/at-what-age-do-people-get-married-around-the-world/. ↵
3. Dorff, E. "Masturbation: A touchy subject." My Jewish Learning. https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/masturbation-a-touchy-subject/. ↵
4. Spector, D. 2013. "11 findings that revolutionized our understanding of sex" Business Insider. https://www.businessinsider.com/11-findings-that-revolutionized-our-understanding-of-sex-2013-10. ↵
5. Kraft A. 2015. "Changing attitudes about premarital sex, homosexuality." CBS News. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/changing-attitudes-about-premarital-sex-homosexuality/. ↵
6. Woodward, Alex. 2017. "The facts of life: the state of sex ed in Louisiana," Gambit. https://www.theadvocate.com/gambit/new_orleans/news/article_1db9b66a-ff59-5e49-87f2-78a43e418b43.html. ↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Sex & Sexuality. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.1:Zy3RJpzj@5/Sex-and-Sexuality. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.
- Premarital Sex. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Premarital_sex. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Sex Education In America: A Brief History. **Authored by**: AJ+. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vcpep877u3M. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Priceonomics graph on marriage age. **Authored by**: Alex Mayyasi. **Provided by**: Priceonomics. **Located at**: https://priceonomics.com/at-what-age-do-people-get-married-around-the-world/. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- Premarital Sex: Increasing Worldwide bar graph. **Authored by**: Joseph Chamie. **Located at**: http://www.ipsnews.net/2018/04/premarital-sex-increasing-worldwide. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 12.6: Sex and Sexuality is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.7: Sexual Orientation

Learning Outcomes

- Define sexual orientation and understand the role of homophobia and heterosexism in society
- Describe how sexual identities are part of the socialization process

Sexual Orientation

A person's **sexual orientation** is his or her physical, mental, emotional, and sexual attraction to a particular sex (male or female). Sexual orientation is typically divided into at least four categories: *heterosexuality*, the attraction to individuals of the other sex; *homosexuality*, the attraction to individuals of the same sex; *bisexuality*, the attraction to individuals of either sex; and *asexuality*, no attraction to either sex. Heterosexuals and homosexuals may also be referred to informally as "straight" and "gay," respectively.

According to current scientific understanding, individuals are usually aware of their sexual orientation between middle childhood and early adolescence (American Psychological Association 2008). They do not have to participate in sexual activity to be aware of these emotional, romantic, and physical attractions; people can be celibate and still recognize their sexual orientation. Homosexual women (also referred to as lesbians), homosexual men (also referred to as gays), and bisexuals of both genders may have very different experiences of discovering and accepting their sexual orientation. At the point of puberty, some may be able to announce their sexual orientations, while others may be unready or unwilling to make their homosexuality or bisexuality known since it goes against U.S. society's historical norms (APA 2008).

People identifying as GLBTQ, sometimes also written as LBGT and LBGTQ, stands for "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender" (and "Queer" or "Questioning" when the Q is added) were surveyed and were asked about their "coming out" experiences. The average age gay men said they had "first thoughts" that one might be gay was 10 years old, while the average gay man "knew for sure" at 15 years of age and "told someone" at age 18; whereas respondents identifying as lesbian had substantially higher averages with 13, 18, and 21 respectively.[1] This suggests that there is a gender difference in terms of self-identifying and of sharing one's sexual orientation with others.

Alfred Kinsey was among the first to conceptualize sexuality as a continuum rather than a strict dichotomy of gay or straight. He created a six-point rating scale that ranges from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively homosexual. See the figure below. In his 1948 work *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, Kinsey writes, "Males do not represent two discrete populations, heterosexual and homosexual. The world is not to be divided into sheep and goats … The living world is a continuum in each and every one of its aspects" (Kinsey 1948).

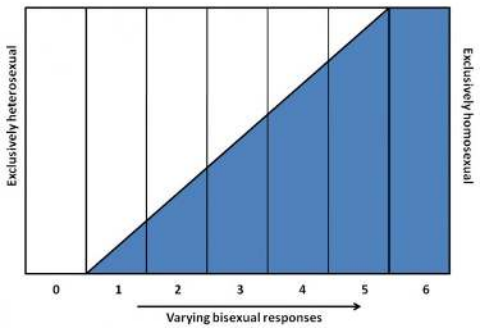


Figure 1. The Kinsey scale indicates that sexuality can be measured by more than just heterosexuality and homosexuality.

Later scholarship by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick expanded on Kinsey's notions. She coined the term "homosocial" to oppose "homosexual," and to describe nonsexual same-sex relations. Sedgwick recognized that in U.S. culture, males are subject to a clear divide between the two sides of this opposition, whereas females enjoy more fluidity. This can be illustrated by the way women in the United States can express homosocial feelings (nonsexual regard for people of the same sex) through hugging, handholding, and physical closeness. In contrast, U.S. males refrain from these expressions since they violate the heteronormative expectation that male sexual attraction should be exclusively for females. Research suggests that it is easier for women to violate these norms

than men, because men are subject to more social disapproval for being physically close to other men (Sedgwick 1985). Sedgwick was also one of the founders of Queer Theory, which will be discussed later in this section.

There is no scientific consensus regarding the exact reasons why an individual holds a heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual orientation. Research has been conducted to study the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social, and cultural influences on sexual orientation, but there has been no evidence that links sexual orientation to one factor (APA 2008).

What is empirically clear is that GLBTQs are subjected to discrimination and violence in schools, the workplace, and the military. Much of this discrimination is based on stereotypes and misinformation. Some is based on **heterosexism**, which Herek (1990) suggests is both an ideology and a set of institutional practices that privilege heterosexuals and heterosexuality over other sexual orientations. Much like racism and sexism, heterosexism is a systematic disadvantage embedded in our social institutions, offering power to those who conform to hetereosexual orientation while simultaneously disadvantaging those who do not. *Homophobia*, an extreme or irrational aversion to homosexuals, accounts for further stereotyping and discrimination.

Major legal policies to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation have only recently been instituted. In 2011, President Obama overturned “don’t ask, don’t tell,” a controversial policy that required homosexuals in the US military to keep their sexuality undisclosed. The Employee Non-Discrimination Act, which ensures workplace equality regardless of sexual orientation, is still pending full government approval. Organizations such as GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) advocate for homosexual rights and encourage governments and citizens to recognize the presence of sexual discrimination and work to prevent it.

Sociologically, it is clear that gay and lesbian couples are negatively affected in states where they are denied the legal right to marriage. In 1996, The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was passed, explicitly limiting the definition of “marriage” to a union between one man and one woman. It also allowed individual states to choose whether or not they recognized same-sex marriages performed in other states. In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned part of DOMA in *Windsor v. United* States, and in 2015 same-sex marriage became legal nationwide when the Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that state-level bans on same-sex marriage were unconstitutional. The court’s rationale was that the denial of marriage licenses to same-sex couples, and the refusal to recognize marriages performed in other jurisdictions, violated the Due Process and Equal Protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution.

Watch It: The 50th Anniversary of The Stonewall Riots

Watch this brief clip that summarizes what occurred at The Stonewall Inn, located in Greenwich Village in New York City, in 1969 and what is considered the origin of the Gay Liberation Movement.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=334

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13440



Figure 2. Photo at the Stonewall Inn, taken on pride weekend in 2016, the day after President Obama announced the Stonewall National Monument, and less than two weeks after the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando.

Socialization and Sexual Identity

Like gender role socialization, sexual identities are heavily socialized from early ages. The United States is a **heteronormative society**, meaning it assumes sexual orientation is biologically determined and unambiguous. Consider that homosexuals are often asked, "When did you know you were gay?" but heterosexuals are rarely asked, "When did you know that you were straight?" (Ryle 2011).

Societal acceptance of homosexuality has increased over time, including in the U.S., where 60% of respondents in 2013 said homosexuality should be accepted, as opposed to 49% who said so in 2007. This still ranks well below Canada, Spain, Germany, the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Britain and Argentina, where national acceptance is over 70%[2] A Pew Research poll found that 63% of Americans said homosexuality should be accepted by society in 2016 [3]

A 2017 Gallup poll concluded that 4.5% of adult Americans identified as LGBT with 5.1% of women identifying as LGBT, compared with 3.9% of men. A different survey in 2016, from the Williams Institute, estimated that 0.6% of U.S. adults identify as transgender. Studies from several nations, including the U.S., conducted at varying time periods, have produced a statistical range of 1.2 to 6.8 percent of the adult population identifying as LGBT.

The District of Columbia has the highest GLBTQ population at 8.6%, followed by Vermont with 5.3%, Massachusetts, California, and Oregon, all at 4.9%, and Nevada with 4.8%.[4]

Like other aspects of socialization, norms and values related to sexuality and sexual orientation are transmitted through various agents of socialization beginning with the family. We can examine views on sexual orientation and examine other variables such as religion, country of origin, age, political affiliation, and others in order to theorize how values and norms related to sexual orientation operate.

Heteronormative behaviors are reinforced through agents of socialization, including popular movies and TV shows that feature LBGTQ relationships and individuals, which is symbolic of growing cultural awareness of relationships that are not heteronormative. Emmy-award winning comedienne Ellen DeGeneres broke early barriers by starring in a sitcom (*Ellen* 1994-1998) with herself as a gay female lead who comes out during an episode (April 30, 1997). *Roseanne* (1988-1997), starring Roseanne Barr, also revolutionarily featured several same sex couples and featured the first gay wedding of a recurring character in the episode "December Bride" (December 12, 1995). *Roseanne* made a comeback in 2018, but Barr herself was written out of the show and widely ostracized after posting an Islamophobic and racist tweet comparing an African American political operative to an ape.

The Showtime series *Shameless* (2011-present) has featured several same sex couples, and has intersected class, the military, and religion in its depiction of homosexual central character Ian Gallagher. HBO series *Game of Thrones* (2011-present) boasts 11 LGBTQ characters, including lesbian Lara Greyjoy and non-gender conforming Brienne of Tarth, among others.

Perhaps the biggest shift in popular culture has been to include LGBTQ characters in childrens' series. *The Legend of Korra* (2012-2014), successor to *Avatar: The Last Airbender* (2005-2008), features a queer lead and explicitly addresses sexism. [5]

In 2012, Tammy Baldwin became the first openly gay politician, and the first Wisconsin woman, to be elected to the U.S. Senate. Prior to being elected to the Senate, Baldwin had been the first openly gay member of the U.S. Congress, joining the body in 1998.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13441

glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]heteronormative society:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]assumes sexual orientation is biologically determined and unambiguous[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]heterosexism:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]an ideology and a set of institutional practices that privilege heterosexuals and heterosexuality over other sexual orientations[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]sexual orientation:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]a person's physical, mental, emotional, and sexual attraction to a particular sex (male or female)[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

1. "A survey of LBGT Americans." (2013). Pew Research Center. http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/06/13/a-survey-of-lgbt-americans/. ↵
2. "The global divide on homosexuality," 2013. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2013/06/04/the-global-divide-on-homosexuality/. ↵
3. Brown. A. 2017. "Five key findings." Pew Research Center. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/13/5-key-findings-about-lgbt-americans/. ↵
4. Gates, G. 2017. "Vermont leads states LGBT identification," Gallop Social and Public Issues. https://news.gallup.com/poll/203513/vermont-leads-states-lgbt-identification.aspx. ↵
5. Necessary, T. "10 Kids Shows." Pride. https://www.pride.com/geek/2019/1/27/10-modern-kids-shows-awesome-queer-characters. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Sex and Gender; Sex and Sexuality. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.1:JvZuwiUn@7/Sex-and-Gender. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Stonewall Inn. **Authored by**: Rhododendrites . **Provided by**: Wikpedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Stonewall_Inn#/media/File:Stonewall_Inn_10_pride_weekend_2016.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- LGBT demographics of the United States. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_demographics_of_the_United_States. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- How the Stonewall Riots Sparked a Movement. **Provided by**: History. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=181&v=Q9wdMJmuBlA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 12.7: Sexual Orientation is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.8: Introduction to Theories of Gender and Sex

What you'll learn to do: summarize the key ideas behind the three theoretical perspectives on gender and sexuality



We can examine issues of gender, sex, sexual orientation, and sexuality through the three major sociological perspectives: functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. How does feminist theory address both both micro and macrosociological approaches? How do sociological theories help us explain and/or predict the complexities of human sexuality and gender role norms? Read on to learn more.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Theories of Gender and Sex. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Sex and Sexuality. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:Zy3RJpzj@3/Sex-and-Sexuality. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- The sign outside an all-gender (gender neutral) restroom at San Diego airport in California. **Authored by**: Checkingfax. **Provided by**: Wikimedia Commons. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:All_gender_restroom_sign_San_Diego_airport.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 12.8: Introduction to Theories of Gender and Sex is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.9: Feminist Movements and Feminist Theory

Learning Outcomes

- Evaluate feminist movements in the U.S. and the strengths and weaknesses of each
- Describe feminist theory

The Feminist Movement

The **feminist movement** (also known as the women's liberation movement, the women's movement, or simply feminism) refers to a series of political campaigns for reform on a variety of issues that affect women's quality of life. Although there have been feminist movements all over the world, this section will focus on the four eras of the feminist movement in the U.S.

First Wave Feminism (1848-1920)

The first women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York (now known as the Seneca Falls Convention) from July 19-20, 1848, and advertised itself as "a convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman." While there, 68 women and 32 men–100 out of some 300 attendees–signed the Declaration of Sentiments, also known as the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments, which was principally authored by Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

There was a notable connection between the movement to abolish slavery and the women's rights movement. Frederick Douglass was heavily involved in both projects and believed it was essential for both groups to work together. As a fellow activistic the pursuit of equality and freedom from arbitrary discrimination, he was asked to speak at the Convention and to sign the Declaration of Sentiments. Despite this instance of movement kinship and intersectionality, it is important to note that no women of color attended the Seneca Convention.

In 1851, Lucy Gage led a women's convention in Ohio where Sojourner Truth, who was born a slave and gave birth to five children in slavery, gave her famous "Ain't I a Woman?" speech. Truth was born Isabella Bomfree in 1797 in New York, and was bought and sold four times during her lifetime. Her five-year-old son Peter was illegally sold into slavery in Alabama, though in 1827, with the help of an abolitionist family, she was able to buy her freedom and to successfully sue for the return of her son. [1]. She moved to New York City in 1828 and became part of the religious revivals then underway. Becoming an activist and speaker, in 1843 she renamed herself Sojourner Truth and dedicated her life to working toward the end of slavery and for women's rights and temperance.

The 15th Amendment, ratified in 1870, was unpopular with suffragists because it did not include women in its guarantee of the right to vote irrespective of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Suffragette Susan B. Anthony (in)famously said, "I will cut off this right arm of mine before I will ever work or demand the ballot for the Negro and not the woman," but abolitionists and early Republicans were intent on prioritizing black men's suffrage over that of women [2]. This further complicated the suffragist movement, as many prominent participants opposed the 15th amendment, which earned them unhelpful support from Reconstruction-era racists who opposed suffrage for black men.

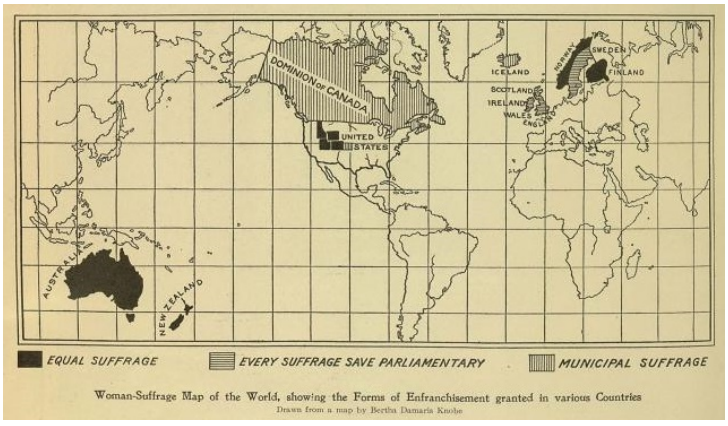


Figure 1. Woman's suffrage around the world in 1908.

The 1920 ratification of the 19th Amendment is the biggest success of the first wave, and it took 72 years to get it passed. As you can see from the map above, the United States was far behind other countries in terms of suffrage. Charlotte Woodward, one of 100 signers of the 1948 Declaration of Sentiments, was the only signatory still alive when the Nineteenth Amendment passed; however, Woodward was not well enough to vote. Another leading feminist from this early period was Margaret Sanger, who advocated for free and available birth control.

The limitations of this wave were related to its lack of inclusion of women of color and poor women. The movement was led by educated white women and often willfully ignored pressing issues for the rest of the women in the United States.

Second Wave Feminism (1960s-1980s)

Whereas the first wave of feminism was generally propelled by middle class, western, cisgender, white women, the second phase drew in women of color and women from developing nations, seeking sisterhood and solidarity, and claiming "Women's struggle is class struggle." [3] Feminists spoke of women as a social class and coined phrases such as "the personal is political" and "identity politics" in an effort to demonstrate that race, class, and gender oppression are all related. They initiated a concentrated effort to rid society top-to-bottom of sexism, from children's cartoons to the highest levels of government (Rampton 2015).

Margaret Sanger, birth control advocate from the first wave, lived to see the Food and Drug Administration approve the combined oral contraceptive pill in 1960, which was made available in 1961 (she died in 1966). President Kennedy made women's rights a key issue of the New Frontier (a slate of ambitious domestic and foreign policy initiatives), and named women (such as Esther Peterson) to many high-ranking posts in his administration (1961-1963).

Like first wave feminists, second wave feminists were influenced by other contemporaneous social movements. During the 1960s, these included the civil rights movement, anti-war movement, environmental movement, student movement, gay rights movement, and the farm workers movement.

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was proposed by first wave feminists in 1923, and was premised on legal equality of the sexes. It was ratified by Congress in 1972 but failed to achieve the three-fourths majority in the states required to make it the 23rd Amendment to the Constitution.[4]. Although this effort was not successful, other gains were made, including increased attention to domestic violence and marital rape issues, the establishment of rape crisis and battered women's shelters, and changes in child custody and divorce law.

In 1963 Betty Friedan, influenced by Simone De Beauvoir's 1947 book *The Second Sex*, wrote the bestselling *The Feminine Mystique*, in which she objected to the mainstream media depiction of women and argued that narrowly reducing women to the status of homemakers limited their potential and wasted their talent. The idealized nuclear family that was prominently marketed at the time, she wrote, did not reflect authentic happiness and was in fact often unsatisfying and degrading for women. Friedan's book is considered one of the most important founding texts of second wave feminism.

Link to Learning

Watch this video clip to learn more about the success and impact of Friedan's book.

Thus, the successes of the second wave included a more individualistic approach to feminism, a broadening of issues beyond voting and property rights, and greater awareness of timely feminist objectives through books and television. However, there were some impactful political disappointments, as the ERA was not ratified by the states, and second wave feminists were not able to create lasting coalitions with other social movements.

Third Wave Feminism (1990s-2008)



Figure 2. The "We Can Do It!" poster from 1943 was re-appropriated as a symbol of the feminist movement in the 1980s.

Third-wave feminism refers to several diverse strains of feminist activity and study, whose exact boundaries in the history of feminism are a subject of debate. The movement arose partially as a response to the perceived failures of and backlash against initiatives and movements created by second-wave feminism. Post-colonial and postmodern theory, which work, among other goals, toward the destabilization of social constructions of gender and sexuality, including the notion of "universal womanhood," have also been important influences (Rampton 2015). This wave broadened the parameters of feminism to include a more diverse group of women and a more fluid range of sexual and gender identities.

Popular television shows like *Sex in the City* (1998-2004) elevated a type of third wave feminism that merged feminine imagery (i.e., lipstick, high heels, cleavage), which were previously associated with male oppression, with high powered careers and robust sex lives. The "grrls" of the third wave stepped onto the stage as strong and empowered, eschewing victimization and defining feminine beauty for themselves as subjects, not as objects of a sexist patriarchy; they developed a rhetoric of mimicry, which appropriated derogatory terms like "slut" and "bitch" in order to subvert sexist culture and deprive it of verbal weapons (Rampton 2015).

Third wave feminists effectively used mass media, particularly the web ("cybergrrls" and "netgrrls"), to create a feminism that is global, multicultural, and boundary-crossing. One important third wave sub-group was the Riot Grrrl movement, whose DIY (do it yourself) ethos produced a number of influential, independent feminist musicians, such as Bikini Kill and Sleater-Kinney.

Third wave feminism's focus on identity and the blurring of boundaries, however, did not effectively address many persistent macrosociological issues such as sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Fourth Wave Feminism (2008-present)

Fourth wave feminism is shaped by technology and characterized by the #metoo and the #timesup movements. Considering that these hashtags were first introduced on Twitter in 2007, this movement has grown rapidly, as social media activism has spread interest in and awareness of feminism.

Waves of accusations against men in powerful positions—from Hollywood directors, to Supreme Court justices, to the President of the United States, have catalyzed feminists in a way that appears to be fundamentally different compared to previous iterations.

As Rampton (2015) states, "The emerging fourth wavers are not just reincarnations of their second wave grandmothers; they bring to the discussion important perspectives taught by third wave feminism; they speak in terms of intersectionality whereby women's suppression can only fully be understood in a context of the marginalization of other groups and genders—feminism is part of a larger consciousness of oppression along with racism, ageism, classism, ableism, and sexual orientation (no "ism" to go with that)."

Successes of fourth wave feminists include the proliferation of social media tags that promote inclusion and more effectively dismantle the gender and sexual binaries that have fragmented the movement. Female farm workers are demanding to have sexual harassment in the fields addressed alongside Hollywood actors.

The unprecedented number of women who were elected to Congress in the 2018 midterm elections is another sign of success for fourth wave feminists. Specifically, we can see that women of color, whose intersectional commitments also extend to

environmental issues and income inequality, are represented in substantial numbers in both chambers.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13442

Watch It

Watch this video for an overview of gender in sociology. The video begins with an explanation of Harriet Martineau and her important contributions to sociology, then examines gender-conflict theory and three of the four waves of feminism.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=338

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory is a type of conflict theory that examines inequalities in gender-related issues. It uses the conflict approach to examine the maintenance of gender roles and uneven power relations. Radical feminism, in particular, considers the role of the family in perpetuating male dominance (note that "radical" means "at the root"). 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. Peggy Reeves Sanday's study of the Indonesian Minangkabau (2004) revealed that in societies considered to be matriarchies (where women comprise the dominant group), women and men tend to work cooperatively rather than competitively, regardless of whether a job would be gendered as feminine by U.S. standards. The men, however, do not experience the sense of bifurcated (i.e., divided into two parts) consciousness under this social structure that modern U.S. females encounter (Sanday 2004).

Patriarchy refers to a set of institutional structures (like property rights, access to positions of power, relationship to sources of income) that are based on the belief that men and women are dichotomous and unequal categories of being. The key to patriarchy is what might be called the **dominant gender ideology** toward sexual differences: the assumption that physiological sex differences between males and females are related to differences in their character, behavior, and ability (i.e., their gender). These differences are used to justify a gendered division of social roles and inequality in access to rewards, positions of power, and privilege. The question that feminists ask therefore is: How does this distinction between male and female, and the attribution of different qualities to each, serve to organize our institutions (e.g., the family, law, the occupational structure, religious institutions, the division between public and private) and to perpetuate inequality between the sexes?

One of the influential sociological insights that emerged within second wave feminism is that "the personal is political." This is a way of acknowledging that the challenges and personal crises that emerge in one's day-to-day lived experience are symptomatic of larger systemic political issues, and that the solutions to such problems must be collectively pursued. As Friedan and others showed, these personal dissatisfactions often originated in previously unquestioned, stubbornly gendered discrepancies.

Standpoint Theory

Many of the most immediate and fundamental experiences of social life—from childbirth to who washes the dishes to the experience of sexual violence—had simply been invisible or regarded as unimportant politically or socially. Dorothy Smith's development of **standpoint theory** was a key innovation in sociology that enabled these issues to be seen and addressed in a systematic way by examining one's position in life (Smith 1977). She recognized from the consciousness-raising exercises and encounter groups initiated by feminists in the 1960s and 1970s that many of the immediate concerns expressed by women about their personal lives had a commonality of themes.

Smith argued that instead of beginning sociological analysis from the abstract point of view of institutions or systems, women's lives could be more effectively examined if one began from the "actualities" of their lived experience in the immediate local settings of "everyday/ everynight" life. She asked, "What are the common features of women's everyday lives?" From this standpoint, Smith observed that women's position in modern society is acutely divided by the experience of dual consciousness (recall W.E.B. DuBois' *double consciousness*). Every day women crossed a tangible dividing line when they went from the "particularizing work in relation to children, spouse, and household" to the institutional world of text-mediated, abstract concerns at work, or in their dealings with schools, medical systems, or government bureaucracies. In the abstract world of institutional life, the actualities of local consciousness and lived life are "obliterated" (Smith 1977). Note again that Smith's argument is in keeping with

the second wave feminist idea that “the personal” (child-rearing, housekeeping) complicates and illuminates one’s relationship to “the political” (work life, government bureaucracies).

Intersectional Theory

Recall that intersectional theory examines multiple, overlapping identities and social contexts (black, Latina, Asian, gay, trans, working class, poor, single parent, working, stay-at-home, immigrant, undocumented, etc.) and the unique, various lived experiences within these spaces. Intersectional theory combines critical race theory, gender conflict theory, and critical components of Marx’s class theory. Kimberlé Crenshaw describes it as a “prism for understanding certain kinds of problems.”

Watch It

How does the convergence or racial or gender stereotypes play out in classrooms? How does this influence the opportunity for equal education? Consider these issues as you watch this short clip from Kimberlé Crenshaw.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=338

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13443

Glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]dominant gender ideology:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]the assumption that physiological sex differences between males and females are related to differences in their character, behavior, and ability (i.e., their gender)[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]heterosexism:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]is a system of attitudes, bias, and discrimination that favor male-female sexuality and relationships[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]feminist:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]one who believes that females should be equal to males[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]feminist movement:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]a series of political campaigns for reforms on issues such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, women’s suffrage, sexual harassment, and sexual violence, all of which fall under the label of feminism and the feminist movement[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]feminist theory:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]the critical analysis of the way gender affects societal structures, power, and inequality[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]intersectional theory:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]utilizes multiple identities of females (i.e. such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, etc.) as important to understanding inequality
[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]patriarchy:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition] a set of institutional structures (like property rights, access to positions of power, relationship to sources of income) that are based on the belief that males *(patri* means “father”) *are* dominant
[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]standpoint theory:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]theory that feminist social science should be practiced from the standpoint of women[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

---

1. Michals, D. "Soujourner Truth." National Women's History Museum. https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/sojourner-truth. ↵
2. Ford, S. 2017. "How racism split the suffrage movement. Bust Magazine. https://bust.com/feminism/19147-equal-means-equal.html. ↵

3. Rampton, M. (2015). "Four waves of feminism." Pacific University Oregon. https://www.pacificu.edu/about/media/four-waves-feminism. ↵
4. "Equal Rights Amendment." This Day in History. https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/equal-rights-amendment-passed-by-congress. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Feminist Movement. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- First-wave feminism. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/First-wave_feminism#United_States. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Second-wave feminism. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Second-wave_feminism. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Third-wave feminism. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Third-wave_feminism. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Seneca Falls Convention. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Seneca_Falls_Convention#Remembrances. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- The Women's Rights Movement. **Authored by**: Boundless. **Located at**: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-politicalscience/. **Project**: Political Science. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Women's Movement USA - 1950s-60s. **Authored by**: International School History. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amZD8XxTsjQ. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Kimberlee Crenshaw: What is Intersectionality?. **Authored by**: National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViDtnfQ9FHc. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

Public domain content

- We Can Do It! Poster. **Authored by**: J. Howard Miller from Westinghouse. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist_movement#/media/File:We_Can_Do_It!.jpg. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*
- Woman's Suffrage 1908. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Women%27s_Suffrage_1908.jpg. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 12.9: Feminist Movements and Feminist Theory is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.10: Theoretical Perspectives on Gender

Learning Outcomes

- Examine gender from a structural-functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist perspective

Theoretical Perspectives on Gender

Sociological theories help to explain complex human behaviors, social phenomena, and social structures. To take a specific example, let's consider how each theoretical perspective might explain the gender wage gap. In 2017, full-time working women made 80.5 cents to every dollar earned by men, meaning there is a gender wage gap of 19.5 percent. This gap is even more pronounced for black and Hispanic women.[1] So why do women make less than men?

Not only do we need to examine each woman's experience in the workforce, we should also understand intersectionality, or how each person's experience is affected by race/ethnicity, social class, age, etc. We then want to scrutinize the structures and processes that shape these experiences. To establish a more comprehensive analytical framework, we can apply each of the three main sociological perspectives to better understand the socio-economic phenomenon of the gender wage gap.

Structural functionalists might look at how values and norms shape societal notions of success in the workforce, and how these established values and norms reinforce the division of labor as well as gender inequality. For functionalists, when roles are clearly established, social solidarity increases. When large numbers of women began to enter the workforce beginning in World War II, they were paid less, but the rationale for this wage was that it was a necessary cost-saving measure during wartime. When women began to collectively demand "equal pay for equal work" in the 1960s, formal norms (laws) had to be passed for this to occur. As we have seen over the past 60 years, values do not always keep up with changing norms and vice versa.

Conflict theorists influenced by the theories of Karl Marx might analyze how the bourgeoisie use the wage gap to perpetuate an unequal system, and how the wage gap is successful in keeping the working classes both divided and subject to a politically neutralizing false consciousness. Females, as a minority group, are paid less so that the dominant group (men) can maintain a greater share of status and power. The United States is an advanced capitalist society, so by paying some workers less than others (and all workers less than the actual value of their labor), those at the top increase their wealth, while the workers are led to believe they too can join the bourgeoisie if they work hard enough.

Interactionists would likely examine how meaning is produced and negotiated in social interactions and how that meaning is then translated into wage inequality. A woman who displays certain behaviors that are generally conceived of as being appropriate for leadership (i.e., strong, opinionated, concise) might be perceived as "bossy" or "difficult to work with," whereas a man depicting the same behaviors would be perceived as someone who is ready for a leadership position. This type of meaning-making, which is heavily gendered through generational cycles of socialization, contributes to the wage gap at the microsociological level.

Let's look at each of these perspectives again as they apply more broadly to gender.

Watch It

Is the gender wage gap a real thing? Watch this vlog from Seth Green to learn about some of the latest research on the topic.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=340

Structural Functionalism

Structural functionalism has provided one of the most important perspectives of sociological research in the twentieth century and has been a major influence on research in the social sciences, including gender studies. Viewing the family as the most integral component of society, assumptions about gender roles within marriage assume a prominent place in this perspective.

Functionalists argue that gender roles were established well before the pre-industrial era when men typically took care of responsibilities outside of the home, such as hunting, and women typically took care of the domestic responsibilities in or around the home. These roles were considered functional because women were often limited by the physical restraints of pregnancy and nursing and were unable to leave the home for long periods of time. These roles were passed on to subsequent generations, since they served as an effective means of keeping the family system functioning properly.

When changes occurred in the social and economic climate of the United States during World War II, changes in the family structure also occurred. Many women had to assume the role of breadwinner (or modern hunter-gatherer) alongside their traditional domestic role in order to stabilize a rapidly changing society. When the men returned from war and wanted to reclaim their jobs, society fell back into a state of imbalance, as many women did not want to forfeit their wage-earning positions (Hawke 2007).

Conflict Theory

According to conflict theory, society is a struggle for dominance among social groups (like women versus men) that compete for scarce resources. When sociologists examine gender from this perspective, they typically classify men as the dominant group and women as the subordinate group. According to conflict theory, social problems are created when dominant groups exploit or oppress subordinate groups. Consider the Women's Suffrage Movement or the debate over women's "right to choose" their reproductive futures. It is difficult for women to rise above men, as dominant group members create the rules for success and opportunity in society (Farrington and Chertok 1993).

Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), a German sociologist and Karl Marx's frequent collaborator, studied family structure and gender roles. Engels suggested that the same owner-worker relationship seen in the labor force is also seen in the household, with women assuming the role of the proletariat (i.e., the industrial age, routine-bound workers). This is due to women's dependence on men for the attainment of wages, which is even worse for women who are entirely dependent upon their spouses for economic support. Contemporary conflict theorists suggest that when women become wage earners, they can gain power in the family structure and create more democratic arrangements in the home, although they may still carry the majority of the domestic burden, as noted earlier (Rismanand and Johnson-Sumerford 1998).

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism aims to understand human behavior by analyzing the critical role of symbols and meaning-making in human interaction. This is certainly relevant to the discussion of masculinity and femininity. Imagine that you walk into a bank hoping to get a small loan for school, a home, or a small business venture. If you meet with a male loan officer, you may state your case logically by listing all the hard numbers that make you a qualified applicant as a means of appealing to the practical, analytical characteristics associated with masculinity. If you meet with a female loan officer, you may make an emotional appeal by stating your good intentions as a means of appealing to the empathetic, nurturing characteristics associated with femininity.

Because the meanings attached to symbols are socially created and not natural, and fluid, not static, we act and react to symbols based on the current assigned meaning. The word *gay*, for example, once meant "cheerful," but by the 1960s it carried the primary meaning of "homosexual." In transition, it was even known to mean "careless" or "bright and showing" (Oxford American Dictionary 2010). Furthermore, the word *gay* (as it refers to a homosexual), carried a somewhat negative and unfavorable meaning fifty years ago, but has since gained more neutral and even positive connotations. When people perform tasks or possess characteristics based on the gender role assigned to them, they are said to be **doing gender**. This notion is based on the work of West and Zimmerman (1987). Whether we are expressing our masculinity or femininity, Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman argue, we are always "doing gender." Thus, gender is something we do or perform, not something we are.

In other words, both gender and sexuality are socially constructed. The **social construction of sexuality** refers to the way in which socially created definitions about the cultural appropriateness of sex-linked behavior shape the way people see and experience sexuality. This is in marked contrast to theories of sex, gender, and sexuality that link male and female behavior to **biological determinism**, or the belief that men and women behave differently due to differences in their biology.

Being Male, Being Female, and Being Healthy

In 1971, Broverman and Broverman conducted a groundbreaking study on the traits mental health workers ascribed to males and females. When asked to name the characteristics of a female, the list featured words such as unaggressive, gentle, emotional, tactful, less logical, not ambitious, dependent, passive, and neat. The list of male characteristics featured words such as aggressive, rough, unemotional, blunt, logical, direct, active, and sloppy (Seem and Clark 2006). Later, when asked to describe the characteristics of a healthy person (not gender specific), the list was nearly identical to that of a male.

This study uncovered the general assumption that being female is associated with being somewhat unhealthy or not of sound mind. This concept seems extremely dated, but in 2006, Susan Seem and M. Diane Clark replicated the study and found similar results.

Again, the characteristics associated with a healthy male were very similar to that of a healthy (genderless) adult. The list of characteristics associated with being female broadened somewhat, but did not show significant change from the original study (Seem and Clark 2006). This interpretation of feminine characteristic may help us one day better understand gender disparities in certain illnesses, such as why one in eight women can be expected to develop clinical depression in her lifetime (National Institute of Mental Health 1999). Perhaps these diagnoses are not just a reflection of women's health, but also a reflection of society's labeling of female characteristics, or the result of institutionalized sexism.

Watch It

Watch this video to see more examples related to each of the main sociological theories on gender.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=340

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13444

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13445

glossary

biological determinism:
the belief that men and women behave differently due to inherent sex differences related to their biology

doing gender:
the performance of tasks based upon the gender assigned to us by society and, in turn, ourselves

social construction of sexuality:
socially created definitions about the cultural appropriateness of sex-linked behavior which shape how people see and experience sexuality

1. "Pay, equity, and discrimination." (2018). Institute for Women's Policy Research. https://iwpr.org/issue/employment-education-economic-change/pay-equity-discrimination/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Gender. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:IThELyrX@3/Gender. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Theories of Gender: Crash Course Sociology #33. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CquRz_cceH8&index=35&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&t=0s. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Is the Gender Pay Gap Real?. **Provided by**: Vlogbrothers. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=23&v=it0EYBBl5LI. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 12.10: Theoretical Perspectives on Gender is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.11: Theoretical Perspectives on Sex

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss structural-functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionist perspectives on sex and sexuality

Sociological Perspectives on Sex and Sexuality

Sociologists representing all three major theoretical perspectives study the role sexuality plays in social life today. Scholars recognize that sexuality continues to be an important and defining social location and that the manner in which sexuality is constructed has a significant effect on perceptions, interactions, and outcomes.

Structural Functionalism

When it comes to sexuality, functionalists stress the importance of regulating sexual behavior to ensure marital cohesion and family and social stability. Since functionalists identify the family unit as the most integral component in society, they maintain a strict focus on it at all times and argue in favor of social arrangements that promote and ensure family preservation.

Functionalists such as Talcott Parsons (1955) have long argued that the regulation of sexual activity is an important function of the family. Social norms surrounding family life have, traditionally, encouraged sexual activity within the family unit (marriage) and have discouraged activity outside of it (premarital and extramarital sex). From a functionalist point of view, the purpose of encouraging sexual activity in the confines of marriage is to intensify the bond between spouses and to ensure that procreation occurs within a stable, legally recognized relationship. This structure gives offspring the best possible chance for appropriate socialization and the provision of basic resources.

From a functionalist standpoint, homosexuality cannot be promoted on a large-scale as an acceptable substitute for heterosexuality. If this occurred, procreation would eventually cease. Thus, homosexuality, if occurring predominantly within the population, is dysfunctional to society. This criticism does not take into account the increasing legal acceptance of same-sex marriage, or the rise in gay and lesbian couples who choose to bear and raise children through a variety of available alternative resources.

Conflict Theory

From a conflict theory perspective, sexuality is another area in which power differentials are present and where dominant groups actively work to promote their worldview as well as their economic interests. Recently, we have seen the debate over the legalization of gay marriage intensify nationwide.

For conflict theorists, there are two key dimensions to the debate over same-sex marriage—one ideological and the other economic. Dominant groups (in this instance, heterosexuals) wish for their worldview—which embraces traditional marriage, the nuclear family, and oftentimes a politicized religiosity—to win out over what they see as the intrusion of a secular, individually driven worldview. On the other hand, many gay and lesbian activists argue that legal marriage is a fundamental right that cannot be denied based on sexual orientation and that, historically, there already exists a precedent for changes to marriage laws: the 1960s legalization of formerly forbidden interracial marriages is one example.

From an economic perspective, activists in favor of same-sex marriage point out that legal marriage brings with it certain entitlements, many of which are financial in nature, like Social Security benefits and medical insurance (Solmonese 2008). Denial of these benefits to gay couples is wrong, they argue. Conflict theory suggests that as long as heterosexuals and homosexuals struggle over these contested social and financial resources, they will continue to be at odds.

Symbolic Interactionism

Interactionists focus on the meanings associated with sexuality and sexual orientation. Since femininity is devalued in U.S. society, those who adopt such traits are subject to ridicule; this is especially true for boys or men. Just as masculinity is the symbolic norm, so too has heterosexuality come to signify normalcy. Prior to 1973, the American Psychological Association (APA) defined homosexuality as an abnormal or deviant disorder. Interactionist labeling theory recognizes the impact this has made. Before 1973, the APA was powerful in shaping social attitudes toward homosexuality by defining it as pathological. Today, the APA cites no association between sexual orientation and psychopathology and sees homosexuality as a normal aspect of human sexuality (APA 2008).

Interactionists are also interested in how discussions of homosexuals often focus almost exclusively on the sex lives of gays and lesbians; homosexuals, especially men, may be assumed to be hypersexual and, in some cases, deviant. Interactionism might also focus on the slurs used to describe homosexuals. Labels such as “queen” and “fag” are often used to demean homosexual men by feminizing them. This subsequently affects how homosexuals perceive themselves. Recall Cooley’s “looking-glass self,” which suggests that self develops as a result of our interpretation and evaluation of the responses of others (Cooley 1902). Constant exposure to derogatory labels, jokes, and pervasive homophobia would lead to a negative self-image, or worse, self-hate. The CDC reports that homosexual youths who experience high levels of social rejection are six times more likely to have high levels of depression and eight times more likely to have attempted suicide (CDC 2011).

Queer Theory

Queer Theory is an interdisciplinary approach to sexuality studies that identifies Western society’s rigid splitting of gender into male and female roles and questions the manner in which we have been taught to think about sexual orientation. According to Jagose (1996), Queer [Theory] focuses on mismatches between anatomical sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, not just division into male/female or homosexual/hetereosexual. By calling their discipline “queer,” scholars reject the effects of labeling; instead, they embraced the word “queer” and reclaimed it for their own purposes. The perspective highlights the need for a more flexible and fluid conceptualization of sexuality—one that allows for change, negotiation, and freedom. The current schema used to classify individuals as either “heterosexual” or “homosexual” pits one orientation against the other. This mirrors other oppressive schemas in our culture, especially those surrounding gender and race (black versus white, male versus female).

Queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argued against U.S. society’s monolithic definition of sexuality and its reduction to a single factor: the sex of someone’s desired partner. Sedgwick identified dozens of other ways in which people’s sexualities were different, such as:

- Even identical genital acts mean very different things to different people.
- Sexuality makes up a large share of the self-perceived identity of some people, a small share of others’.
- Some people spend a lot of time thinking about sex, others little.
- Some people like to have a lot of sex, others little or none.
- Many people have their richest mental/emotional involvement with sexual acts that they don’t do, or don’t even want to do.
- Some people like spontaneous sexual scenes, others like highly scripted ones, others like spontaneous-sounding ones that are nonetheless totally predictable.
- Some people, homo- hetero- and bisexual, experience their sexuality as deeply embedded in a matrix of gender meanings and gender differentials. Others of each sexuality do not (Sedgwick 1990).

Thus, theorists utilizing queer theory strive to question the ways society perceives and experiences sex, gender, and sexuality, opening the door to new scholarly understanding.

Throughout this module we have examined the complexities of gender, sex, and sexuality. Differentiating between sex, gender, and sexual orientation is an important first step to a deeper understanding and critical analysis of these issues. Understanding the sociology of sex, gender, and sexuality will help to build awareness of the inequalities experienced by subordinate categories such as women, homosexuals, and transgender individuals.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/13446

glossary

queer theory:
an interdisciplinary approach to sexuality studies that identifies Western society’s rigid splitting of gender into male and female roles and questions its appropriateness

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Sex and Sexuality. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:Zy3RJpzj@3/Sex-and-Sexuality. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 12.11: Theoretical Perspectives on Sex is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.12: Putting It Together- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

In this module, you learned about gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and sexual attitudes. Remember that sex does not always correspond with gender and gender identity and sexual orientation are not always as clear cut as we might assume in our heteronormative society.

All of these topics are hotly contested in mainstream American media, especially in regards to recent debates surrounding public restrooms and gender identity. Government leaders and school officials argue over the appropriateness of unisex bathrooms and whether transgender individuals should be able to use facilities that match the gender with which they identify.

Those who oppose eliminating gendered restrooms – or opening them to transgender people — voice concerns about safety. Many of them argue that there is a potential danger in allowing transgender women into ladies' rooms because men posing as transgender women will enter restrooms to prey upon girls and other women. In April 2016, Target drew national criticism after the retail giant announced that it welcomes transgender employees and customers to use the restroom or fitting room that corresponds with their gender identity. The American Family Association responded by launching a petition to boycott Target – an online petition that more than 1.5 million people had signed as of 2018.

The rancor over restroom access has grown as transgender activism has become more mainstream, thanks partly to the high visibility of transgender celebrities such as Caitlyn Jenner and Laverne Cox. In recent years, lawmakers in several states, including Kentucky, Nevada, Minnesota and Florida, have considered bills that would restrict the use of public toilets. In March 2016, the North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill that, among other things, requires students in state schools to use bathrooms and changing areas that match the sex listed on their birth certificates. The move prompted a federal civil rights lawsuit, which was eventually dropped when the state partially repealed the bill in March 2017, removing the restrictions on restroom use by transgender individuals.

CC licensed content, Original

- Putting It Together: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Bathroom Bill. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Bathroom_bill. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Single-sex restrooms and transgender individuals: A roundup of research. **Authored by**: Denise-Marie Ordway. **Provided by**: Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center and the Carnegie-Knight Initiative. **Located at**: http://journalistsresource.org/studies/society/gender-society/restroom-bathroom-transgender-legislation-research. **Project**: Journalist's Resource. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 12.12: Putting It Together- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.13: Discussion- Gender

STEP 1: Find a company that advertises the same product to different genders in distinct ways. For example, look for clothing brands, beer companies, body care products, condoms, razors, energy drinks, health products, etc.

STEP 2: Post the two different ads or links to the ads in the discussion forum, along with a paragraph explaining how and why the two ads play into gender stereotypes.

STEP 3: Pick either the structural-functionalist, conflict, or symbolic interactionist perspective to analyze how someone from that perspective would analyze that advertisement. Add in your own thoughts and explanation as to how someone from that perspective may think about gender or sexuality.

STEP 4: Post a response of at least 100 words on at least TWO classmate's responses.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Gender. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 12.13: Discussion- Gender is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

12.14: Assignment- Gender and Advertising

STEP 1: Search magazines, websites, newspapers, blogs, or other media venues to find advertisements. Search for advertisements with people in them that are related in some way to sex, gender, or sexuality, as discussed in this module. They can be either print ads or commercials.

STEP 2: Find two different advertisements—one that portrays a "negative" or stereotypical view on gender or sexuality, and then one that portrays a "positive" view on gender or sexuality. Post pictures or provide links to these advertisements.

STEP 3: Answer the following questions about BOTH advertisements, in a paper of 250-500 words.

1. How does this advertisement portray gender, sex, or sexuality? What is the ad intentionally trying to sell? What unintentional messages might it also be sending?
2. Who is the intended audience of this advertisement? Are there any stereotypes in this ad? How do you think this ad is received? Do you think it is effective? Explain.
3. If you could make adjustments or changes to this advertisement, what would you do, and why?

STEP 4: Write a summary paragraph describing your own personal views on gender in advertising. Do you think advertising on the whole is becoming less stereotyped, or more so? How have you seen examples of this in your own life? What steps, if any, do you think should be taken to improve future advertisements?

Criteria	Ratings			Points
Advertisements	Finds at least two advertisements related to module content on sex, gender, or sexuality	Finds advertisements only loosely connected to module content	Finds only 1 or non-applicable advertisements	__/5
Analysis	Answers analysis questions about how both advertisements relate to advertisements portrays sex, gender, or sexuality	Partially answers analysis questions about how both advertisements relate to advertisements portrays sex, gender, or sexuality	Does not thoroughly answer analysis questions about how both advertisements relate to advertisements portrays sex, gender, or sexuality	__/10
Summary	Provides summary of your own personal views on gender and sex in advertising	Provides incomplete summary of your own personal views on gender and sex in advertising	Provides partial of your own personal views on gender and sex in advertising	__/5
			Total:	__/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Gender and Advertising. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 12.14: Assignment- Gender and Advertising is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

13: Module 10- Marriage and Family

13.1: Why It Matters- Marriage and Family
13.2: Introduction to Marriage and Family
13.3: Defining Family
13.4: Marriage and Courtship Patterns
13.5: Lines of Descent and Family Stages
13.6: Introduction to Family Life
13.7: Variations in Family Life
13.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Marriage and Family
13.9: Introduction to Challenges Families Face
13.10: Divorce and Remarriage
13.11: Violence and Abuse
13.12: Putting It Together- Marriage and Family
13.13: Discussion- Marriage and Family
13.14: Assignment- Families in Media

This page titled 13: Module 10- Marriage and Family is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.1: Why It Matters- Marriage and Family

Why discuss family, marriage and the variations in family life, including marriage, divorce, childrearing, and abuse?



Figure 1. Marriage is one way to formalize a family. Photos courtesy of Jillianr/flickr

Ayida and John were having a large church wedding attended by family and friends. They had been living together their entire senior year of college and planned on getting married right after graduation. Ayida's Haitain parents were very traditional in their life and family. They had married after college, at which time Ayida's mother was a stay-at-home mother and her father was a vice president at a large accounting firm. The marriage was viewed as very strong by outsiders. John's white parents had divorced when John was five. He and his younger sister lived with his mother, who worked as an elementary school teacher and taught summer school to make ends meet. The mother had a live-in boyfriend that she married when John was in high school. His stepfather was helpful in getting John summer jobs and in encouraging him to attend community college before transferring into a four-year university.

Ayida's maid of honor, Susie, was Ayida's college roommate freshman and sophomore year, but had dropped out upon finding out she was pregnant. She chose not to marry the father and was currently raising the child as a single parent while working as a barista. Her parents helped with childcare so she could work 30 hours per week. John's best man, Brad, began working construction after he graduated from high school, and was in and out of relationships. He was currently seeing a woman with two teenage children from a previous marriage. Ayida and John had a gay couple as ushers. Steve and Roger had been married for almost ten years, had adopted a daughter, and were starting a web-based business together.

This scenario is representative of the many types of families in today's society—interracial relationships, divorce, blended families, serial monogamy, same-sex marriage, adoption, and more. Our families may have different structures, but they have similar purposes. Oftentimes, we learn our family's worldview; subsequently, we may or may not choose to duplicate the beliefs and activities of our family. In this module, you'll examine family relationships and challenges in family life.

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Marriage and Family. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:8F8yv8pE@4/Introduction-to-Marriage-and-Family. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*.

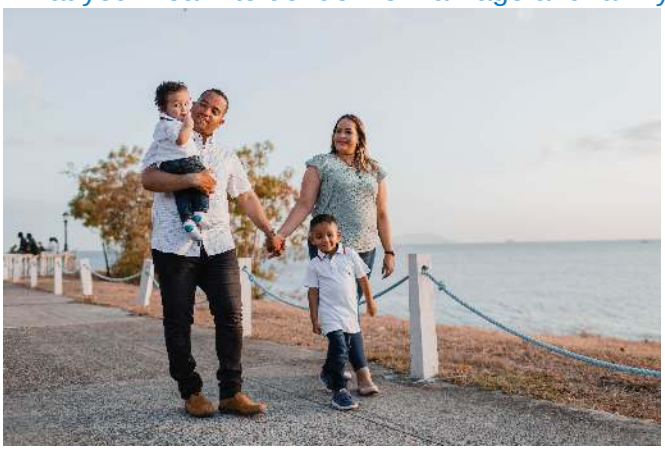
License Terms: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

- Wedding Photo. **Authored by**: Jillian H. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/jillianr/2473376138. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 13.1: Why It Matters- Marriage and Family is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.2: Introduction to Marriage and Family

What you'll learn to do: define marriage and family



In this section, you'll learn how family is defined and how family dynamics are changing and evolving. For example, between 2006 and 2010, nearly half of heterosexual women (48 percent) ages fifteen to forty-four said they were not married to their spouse or partner when they first lived with them. That's up from 43 percent in 2002, and 34 percent in 1995 (Rettner 2013).

The Pew Research Center reports that the number of unmarried couples who live together has grown from fewer than one million in the 1970s to 8.1 million in 2011 to 18 million in 2016. Of the 18 million, 8.9 million are ages 18-34, 4.7 million are ages 35-49, and 4.0 million are 50+. [1]. Cohabiters aged 50 and older comprise one quarter (23%) of all cohabiting adults in 2016, a category which grew by 75% since 2007; although this seems high, only 4% of U.S. adults 50 and older were cohabiting.[2]

Watch It

Before we talk about cohabitation and/or marriage, take a look at this video about perceptions on modern dating and consider how you might respond to these same questions about relationships. In what ways are our responses shaped by societal expectations, culture norms, and the processes of socialization?

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=354

---

1. Stepler, R. 2017. "Number of U.S. Adults Cohabiting With a Partner Continues to Rise." Pew Research Center. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/06/number-of-u-s-adults-cohabiting-with-a-partner-continues-to-rise-especially-among-those-50-and-older/↵
2. Stepler, R. 2017. "Number of U.S. Adults Cohabiting With a Partner Continues to Rise." Pew Research Center. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/06/number-of-u-s-adults-cohabiting-with-a-partner-continues-to-rise-especially-among-those-50-and-older/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Marriage and Family. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- **Authored by**: Luis Quintero. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/N9H3dAeR0SM. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

All rights reserved content

- People Answer The Toughest Questions About Modern Dating. **Authored by**: BuzzFeed Yellow. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKuiA46LMa4. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 13.2: Introduction to Marriage and Family is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.3: Defining Family

Learning Outcomes

- Describe family as a social institution

Family is a key social institution in all societies, which makes it a cultural universal. Similarly, values and norms surrounding marriage are found all over the world in every culture, so marriage and family are both cultural universals. Statuses (i.e., wife, husband, partner, mom, dad, brother, sister, etc.) are created and sanctioned by societies. While marriage and family have historically been closely linked in U.S. culture, with marriages creating new families, their connection is becoming more complex, as illustrated by the the opening vignette and in the subsequent data on cohabitation.

Sociologists are interested in the relationship between the institution of marriage and the institution of family because families are the most basic social unit upon which society is built, but also because marriage and family are linked to other social institutions such as the economy, government, and religion. So what is a family? **Family** is a socially recognized group (usually joined by blood, marriage, cohabitation, or adoption) that forms an emotional connection among its members and that serves as an economic unit of society. Sociologists identify different types of families based on how one enters into them. A **family of orientation** refers to the family into which a person is born. A **family of procreation** describes one that is formed through marriage. These distinctions have cultural significance related to issues of lineage.

Marriage is a legally recognized social contract between two people, traditionally based on a sexual relationship and implying a permanence of the union. Marriage is a cultural universal, and like family, it takes many forms. *Who* gets married, *what* the marriage means to the couple and to the society, *why* people get married (i.e., economic reasons, political reasons, or for love), and *how* it occurs (i.e., wedding or other ceremony) vary widely within and between societies. In practicing cultural relativism, we should also consider variations, such as whether a legal union is required (think of "common law" marriage and its equivalents), or whether more than two people can be involved (consider polygamy). Other variations on the definition of marriage might include whether spouses are of opposite sexes or the same sex, and how one of the traditional expectations of marriage–that children will be produced–is understood today.



(a)



(b)

Figure 1. The modern concept of family is far more encompassing than in past decades, which is evidenced in both laws (formal norms) and social control (both formal and informal). (Photo (a) courtesy Gareth Williams/flickr; photo (b) courtesy Guillaume Paumier/ Wikimedia Commons)

The sociological understanding of what constitutes a family can be explained by the paradigms of symbolic interactionism and functionalism. These two theories indicate that families are groups in which participants view themselves as family members and act accordingly. In other words, families are arrangements in which people come together to form a strong primary group connection and to maintain emotional ties with one another. Such families may include groups of close friends or teammates.

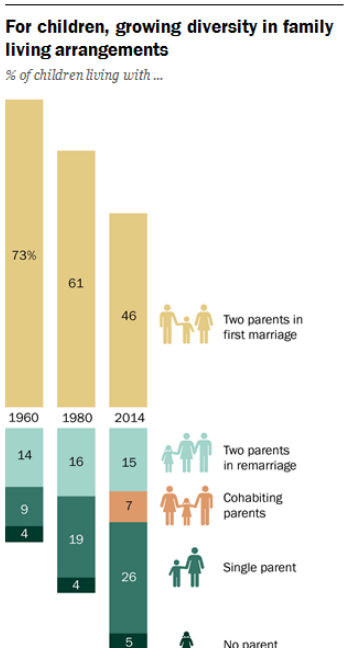


Figure 2. Family dynamics have shifted significantly in the past sixty years, with fewer children living in two-parent households.

In addition, the functionalist perspective views families as groups that perform vital roles for society—both internally (for the family itself) and externally (for society as a whole). Families provide for one another's physical, emotional, and social well-being. Parents care for and socialize children. Later in life, adult children often care for elderly parents. While interactionism helps us understand the symbolic, subjective experience and meaning of belonging to a "family," functionalism illuminates the many purposes of families and their roles in the maintenance of a balanced society (Parsons and Bales 1956).

Diverse Family Units

Irrespective of what form a family takes, it constitutes a basic social unit upon which societies are based, and can reflect other societal changes. For example, the bar graph shows how much the family structure has changed in a relatively short period of time. What trends do you see in the bar graph? What variables might help explain the increase in single parents between 1960 and 1980 and 2014? What variables might help explain the decrease in children living in two parent/first marriage families? Which theoretical perspectives can help explain this phenomenon?

The study also revealed that 60 percent of U.S. respondents agreed that if you consider yourself a family, you are a family (a concept that reinforces a meaning-making interactionist perspective) (Powell 2010). The government, however, is not so flexible in its definition of "family." The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as "a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together" (U.S. Census Bureau 2019). While this definition can be used as a means to consistently track family-related patterns over several years, it excludes some family types, such as cohabiting, unmarried heterosexual and homosexual couples.

Family is, indeed, a subjective concept, but it is a fairly objective fact that family (whatever one's concept of it may be) is very important to people in the United States. In a 2010 survey by Pew Research Center in Washington, DC, 76 percent of adults surveyed stated that family is "the most important" element of their life—just one percent said it was "not important" (Pew Research Center 2010). It is also very important to society. President Ronald Reagan, expressing a sentiment that can apply just as easily to a married lesbian couple with adopted children as to a traditional, heterosexual couple with no children, once stated, "The family has always been the cornerstone of American society. Our families nurture, preserve, and pass on to each succeeding generation the values we share and cherish, values that are the foundation of our freedoms" (Lee 2009). While the exact constitution of the family may have changed in recent years, the fundamentals of emotional closeness and support are still present. Most responders to the Pew survey stated that their family today is at least as close (45 percent) or closer (40 percent) than the family with which they grew up (Pew Research Center).

First Families



Figure 2. First families. (a) President Trump with his wife, Melania, and five kids. (b) President Obama with his wife, Michelle, and kids Malia and Sasha.

When a political candidate runs for office in the United States, there is a lot of attention paid to the candidate's family because this is thought to be a reflection of the candidate and the candidate's values.

When former U.S. President Barack Obama ran for office, many questioned his Kenyan lineage through his father's side, as well as his upbringing in Hawaii and Indonesia, where his mother was doing anthropological work. His parents separated when he was young, and he was raised by his white mother. Michelle Obama, originally from the south side of Chicago, was educated at Princeton and Harvard, then held a prestigious position at the University of Chicago, which she left once her husband was elected. The former first coupled married in 1992 and have two children who were born in 1998 and 2001.

President Donald Trump grew up in New York City (in Queens) to Fred, a real estate developer, and Mary Anne Trump. He was married and divorced twice, and had four children (three with Ivanka Trump and one with Marla Maples) before marrying current First Lady Melania Trump, with whom he has a fourth child, Barron Trump. Both Ivana and Melania were models and were both born in Eastern Europe (Czechoslovakia and Slovenia respectively). Three marriages and five children make the First Family quite unique in U.S. Presidential history.

Think It Over

- Think about family composition (i.e., makeup) from 1960 to 2014 using the bar graph above. Can you predict what the family structure will be like in 2030? What variables might influence family structure going forward?
- According to research, what are people's general thoughts on family in the United States? How do they view nontraditional family structures? How do you think these views might change in twenty years?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14687

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14688

glossary

family:
socially recognized groups of individuals who may be joined by blood, marriage, or adoption and who form an emotional connection and an economic unit of society

family of orientation:
the family into which one is born

family of procreation:
a family that is formed through marriage

marriage:
a legally recognized contract between two or more people in a sexual relationship who have an expectation of permanence about their relationship

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Trump Family. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Trump_Family_Hand_Up.jpg. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- What is Marriage? What is a family?. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:_C0iCApg@6/What-Is-Marriage-What-Is-a-Family. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Obama Family. **Authored by**: Pete Souza. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_of_Barack_Obama#/media/File:Barack_Obama_family_portrait_2011.jpg. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

All rights reserved content

- Graphic of the two-parent household in decline. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/12/17/parenting-in-america/st_2015-12-17_parenting-12/. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 13.3: Defining Family is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.4: Marriage and Courtship Patterns

Learning Outcomes

- Describe changes and trends in courtship, marriage and family patterns

Marriage Patterns

As discussed in the previous section, single parenting and **cohabitation**, which is when a couple shares a residence but not a marriage, are becoming more prevalent and socially acceptable. We also see declining rates of marriage and individuals marrying much later in life, with 30 years old as the *median* age for men and 28 years old for women in 2018, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

One explanation for this trend may be that people are less motivated to get married than they have been in the past. Historically, marriage has served a variety of functions—financial, political, biological (i.e., sex), and social. The top reasons Americans cite for getting married today are love, lifelong commitment, and companionship; only 49% of survey respondents listed "children" as a reason to get married [1]

The institution of marriage is likely to continue, but some previous patterns of marriage will become outdated as new patterns emerge. In this context, cohabitation contributes to the phenomenon of people getting married for the first time at a later age than was typical in earlier generations (Glezer 1991). Furthermore, marriage will continue to be delayed as more people place education and career ahead of "settling down."

One Partner or Many?

People in the United States typically equate marriage with **monogamy**, when someone is married to only one person at a time. In many countries and cultures around the world, however, having one spouse is not the only form of marriage.

A recent article by Thobejane and Flora (2014)[2] provides an updated view on **polygamy**, or being married to more than one person at a time. Polygamy is more common that one would think, with 83% of human societies permitting the practice, but it is most common in Africa as a reflection of tribal and religious customs and economic and social structures. Instances of polygamy almost exclusively take the form of polygyny. **Polygyny** refers to a man being married to more than one woman at the same time. The reverse, when a woman is married to more than one man at the same time, is called **polyandry**. It is far less common and only occurs in about 1 percent of the world's cultures (Altman and Ginat 1996). The reasons for the overwhelming prevalence of polygamous societies are varied, but they often include factors such as population growth, religious ideologies, and social status.

While the majority of societies accept polygyny, the majority of people do not practice it. Often fewer than 10 percent (and no more than 25–35 percent) of men in polygamous cultures have more than one wife; these husbands are often older, wealthy, high-status men (Altman and Ginat 1996). The average plural marriage involves no more than three wives. Negev Bedouin men in Israel, for example, typically have two wives, although it is acceptable to have up to four (Griver 2008). As urbanization increases in these cultures, polygamy is likely to decrease as a result of greater access to mass media, technology, and education (Altman and Ginat 1996).

In the United States, polygamy is considered by most to be socially unacceptable and it is illegal. The act of entering into marriage while still married to another person is referred to as **bigamy** and is considered a felony in most states. Polygamy in the United States is often associated with those of the Mormon faith, although that designation is erroneous as the "Mormon Church" (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) officially renounced polygamy in 1890. The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), on the other hand, still holds tightly to the historic religious beliefs and practices and allows polygamy in their sect. The prevalence of polygamy is often overestimated due to shows such as HBO's *Big Love* and TLC's *Sister Wives*, (2010-present) which have brought the issues of polygamy and the Constitutionality of alternative marriage arrangements into mainstream American discourse. The patriarch in *Sister Wives*, Kody Brown, is legally married to one wife, has three additional "spiritual wives," and has eighteen children total among the four wives.

The most extreme FLDS sect has an estimated 10,000 followers in the United States, so the number of polygamous marriages or "spiritual unions" nationally is very small, but there may be up to 40,000 others in Utah and nearby states who practice polygamy illegally, in addition to excommunicated Mormons in polygamous marriages [3]

No one knows how many Muslims in the U.S. live in polygamous families, but best estimates from academics range from 50,000 to 100,000 people [4]. A man might marry a woman under civil law, and not unlike the spiritual unions found in FLDS, an additional two or three marriages might occur in religious ceremonies unrecognized by the state and/or in other countries. While some women consent to polygamous unions, others keep quiet for fear of retribution or deportation and live "invisible lives" (Hagerty 2018).

Courtship

Courtship is the traditional dating period before engagement and marriage (or long term commitment if marriage is not allowed). It is an alternative to arranged marriages in which the couple or group doesn't meet before the wedding. During a courtship, a couple or group gets to know each other and decides if there will be an engagement. Courting includes activities such as dating where couples or groups go together for some activity (e.g., a meal or movie). Courting can also take place without personal contact, especially with modern technology. Virtual dating, chatting online, sending text messages, conversing over the telephone, instant messaging, writing letters, and sending gifts are all modern forms of courting.

Courtship varies both by time period and by region of the world. One way courtship varies is in the duration; courting can take days or years.

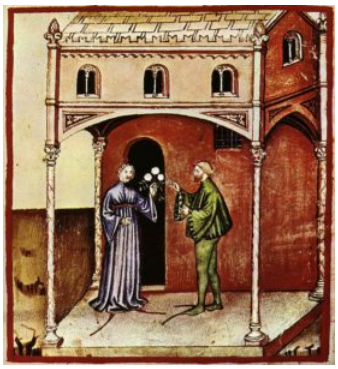


Figure 1. Courting, Tacuinum Sanitatis (XIV century).

While the date is fairly casual in most European-influenced cultures, in some traditional societies, courtship is a highly structured activity, with very specific formal rules. In some societies, the parents or community propose potential partners, and then allow limited dating to determine whether the parties are suited (in fact, this was common in the U.S. throughout the 1800's). In Japan, some parents hire a matchmaker to provide pictures and résumés of potential mates, and if the couple or group agrees, there will be a formal meeting with all family parties and the matchmaker in attendance; this is called Omiai. In more closed societies, courtship is virtually eliminated altogether by the practice of arranged marriages, where partners are chosen for young people, typically by their parents or (in the absence of parents) local authorities. Forbidding experimental and serial courtship and sanctioning only arranged matches is partly a means of guarding the chastity of young people and partly a matter of furthering family interests, which in such cultures may be considered more important than individual romantic preferences. Another variation of courtship is the bundling tradition, which likely originated in Scandinavia and was carried to the U.S. by immigrants. Bundling involved potential mates spending the night together in the same bed, though the couple was not supposed to engage in sexual relations. This practice ceased in the late 19th Century.

In earlier centuries, young adults were expected to court with the intention of finding marriage partners, rather than for social reasons. However, by the 1920s, dating for fun was becoming an expectation, and by the 1930s, it was assumed that any popular young person would have lots of dates. This form of dating, though, was usually more chaste than is seen today, since pre-marital sex was not considered the norm even though it was widespread. As a result of social changes spurred by the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, the taboo of sex during dating began to wane. In recent years, a number of college newspapers have featured editorials where students decry the lack of traditionally paired-up "dating" on their campuses. This may be a result of a highly-publicized 2001 study and campaign sponsored by the conservative American women's group Independent Women's Forum, which promotes "traditional" dating. Also, in recent years dating has evolved and taken on the metamorphic properties necessary to sustain itself in today's world. This can be seen in the rise in internet dating, speed dating or gradual exclusivity dating (a.k.a. slow

dating). Some theorize that courtship as it was known to prior generations has seen its last days and the next closest thing is gradual exclusivity, where the partners respect and value each other's individual lives but still maintain the ultimate goal of being together even if time or space will not permit it now.

Courtship is used by a number of theorists to explain gendering processes and sexual identity. Despite occasional studies as early as the 1910's, systematic scientific research into courtship began in the 1980s after which time academic researchers started to generate theories about modern dating practices and norms. Both Moore and Perper argued that, contrary to popular beliefs, courtship is normally triggered and controlled by women, driven mainly by non-verbal behaviors to which men respond. This is generally supported by other theorists who specialize in the study of body language, but ignores the ways females are socialized to "gain status" by learning to appear attractive to and demonstrate desire for males.

Feminist scholars, however, continue to regard courtship as a socially constructed (and male-focused) process organized to subjugate women. While some criticize feminist interpretations of courtship by pointing to women's support of courtship and attraction to magazines about marital and romantic experience, such criticisms generally ignore the emphasis on marital and romantic relationships (in many cases as the sole element of women's value in male-dominated societies) embedded within feminine socialization norms, and the widespread empirical demonstration that courtship patterns almost universally privilege masculine interests and privilege.

Systematic research into courtship processes inside the workplace, as well two 10-year studies examining norms in different international settings, continue to support a view that courtship is a social process that socializes *all* sexes into accepting relationship types that maximize the chances of successfully raising children. This may negatively impact women, particularly those seeking independence and equality at work.

A Hook-up Culture?

Since the sexual revolution in the 1960s, non-marital sexual relationships have become increasingly acceptable in the United States. The prevalence of one-night stands and non-committal relationships contributes to what sociologists call a hook-up culture. A hook-up culture is one that accepts and encourages casual sexual encounters, including one-night stands and other related activity, which focus on physical pleasure without necessarily including emotional bonding or long-term commitment. It is generally associated with Western late adolescent behavior and, in particular, American college culture.The term hook-up has an ambiguous definition because it can indicate kissing or any form of physical sexual activity between partners. Sociologist Lisa Wade talks more about hook-up culture and sexual activity on college campuses at this link: Sociology and the Culture of Sex on Campus.

According to one study the vast majority, more than 90%, of American college students say their campus is characterized by a hook-up culture, and students believe that about 85% of their classmates have hooked up. Studies show that most students (most recent data suggest between 60% and 80%) do have some sort of casual sex experience. Of those students who have hooked up, between 30% and 50% report that their hook-ups included sexual intercourse. Nationally, women now outnumber men in college enrollment by 4 to 3, leading some researchers to argue that the gender imbalance fosters a culture of hooking up because men, as the minority and limiting factor, hold more power in the sexual marketplace and use it to pursue their preference of casual sex over long-term relationships.

However, most students overestimate the number of hook-ups in which their peers engage. Only 20% of students regularly hook up. Roughly one half will occasionally hook up, and one-third of students do not hook up at all.The median number of hook-ups for a graduating senior on a college campus is seven, and the typical college student acquires two new sexual partners during their college career. Half of all hook-ups are repeats, and 20% of students will graduate from college a virgin, according to the Online College Social Life Survey.

Watch It

This video examines the evolving stages of family life—courtship, marriage, child-rearing, and family life in your later years.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=358

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14689

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14690

glossary

bigamy:
the act of entering into marriage while still married to another person

cohabitation:
the act of a couple sharing a residence while they are not married

courtship:
the traditional dating period before engagement and marriage

monogamy: the act of being married to only one person at a time

polyandry:
a form of marriage in which one woman is married to more than one man at one time

polygamy:
the state of being committed or married to more than one person at a time

polygyny:
a form of marriage in which one man is married to more than one woman at one time

1. Geiger, A and G. Livingston, 2019. "8 Facts about Love and Marriage in America." Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/02/13/8-facts-about-love-and-marriage/. ↵
2. Thobejane, Tsoaledi & Flora, Takayindisa. (2014). An Exploration of Polygamous Marriages: A Worldview. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences. 5. 1058-1066. 10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n27p1058. ↵
3. "Factbox: Five Facts About Polygamists in the U.S." Reuters. June, 12, 2007. ↵
4. Hagerty, Barbara Bradley. (2018). "Some Muslims in the U.S. Quietly Engage in Polygamy." NPR. ↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- What Is Marriage? What Is a Family?. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:_C0iCApg@6/What-Is-Marriage-What-Is-a-Family. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Introduction to Psychology, Courtship section. **Provided by**: Wikibooks. **Located at**: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology/Family. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Hook-up culture, modified. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Hookup_culture. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Stages of Family Life: Crash Course Sociology #38. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWTz3KBCxfg&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=40&t=0s. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 13.4: Marriage and Courtship Patterns is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.5: Lines of Descent and Family Stages

Learning Outcomes

- Differentiate between lines of decent and residence

Residency and Lines of Descent

Descent refers to the socially recognized links between ancestors and descendants or one's traceable ancestry and can be **bilateral**, or traced through either parents, or **unilateral**, or traced through parents and ancestors of only one sex. The former occurs in the United States because both paternal and maternal ancestors are considered part of one's family. The latter, unilateral descent, is practiced in the other 40 percent of the world's societies (O'Neal 2006).

There are three types of unilateral descent: **patrilineal**, which follows the father's line only; **matrilineal**, which follows the mother's side only; and **ambilineal**, which follows either the father's only or the mother's side only, depending on the situation. In partrilineal societies, such as those in rural China and India, only males carry on the family surname. This gives males the prestige of permanent family membership while females are seen as only temporary members. U.S. society assumes some aspects of partrilineal decent. For instance, most children assume their father's last name even if the mother retains her birth name.

In matrilineal societies, inheritance and family ties are traced to women. Matrilineal descent is common in Native American societies, notably the Crow and Cherokee tribes. In these societies, children are seen as belonging to the women and, therefore, one's kinship is traced to one's mother, grandmother, great grandmother, and so on (Mails 1996). In ambilineal societies, which are most common in Southeast Asian countries, parents may choose to associate their children with the kinship of either the mother or the father. This choice may be based on the desire to follow stronger or more prestigious kinship lines or on cultural customs such as men following their father's side and women following their mother's side (Lambert 2009).

Tracing one's line of descent to one parent rather than the other can be relevant to the issue of residence. In many cultures, newly married couples move in with, or near to, family members. In a **patrilocal** residence system it is customary for the wife to live with (or near) her husband's blood relatives (or family of orientation). Patrilocal systems can be traced back thousands of years. In a DNA analysis of 4,600-year-old bones found in Germany, scientists found indicators of patrilocal living arrangements (Haak, et al 2008). Patrilocal residence is thought to be disadvantageous to women because it makes them outsiders in the home and community; it also keeps them disconnected from their own blood relatives. In China, where patrilocal and patrilineal customs are common, the written symbols for maternal grandmother (*wáipá*) are separately translated to mean "outsider" and "women" (Cohen 2011).

Similarly, in **matrilocal** residence systems, where it is customary for the husband to live with his wife's blood relatives (or her family of orientation), the husband can feel disconnected and can be labeled as an outsider. The Minangkabau people, a matrilocal society that is indigenous to the highlands of West Sumatra in Indonesia, believe that home is the place of women and they give men little power in issues relating to the home or family (Joseph and Najmabadi 2003). Most societies that use patrilocal and patrilineal systems are patriarchal, but very few societies that use matrilocal and matrilineal systems are matriarchal, as family life is often considered an important part of the culture for women, regardless of their power relative to men.

Watch It

The selected clip from this video explains how to view family through a sociological lens, then examines both marriage and residential patterns in different societies.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=360

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14691

Stages of Family Life

The concept of family has changed greatly in recent decades. Historically, it was often thought that many families evolved through a series of predictable stages. Developmental or "stage" theories used to play a prominent role in family sociology (Strong and

DeVault 1992). Today, however, these models have been criticized for their linear and conventional assumptions as well as for their failure to capture the diversity of family forms. While reviewing some of these once-popular theories, it is important to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

The set of predictable steps and patterns families experience over time is referred to as the **family life cycle**. One of the first designs of the family life cycle was developed by Paul Glick in 1955. In Glick's original design, he asserted that most people will grow up, establish families, rear and launch their children, experience an "empty nest" period, and come to the end of their lives. This cycle will then continue with each subsequent generation (Glick 1989). Glick's colleague, Evelyn Duvall, elaborated on the family life cycle by developing these classic stages of family (Strong and DeVault 1992):

Stage Theory. This table shows one example of how a "stage" theory might categorize the phases a family goes through.

Stage	Family Type	Children
1	Marriage Family	Childless
2	Procreation Family	Children ages 0 to 2.5
3	Preschooler Family	Children ages 2.5 to 6
4	School-age Family	Children ages 6–13
5	Teenage Family	Children ages 13–20
6	Launching Family	Children begin to leave home
7	Empty Nest Family	"Empty nest"; adult children have left home

The family life cycle was used to explain the different processes that occur in families over time. Sociologists view each stage as having its own structure with different challenges, achievements, and accomplishments that transition the family from one stage to the next. For example, the problems and challenges that a family experiences in Stage 1 as a married couple with no children are likely much different than those experienced in Stage 5 as a married couple with teenagers. The success of a family can be measured by how well they adapt to these challenges and transition into each stage. While sociologists use the family life cycle to study the dynamics of family over time, consumer and marketing researchers have used it to determine what goods and services families need as they progress through each stage (Murphy and Staples 1979).

As early "stage" theories have been criticized for generalizing family life and not accounting for differences in gender, ethnicity, culture, and lifestyle, less rigid models of the family life cycle have been developed. One example is the **family life course**, which recognizes the events that occur in the lives of families but views them as parting terms of a fluid course rather than in consecutive stages (Strong and DeVault 1992). This type of model accounts for changes in family development, such as the fact that in today's society, childbearing does not always occur with marriage. It also sheds light on other shifts in the way family life is practiced. Society's modern understanding of family rejects rigid "stage" theories and is more accepting of newer, more fluid models.

The Evolution of Television Families

Contemporary family sitcoms on television or streaming services such as Netflix or Hulu depict the changing family structure in the larger society, but how much have depictions of the "typical" American family evolved? Popular shows like *The Simpsons* (1989-present), *Family Guy* (1999-present), and *American Dad* (2005-present) are all satirical animated sitcoms that depict a white, blue collar family (*The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*) or a white, upper middle class family *(American Dad*) with a stay-at-home mom, a working dad, and children. This sounds pretty similar to the Cleavers and the Waltons, popular sitcom families from the 1950s and 1960s. Most of the iconic families you saw in television sitcoms included a father, a mother, and children cavorting under the same roof while comedy ensued. The 1960s was the height of the suburban U.S. nuclear family on television with shows such as *The Donna Reed Show* and *Father Knows Best*. While some shows of this era portrayed single parents (*My Three Sons* and *Bonanza*, for instance), the single status almost always resulted from being widowed—not divorced or unwed.

There were some notable exceptions in the 1980s including shows such as *Diff'rent Strokes* (1978-1986) (a widowed man with two adopted African American sons) and *One Day at a Time* (1975-1984 and a reboot with the same title on Netflix from 2017-2019) (a divorced woman with two teenage daughters and a divorced Cuban veteran mom with a son and a daughter). Still, traditional

families such as those in *Family Ties* (1982-1989) and *The Cosby Show* (1984-1992) dominated the ratings. The late 1980s and the 1990s saw the introduction of the dysfunctional family with shows such as *Roseanne* (1988-1997 and 2018), and *Married with Children* (1986-1997), which portrayed traditional nuclear families, but in a much less flattering light than those from the 1960s did (Museum of Broadcast Communications 2011).

Although family dynamics in real U.S. homes were changing, the expectations for families portrayed on television were not. The United States' first reality show, *An American Family* (which aired on PBS in 1973) chronicled Bill and Pat Loud and their children as a "typical" U.S. family. During the series, the oldest son, Lance, announced to the family that he was gay, and at the series' conclusion, Bill and Pat decided to divorce. Although the Loud's union was among the 30 percent of marriages that ended in divorce in 1973, the family was featured on the cover of the March 12 issue of *Newsweek* with the title "The Broken Family" (Ruoff 2002).

Over the past ten years, the nontraditional family has become somewhat of a tradition on television. While most situation comedies focus on single men and women without children, those that do portray families often stray from the classic structure: they include unmarried and divorced parents, adopted children, gay couples, and multigenerational households. Even those that do feature traditional family structures may show less-traditional characters in supporting roles, such as the brothers in the highly rated shows *Everybody Loves Raymond* and *Two and Half Men*. Even wildly popular children's programs as Disney's *Hannah Montana* and *The Suite Life of Zack & Cody* feature single parents.

In 2009, ABC premiered an intensely nontraditional family with the broadcast of *Modern Family*. The show follows an extended family that includes a divorced and remarried father with one stepchild, and his two biological adult children: one is in a traditional two-parent household, and the other is a gay man in a committed relationship who is raising an adopted daughter. While this dynamic is more complicated than the typical "modern" family, its elements may resonate with many of today's viewers. "The families on the shows aren't as idealistic, but they remain relatable," states television critic Maureen Ryan. "The most successful shows, comedies especially, have families that you can look at and see parts of your family in them" (Respers France 2010). Do the shows you select allow you to better understand (and perhaps laugh at) some of the dynamics within your own family?

Many Americans consume shows through different modalities than "television," so the modality itself has also evolved. Netflix was founded in 1997, but it did not enter the creative realm with "Netflix Originals" until 2012. Today, Netflix and other streaming services like Amazon Prime and Hulu are taking a more active role in shaping media representations of the American family.

Think It Over

- Explain the difference between bilateral and unilateral descent. Using your own association with kinship, explain which type of descent applies to you?
- What shows do you watch that depict American families? Using your sociological imagination, situate those shows within this context by describing the family structure, the racial/ ethnic background and any other minority groups, and other sociological variables like class, religion, and gender.
- How do you think viewing patterns have changed with the advent of streaming services based on your own viewing habits? Where, when, how (and what device/s), and with whom do you watch these shows? Are they similar or different to that of your parents and grandparents?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14692

glossary

ambilineal:
a type of unilateral descent that follows either the father's or the mother's side exclusively

descent:
the socially recognized links between ancestors and descendants or one's traceable ancestry

bilateral descent:
the tracing of kinship through both parents' ancestral lines

bigamy:
the act of entering into marriage while still married to another person

family:
socially recognized groups of individuals who may be joined by blood, marriage, or adoption and who form an emotional connection and an economic unit of society

family life course:
a sociological model of family that sees the progression of events as fluid rather than as occurring in strict stages

family life cycle:
a set of predictable steps and patterns families experience over time

family of orientation:
the family into which one is born

family of procreation:
a family that is formed through marriage

kinship:
a person's traceable ancestry (by blood, marriage, and/or adoption)

marriage:
a legally recognized contract between two or more people in a sexual relationship who have an expectation of permanence about their relationship

matrilineal descent:
a type of unilateral descent that follows the mother's side only

matrilocal residence:
a system in which it is customary for a husband to live with the his wife's family

patrilineal descent:
a type of unilateral descent that follows the father's line only

patrilocal residence:
a system in which it is customary for the a wife to live with (or near) the her husband's family

unilateral descent:
the tracing of kinship through one parent only

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- What Is Marriage? What Is a Family?. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:_C0iCApg@6/What-Is-Marriage-What-Is-a-Family. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

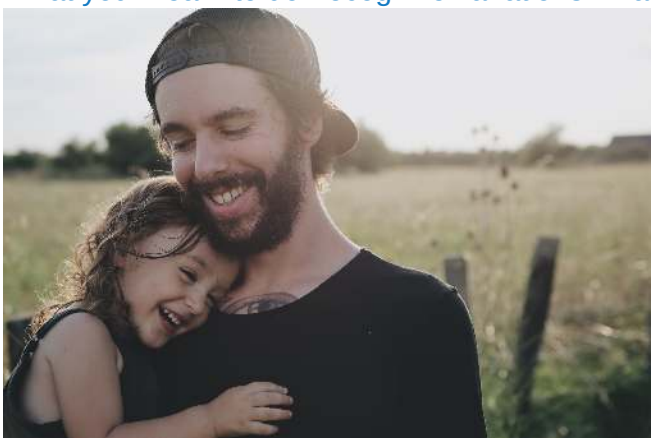
All rights reserved content

- Theories About Family & Marriage: Crash Course Sociology #37. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaeiCEro0iU. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 13.5: Lines of Descent and Family Stages is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.6: Introduction to Family Life

What you'll learn to do: recognize variations in family life



As a reminder, marriage and family are social institutions, but that does not mean that people's concepts of marriage and family in the United States are static. As discussed in the previous sections, increases in cohabitation, same-sex partners, multiple divorces and remarriages, and singlehood are altering our understanding of marriage. Similarly, single parents, same-sex parents, cohabitating parents, and unwed parents are changing our notion of what it means to be a family. In fact, only 46% of children today live with two parents who are both on their first marriage.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Family Life. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Marriage and Family. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:8F8yv8pE@4/Introduction-to-Marriage-and-Family. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Father and daughter. **Authored by**: Caroline Hernandez . **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/TMpQ5R9mbOc. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 13.6: Introduction to Family Life is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.7: Variations in Family Life

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the variations of marriage and family life in the United States over time

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's annual *America's Families and Living Arrangements*, 69 percent of America's 73.7 million children under age 18 live in families with two parents in 2016. [1] In 1960, that 88 percent of kids lived in two parent homes. This is a decrease from 77 percent in 1980 (U.S. Census 2011). This two-parent family structure is known as a **nuclear family,** referring to married parents and children as the nucleus, or core, of the group. Recent years have seen a rise in variations of the nuclear family with the parents not being married. Seven percent of children live with two cohabiting parents (U.S. Census 2011).[2]

Single Parents

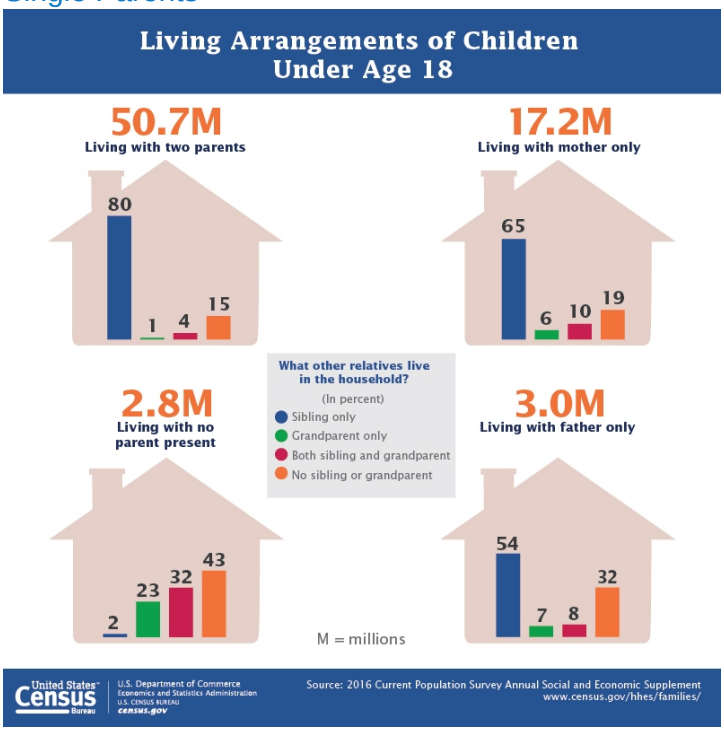


Figure 1. Living arrangements of children of under the age of 18 shown along with the percentages of those who live with siblings or grandparents.

Next to the nuclear family, the second most common living arrangement is a female-headed household (single mom), which comprise 23 percent of families with children under 18 in 2016. Between 1960 and 2016, there was a sharp increase in the percentage of children living with only one parent—single moms went from 8 to 23 percent and single dads increased from 1 to 4 percent; of these 10 percent live with the cohabitation partner of their parent (U.S. Census, 2016).

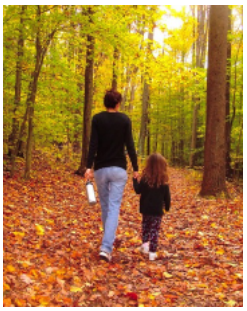


Figure 2. More than one quarter of U.S. children live in a single-parent

household. (Photo courtesy of Ross Griff/flickr)

Blended Families

Stepparents are an additional family element in two-parent homes. Among children living in two-parent households, 9 percent live with a biological or adoptive parent and a stepparent with the majority (70 percent) living with a stepfather. Family structure has been shown to vary with the age of the child. Older children (fifteen to seventeen years old) are less likely to live with two parents than adolescent children (six to fourteen years old) or young children (zero to five years old). Older children who do live with two parents are also more likely to live with stepparents (U.S. Census 2011).

Alternate Arrangements

In some family structures a parent is not present at all. In 2016, three million children (4 percent of all children) lived with a guardian who was neither their biological nor adoptive parent, an increase from 3 to 4 percent from 1960-2016. Of these children, 54 percent live with grandparents, 21 percent live with other relatives, and 24 percent live with nonrelatives. This family structure is referred to as the **extended family**, and may include aunts, uncles, and cousins living in the same home. Note that this is a less centralized form than the nuclear family. Foster parents account for about a quarter of nonrelatives. The practice of grandparents acting as parents, whether alone or in combination with the child's parent(s), is also becoming widespread among today's families (De Toledo and Brown 1995).

The Age of GrandFamilies

What do Oprah Winfrey, Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, Jack Nickolson, 50 Cent, Al Pacino, Jamie Foxx, Maya Angelou, and Carol Burnett all have in common? They were raised by their grandparents!

A 2018 article in *The Atlantic* titled "The Age of Grandparents is Made of Many Tragedies" states "The proportion of children living in 'grandfamilies' has doubled in the U.S. since 1970, and has gone up 7 percent in the past five years alone—an increase many attribute to the opioid epidemic" [3]. The number, 2.6 million grandparents, is stable, but the reasons have changed over time and include something short and temporary like military deployment or joblessness, or something more lasting or devastating such as mental illness, divorce, incarceration, death, or, substance abuse (Henig, R. 2018). One-fifth of these 2.6 million grandparents have incomes below the poverty line and one-quarter have a disability [4]. Nine percent of all children live with a grandparent, and in nearly half those cases, the grandparent maintains primary responsibility for the child (U.S. Census 2011).

What are the emotional and economic costs involved with grandfamilies? These kinship networks can prevent children from going into foster care with a nonrelative, which is not only costly but is also often temporary, as the goal is to reunite children with one or both of their biological parents. While grandparents can apply for some aid from the state to offset the cost of raising the child, it can be a difficult bureaucracy to navigate. In fact, some states have set up "kinship navigators" to help grandparents find available resources. This type of support system has received bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress.

Changes in the traditional family structure raise questions about how such societal shifts affect children. U.S. Census statistics have shown that children living in homes with both parents grow up with more financial and educational advantages than children who are raised in single-parent homes (U.S. Census 1997). This correlates with the statistic that never-married parents are typically younger, have fewer years of schooling, and have lower incomes (U.S. Census 1997). The benefits of marriage are sometimes coined the "marriage premium" due to some monetary benefits like increased income for married spouses, with married men out-earning similarly qualified unmarried men[5] The marriage premium for children in avoiding poverty tends to be the highest for those whose mothers have high school degrees or who are in their early-to-mid 20s.[6]

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14693

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14694

Cohabitation

Cohabitation is now more prevalent than living with a spouse among 18-24 year-olds in 2018, with 9 percent cohabiting compared to 7 percent who live with a spouse; in 1968, only .1 percent of 18-24-year-olds cohabited.[7]

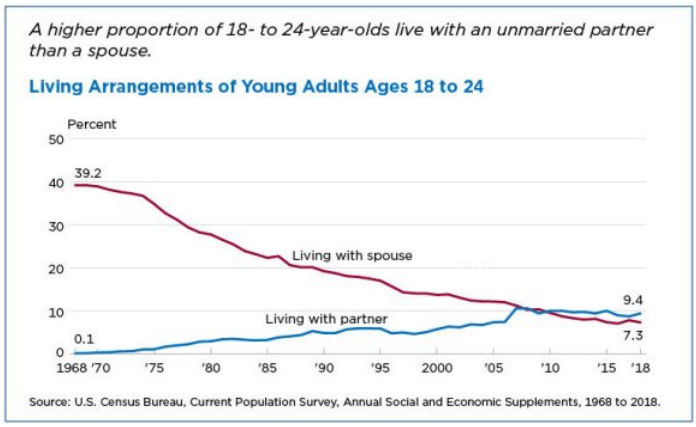


Figure 3. With declining marriage rates and the initial age of marriage, in 2018, more 18- to 24-year-olds lived with an unmarried partner than a spouse.

The most common age cohort to cohabit are the 25-34 age group, with 14 percent of those Americans cohabiting, as compare to approximately 10 percent of the 18-24 and 35-49 age groups cohabiting (Stepler 2017).

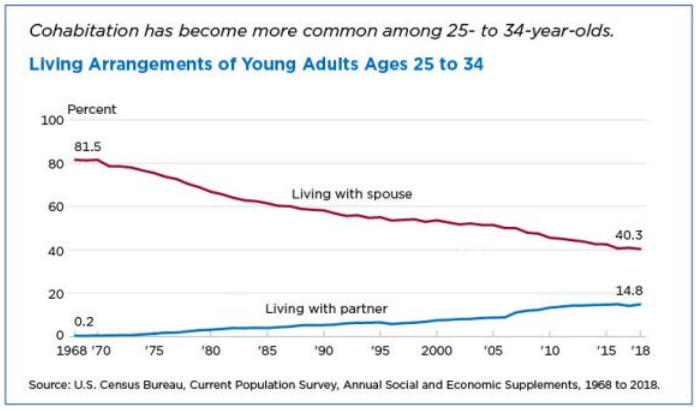


Figure 4. Cohabitation is on the rise, while living with a married spouse is declining.

Cohabiting couples may choose to live together in an effort to spend more time together or to save money on living costs. Many couples view cohabitation as a “trial run” for marriage. Variables such as educational attainment, social class, race, and age at first cohabitation and length of cohabitation can be used as independent variables to predict marriage and/or relationship stability.

Same-Sex Couples

Measuring same-sex couples in the United States has been challenging in part because the U.S. Census has not previously allowed respondents to specify that they were part of a same-sex couple. This will change in the 2020 Census, allowing for more accurate reporting.

The American Community Survey reported 935,229 same sex households in 2017 with a standard deviation of 7,754 (in other words, give or take 8,000) compared to 776,943 same-sex households in 2005, which is an 83 percent increase. What has changed? How have formal norms (laws) changed in the 21st century with respect to same-sex marriage?

On June 26, 2016, the Supreme Court of the United States handed down the decision that any ban on same-sex marriage was a violation of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which resulted in the legalization of same-sex marriage in all fifty states.

Same-sex couples tend to be better educated than opposite-sex couples (both married and not married) with 32.2 percent of same-sex couples both having at least a bachelor’s degree compared to 40.6 percent and 27.4 percent for opposite-sex couples, respectively (ACS 2017).

Link to Learning

Check out this interactive link from the UCLA Williams Institute School of Law to see what same-sex and couple demographics look like in your city and state.

While there is some concern from socially conservative groups regarding the well-being of children who grow up in same-sex households, research reports that same-sex parents are as effective as opposite-sex parents. In an analysis of 81 parenting studies, sociologists found no quantifiable data to support the notion that opposite-sex parenting is any better than same-sex parenting. Children of lesbian couples, however, were shown to have slightly lower rates of behavioral problems and higher rates of self-esteem (Biblarz and Stacey 2010).



Figure 5. More and more people in the United States are choosing lifestyles that don't include marriage. (Photo courtesy of Glenn Harper/flickr)

Staying Single

Gay or straight, a new option for many people in the United States is simply to stay single. In 2016, there were 110.6 million unmarried individuals over age eighteen in the United States, accounting for 45.2 percent of the total adult population (U.S. Census 2017). One in seven never-married adults say they don't want to get married, according to a 2017 Pew Research study. "Single by choice" is a phrase that increasingly reverberates throughout popular culture. In 1960, 72 percent of U.S. adults were married whereas in 2016 50 percent are married (Parker and Stepler 2017). Single, or never-married, individuals are found in higher concentrations in large cities or metropolitan areas, with New York City being one of the highest.

The decision to marry or not to marry can be based a variety of factors including religious and cultural expectations. Asian individuals are the most likely to marry while African Americans are the least likely to marry (Venugopal 2011). Additionally, individuals who place no value on religion are more likely to be unmarried than those who place a high value on religion. For black women, however, the importance of religion made no difference in marital status (Bakalar 2010). In general, being single is not a rejection of marriage; rather, it is a lifestyle that does not necessarily include marriage. By age forty, according to census figures, 20 percent of women and 14 of men will have never married (U.S. Census Bureau 2011).

Deceptive Divorce Rates

It is often cited that half of all marriages end in divorce. This statistic has made many people cynical when it comes to marriage, but it is misleading. Let's take a closer look at the data.

Using National Center for Health Statistics data from 2003 that show a marriage rate of 7.5 (per 1000 people) and a divorce rate of 3.8, it would appear that exactly one half of all marriages failed (Hurley 2005). This reasoning is deceptive, however, because instead of tracing actual marriages to see their longevity (or lack thereof), this compares what are unrelated statistics: that is, the number of marriages in a given year does not have a direct correlation to the divorces occurring that same year.

In 2016, the U.S. divorce rate was down to 3.2 percent. Sociologist Philip Cohen posits the falling divorce rate is attributable to changing millennial patterns that involve waiting longer to get married, being more financially stable, and increased rates of cohabitation (prior to marriage and in lieu of marriage). Greater financial security results in millennial marriages lasting an average of ten years longer than baby boomer marriages [8]

Research published in the *New York Times* took a different approach—determining how many people had ever been married, and of those, how many later divorced. The result? According to this analysis, U.S. divorce rates have only gone as high as 41 percent (Hurley 2005).

Another way to calculate divorce rates would be through a cohort study. For instance, we could determine the percentage of marriages that are intact after, say, five or seven years, compared to marriages that have ended in divorce after five or seven years. Sociological researchers must remain aware of research methods and how statistical results are applied. As illustrated, different methodologies and different interpretations can lead to contradictory, and even misleading, results.

Think It Over

- Explain the different variations of marriage and family and the changes over time.
- Why are some couples choosing to cohabitate before marriage? What effect does cohabitation have on marriage?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14690

glossary

extended family:
a household that includes at least one parent and child as well as other relatives like grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins

nuclear family:
two parents (traditionally a married husband and wife) and children living in the same household, thereby creating a "core" unit

1. "The Majority of Children Still Live in Two Parent Households," 2016. U.S. Census. https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2016/cb16-192.html. ↵
2. Pew Research Center (December 2015). The two-parent household in decline. Retrieved from https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/12/17/parenting-in-america/st_2015-12-17_parenting-12/. ↵
3. Henig, Robin Morentz. 2018. "The Age of Grandparents is Made of Many Tragedies," *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2018/06/this-is-the-age-of-grandparents/561527/. ↵
4. Cancino, Alejadra. 2016. "More Grandparents Are Raising Their Grandchildren." PBS. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/more-grandparents-raising-their-grandchildren. ↵
5. Institute for Family Studies (August 2017). Household Specialization, Millennials, and the Marriage Premium. Retrieved from https://ifstudies.org/blog/household-specialization-millennials-and-the-marriage-premium. ↵
6. Kearney, Melissa S. and Levine, Phillip B. (March 2017). The Economics of Non-Marital Childbearing and The "Marriage Premium for Children". NBER Working Paper No. 23230. Retrieved from https://www.nber.org/papers/w23230. ↵
7. Gurrentz, Benjamin. 2018. "Living with an Unmarried Partner Now Common for Young Adults." U.S. Census. https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2018/11/cohabitaiton-is-up-marriage-is-down-for-young-adults.html. ↵
8. Wood, Johnny. 2018. "The U.S. Divorce Rate is Dropping, Thanks to Millennials." World Economic Forum. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/10/divorce-united-states-dropping-because-millennials/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Variations in Family Life. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:_FBDVOE1@3/Variations-in-Family-Life. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Living Arrangements of Children Under Age 18 graphic. **Provided by**: U.S. Census Bureau. **Located at**: https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2016/comm/cb16-192_living_arrangements.html. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- Living with an Unmarried Partner Now Common for Young Adultsu2014charts. **Authored by**: Benjamin Gurrentz. **Provided by**: United States Census Bureau. **Located at**: https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2018/11/cohabitaiton-is-up-marriage-is-down-for-young-adults.html. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 13.7: Variations in Family Life is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Marriage and Family

Learning Outcomes

- Differentiate between theoretical perspectives on marriage and family

Theoretical Perspectives on Marriage and Family

Sociologists study families on both the macro and micro level to examine this important and universal social institution. Sociologists may use a variety of theoretical perspectives to explain events that occur within and outside of the family.

Functionalism

When considering the role of family in society, functionalists begin with the importance of families as formative social institutions that play a key role in stabilizing society. They also examine the statuses and roles that family members take on in marriages and/or families. The family—and its members—perform certain systemic functions that facilitate the prosperity and development of society.

Sociologist George Murdock conducted a survey of 250 societies and determined that there are four universal residual functions of the family: sexual, reproductive, educational, and economic (Lee 1985). According to Murdock, the family included adults of both sexes at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more more children (including any adopted children), which is the traditional definition of a nuclear family. Here is an overview of these functions:

1. Sexual: families regulate sexual relations between individuals and offer a socially legitimate sexual outlet for adults.
2. Reproductive: the sexual outlet within a family gives way to reproduction, which is a necessary part of ensuring the survival of society.
3. Educational: the family plays a vital role in training children for adult life and as the primary agent of socialization and enculturation, the family teaches young children the ways of thinking and behaving that follow social and cultural norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes. The educational component includes gender roles.
4. Economic: economic roles within the (nuclear) family are related to physical and psychological differences between males and females, with females being better suited to domestic work.

Functionalists examine the division of labor within a family by distinguishing between **instrumental** and **expressiveroles**. Instrumental roles typically involve work outside of the family that provides financial support and establishes family status. Expressive roles typically involve work inside of the family which provides emotional support and physical care for children (Crano and Aronoff 1978). In many societies, males assume the instrumental role and females assume the expressive role; however, as the structure of the family has changed over time, along with changing values and norms related to gender identity, these roles are not so easily categorized by gender.

According to functionalists, the traditional differentiation of the roles on the basis of sex, as in Murdock's heterosexual nuclear family, ensures that families are well balanced and coordinated. When family members move outside of these roles, the family is thrown out of balance and must recalibrate in order to function properly. For example, if the father assumes an expressive role such as providing daytime care for the children, the mother must take on an instrumental role such as gaining paid employment outside of the home in order for the family to maintain balance and function.

Critiques of this theory are that it does not adequately address today's family structure. In single parent homes, same-sex couples, and in grandfamilies, these roles are not neatly divided by gender; however, the family is not dysfunctional and there are many ways to fulfill the four universal functions of the family in these variations.

Conflict Theory

Just as functionalists are examining the ways in which a particular social institution operates and fulfills important tasks–or functions–for societies, conflict theorists are looking at the mechanisms through which these same social institutions reproduce systems of inequality at a macrosociological level. Within families, conflict theorists highlight the role of power in family life and contend that the family is often not a haven, but rather an arena where power struggles occur. This exercise of power often entails the gender role performances described above. Conflict theorists may study conflicts as simple as the enforcement of rules from parent to child, which in turn perpetuate gender inequalities. For example, boys may be negatively sanctioned for crying while girls

are positively sanctioned for the same act. Conflict theorists, particularly feminist theorists, examine domestic violence (spousal and child), sexual assault, marital rape, and incest and theorize how these disproportionate, violent acts against women and girls provide a *home* for sexism and violence that we see in society.

The first study of marital power was undertaken in 1960. Researchers found that the person with the most access to value resources held the most power. As money is one of the most valuable resources, men who worked in paid labor outside of the home held more power than women who worked inside the home (Blood and Wolfe 1960). Conflict theorists find disputes over the division of household labor to be a common source of marital discord. Household labor offers no wages and, therefore, no power. Studies indicate that when men do more housework, women experience more satisfaction in their marriages, reducing the incidence of conflict (Coltrane 2000). In general, conflict theorists tend to study areas of marriage and life that involve inequalities or discrepancies in power and authority, as they are reflective of the larger social structure. Arlie Hochschild's research on couples led her to publish *The Second Shift* (1989), which described a **second shift**, or the labor performed at home in addition to labor in the traditional, external work sectors. Basically, she found that in couples where both men and women work outside the home, women came home and started an additional shift that included cooking, cleaning, caring for children, and a variety of other domestic tasks. In contrast, male partners completed their first shift and typically came home and did not do much additional work. This type of imbalanced division of labor helped sociologists to explain the shifting dynamics in a home where both adults work outside the home and the ways in which gender roles norms are contested.

Symbolic Interactionism

Interactionists view the world in terms of symbols and the meanings assigned to them (LaRossa and Reitzes 1993). The family itself is a symbol. To some, it is a father, mother, and children; to others, it is any union that involves respect and compassion. Interactionists stress that family is not an objective, concrete reality. Like other social phenomena, it is a social construct that is subject to the ebb and flow of social norms and ever-changing meanings.

Consider the meaning of other elements of family: "parent" is a symbol of a biological and emotional connection to a child. However, with more parent-child relationships developing through adoption, remarriage, or a change in guardianship, the word "parent" today is less likely to be associated with a biological connection than with whoever is socially recognized as having the responsibility for a child's upbringing. Similarly, the terms "mother" and "father" are no longer rigidly associated with the meanings of caregiver and breadwinner. These meanings are more free-flowing, and reflect changing family roles.

Interactionists also recognize how the family status roles of each member are socially constructed, playing an important part in how people perceive and interpret social behavior. Interactionists view the family as a group of role players or "actors" that come together to act out their parts in an effort to construct a family. These roles are open to interpretation. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a "good father," for example, was one who worked hard to provided financial security for his children. Today, a "good father" is one who takes time outside of work to promote his children's emotional well-being, social skills, and intellectual growth—in some ways, a much more daunting task.

Watch It

Watch the selected clip from this video to review how each of the schools of thought think about family and marriage.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=366

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14695

Glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]expressive roles:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]roles that typically involve work inside of the family which provide emotional support and physical care for children[/glossary-definition]

[glossary-term]**instrumental roles**:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]roles that typically involve work outside of the family that provide financial support and establish family

status[/glossary-definition]

[glossary-term]**second shift:**[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]labor performed at home in additional to labor in the traditional work sectors[/glossary-definition]

[/glossary-page]
CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Variations in Family Life. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:_FBDVOE1@3/Variations-in-Family-Life. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Theories About Family & Marriage: Crash Course Sociology #37. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaeiCEro0iU. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 13.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Marriage and Family is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.9: Introduction to Challenges Families Face

What you'll learn to do: describe the social and interpersonal impacts of family challenges



As the structure of family changes over time, so do the challenges families face. Events like divorce and remarriage present new difficulties for families and individuals. Other long-standing domestic issues such as abuse continue to strain the health and stability of today's families.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Challenges Families Face. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Grocery market food fresh. **Authored by**: mordyth. **Provided by**: Pixabay . **Located at**: https://pixabay.com/photos/grocery-market-food-fresh-412912/. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://pixabay.com/service/license/

All rights reserved content

- U.S. Air Force photo illustration. **Authored by**: Steve White. **Located at**: https://www.jber.jb.mil/News/Photos/igphoto/2000163555/. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*
- Which Families are in Poverty?. **Authored by**: Norton Sociology. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oigUfeiDxTo. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 13.9: Introduction to Challenges Families Face is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.10: Divorce and Remarriage

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the social and interpersonal impacts of divorce

Divorce

Divorce, while fairly common and accepted in modern U.S. society, was once a word that would only be whispered and which was accompanied by gestures of disapproval. In 1960, divorce was generally uncommon, affecting only 9.1 out of every 1,000 married persons. That number more than doubled (to 20.3) by 1975 and peaked in 1980 at 22.6 (Popenoe 2007). Over the last quarter century, divorce rates have dropped steadily and are now similar to those in 1970. The dramatic increase in divorce rates after the 1960s has been associated with the liberalization of divorce laws, and to the shift in societal makeup due to women increasingly entering the workforce (Michael 1978). The decrease in divorce rates can be attributed to two probable factors: an increase in the age at which people get married, and an increased level of education among those who marry—both of which have been found to promote greater marital stability.

Divorce does not occur equally among all people in the United States; some segments of the U.S. population are more likely to divorce than others. According the American Community Survey (ACS), men and women in the Northeast have the lowest rates of divorce at 7.2 and 7.5 per 1,000 people. The South has the highest rate of divorce at 10.2 for men and 11.1 for women. Divorce rates are likely higher in the South because marriage rates are higher and marriage occurs at younger-than-average ages in this region. In the Northeast, the marriage rate is lower and first marriages tend to be delayed; therefore, the divorce rate is lower (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). More specifically, our nation's capital, Washington D.C. has the highest rates of divorce with a rate of 29.9 per 1,000 in 2015 and Hawaii and the lowest with 11.1 percent per 1,000 [1]

The rate of divorce also varies by race. In a 2009 ACS study, American Indian and Alaskan Natives reported the highest percentages of currently divorced individuals (12.6 percent) followed by blacks (11.5 percent), whites (10.8 percent), Pacific Islanders (8 percent), Latinos (7.8 percent) and Asians (4.9 percent) (ACS 2011). In general those who marry at a later age, and who have a college education have lower rates of divorce.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14696

So what causes divorce? While more young people are choosing to postpone or opt out of marriage, those who enter into the union do so with the expectation that it will last. A great many marital problems can be related to stress, especially financial stress. According to researchers participating in the University of Virginia's National Marriage Project, couples who enter marriage without a strong asset base (like a home, savings, and a retirement plan) are 70 percent more likely to be divorced after three years than are couples with at least $10,000 in assets. This is connected to factors such as age and education level that correlate with low incomes.

The addition of children to a marriage creates added financial and emotional stress. Research has established that marriages enter their most stressful phase upon the birth of the first child (Popenoe and Whitehead 2007). This is particularly true for couples who have multiples (twins, triplets, and so on). Married couples with twins or triplets are 17 percent more likely to divorce than those with children from single births (McKay 2010). Another contributor to the likelihood of divorce is a general decline in marital satisfaction over time. As people get older, they may find that their values and life goals no longer match up with those of their spouse (Popenoe and Whitehead 2004).



Figure 1. A study from Radford University indicated that bartenders are among the professions with the highest divorce rates (38.4 percent). Other traditionally low-wage industries (like restaurant service, custodial employment, and factory work) are also associated with higher divorce rates. (Aamodt and McCoy 2010). (Photo courtesy of Daniel Lobo/flickr)

Remarriage

In 2013, 23 percent of married people had been married before,[2] compared with just 13 percent in 1960. In 2013, 4 out of 10 new marriages included at least one partner who had been previously married and half of these (2 out of 10) include two spouses who were remarrying (Geiger and Livingston 2019). Previously married men are more likely to get married again, with 64 percent getting married twice compared to 52 percent of women, but this could be an indication of desire—54 percent of women say they do not want to remarry as opposed to 30 percent of men (Geiger and Livingston 2019).

People in a second marriage account for approximately 19.3 percent of all married persons, and those who have been married three or more times account for 5.2 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). The vast majority (91 percent) of remarriages occur after divorce; only 9 percent occur after death of a spouse (Kreider 2006). Most men and women remarry within five years of a divorce, with the median length for men (three years) being lower than for women (4.4 years). This length of time has been fairly consistent since the 1950s. The majority of those who remarry are between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four (Kreider 2006). The general pattern of remarriage also shows that whites are more likely to remarry than Hispanics, Blacks, or Asians.

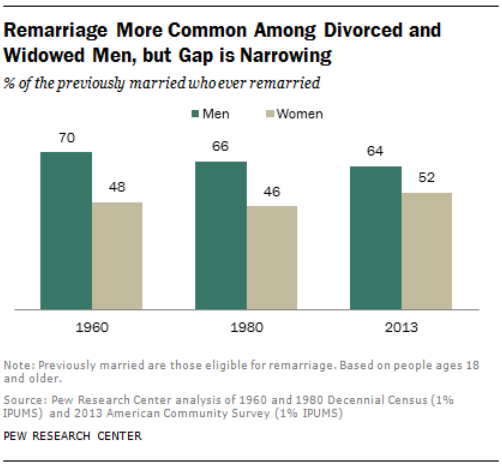


Figure 2. Men are more likely than women to get remarried after divorce.

Marriage the second time around (or third or fourth) can be a very different process than the first. Remarriage lacks many of the classic courtship rituals of a first marriage. In a second marriage, individuals are less likely to deal with issues like parental approval, premarital sex, or desired family size (Elliot 2010). In a survey of households formed by remarriage, a mere 8 percent included only biological children of the remarried couple. Of the 49 percent of homes that include children, 24 percent included only the woman's biological children, 3 percent included only the man's biological children, and 9 percent included a combination of both spouse's children (U.S. Census Bureau 2006).

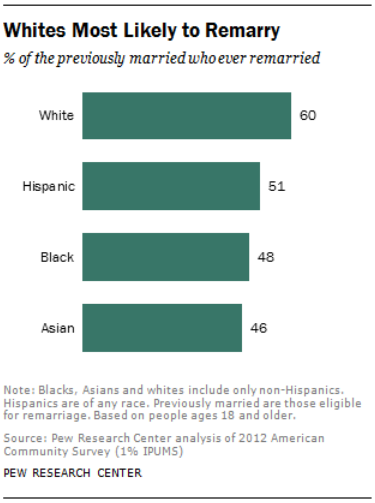


Figure 3. Whites are more likely than other racial and ethnic groups to get remarried.

Children of Divorce and Remarriage

Divorce and remarriage can be stressful on partners and children alike. Divorce is often justified by the notion that children are better off in a divorced family than in a family with parents who do not get along, but many other variables are important, such as the parental involvement of the non-custodial parent and the socioeconomic status of the custodial parent.

Children's ability to deal with a divorce may depend on their age. Research has found that divorce may be most difficult for school-aged children, as they are old enough to understand the separation but not old enough to understand the reasoning behind it. Older teenagers are more likely to recognize the conflict that led to the divorce but may still feel fear, loneliness, guilt, and pressure to choose sides. Infants and preschool-age children may suffer the heaviest impact from the loss of routine that the marriage offered (Temke 2006).

Proximity to parents also makes a difference in a child's well-being after divorce. Boys who live or have joint arrangements with their fathers show less aggression than those who are raised by their mothers only. Similarly, girls who live or have joint custody arrangements with their mothers tend to be more responsible and mature than those who are raised by their fathers only. Nearly three-fourths of the children of parents who are divorced live in a household headed by their mother, leaving many boys without a father figure residing in the home (U.S. Census Bureau 2011b). Still, researchers suggest that a strong parent-child relationship can greatly improve a child's adjustment to divorce (Temke 2006).

Watch It: Families and inequality

Sociologist Annette Lareau studied class differences in family life by closely following 88 families from various socioeconomic backgrounds. She found middle-class parents to be more involved in their children's education, but not because lower-class parents were disinterested in their children's learning. Both wanted the best for their children, but Lareau found that parents approached education and family life in different ways.

On the whole, middle-class parents were more likely to spend time investing in their children's education while at home and through various extracurricular activities, whereas many of the lower-class parents viewed the schools as specialists and teachers as experts who had the primary responsibility for educating their children. Also due to time and monetary constraints, lower-class children had more unstructured time and autonomy, which also led to greater creativity. Middle-class parents were more likely to read and talk with their kids, be involved in their schoolwork, and supplement their school education.[3]

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=370

In her 2003 book, *Unequal Childhoods*, Lareau used the terms *concerted cultivation* and *accomplishment of natural growth* to describe the differences in parenting styles. Each parenting style is described below:

- Concerted Cultivation: The parenting style, favored by middle-class families, in which parents encourage negotiation and discussion and the questioning of authority, and enroll their children in extensive organized activities. This style helps children eventually find their way to middle-class careers, teaches them to question people in authority, develops a larger, more fluent vocabulary, and makes them comfortable in discussions with people of authority. However, it may also give children a sense of entitlement.
- Accomplishment of Natural Growth: The parenting style, favored by working-class and lower-class families, in which parents issue directives to their children rather than negotiations, encourage the following and trusting of people in positions of authority, and do not structure their children's daily activities, instead letting them play on their own. This method prepares the children for "working" or "poor-class" jobs, teaches them to respect and take the advice of people in authority, and allows the children to become independent at a younger age.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14697

Learning Outcomes

- Explain how financial status impacts marital stability. What other factors are associated with a couple's financial status?
- Why do you think divorced males are more likely to remarry and to do so more quickly than their female counterparts?

1. "Divorce Rates in the U.S.: Geographic Variation," 2015. Bowling Green State University, https://www.bgsu.edu/ncfmr/resources/data/family-profiles/anderson-divorce-rate-us-geo-2015-fp-16-21.html. ↵
2. Livingston, Gretchen. "Growing Number of Adults Have Remarried." Pew Research Center. Retrieved from https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/11/14/four-in-ten-couples-are-saying-i-do-again/. ↵
3. McKenna, Laura (February 2012). Explaining Annette Lareau, or, Why Parenting Style Ensures Inequality. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/health/a...uality/253156/ ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Challenges Families Face. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:X0Qbaq5o@5/Challenges-Families-Face. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Unequal Childhoods. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Unequal_Childhoods. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Remarriage More Common Among Divorced and Widowed Men, but Gap is Narrowing. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/11/14/four-in-ten-couples-are-saying-i-do-again/st_2014-11-14_remarriage-08/. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- Four in ten couples are saying I do again, whites most likely to remarry. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/11/14/four-in-ten-couples-are-saying-i-do-again/st_2014-11-14_remarriage-10/. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- Unequal Childhoods: Annette Lareau. **Provided by**: Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HN9ydNktAc. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 13.10: Divorce and Remarriage is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.11: Violence and Abuse

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the social and interpersonal impact of family abuse

Violence and Abuse

Violence and abuse are among the most disconcerting challenges that today's families face. Abuse can occur between spouses, between parent and child, as well as between other family members. The frequency of violence among families is a difficult to determine because many cases of abuse go unreported. In any case, studies have shown that abuse (reported or not) has a major impact on families and society as a whole.



Figure 1. Thirty percent of women who are murdered are killed by their intimate partner. What does this statistic reveal about societal patterns and norms concerning intimate relationships and gender roles? (Photo courtesy of Kathy Kimpel/flickr)

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a significant social problem in the United States. It is often characterized as violence between household or family members, specifically spouses. To include unmarried, cohabitating, and same-sex couples, family sociologists have created the term intimate partner violence (IPV). According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men. Women are the primary victims of intimate partner violence. It is estimated that one in four women has experienced some form of IPV in her lifetime (compared to one in seven men) (Catalano 2007).

IPV may include physical violence, such as punching, kicking, or other methods of inflicting physical pain; sexual violence, such as rape or other forced sexual acts; threats and intimidation that imply either physical or sexual abuse; and emotional abuse, such as harming another's sense of self-worth through words or controlling another's behavior. IPV often starts as emotional abuse and then escalates to other forms or combinations of abuse. About 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men experienced sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner and reported an IPV-related impact during their lifetime (Centers for Disease Control 2018).

According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, IPV affects different segments of the population at different rates with American Indian and Alaskan Native women experiencing the highest levels of IPV at 48 percent compared to 47 percent among multiracial women, 45 percent for black women, 37 percent for white women, 34 percent for Latinas, and 18 percent Asian/Pacific Islander women. Contact sexual violence, which includes rape and unwanted sexual contact, is experienced by 42.6 percent of women and 24.8 percent of men in the U.S. (Centers for Disease Control 2018). Bisexual women are most likely (61 percent) to experience rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner compared to 44 percent of lesbians, 37 percent of bisexual men, 35 percent of heterosexual women, 29 percent of heterosexual men, and 26 percent of gay men.

Link to Learning

For visual representations of this survey data, please see the link at the Intimate Partner Violence Fact Sheet.

Accurate statistics on IPV are difficult to determine, as it is estimated that more than half of nonfatal IPV goes unreported. It is not until victims choose to report crimes that patterns of abuse are exposed. People who have the most to lose by reporting domestic violence, such as women who are in arranged marriages, lack U.S. citizenship, and/or are homeless or involved with the criminal justice system, are likely the most undercounted in these victimization surveys.

Sometimes abuse is reported to police by a third party, but still may not be confirmed by victims. A study of domestic violence incident reports found that even when confronted by police about abuse, 29 percent of victims denied that abuse occurred. Surprisingly, 19 percent of their assailants were likely to admit to abuse (Felson, Ackerman, and Gallagher 2005). According to the National Criminal Victims Survey, victims cite varied reason why they are reluctant to report abuse, as shown in the table below.

This chart shows reasons that victims give for why they fail to report abuse to police authorities (Catalano 2007).

Reason Abuse Is Unreported	% Females	% Males
Considered a Private Matter	22	39
Fear of Retaliation	12	5
To Protect the Abuser	14	16
Belief That Police Won't Do Anything	8	8

Two-thirds of nonfatal IPV occurs inside of the home and approximately 10 percent occurs at the home of the victim's friend or neighbor. The majority of abuse takes place between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., and nearly half (42 percent) involves alcohol or drug use (Catalano 2007). Many perpetrators of IPV blame alcohol or drugs for their abuse, though studies have shown that alcohol and drugs do not cause IPV, but rather may only lower inhibitions (Hanson 2011). IPV has significant long-term effects on individual victims and on society. Studies have shown that IPV damage extends beyond direct physical or emotional wounds. Extended IPV has been linked to unemployment among victims, as many have difficulty finding or holding employment. Additionally, nearly all women who report serious domestic problems exhibit symptoms of major depression (Goodwin, Chandler, and Meisel 2003). Female victims of IPV are also more likely to abuse alcohol or drugs, suffer from eating disorders, and attempt suicide (Silverman et al. 2001).

Watch It: Why Does She Stay?

Leslie Morgan Steiner tells her story of experiencing severe domestic violence as a young woman. Listen carefully as she describes the stages of domestic violence. What are the early signs?

After watching the TEDTalk, do you have an answer to the question, "Why does she stay?"

What does a *typical* domestic violence survivor look like? What can you do to end domestic violence according to Steiner?

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=372

Child Abuse

In the fiscal year 2017, approximately 4.3 million children are the subjects of Child Protective Services (CPS) Reports. This number includes duplicates (more than one report for the same child), with and the majority (65.7 percent) of these reports made by professionals such as education personnel (19.4 percent), legal and law enforcement personnel (18.3 percent), and social services personnel (11.7 percent) [1]. Of these, 17 percent or 674,000 are classified as victims, with 74.9 percent of victims described as neglected, 18.3 percent as physically abused, and 8.6 percent as sexually abused. These victims may suffer a single maltreatment type or a combination of two or more maltreatment types. An estimated 1,720 children died of abuse and neglect at a rate of 2.32 per 100,000 children in the national population.

Infants are also often victims of physical abuse, particularly in the form of violent shaking. This type of physical abuse is referred to as shaken-baby syndrome, or abusive head trauma, which describes a group of medical symptoms such as brain swelling and retinal hemorrhage resulting from forcefully shaking or causing impact to an infant's head. A baby's cry is the number one trigger for shaking. Parents may find themselves unable to soothe a baby's concerns and may take their frustration out on the child by shaking him or her violently. Other stress factors such as a poor economy, unemployment, and general dissatisfaction with parental life may contribute to this type of abuse. While there is no official central registry of shaken-baby syndrome statistics, it is estimated that each year 1,400 babies die or suffer serious injury from being shaken (Barr 2007).

In a study conducted by the Medill Justice Project using nearly 3,000 cases nationwide, 72.5 percent of those accused of shaken-baby syndrome crimes are men, while 27.5 percent are women [2]. The gender discrepancy found in this study has been attributed

to socialization and to the ways in which men are, or are not, taught how to care for infants. Other studies have questioned whether males are more likely to be the perpetrators or are just more easily convicted based on their size and strength.

Corporal Punishment

Physical abuse in children may come in the form of beating, kicking, throwing, choking, hitting with objects, burning, or other methods. Injury inflicted by such behavior is considered abuse even if the parent or caregiver did not intend to harm the child. Other types of physical contact that are characterized as discipline (spanking, for example) are not considered abuse as long as no injury results (Child Welfare Information Gateway 2008).

This issue is rather controversial among modern-day people in the United States. While some parents feel that physical discipline, or corporal punishment, is an effective way to respond to bad behavior, others feel that it is a form of abuse. According to a poll conducted by ABC News, 65 percent of respondents approve of spanking and 50 percent said that they sometimes spank their child.

Tendency toward physical punishment may be affected by culture and education. Those who live in the South are more likely than those who live in other regions to spank their child. Those who do not have a college education are also more likely to spank their child (Crandall 2011). Currently, 19 states officially allow spanking in the school system; however, many parents may object and school officials must follow a set of clear guidelines when administering this type of punishment.[3] Studies have shown that spanking is not an effective form of punishment and may lead to aggression by the victim, particularly in those who are spanked at a young age (Berlin 2009).

Watch It: Child Maltreatment

Although definitions of child abuse vary, international studies conducted by the World Health Organization have shown that a quarter of all adults report having been physically abused as children and 1 in 5 women and 1 in 13 men report having been sexually abused as a child. Additionally, many children are subject to emotional abuse (sometimes referred to as psychological abuse) and to neglect.

In armed conflict and refugee settings, girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, exploitation and abuse by combatants, security forces, members of their communities, aid workers and others.

Watch the UNICEF clip below about the story of a child soldier in South Sudan.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=372

Child abuse occurs at all socioeconomic and education levels and crosses ethnic and cultural lines. Just as child abuse is often associated with stresses felt by parents, including financial stress, parents who demonstrate resilience to these stresses are less likely to abuse (Samuels 2011). As a parent's age increases, the risk of abuse decreases. Children born to mothers who are fifteen years old or younger are twice as likely to be abused or neglected by age five than are children born to mothers ages twenty to twenty-one (George and Lee 1997).

Drug and alcohol use is also a known contributor to child abuse. Children raised by substance abusers have a risk of physical abuse three times greater than other kids, and neglect is four times as prevalent in these families (Child Welfare Information Gateway 2011). Other risk factors include social isolation, depression, low parental education, and a history of being mistreated as a child. Approximately 30 percent of abused children later abuse their own children (Child Welfare Information Gateway 2006).

Link to Learning

The Child Welfare Information Gateway from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides tools, resources, and publications related to child welfare.

Learning Outcomes

- https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14698

glossary

intimate partner violence (IPV):

violence that occurs between individuals who maintain a romantic or sexual relationship

1. "Child Maltreatment 2017," U.S. Department of Child and Human Services. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cm2017.pdf#page=20. ↵
2. "Study: Men More Likely to be Accused of Shaking Infants," Northwestern University. https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2013/08/the-medill-justice-projects-study-shows-men-far-more-likely-than-women-to-be-accused-of-violently-shaking-infants/. ↵
3. Gershoff, E. T., & Font, S. A. (2016). Corporal Punishment in U.S. Public Schools: Prevalence, Disparities in Use, and Status in State and Federal Policy. Social policy report, 30, 1. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Challenges Families Face. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:X0Qbaq5o@5/Challenges-Families-Face. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Why domestic violence victims don't leave | Leslie Morgan Steiner. **Provided by**: Ted. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=27&v=V1yW5IsnSjo. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- A Child Soldier Is Freed in South Sudan. **Provided by**: UNICEF. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59PbY8mjxSA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 13.11: Violence and Abuse is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.12: Putting It Together- Marriage and Family



In this module, you learned about the marriage, family, and the role that families play in social development. The first and most important socializing agency a person encounters in life is the family. As a primary group, it teaches children how to navigate their culture by serving as the first agent of socialization. While this helps individuals to develop a sense of identity, we also learned to view family from the various sociological perspectives and saw that the family can sometimes reproduce societal inequalities or be a place of abuse or neglect.

While the nuclear family is considered the "traditional" family and consists of a mother, father, and the children, the two-parent nuclear family has become less prevalent, and alternative family forms, such as same-sex couples, single-parent households, cohabitating couples, blended families, couples without children, and adopting individuals are more common. Families also have fewer children than in the past.

Watch It

This video of sociologists Kathryn Edin explains how her research dispelled the myth that some poor families have children simply to collect welfare. Instead, she shows that in economically disadvantaged areas such Camden, New Jersey, parents may typically be younger than elsewhere in America, but they are still thoughtful and hopeful as they become parents, despite facing the obstacles associated with poverty. As you can see, there's no one right way to "do" a family.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=374

CC licensed content, Original

- Putting It Together: Marriage and Family. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Family Structures section in the first paragraph. **Provided by**: Boundless. **Located at**: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Family Portrait. **Authored by**: Eric Ward. **Provided by**: Wikimedia. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Family_Portrait.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Having Children in Poverty: Kathryn Edin. **Provided by**: Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KBaVVu46PI. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 13.12: Putting It Together- Marriage and Family is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.13: Discussion- Marriage and Family

Answer the following questions in a blog post of at least 150 words, then comment on TWO posts from other students.

- Pew Research Center projects that when today's young adults reach their mid-40s and 50s, 25% are likely to have never been married. How does the increasing numbers of adults choosing to remain single impact the future role of family in society?

Consider the following questions in your post.

- Does the increase in individuals choosing to remain single change the role of the family as the most basic social unit upon which society is built? What roles do individual adults hold in society that are different than married couples?
- How do single adults change the definition of family as a socially recognized group that forms an emotional connection and serves as an economic unit of society. As more people choose to remain single and build their connections with friends, romantic partners, mentors, etc., what changes happen to how families are formed, issues that are faced, and impacts on society.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Marriage and Family. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 13.13: Discussion- Marriage and Family is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

13.14: Assignment- Families in Media

Images of families are everywhere in media, including in movies and television. What constitutes a family has changed significantly in recent decades, and much of those changes are reflected in the families we watch on screens. Some of these images reflect our personal experience of family and some are very different from what we know and have experienced.

STEP 1: Choose either a television show or movie to do some research from a sociological lens. Look for a family that is explored in depth. There should be a strong enough depiction of family members and how they interact to be able to explore sociological concepts.

STEP 2: Choose one theoretical view of the family identified in the module (functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism) through which to analyze your chosen family.

Reflect on how well your family selections support a theoretical view of family. Your reflection should be 300-500 words. Use your identified families as support for or an argument against the theoretical view of family in society. Consider the following questions:

1. What norms are assumed in this family?
2. What roles do family members have?
3. How are the assumptions and points of view in this family understood through your chosen theoretical view?
4. What argument do these families make about public perceptions of family behavior and structures?
5. What does this family say about society?

For example, you might decide to write about how the Simpsons reflect a functionalist view of the family in society. You can evaluate each family member on how well they socialize Bart, Lisa, and Maggie, how each member provides emotional and practical support for each other, and how significant changes in their family impact its stability.

Rubric

Criteria	Unacceptable (Below Standards)	Acceptable (Meets Standards)	Good (Occasionally Exceeds)	Excellent (Exceeds Standards)	Points
Family Theory Content	Does not adequately convey topic. Does not address norms or assumptions in chosen theory.Lacks adequate support of theoretical view. Very clear connections between ideas.	__/10			
Support	Few or no supporting sources for topic. Sources used are insignificant or unsubstantiated.	Sources generally acceptable but not peer-reviewed research (evidence) based.	Sources well selected to support the topic with some research in support of thesis.	Strong peer-reviewed or research based support for topic.	__/6
Grammar & Mechanics	Grammatical errors or spelling & punctuation substantially detract from the paper.	Very few grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors interfere with reading the paper.	Grammatical errors or spelling & punctuation are rare and do not detract from the paper.	The paper is free of grammatical errors and spelling & punctuation.	__/4
				Total:	__/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Families in Media. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 13.14: Assignment- Families in Media is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

14: Module 11- Religion

14.1: Why It Matters- Religion
14.2: Introduction to Sociological Views on Religion
14.3: The History of Religion
14.4: Theoretical Perspectives on Religion
14.5: Introduction to World Religions
14.6: Types of Religion
14.7: Hinduism
14.8: Buddhism
14.9: Taoism and Confucianism
14.10: Judaism
14.11: Islam
14.12: Christianity
14.13: Introduction to Religion in the United States
14.14: U.S. Trends in Religion
14.15: Religion and Social Change
14.16: Putting It Together- Religion
14.17: Discussion- Religion
14.18: Assignment- World Religions

This page titled 14: Module 11- Religion is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.1: Why It Matters- Religion

Why describe the role that religion plays in shaping values and beliefs, and compare various religions around the world?

Religion plays a major role in the socialization process. For centuries, humankind has sought to understand and explain the "meaning of life." Religion, in one form or another, has been found in all human societies since human societies first appeared. Archaeological digs have revealed ritual objects, ceremonial burial sites, and other religious artifacts. Social conflict and even wars often result from religious disputes. To understand a culture, sociologists must study its religion.



Figure 1. Religions come in many forms, such as that being practiced in this large megachurch. (Photo courtesy of ToBeDaniel/Wikimedia Commons)

Religion can also serve as a filter for examining other issues in society and other components of a culture. For example, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, it became important for teachers, church leaders, and the media to educate Americans about Islam to prevent stereotyping and to promote religious tolerance. Sociological tools and methods, such as surveys, polls, interviews, and analysis of historical data, can be applied to the study of religion in a culture to help us better understand the role religion plays in people's lives and the way it influences society. In this module, you'll examine the role that religion plays in shaping values and beliefs.

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Religion. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:pyVSVeTw@2/Introduction-to-Religion. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 14.1: Why It Matters- Religion is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.2: Introduction to Sociological Views on Religion

What you'll learn to do: identify and explain how major sociological perspectives view religion



Figure 1. A woman administers communion, a religious ceremony, dispensing wine and bread to a line of congregants. (Photo courtesy of Alex Proimos/Wikimedia Commons)

Religion describes the beliefs, values, and practices related to sacred or spiritual concerns. It is a social institution, because it serves societal needs, including a sense of community. Religion is also an example of a cultural universal, because it is found in all societies in one form or another. Functionalism, conflict theory, and interactionism all provide valuable ways for sociologists to understand religion.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Sociological Views on Religion. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Religion. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:pyVSVeTw@2/Introduction-to-Religion. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- The Line of Communion. **Authored by**: Alex Proimos. **Provided by**: Wikimedia Commons. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Line_of_Communion_(7074868945).jpg. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 14.2: Introduction to Sociological Views on Religion is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.3: The History of Religion

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss the historical views and sociological perspectives on religion

What is religion? Pioneering sociologist Émile Durkheim claimed that it consists of "things that surpass the limits of our knowledge" (1915). He defined religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community, called a church, all those who adhere to them" (1915). Some people associate religion with places of worship (a synagogue or church), others with a practice (confession or meditation), and still others with a concept that guides their daily lives (like dharma or sin). All these people can agree that religion is a system of beliefs, values, and practices concerning what a person holds sacred or considers to be spiritually significant.

From the Latin *religio* (respect for what is sacred) and *religare* (to bind, in the sense of an obligation), the term religion describes systems of belief and practice that define what people consider to be sacred or spiritual (Fasching and deChant 2001; Durkheim 1915). Throughout history, and in societies across the world, leaders have used religious narratives, symbols, and traditions in an attempt to give more meaning to life and to offer a framework for understanding the universe. Some form of religion is found in every known culture, and it is usually practiced in a public way by a recognizable group. The practice of religion can include feasts and festivals, prayer to God or gods, marriage and funeral services, devotional music and art, meditation or initiation, sacrifice or service, and other aspects of ritualized culture.

While some people think of religion as something individual because religious beliefs can be highly personal, religion is also a social institution. Social scientists recognize that religion exists as an organized and integrated set of beliefs, behaviors, and norms centered on basic social needs and values. Moreover, religion is a cultural universal found in all social groups. For instance, in every culture, funeral rites are practiced in some way, although these customs vary between cultures and within religious affiliations. Despite differences, there are common elements in a ceremony marking a person's death, such as announcement of the death, care of the deceased, disposition (e.g., cremation or burial), and ceremony or ritual. These universals, and the differences in how societies and individuals experience and practice religion, provide rich material for sociological study.

In studying religion, sociologists distinguish between experience, belief, and ritual. **Religious experience** refers to the conviction or sensation that we are connected to "the divine" and might be felt when people pray or meditate. **Religious beliefs** are specific ideas members of a particular faith hold to be true, such as that Jesus Christ was the son of God, or that reincarnation exists. Another illustration of religious beliefs is the creation stories we find in different religions. **Religious rituals** are behaviors or practices that are either required or expected of the members of a particular group, such as baptism, bar mitzvah, First Communion, or confession of sins (Barkan and Greenwood 2003).

The History of Religion as a Sociological Concept

In the wake of nineteenth century European industrialization and secularization, three social theorists attempted to examine the relationship between religion and society: Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and Max Weber.

German philosopher, journalist, and revolutionary socialist Karl Marx (1818–1883) studied the social impact of religion. He believed religion reflects the social stratification of society and that it maintains inequality and perpetuates an unjust status quo. For him, religion was just an extension of and false remedy for working-class (proletarian) economic suffering. He famously argued that religion "is the opium of the people" (1844).

French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things" (1915). To him, sacred meant extraordinary—something that inspired wonder and that seemed connected to the concept of "the divine." Durkheim argued that "religion happens" in society when there is a separation between the profane (ordinary life) and the sacred (1915). 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 is generally considered the first sociologist who analyzed religion in terms of its societal impact. Above all, he believed religion is about community: It binds people together (social cohesion), promotes behavior consistency (social control), and offers strength during life's transitions and tragedies (meaning and purpose). By applying the methods of natural science to the study of society, Durkheim held that the source of religion and morality is the collective mind-set of society and that the cohesive bonds of

social order result from common values in a society. He contended that these values need to be maintained to preserve social stability.

But what would happen if religion were to decline? This question led Durkheim to posit that religion is not just a social creation but something that demonstrates the cohesive power of societal bonds: when people celebrate sacred things, they celebrate the stabilizing power of their society. By this reasoning, even if traditional religion disappeared, society wouldn't necessarily dissolve.

Whereas Durkheim saw religion as a source of social stability, German sociologist and political economist Max Weber (1864–1920) believed it was a precipitator of social change. He examined the effects of religion on economic activities and noticed that heavily Protestant societies—such as those in the Netherlands, England, Scotland, and Germany—were the most highly developed capitalist societies and that their most successful business leaders were Protestant. In his writing *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), he contends that the Protestant work ethic influenced and accelerated the development of capitalism. Weber noted that certain kinds of Protestantism supported the pursuit of material gain by motivating believers to work hard, be successful, and not spend their money on frivolous things. (The modern use of "work ethic" comes directly from Weber's Protestant ethic, although it has now lost its religious connotations.)

The Protestant Work Ethic in the Information Age

Max Weber (1904) posited that, in Europe in his time, Protestants were more likely than Catholics to value capitalist ideology, and believed in hard work and careful saving. He showed that Protestant values directly influenced the rise of capitalism and helped create the modern world order. Weber thought the emphasis on community in Catholicism versus the emphasis on individual achievement in Protestantism made a difference. Watch this brief video to review Weber's ideas.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=386

Weber's century-old claim that the Protestant work ethic led to the development of capitalism has been one of the most important and controversial topics in the sociology of religion. Despite its influence, some scholars have found little merit to his contention when applied to modern society (Greeley 1989).

What does the concept of work ethic mean today? The work ethic in the information age has been affected by tremendous cultural and social change, just as labor practices and relations were shaped by the Industrial Revolution. In that period, factory jobs tended to be simple, and required very little thinking or decision making on the part of the worker. Today, the work ethic of the modern workforce has been transformed, as more thinking and decision making is required. Contemporary workers also seek autonomy and fulfillment in their jobs, not just wages. Higher levels of education have become necessary, as have interpersonal management skills and access to the most recent information on any given topic. The information age has increased the rapid pace of production expected in many sectors of the economy.

On the other hand, the "McDonaldization" of the United States (Hightower 1975; Ritzer 1993), in which many "service" industries, such as the fast-food and retail industries, have established routinized roles and tasks, has resulted in a "discouragement" of the work ethic. In jobs where roles and tasks are highly prescribed, workers have no opportunity to make decisions. They are considered replaceable commodities as opposed to valued employees. During times of recession, these service jobs may be the only employment available to younger individuals or those with low-level skills and credentials. The pay, working conditions, and robotic nature of the tasks dehumanizes the workers and strips them of incentives for doing quality work.

Working hard also doesn't seem to have any relationship with Catholic or Protestant religious beliefs anymore, or those of other religions; information age workers expect talent and hard work to be rewarded by material gain and career advancement. In fact, some people now argue that work has *replaced* religion. Read this article, "Workism Is Making Americans Miserable," by Derek Thompson to learn more.

For Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, who were reacting to the great social and economic upheaval of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century in Europe, religion was an integral part of society. For Durkheim, religion was a cohesive force that helped bind the members of society together, while Weber believed religion could be understood as something important to, but separate from, society. Marx considered religion inseparable from the economy and the worker's position within it. Religion could not be understood apart from the capitalist society that perpetuated inequality. Despite their different views, these social theorists all believed in the importance of religion to society.

Further Research

For more discussion on the study of sociology and religion, check out the following blog: The Immanent Frame. It is a forum for the exchange of ideas about religion, secularism, and society by leading thinkers in the social sciences and humanities.

Think It Over

- List some ways that you see religion exerting social control in the everyday world.
- What are some sacred items that you're familiar with? Are there some objects, such as cups, candles, or clothing, that would be considered profane in normal settings but are considered sacred in special circumstances or when used in specific ways?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14700

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14701

glossary

religion:
a system of beliefs, values, and practices concerning what a person holds to be sacred or spiritually significant

religious experience:
the conviction or sensation that one is connected to "the divine"

religious beliefs:
specific ideas that members of a particular faith hold to be true

religious rituals:
behaviors or practices that are either required for or expected of the members of a particular group

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The Sociological Approach to Religion. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:U9O-WSd_@3/The-Sociological-Approach-to-Religion. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Max Weber and the Protestant Ethic. **Provided by**: BBC Radio 4. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-0sIHDzsU4. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 14.3: The History of Religion is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.4: Theoretical Perspectives on Religion

Learning Outcomes

- Explain how the major sociological paradigms view religion

Theoretical Perspectives on Religion



Figure 1. Functionalists believe religion meets many important needs for people, including group cohesion and companionship. (Photo courtesy of James Emery/flickr)

Modern-day sociologists often apply one of the major theoretical perspectives. These views offer different lenses through which to study and understand society: functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. Let's explore how scholars applying these paradigms understand religion.

Functionalism

Functionalists contend that religion serves several functions in society. Religion, in fact, depends on society for its existence, value, and significance, and vice versa. From this perspective, religion serves several purposes, like providing answers to spiritual mysteries, offering emotional comfort, and creating a place for social interaction and social control.

In providing answers, religion defines the spiritual world and spiritual forces, including divine beings. For example, it helps answer questions like, "How was the world created?" "Why do we suffer?" "Is there a plan for our lives?" and "Is there an afterlife?" As another function, religion provides emotional comfort in times of crisis. Religious rituals bring order, reassurance, and organization through shared familiar symbols and patterns of behavior.

One of the most important functions of religion, from a functionalist perspective, is the opportunities it creates for socializing and the formation of groups. It provides social support and offers a place to meet others who hold similar values, as well as a place to seek help (spiritual and material) in times of need. Moreover, it can foster group cohesion and integration. Because religion can be central to many people's concept of themselves, sometimes there is an "in-group" versus "out-group" feeling toward other religions in our society or within a particular practice. Religion promotes social control: it reinforces social norms such as appropriate styles of dress, following the law, conforming to gender roles, and regulating sexual behavior.

On an extreme level, the dysfunctions of this type of in-group/ out-group mentality has resulted in violent episodes such as the Spanish Inquisition (1478-1834) and the Salem witch trials (1692-1693), as well as extremist acts by anti-Semitic groups, jihadists, Christian fundamentalists, and many more. Social control can be a function of religious groups but it can also be dysfunctional when prescriptive social norms produce inequality between men and women, between different castes or classes, and/or when they diminish individual agency and choice within a religious group.



Figure 2. Many religions, including the Catholic faith, have long prohibited women from becoming spiritual leaders. Feminist theorists focus on gender inequality and promote leadership roles for women in religion. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Conflict Theory

Conflict theorists view religion as an institution that helps maintain patterns of social inequality. For example, the Vatican has a tremendous amount of wealth, while the average income of Catholic parishioners is small. According to this perspective, religion has been used to support the "divine right" of oppressive hereditary monarchies and to justify unequal social structures, like India's rigidly hierarchical caste system.

Conflict theorists are critical of the way many religions promote the idea that believers should be satisfied with existing circumstances because they are divinely ordained. This power dynamic has been used by Christian institutions for centuries to keep poor people poor and to teach them that they shouldn't be concerned with what they lack because their "true" reward (from a religious perspective) will come after death. Conflict theorists also point out that those in power in a religion are often able to dictate practices, rituals, and beliefs through their interpretation of religious texts or via proclaimed direct communication with the divine, perhaps through "revelation" or a process of "divination."

The feminist perspective is considered to be another conflict theory view that focuses specifically on gender inequality. In terms of religion, feminist theorists assert that, although women are typically the ones to socialize children into a religion, they have traditionally held very few positions of power within religions. A few religions and religious denominations are more gender equal, but male dominance remains the norm of most. In addition to examining power relations within religious organizations, feminists also attend to the ways that religion justifies and sustains a belief in patriarchy, or the assumption that men should occupy positions of authority in society.

Rational Choice Theory: Can Economic Theory Be Applied to Religion?

How do people decide which religion to follow, if any? How does one pick a church or decide which denomination "fits" best? Rational choice theory (RCT) is one way social scientists have attempted to explain these behaviors. The theory proposes that people are self-interested, though not necessarily selfish, and that people make rational choices—choices that can reasonably be expected to maximize positive outcomes while minimizing negative outcomes. Sociologists Roger Finke and Rodney Stark (1988) first considered the use of RCT to explain some aspects of religious behavior, with the assumption that there is a basic human need for religion in terms of providing belief in a supernatural being, a sense of meaning in life, and belief in life after death. Religious explanations of these concepts are presumed to be more satisfactory than scientific explanations, which may help to account for the continuation of strong religious connectedness in countries such as the United States, despite predictions of some competing theories for a great decline in religious affiliation due to modernization and religious pluralism.

Another assumption of RCT is that religious organizations can be viewed in terms of "costs" and "rewards." Costs are not only monetary requirements, but are also the time, effort, and commitment demands of any particular religious organization. Rewards are the intangible benefits in terms of belief and satisfactory explanations about life, death, and the supernatural, as well as social rewards from membership. RCT proposes that, in a pluralistic society with many religious options, religious organizations will compete for members, and people will choose between different churches or denominations in much the same way they select other consumer goods, balancing costs and rewards in a rational manner. In this framework, RCT also explains the development and decline of churches, denominations, sects, and even cults; this limited part of the very complex RCT theory is the only aspect well supported by research data.

Critics of RCT argue that it doesn't fit well with human spiritual needs, and many sociologists disagree that the costs and rewards of religion can even be meaningfully measured or that individuals use a rational balancing process regarding religious affiliation. The theory doesn't address many aspects of religion that individuals may consider essential (such as faith) and further fails to account for agnostics and atheists who don't seem to have a similar need for religious explanations. Critics also believe this theory overuses economic terminology and structure and point out that terms such as "rational" and "reward" are unacceptably defined by their use; they would argue that the theory is based on faulty logic and lacks external, empirical support. A scientific explanation

for *why* something occurs can't reasonably be supported by the fact that it *does* occur. RCT is widely used in economics and to a lesser extent in criminal justice, but the application of RCT in explaining the religious beliefs and behaviors of people and societies is still being debated in sociology today.

Symbolic Interactionism

Rising from the concept that our world is socially constructed, symbolic interactionism studies the symbols and interactions of everyday life. To interactionists, beliefs and experiences are not sacred unless individuals in a society regard them as sacred. The Star of David in Judaism, the cross in Christianity, and the crescent and star in Islam are examples of sacred symbols. Interactionists are interested in the negotiated meanings that different societies and groups attribute to these symbols.

Because interactionists study one-on-one, everyday interactions between individuals, a scholar using this approach might ask questions focused on this dynamic. The interaction between religious leaders and practitioners, the role of religion in the ordinary components of everyday life, and the ways people express religious values in social interactions—all might be topics of study to an interactionist.

Watch It

Watch this video for a deeper look at each theoretical perspective on religion.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=388

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14702

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14703

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14704

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14705

Think It Over

- Consider a religion that you are familiar with, and discuss some of its beliefs, behaviors, and norms. Discuss how these meet social needs. Then, research a religion that you don't know much about. Explain how its beliefs, behaviors, and norms are like/unlike the other religion.

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision and Original Content related to feminist theory. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The Sociological Approach to Religion. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:U9O-WSd_@3/The-Sociological-Approach-to-Religion. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Religion: Crash Course Sociology #39. **Authored by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIgb-3e8CWA&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=40. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 14.4: Theoretical Perspectives on Religion is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.5: Introduction to World Religions

What you'll learn to do: explain the basic tenets of major world religions



Figure 1. A Buddhist monk sits with their hands clasped. The concept of the "middle way" is central to Buddhist thinking, which encourages people to live in the present and to practice acceptance of others (Smith 1991). (Photo courtesy of Peter Hershey/unsplash)

The major religions of the world (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism, Christianity, Taoism, and Judaism) differ in many respects, including how each religion is organized and the belief system, or common tenets, each upholds. Differences include the nature of belief in a higher power, the history of how the world and the religion began, and the use of sacred texts and objects.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to World Religions. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- World Religions. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:k-vms25Q@4/World-Religions. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Monk. **Authored by**: Peter Hershey. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/tK67jI9G398. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 14.5: Introduction to World Religions is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.6: Types of Religion

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the differences between various types of religious organizations and classifications



Figure 1. The symbols of fourteen religions are depicted here. In no particular order, they represent Judaism, Wicca, Taoism, Christianity, Confucianism, Baha'i, Druidism, Islam, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Shinto, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism. Can you match the symbol to the religion? What might a symbolic interactionist make of these symbols? (Photo courtesy of ReligiousTolerance.org)

Types of Religious Organizations

Religions organize themselves—their institutions, practitioners, and structures—in a various ways. For instance, when the Roman Catholic Church emerged, it borrowed many of its organizational principles from the ancient Roman military and turned senators into cardinals, for example. Ecclesia, denomination, and sect are terms used to describe these classifications. Scholars are also aware that these definitions are not static. Most religions transition through different organizational phases. For example, Christianity began as a cult, transformed into a sect, and today exists as an ecclesia.

Cults, like sects, are new religious groups. In the United States today this term often carries pejorative connotations. However, almost all religions began as cults and gradually progressed to levels of greater size, stability, and organization. The term cult is sometimes used interchangeably with the term "new religious movement" (NRM). In its pejorative use, these groups are often disparaged as being secretive, highly controlling of members' lives, and dominated by a single, charismatic leader.

Controversy exists over whether some religious groups are in fact cults, perhaps due in part to media sensationalism over groups like the polygamous Mormon FLDS or the Peoples Temple followers who died in a mass suicide at Jonestown, Guyana, in 1978. Some groups that are controversially labeled as cults today include the Church of Scientology and the Hare Krishna movement.

A **sect** is a small and relatively new group. Most of the well-known Christian denominations in the United States today began as sects. For example, the Methodists and Baptists protested against their parent Anglican Church in England, just as Henry VIII protested against the Catholic Church by forming the Anglican Church. From "protest" comes the term Protestant.

Occasionally, a sect is a breakaway group that may be in tension with the larger society. They sometimes claim to be returning to "the fundamentals" or to be contesting the truth of a particular doctrine. When membership in a sect increases over time, it may grow into a denomination. Often a sect begins as an offshoot of a denomination, when a group of members believes they should separate from the larger group.



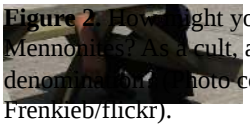


Figure 2. How might you classify the Mennonites? As a cult, a sect, or a denomination? (photo courtesy of Frenkieb/flickr).

Some sects dissolve without growing into denominations. Sociologists call these **established sects**. Established sects, such as the Amish or Jehovah's Witnesses fall halfway between sect and denomination on the ecclesia–cult continuum because they have a mixture of sect-like and denomination-like characteristics.

A **denomination** is a large, mainstream religious organization, but it does not claim to be official or state sponsored. It is one religion among many. For example, Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal, Catholic, and Seventh-day Adventist are all Christian denominations.

The term **ecclesia**, originally referring to a political assembly of citizens in ancient Athens, Greece, now refers to a congregation. In sociology, the term is used to refer to a religious group that most all members of a society belong to. It is considered a nationally recognized, or official, religion that holds a religious monopoly and is closely allied with state and secular powers. The United States does not have an ecclesia by this standard; in fact, this is the type of religious organization that many of the first colonists came to America to escape.

One way to remember these religious organizational terms is to think of cults, sects, denominations, and ecclesia representing a continuum, with increasing influence on society, where cults are least influential and ecclesia are most influential.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14706

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14707

Types of Religions

Scholars from a variety of disciplines have strived to classify religions. One widely accepted categorization that helps people understand different belief systems considers what or who people worship (if anything). Using this method of classification, religions might fall into one of these basic categories, as shown in the table below.

One way scholars have categorized religions is by classifying what or who they hold to be divine.

Religious Classification	What/Who Is Divine	Example
Polytheism	Multiple gods	Belief systems of the ancient Greeks and Romans
Monotheism	Single god	Judaism, Islam
Atheism	No deities	Atheism
Animism	Nonhuman beings (animals, plants, natural world)	Indigenous nature worship (Shinto)
Totemism	Human-natural being connection	Ojibwa (Native American) beliefs

Note that some religions may be practiced—or understood—in various categories. For instance, the Christian notion of the Holy Trinity (God, Jesus, Holy Spirit) defies the definition of **monotheism**, which is a religion based on belief in a single deity, to some scholars. Similarly, many Westerners view the multiple manifestations of Hinduism's godhead as **polytheistic**, which is a religion based on belief in multiple deities, while Hindus might describe those manifestations are a monotheistic parallel to the Christian Trinity. Some Japanese practice Shinto, which follows **animism**, which is a religion that believes in the divinity of nonhuman beings, like animals, plants, and objects of the natural world, while people who practice **totemism** believe in a divine connection between humans and other natural beings.

It is also important to note that every society also has nonbelievers, such as **atheists**, who do not believe in a divine being or entity, and **agnostics**, who hold that ultimate reality (such as God) is unknowable. While typically not an organized group, atheists and

agnostics represent a significant portion of the population. It is important to recognize that being a nonbeliever in a divine entity does not mean the individual subscribes to no morality. Indeed, many Nobel Peace Prize winners and other great humanitarians over the centuries would have classified themselves as atheists or agnostics.

Think It Over

- Consider the different types of religious organizations in the United States. What role did ecclesia play in the history of the United States? How have sects tended to change over time? What role do cults have today?
- What is your understanding of monotheism versus polytheism? How might your ideology be an obstacle to understanding the theism of another religion you're unfamiliar with?
- In U.S. society, do you believe there is social stratification that correlates with religious beliefs? What about within the practitioners of a given religion? Provide examples to illustrate your point.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14708

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14709

glossary

agnosticism:
the belief that ultimate reality, or God, is unknowable

animism:
the religion that believes in the divinity of nonhuman beings, like animals, plants, and objects of the natural world

atheism:
the belief in no deities

cults:
religious groups that are small, secretive, and highly controlling of members and have a charismatic leader

denomination:
a large, mainstream religion that is not sponsored by the state

ecclesia:
a religion that is considered the state religion

established sects:
sects that last but do not become denominations

monotheism:
a religion based on belief in a single deity

polytheism:
a religion based on belief in multiple deities

sect:
a small, new offshoot of a denomination

totemism:
the belief in a divine connection between humans and other natural beings

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- World Religions. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:k-vms25Q@4/World-Religions. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 14.6: Types of Religion is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.7: Hinduism

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the basic tenets of Hinduism

Hinduism



Figure 1. Hindu women sometimes apply decorations of henna dye to their hands for special occasions such as weddings and religious festivals. (Photo courtesy of Akash Mazumdar)

The oldest religion in the world, Hinduism originated in the Indus River Valley about 4,500 years ago in what is now modern-day northwest India and Pakistan. It arose contemporaneously with ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultures. With roughly one billion followers, Hinduism is the third-largest of the world's religions; its followers, known as Hindus, constitute about 1.15 billion, or 15–16% of the global population. Hinduism is the most widely professed faith in India, Nepal and Mauritius. It is also the predominant religion in Bali, Indonesia. Significant numbers of Hindu communities are also found in the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, North America, Europe, Africa, and other countries.

Most forms of Hinduism are henotheistic, meaning they worship a main single deity, known as Brahman, but still recognize other gods and goddesses such Vishnu, Shiva, and Krishna, among others. Hinduism includes a diversity of ideas on spirituality and traditions, but has no ecclesiastical order, no unquestionable religious authorities, no governing body, no prophet(s) nor any binding holy book (although there are sacred texts). Hindus can choose to be polytheistic, pantheistic, panentheistic, pandeistic, henotheistic, monotheistic, monistic, agnostic, atheistic or humanist. Because of the wide range of traditions and ideas covered by the term Hinduism, arriving at a comprehensive definition is difficult. Hinduism has been variously defined as a religion, a religious tradition, a set of religious beliefs, and "a way of life." From a Western lexical standpoint, Hinduism, like other faiths, is appropriately referred to as a religion but in India, the term *dharma* is preferred, which is broader than the Western term religion.

One of the key thoughts of Hinduism is the belief in the soul, or atman. This philosophy holds that all living creatures have a soul, and all will be reincarnated, which is one reason why many Hindus are vegetarians. The ultimate goal of Hinduism is to achieve moksha, or salvation, which ends the cycle of sorrow, suffering and rebirths (saṃsāra) to become part of the absolute soul, or in complete oneness with God and existence. Hindus also generally believe in a set of principles called dharma, which refers to one's duty in the world that corresponds with righteous choices and ethical actions. Hindus also believe in karma, or the notion that spiritual ramifications of one's actions are balanced cyclically in this life or a future life.

The caste system, described in the module on social stratification, is based on the Hindu principles of karma and dharma. This ancient system, estimated by some scholars to be 3,000 years old, divides society into the following four castes: 1) brahmin (the intellectual and spiritual leaders), 2) kshatriyas (the protectors and public servants of society), 3) vaisyas (the skillful producers), and 4) shudras (the unskilled laborers) [1] Although discrimination based on caste was banned with India's independence from Great Britain in 1947, some traditions such as marrying within one's caste are still embraced.



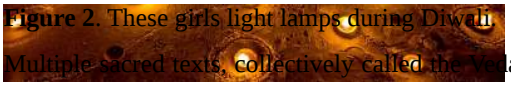


Figure 2. These girls light lamps during Diwali.

Multiple sacred texts, collectively called the Vedas, were composed around 1500 B.C. and contain hymns and rituals from ancient India. They are mostly written in Sanskrit. Like many other religions, Hinduism was suppressed at various points in India's history —by Muslim Arabs from 1200 to 1757 and between 1757 and 1848 when the British controlled India [2].

There are several Hindu festivals that are observed, but Diwali, or the festival of lights, is probably the most well known. The five days of Diwali include different rituals such as spring cleaning, shopping, decorating, praying, fasting, gift-giving, and eating, but the focal point of the celebration includes lighting lamps to represent a victory of good over evil and the light that comes from within. Another popular festival is the celebration of the arrival of spring, known as Holi, or the festival of colors, named for the bright colors of powders and water that many throw at others during the celebration.

The most famous Hindu, Mohandas 'Mahatma' Gandhi, helped India to gain independence from the British in 1947 before he was assassinated by an extremist Indian nationalist in 1948. After the dissolution of the British Raj in 1947, two new sovereign nations were formed—the Dominion of India and the Dominion of Pakistan. The subsequent partition of the former British India displaced up to 12.5 million people and resulted in conflict and war between the main religions groups, Muslims and Hindus, with estimates of loss of life varying from several hundred thousand to 1 million. India emerged as a secular nation with a Hindu majority population and a large Muslim minority, while Pakistan emerged also as a secular nation with a Muslim majority population and a large Hindu minority.

Watch It

Learn about the basic beliefs and practices of Hinduism in this short video.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=394

Think it Over

- How do Hindus view the individual's relationship with the Divine?
- What does the traditional Hindu greeting *namaste* tell us about Hindu beliefs?

Jainism

Jainism is another predominantly Indian religion that shares some commonalities with Hinduism, although there are still major distinctions. Followers of Jainism are called "Jains," a word derived from the Sanskrit word jina (victor) and connoting the path of victory in crossing over life's stream of rebirths through an ethical and spiritual life. Jains consider their religion to be eternal (sanatan), and trace their history through a succession of 24 victorious saviors and teachers known as tirthankaras. Jains believe that Jainism is an eternal dharma with the tirthankaras guiding every cycle of the Jain cosmology.

The main religious premises of Jainism are ahiṃsā (non-violence), anekāntavāda (many-sidedness), aparigraha (non-attachment) and asceticism. Devout Jains take five main vows: ahiṃsā (non-violence), satya (truth), asteya (not stealing), brahmacharya (celibacy or chastity), and aparigraha (non-attachment). These principles have impacted Jain culture in many ways, such as leading to a predominantly vegetarian lifestyle that avoids harm to animals and their life cycles. "Parasparopagraho Jīvānām" (the function of souls is to help one another) is the motto of Jainism.

Watch It

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=394

---

1. "Hinduism," 2018. History.com, https://www.history.com/topics/religion/hinduism. ↵
2. "Hinduism," 2018. History.com, https://www.history.com/topics/religion/hinduism. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- World Religions. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.3:k-vms25Q@8/15-2-World-Religions. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- India-Pakistan Relations. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/India%E2%80%93Pakistan_relations. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Hinduism demographics and definitions. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Jainism. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Jainism. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Diwali Festival. **Provided by**: Wikimedia. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Diwali_Festival.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Introduction to Hindusim | Belief | Oprah Winfrey Show. **Provided by**: OWN. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EICcU9oN-s. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Introduction to Jainism | Belief | . **Provided by**: Oprah Winfrey Network. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_VA7mWWn58. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 14.7: Hinduism is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.8: Buddhism

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the basic tenets of Buddhism



Figure 1. Buddhism promotes peace and tolerance. The 14th Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso) is one of the most revered and influential Tibetan Buddhist leaders. (Photo courtesy of Nancy Pelosi/flickr)

Buddhism

Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama around 500 B.C.E. Siddhartha was born as a prince in present-day Nepal and was so moved by the suffering in the world, he is said to have given up a comfortable, upper-class life to follow one of poverty and spiritual devotion. At the age of thirty-five, he famously meditated under a sacred fig tree and vowed not to rise before he achieved enlightenment (*bodhi*). After this experience, he became known as Buddha, or "enlightened one." Followers were drawn to Buddha's teachings, known as "dharma," and the practice of meditation, and he later established a monastic order.

Buddha's teachings encourage Buddhists to lead a moral life by accepting the four Noble Truths: 1) life is suffering, 2) suffering arises from attachment to desires, 3) suffering ceases when attachment to desires ceases, and 4) freedom from suffering is possible by following the "middle way." The concept of the "middle way" is central to Buddhist thinking, which encourages people to live in the present and to practice acceptance of others (Smith 1991). Buddha taught that wisdom, kindness, patience, generosity and compassion were important virtues. Buddhism also tends to deemphasize the role of a godhead, instead stressing the importance of personal responsibility (Craig 2002). This is illustrated by five moral principles, which prohibit:

- Killing living things
- Taking what is not given
- Sexual misconduct
- Lying
- Using drugs or alcohol



Figure 2. Meditation is an important practice in Buddhism. A Tibetan monk is shown here engaged in solitary meditation. (Photo courtesy of Prince Roy/flickr)

The Four Truths express the basic orientation of Buddhism: people crave and cling to impermanent states and things, which is dukkha, “incapable of satisfying” and painful. This keeps people caught in saṃsāra, the endless cycle of repeated rebirth, dukkha, and dying again. According to Buddhism, there is a way to liberation from this endless cycle to the state of nirvana, namely following the Noble Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path consists of eight practices: right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right samadhi (“meditative absorption or union”).

Buddhism is the world’s fourth-largest religion, with over 520 million followers, or over 7% of the global population. While some of the main tenets were explained above, Buddhism encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs, and spiritual practices, and can be further divided into other traditions, which have some variations in their beliefs. The two major extant branches of Buddhism are Theravada (Pali: “The School of the Elders”) and Mahayana (Sanskrit: “The Great Vehicle”). Theravada Buddhism has a widespread following in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia such as Myanmar and Thailand. Mahayana, which includes the traditions of Pure Land, Zen, Nichiren Buddhism, Shingon and Tiantai (Tendai), is found throughout East Asia.

Vajrayana, a body of teachings attributed to Indian adepts, may be viewed as a separate branch or as an aspect of Mahayana Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhism, which preserves the Vajrayana teachings of eighth-century India, is practiced in the countries of the Himalayan region, Mongolia, and Kalmykia. The Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959 has led Tibetan Buddhists to live in exile in India since 1959, including His Holiness The Dalai Lama.

Buddhists celebrate several festivals throughout the year, including a Buddhist New Year, Vesak, a festival to celebrate Buddha’s birth, enlightenment, and death, and Uposatha, an observance that encourages Buddhists to recommit to the teachings.[1]

Watch It

Watch this video to learn about the basic beliefs and practices of Buddhism.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=396

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14710

Think It Over

- Think of some ways in which the principles of Hinduism and Buddhism are visible in mainstream culture in the United States.
- Try to meditate for four minutes. Is it challenging? Try listening to this guided four-minute meditation if you want help.

---

1. "Buddhism," 2018. History.com. https://www.history.com/topics/religion/buddhism. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Buddhism. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- World Religions. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.3:k-vms25Q@8/15-2-World-Religions. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Introduction to Buddhism | Belief | Oprah Winfrey Network. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lxq-RiLb-6M. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 14.8: Buddhism is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.9: Taoism and Confucianism

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the basic tenets of Taoism
- Describe the basic tenets of Confucianism

Chinese Religions

The government of the People's Republic of China officially espouses atheism, though Chinese civilization has historically long been a cradle and host to a variety of the most enduring religio-philosophical traditions of the world. Confucianism and Taoism, later joined by Buddhism, constitute the "three teachings" that have shaped Chinese culture. There are no clear boundaries between these intertwined religious systems, which do not claim to be exclusive, and elements of each enrich popular or folk religion. Following a period of enforced atheism after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in China, religion has recently become more popular once again. The government today formally recognizes five religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam (though the Chinese Catholic Church is independent of the Catholic Church in Rome). In the early twenty-first century there has also been increasing official recognition of Confucianism and Chinese folk religion as part of China's cultural inheritance. Let's take a closer look at two of these Chinese religious traditions: Taoism and Confucianism.

Taoism

In Taoism (also commonly written as Daoism), the purpose of life is inner peace and harmony. Tao is usually translated as "way" or "path." Lao Tzu, sometimes written Laozi, was an ancient Chinese philosopher and writer who lived during the 6th or 4th century B.C.E., and who authored the Tao Te Ching, which remains the fundamental text on philosophical Taoism. In the Tao Te Ching, Laozi often explains his ideas by way of paradox, analogy, repetition, symmetry, rhyme, and rhythm.

Taoism as an organized religion began in the year 142 C.E. with the revelation of the Tao to Zhang Daoling (Chang Tao-ling) by the personified god of the Tao, Taishang laojun, the Highest Venerable Lord (one of the three main deities). Taoism became a semi-official Chinese religion during the Tang dynasty (7th-10th centuries) and continued during the Song dynasty (960-1279). As Confucianism gained popularity, Taoism gradually fell from favor, and changed from an official religion to a popular religious tradition. [1]

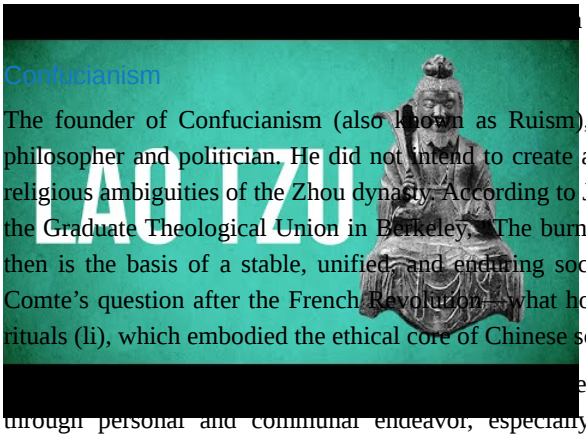
The central concept of *tao* describes a spiritual reality, the order of the universe, as being in harmony with the virtues of compassion and moderation. The ying-yang symbol and the concept of polar forces are central Taoist ideas (Smith 1991). Some scholars have compared this Chinese tradition to its Confucian counterpart by saying that "whereas Confucianism is concerned with day-to-day rules of conduct, Taoism is concerned with a more spiritual level of being" (Feng and English 1972).

After the communist takeover of China in 1949, Taoism was banned and its followers re-educated, with the result that the number of practicing Taoists fell by 99% in 10 years. At this time Taoism began to flourish in the greater freedom on offer in Taiwan (a separatist island territory which had not been absorbed into the new communist China). After the end of the Cultural Revolution the Chinese government began to allow a small measure of religious freedom. Taoism began to revive in China, and Taoist temples and practitioners can now be found throughout the country. [2] Today, the Taoist tradition is one of the five religious doctrines officially recognized in the People's Republic of China (PRC) as well as the Republic of China (ROC), and although it does not travel readily from its East Asian roots, it claims adherents in a number of societies, in particular in Hong Kong, Macau, and in Southeast Asia.

Taoism has had a profound influence on Chinese culture in the course of the centuries, and Taoists (Chinese: 道士; pinyin: dàoshi, "masters of the Tao"), a title traditionally attributed only to the clergy and not to their lay followers, usually take care to note the distinction between their ritual tradition and the practices of Chinese folk religion and non-Taoist vernacular ritual orders, which are often mistakenly identified as pertaining to Taoism. Chinese alchemy (especially neidan), Chinese astrology, Chan (Zen) Buddhism, several martial arts, traditional Chinese medicine, feng shui, and many styles of qigong have been intertwined with Taoism throughout history.

Watch It

Watch this video to learn about Laozi (also written Lao Tzu or Lao-Tze), the founder of Daoism, and the teachings in the Tao Te Ching.



of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=398

Confucianism

The founder of Confucianism (also known as Ruism), or Master Kong, better known as Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.), was a philosopher and politician. He did not intend to create a new religion, but sought to provide structure and reform to some of the religious ambiguities of the Zhou dynasty. According to Judith Berling, Professor Emerita of Chinese and Comparative Religions at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, "The burning issue of the day was: If it is not the ancestral and nature spirits, what then is the basis of a stable, unified, and enduring social order?" [3] This sounds very familiar to founding sociologist August Comte's question after the French Revolution: what holds society together? Confucius' answer was in the Zhou religion and its rituals (li), which embodied the ethical core of Chinese society.

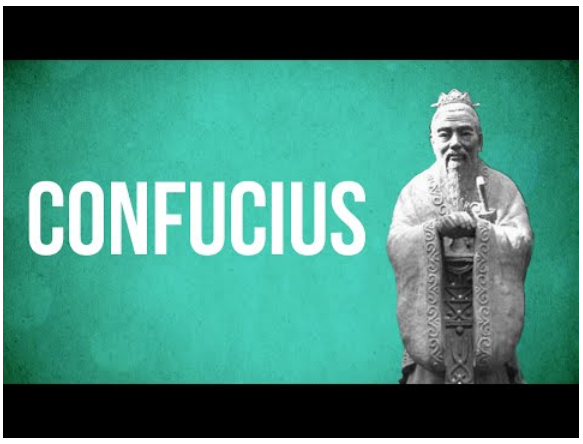
elief that human beings are fundamentally good, teachable, and perfectible through personal and communal endeavor, especially self-cultivation and self-creation. Confucian thought focuses on the development of virtue in a morally organized world. Some of the basic Confucian ethical concepts and practices include rén, yì, and lǐ, and zhì. Rén (仁, 'benevolence' or 'humaneness') is the essence of the human being which manifests as compassion, and is sometimes translated as love or kindness. It is the virtue-form of Heaven, and the source of all other virtues. Yì (義/义) is the upholding of righteousness and the moral disposition to do good. Lǐ (禮/礼) is a system of ritual norms and propriety that determines how a person should properly act in everyday life so as to be in harmony with the law of Heaven. Zhì (智) is the ability to see what is right and fair, or the converse, in the behaviors exhibited by others. Confucianism holds one in contempt, either passively or actively, for failure to uphold the cardinal moral values of rén and yì. Confucianism also places am emphasis on filial piety (Chinese: 孝, xiào), which is a virtue of respect for one's parents and ancestors.

Confucianism entrenched itself in Chinese history and culture, becoming what sociologist Robert Bellah called a **civil religion** whereby "the sense of religious identity and common moral understanding is at the foundation of a society's central institutions." [4] Like Hinduism, Confucianism was part of the social fabric and way of life; to Confucians, everyday life was the arena of religion. Some religious scholars consider Confucianism more of a social system than a religion because it focuses on sharing wisdom about moral practices but doesn't involve any type of specific worship; nor does it have formal holy objects.

Confucianism was the official religion of China from 200 B.C.E. until it was officially abolished when communist leaders discouraged religious practice in 1949. Like Taoism, Confucianism spread to other countries and was somewhat dormant in China for a time, but is on the rise once again.

Watch IT

Watch this video to learn more about Confucius and the basic tenets of the religion.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=398

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14711

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14712

Link to Learning

For more insight on Confucianism, read the Analects by Confucius.

Glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]civil religion:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]the implicit religious values and common moral understanding shared by a nation[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

---

1. "The Origins of Taoism." BBC. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/taoism/history/history.shtml. ↵
2. "The Origins of Taoism." BBC. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/taoism/history/history.shtml. ↵
3. Berling, Judith. "Confucianism." 1996. Center for Global Education, Society for Asian Studies. https://asiasociety.org/education/confucianism. ↵
4. Bellah, Robert Neeley. 1975. The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in a Time of Trial, New York: Seabury Press. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Taoism. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Taoism. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Religion in China. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_China. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- World Religions. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.3:k-vms25Q@8/15-2-World-Religions. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Laozi. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Laozi. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Paragraph on Confucianism beliefs. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucianism. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- EASTERN PHILOSOPHY - Confucius. **Authored by**: The School of Life. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUhGRh4vdb8. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- EASTERN PHILOSOPHY - Lao Tzu. **Authored by**: The School of Life. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFb7Hxva5rg. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 14.9: Taoism and Confucianism is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.10: Judaism

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the basic tenets of Judaism

Judaism

Judaism is the ethnic religion of the Jewish people. It is an ancient, monotheistic, Abrahamic religion that encompasses the religion, philosophy, and culture of the Jewish people. It began over 3,000 years ago and is well known through the book of both the Torah and the Old Testament called Exodus, which describes the emancipation of the Hebrews from Egyptian captivity in the thirteenth century B.C.E. Judaism is considered by religious Jews to be the expression of the covenant that God established with the Children of Israel. It encompasses a wide body of texts, practices, theological positions, and forms of organization. The Torah is part of the larger text known as the Tanakh, or the Hebrew Bible, and is supplemented by oral tradition represented in later texts such as the Midrash and the Talmud. The Torah consists of the five books of Moses, which are also contained in the Christian Bible. With between 14.5 and 17.4 million adherents worldwide, Judaism is the tenth largest religion in the world.



Figure 1. A Hasidic Jewish family in New York City.

The most important teaching of Judaism is that there is one God, who wants people to do what is just and compassionate. Judaism teaches that a person serves God by learning the holy books and doing what they teach. These teachings include both ritual actions and ethical interpretative frameworks. Jews place an emphasis on moral behavior and action in this world as opposed to personal salvation in the next world. Like Hindus and Buddhists, the Jewish sages believed in non-violence and taught: “Anyone who takes a single life, it is as though he has destroyed the entire world. And anyone who saves a single life, it is as though he has saved the entire world” [1]. Jews also believe in improving the world around them, as another core value is that of *Tikkun olam*, which translates to mean “repair” and “of all time [later translated to mean the world]”—meaning they feel an obligation to fix up the world.[2] Another related value is that of *tzedakah*, which translates to mean “righteousness or justice or fairness,” but which is often mistaken for charity. The Talmud categorizes *tzedakah* into eight levels with the lowest level of giving as “begrudging” and the highest as “enabling the recipient to become self-reliant” [3] It is a *mitzvah*, or commandment, and is one of 613 laws.

Today, the largest Jewish religious movements are Orthodox Judaism (Haredi Judaism and Modern Orthodox Judaism), Conservative Judaism, and Reform Judaism. Major sources of difference between these groups include their approaches to Jewish law, the authority of the Rabbinic tradition, and the significance of the State of Israel. There is a wide spectrum of devotion, practice, and even appearance within Judaism, but the most visible are Orthodox Jews because they are recognized by their outward appearance. For example, one ultra-orthodox group that emphasizes conservatism and tradition are Hasidic Jews, who have a large population in parts of Brooklyn, New York. They are recognizable by their dress code—women cover most of their bodies (shirts with sleeves below the elbows, legs covered with pantyhose, hair covered with a wig and often a hat, etc.) and men wear black coats, black hats, *payos* or long curly sideburns, and full uncut beards (sometimes brown fur hats depending on the sect and time of year and/or holiday), and sometimes white stockings (depending on the type of Orthodox Jewish sect). At the other end of the spectrum is Reformed Judaism, which permits women to be rabbis and does not require strict observance to the laws found in the Torah.

Although Jews make up a very small percentage of the global population (0.2%), most people around the world are familiar with Jewish culture and practices, and some historical facts. Children all over the world are taught about the genocide that occurred during World War II when 6 million Jews were killed in Europe during the Holocaust. In New York City, public schools observe

many of the major Jewish holidays including Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, and Passover. Foods associated with traditional Jewish culture like bagels and lox, knish, latkes, and babka are enjoyed widely.

Link to Learning: Understanding the ISraeli-Palestinian Conflict

Jews and Muslims both claim a religious tie to the land in Israel and Palestine, not only because both religions had major events take place there and are deeply rooted in the area, but because both claim that they were promised the land by God, through Abraham. Abraham had more than one son, however, and descendants from Isaac were predominantly Jewish and descendants from Ishmael became predominantly Muslim. This contention is important today, as there is frequent geo-political news surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel as a nation did not come into existence until and after World War II, and the area is continually plagued by conflict. You can learn more about it through this Crash Course video "Conflict in Israel and Palestine."

Watch It

Learn more about the basic beliefs and practices of Judaism in this short video.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=400

Link to Learning: Judaism in America

To learn more about the Orthodox Jewish communities in New York City, please click on this link to PBS's A Life Apart: Hasidism in America. You could also search for a 2017 Netflix documentary titled *One of Us*, which looked at the lives of three Hasidic Jews who left their religious communities.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14713

---

1. Freeman, Tzvi. 2018. "What are Jewish Values?" Chabad.org. https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3852164/jewish/What-Are-Jewish-Values.htm. ↵
2. "Tikun Olam: Repairing the World," My Jewish Learning. https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/tikkun-olam-repairing-the-world/. ↵
3. "Tzedekah 101," My Jewish Learning. https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/tzedakah-101/. ↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- World Religions. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:k-vms25Q@4/World-Religions. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Hasidic Family. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://images.app.goo.gl/duBEkQF5HKy2WaAu9. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Judaism. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Judaism Beliefs. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://simple.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Introduction to Judaism | Belief | Oprah Winfrey Network. **Provided by**: OWN. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJbg_cXYFyM. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 14.10: Judaism is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.11: Islam

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the basic tenets of Islam



Figure 1. The Islamic house of worship is called a mosque. (Photo courtesy of David Stanley/flickr)

Islam

Islam is monotheistic, Abrahamic religion that follows the teachings of the prophet Muhammad, born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in 570 C.E. Muhammad is seen as an earthly prophet, not as a divine being, and he is believed to be the messenger of Allah (God), who is divine. The followers of Islam, whose U.S. population is projected to double in the next twenty years (Pew Research Forum 2011), are called Muslims. It has over 1.8 billion followers worldwide (24% of the population), making it the world's second-largest religion. Is is one of the fastest-growing religions in the world, with Muslims expected to account for 30% of the global population by 2050.[1] Births to Muslims between 2010 and 2015 outnumbered deaths by 152 million (213 million births vs. 61 million deaths), meaning Muslims have the highest fertility rate of any religious group at 2.9 children per woman (Christians are 2.6 children per woman and Hindu and Jewish fertility rates are 2.3) [2]

About 13% of Muslims live in Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority country; 31% of Muslims live in South Asia, the largest population of Muslims in the world; 20% in the Middle East–North Africa region, where it is the dominant religion; and 15% reside in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sizeable Muslim communities are also found in the Americas, the Caucasus, Central Asia, China, Europe, Mainland Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and Russia.

Most Muslims belong to one of two denominations: Sunni (87–90%) or Shia (10-13%) (Pew Research). Following Muhammed's death in 632 C.E., disagreements arose over would be the next caliph, or leader. Those who believed that Muhammed's father-in-law, Abu Bakr, was the first caliph became known as Sunnis, and those who followed Muhammad's son-in-law and cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib became known as Shias. Today Shia Muslims are the majority in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Lebanon, and Azerbaijan, as well as being a politically significant minority in Pakistan, Syria, Yemen and Kuwait.

Islam means "peace" and "submission." The sacred text for Muslims is the Qur'an (or Koran). As with Christianity's Old Testament, many of the Qur'an stories are shared with the Jewish faith. While divisions exist within Islam, all Muslims are guided by five core beliefs or practices, often called "the five pillars":

1. Shahadah: the profession of faith in God. This is commonly recited, and translates to "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet."
2. Salat: daily prayer. These prayers are performed five times a day, at set times, with the individual kneeling and prostrating in a particular pattern while facing in the direction of Mecca (the birthplace of Muhammed, and therefore of Islam itself). The five prayer times correspond to dawn, noon, afternoon, evening, and night.



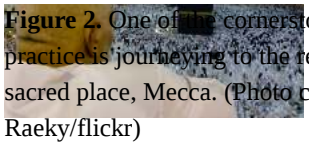


Figure 2. One of the cornerstones of Muslim practice is journeying to the religion's most sacred place, Mecca. (Photo courtesy of Raeky/flickr)

3. Zakat: almsgiving. This is given as a tithe (often around 2.5% of a person's income) and is used to support holy places and mosques around the world, as well as those within the same community as the payer.
4. Sawm: fasting as a spiritual practice, as is done during the month of Ramadan. During Ramadan, Muslims do not eat or drink from sunup to sundown for an entire month. Ramadan includes special daily prayers called *taraweeh*, which take place at mosques and last for 1-2 hours, and a period of seclusion, or *I'tikaf*, during the last ten nights of the month. The fast is meant to allow Muslims to seek nearness and to look for forgiveness from God, to express their gratitude to and dependence on him, to atone for their past sins, and to remind them of the needy.[32] During Ramadan, Muslims are also expected to recommit to the teachings of Islam by refraining from violence, anger, envy, greed, lust, profane language, gossip and to try to get along with fellow Muslims better. In addition, all obscene and irreligious sights and sounds are to be avoided
5. Hajj: pilgrimage to the holy center of Mecca. The reason for this journey is to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad, hoping to gain enlightenment as Muhammad did when he was in the presence of Allah.

While Muslims celebrate many special occasions and events, there are two specific days set aside as holy days: *Eid ul Fitr* and *Eid ul Adha* (*Eid* or *Id* is a word meaning festival). The holiday, E*id ul Fitr*, marks the end of Ramadan and is a time of feasting, fine clothes, decorating one's home, praying, and making amends. *Eid ul Adha* is a festival to remember the prophet Ibrahim's (known as Abraham in Judaism and Christianity) willingness to sacrifice his son when God ordered him to do so. [3]

JIhad and Terrorism

Following the 9/11 attacks in 2001 by the terrorist group Al-Qaeda, the word "jihad" has become a contentious term associated with extremists who justify their violent actions as part of a a political project, or a religious war against nonbelievers. Jihad is an Arabic word which means "to strive" or "to struggle," especially toward a praiseworthy goal. In a broader Islamic context, it can refer to almost any effort to make personal and social life conform to God's will, such as to struggle against one's evil inclinations, or to undertake religious proselytizing (i.e., the spreading of the faith), or to work toward the moral betterment of the "ummah," which refers to the entirety of the Muslim community. Despite the multiple and many benevolent applications of this idea, today it is often narrowly associated with a form of holy war, or with sacrificing one's life for the sake of God.

Al-Qaeda (the "base" or "foundation") is a terrorist network of Islamic extremists and Salafist jihadists (a splinter group from Sunni Islam). Islamic extremism is not the same thing as Islam—remember that Islam, by definition, is peaceful. Al-Qaeda formed during the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989) and has had a strong presence at various times in different regions throughout the Middle East. It is connected with ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, also called the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), or the Islamic State (IS)), which recently controlled large areas in Iraq and Syria, but lost nearly all of its significant territory by March 2019. ISIS claimed responsibility for the Easter suicide bombings in Sri Lanka, which killed over 250 people at churches and hotels, and has also been connected with terrorist activities in Congo, the Philippines, Nigeria, Libya, and parts of Egypt. It's important to note that Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups or splinter sects are not representative of Islam overall, just as extremist Christian terrorists such as the Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh are not representative of mainstream Christian beliefs.

Watch It

Watch this short video to learn more about the beliefs and practices of Islam.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=402

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14714

---

1. The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050 Why Muslims Are Rising Fastest and the Unaffiliated Are Shrinking as a Share of the World's Population (2015). Retrieved from

https://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/. ↵
2. Hackett, Conrad and David McClenden. 2018. "Christians Remain World's Largest Religious Group." https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/05/christians-remain-worlds-largest-religious-group-but-they-are-declining-in-europe/. ↵
3. "Muslim Holy Days," BBC. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/holydays/holydays.shtml. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- World Religions. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.3:k-vms25Q@8/15-2-World-Religions. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Jihad. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad#Muslim_public_opinion. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Islam. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Five Pillars of Islam. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_Pillars_of_Islam. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Introduction to Islam | Belief | Oprah Winfrey Show. **Provided by**: OWN. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgP_OSOS3IA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 14.11: Islam is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.12: Christianity

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the basic tenets of Christianity

Christianity

The largest religion in the world is Christianity, with 2.3 billion people, or 31.4% of the world's population identifying as Christian. Today, the four largest branches of Christianity are the Catholic Church (1.3 billion), Protestantism (920 million), the Eastern Orthodox Church (260 million) and Oriental Orthodoxy (86 million).

Christianity began 2,000 years ago in Palestine, with Jesus of Nazareth, who believers consider to be the Son of God and savior of the world. Christianity understands its namesake to be a charismatic leader who taught his followers about *caritas* (charity), or the principle that one should treat others as you would like to be treated yourself. Jesus, a Jew, rebelled against many of the Jewish laws and did things like heal the sick on the Sabbath—a day in which no work was to take place. Christians believe that Jesus died and was resurrected, and that Jesus' death was necessary so that humankind can obtain salvation.

The sacred text for Christians is the Bible. While Jews, Christians, and Muslims share many of same historical religious stories, their versions of these narratives and subsequent beliefs often diverge. In their shared sacred stories, it is suggested that the son of God—a messiah—will return to save God's followers. While Christians believe that he has already appeared in the person of Jesus Christ, Jews and Muslims disagree. While they recognize Christ as an important historical figure, their traditions don't believe that he is the son of God, and these faiths see the prophecy of the messiah's arrival as not yet fulfilled.

Within Christianity, different groups do not necessarily adhere to the same religious texts, though there are often important similarities among them. For instance, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, an established Christian sect, use the Book of Mormon, which they believe details other parts of Christian doctrine and Jesus' life that are not included in the Bible. Similarly, the Catholic Bible includes the Apocrypha, a collection of texts that, while part of the 1611 King James translation, is no longer included in Protestant versions of the Bible.

The 16th-century Reformation led to Protestants, or *protest*-ants, breaking off from the Catholic Church. Today 40% of Christians are Protestants, which include Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, and others.

Although monotheistic, Christians often describe their god through three manifestations that they call the Holy Trinity: the father (God), the son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a term Christians often use to describe religious experience, or how they feel the presence of the sacred in their lives. One foundation of Christian doctrine is the Ten Commandments, which decry acts considered sinful, including theft, murder, and adultery.

Christian holidays such as Christmas and Easter are widely celebrated in the United States and around the world. They are marked by gift-giving, singing, praying, decorating one's home, and preparing specific foods associated with the holidays. Many Christians and Jews strive to go to the holy sites of Israel, as a form of pilgrimage, which is similar to a Muslim's journey to Mecca to participate in the Hajj. Although Christians do not typically fast, Lent (or the forty days leading up to Easter) is a time of reflection and contemplation for Christians, and many choose to give up something as part of their preparation for the sacred holiday.

Like participants in other world religions, Christians have been persecuted for their beliefs, but have also historically been involved with persecuting non-Christians, such as during the Spanish Inquisition or the Crusades. Today politically volatile forms of Christian extremism, often combined with strains of nationalism and/or racism, is on the rise, with some terrorists explicitly claiming that their actions are rooted in Christian beliefs. Examples include the July, 2011 Norway attacks and the March, 2019 shootings at a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Watch It

Learn more about the basic beliefs and practices of Christianity in the following video.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=404

Further Research

PBS's *Frontline* explores "the life of Jesus and the rise of Christianity" in this documentary.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14715

Try It

Review each of the types of religion from this module in the following interactive.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=404

CC licensed content, Original

- Religion interactive. **Authored by**: Scott Barr for Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- World Religions. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:k-vms25Q@4/World-Religions. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Christianity. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Introduction to Christianity | Belief | Oprah Winfrey Network. **Provided by**: OWN. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Z6CArFTLmk. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 14.12: Christianity is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.13: Introduction to Religion in the United States

What you'll learn to do: describe religion in the United States



Figure 1. Lakewood church in Houston, Texas holds a service in a former sports arena which seats 16,000 people. (Photo courtesy of ToBeDaniel/Wikimedia Commons)

In examining the state of religion in the United States today, we see the complexity of religious life in our society, plus emerging trends like the rise of the megachurch, secularization, and the role of religion in social change.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Religion in the United States. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Religion in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:Xe8gZFyQ@3/Religion-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Lakewood Worship. **Authored by**: ToBeDaniel . **Provided by**: Wikimedia Commons. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lakewood_worship.jpg. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 14.13: Introduction to Religion in the United States is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.14: U.S. Trends in Religion

Learning Outcomes

- Describe current U.S. trends including megachurches and secularization

Megachurches

A **megachurch** is a Christian church that has a very large congregation averaging more than 2,000 people who attend regular weekly services. As of 2016, the largest megachurches in the United States were the Lakewood Church in Houston Texas, with an average weekly attendance of more than 43,500, and Life.Church in Edmond, Oklahoma, with up to 53,000 weekly attendees. Megachurches have existed in other parts of the world, especially South Korea, Brazil, and several African countries, but the rise of the megachurch in the United States is a fairly recent phenomenon that has developed primarily in California, Florida, Georgia, and Texas.

Since 1970 the number of megachurches in the United States has grown from about fifty to more than 1,000, most of which are affiliated with the Southern Baptist denomination (Bogan 2009). Approximately six million people are members of these churches (Bird and Thumma 2011). The architecture of these church buildings often resembles a sports arena or concert hall more than it does a traditional site of religious worship. The church may include jumbotrons (large-screen televisions typically used in sports arenas to show close-ups of an event). Worship services may feature contemporary music with drums and electric guitars and use state-of-the-art sound equipment. The buildings sometimes include food courts, sports and recreation facilities, and bookstores. Services such as child care and mental health counseling are often offered.

Typically, a single charismatic pastor leads the megachurch; at present, all are male. Some megachurches and their celebrity preachers have a wide-ranging television presence, and viewers all around the country watch and respond to their performances and frequent fundraising drives.

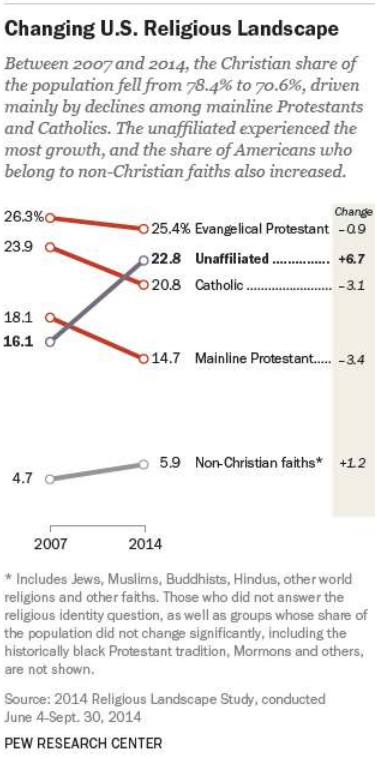


Figure 1. Christianity is declining in the United States, while those claiming to be unaffiliated or in non-Christian faiths is rising.

Besides size, U.S. megachurches share other traits, including conservative theology, evangelism, use of technology and social networking (Facebook, Twitter, podcasts, blogs), charismatic leaders, successful fundraising, multiple sites, and a predominantly white membership. They list their main focuses as youth activities, community service, and study of Scripture (Hartford Institute for Religion Research b).

Critics of megachurches believe they are too large to promote close relationships among fellow church members or with the pastor, such as those that might occur in smaller houses of worship. Supporters note that, in addition to the large worship services, congregations may also meet in small groups, and some megachurches have informal events throughout the week to allow for community-building (Hartford Institute for Religion Research a).

Secularization

August Comte, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx predicted that in modern society, positivism (Comte's term), rationality (Weber's term), and science would displace the religious perspectives from earlier societies. Weber believed membership in distinguished clubs would outpace membership in Protestant sects as a way for people to gain authority or respect, but this has not come to fruition. In our modern, scientific world, traditional religious values still play an important role, sometimes conflicting with scientific views and other times adjusting because of them, or supporting them. Some of the high-profile confrontations between leaders of religious and scientific communities over issues such as embryonic stem cells, genetic modification, and family planning illustrate that science has not simply replaced religion in the modern world [1]

Secularization is the decline in the social and cultural importance of religion. As discussed in previous sections, secularization has also been imposed in some areas of the world, as in China following its communist takeover in 1949. Some people suggest secularization is a root cause of many social problems, such as divorce, drug use, and educational downturn. One-time presidential contender Michele Bachmann even linked Hurricane Irene and the 2011 earthquake felt in Washington D.C. to politicians' failure to listen to God (Ward 2011).

While some scholars see the United States becoming increasingly secular, others observe a rise in fundamentalism, which is defined as belief in the unquestionable authority of sacred texts and/or religious leaders. Christian fundamentalists, for example, often claim that the events and descriptions in the Bible are true in a literal and material sense. Secularization interests social observers because it entails a pattern of change in a fundamental social institution. Compared to other democratic, industrialized countries, the United States is generally perceived to be a fairly religious nation. Whereas 65 percent of U.S. adults in a 2009 Gallup survey said religion was an important part of their daily lives, the numbers were lower in Spain (49 percent), Canada (42 percent), France (30 percent), the United Kingdom (27 percent), and Sweden (17 percent) (Crabtree and Pelham 2009). These numbers do seem to be declining as secularization or non-religious affiliation increases.

Watch It

Watch this video of sociologist Peter Kivisto as he explains the sociology of religion, and particularly how religion is changing through secularization. He reviews some of the ideas from key theorists and examines how and why secularization has not happened as much as some early sociologists predicted.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=408

Link to Learning

Check out the 20 most religious countries in the world and the 20 least religious countries in the world. Are you surprised by any of the rankings? Why?

Thank God for that Touchdown: Separation of Church and State

Imagine three public universities with football games scheduled on Saturday. At University A, a group of students in the stands who share the same faith decide to form a circle amid the spectators to pray for the team. For fifteen minutes, people in the circle share their prayers aloud among their group. At University B, the team ahead at halftime decides to join together in prayer, giving thanks and seeking support from God. This lasts for the first ten minutes of halftime on the sidelines of the field while spectators watch. At University C, the game program includes, among its opening moments, two minutes set aside for the team captain to share a prayer of his choosing with the spectators.

In the tricky area of separation of church and state, which of these actions is allowed and which is forbidden? In our three fictional scenarios, the last example is against the law while the first two situations are perfectly acceptable.

In the United States, a nation founded on the principles of religious freedom (many settlers were escaping religious persecution in Europe), how stringently do we adhere to this ideal? How well do we respect people's right to practice any belief system of their choosing? The answer just might depend on what religion you practice.

In 2003, for example, a lawsuit escalated in Alabama regarding a monument to the Ten Commandments in a public building. This led to a 2018 state amendment that voters passed which explicitly allows for the display of the Ten Commandments in public places. The Arkansas American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a lawsuit in 2018, seeking to have a Ten Commandments monument removed from the Arkansas State Capitol. The plaintiffs in these cases argue that any state-sanctioned recognition of religion suggests endorsement of one belief system at the expense of all others—contradictory to the idea of freedom of religion. A similar case in New Mexico resulted in the City of Bloomfield relocating its Ten Commandments monument from the front lawn of City Hall to a private property at a nearby church.

So what violates separation of church and state and what is acceptable? When it comes to Ten Commandment monuments on government property, it seems that if there are other monuments representing beliefs and values, it is not a violation of the First Amendment; however, if the monument stands on its own and is reasonably assumed to show preference or endorsement for one particular religious view, it is unconstitutional.

WAtch It

Watch the short video clip below and think about what sociological variables can influence religiosity in the U.S. and around the world.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=408

Think It Over

- Do you believe the United States is becoming more secularized or more fundamentalist?
- Comparing your generation to that of your parents or grandparents, what differences do you see in the relationship between religion and society
- What would popular media have you believe is the state of religion in the United States today?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14716

glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]megachurch:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]a Christian church that has a very large congregation averaging more than 2,000 people who attend regular weekly services[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]secularization:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]the historical decline in the and social and cultural importance of religion, religiosity, and sacred practices and beliefs[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

---

1. Evans 2010; Nelkin 2004 as quoted in "Traditional, Modern, and Post-Secular Perspectives on Science and Religion in the United States" by Timothy L. O'Brien and Shiri Roy in *The American Sociological Review*, 2015. http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/journals/ASR/Feb15ASRFeature2.pdf↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Religion in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:Xe8gZFyQ@3/Religion-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- List of the largest Protestant churches in the United States. **Provided by**: Wikpedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_the_largest_Protestant_churches_in_the_United_States. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Changing U.S. Religious Landscape. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: https://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/pf_15-05-05_rls2_1_310px/. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- How the U.S. public became less religious. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=10&v=ykr4WeHaJNE. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 14.14: U.S. Trends in Religion is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.15: Religion and Social Change

Learning Outcomes

- Give examples of religion as an agent of social change

Religion and Social Change

Religion has historically been an impetus for social change. The translation of sacred texts into everyday, non-scholarly language empowered people to shape their religions. The United States is no stranger to religion as an agent of social change. In fact, some of the first colonial settlers in what would become the United States were acting on religious convictions when they crossed the Atlantic and made their way to the New World.

Disagreements between religious groups and instances of religious persecution have led to wars and genocides—the very same European settlers that came to the New World looking for religious freedom persecuted Native Americans, forced conversions and family separation, and used religion to justify the practice of human slavery.

Liberation Theology

Liberation theology began as a movement within the Roman Catholic Church in the 1950s and 1960s in Latin America. Liberation theology combines Christian principles with political activism; it is the synthesis of Christian theology and Marxist socio-economic principles, emphasizing liberation for oppressed peoples. It uses the church to promote social change via the political arena, and it is most often seen in attempts to reduce or eliminate social injustice, discrimination, and poverty. One of the founding members of the movement, Father Gustavo Gutiérrez Merino (a Peruvian theologian and Dominican priest) said true liberation has the following dimensions:

- It addresses the elimination of the immediate causes of poverty and injustice with the goal of political and social liberation,
- It involves the the emancipation of the poor, the marginalized, or the oppressed and the removal of obstacles limiting their ability to develop with dignity
- It involves liberation from selfishness and sin as well as a re-establishment of a relationship with God and with other people.

Civil wars and political unrest in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s led to the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of people, including priests. One of these priests was the Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was killed in 1980 by a Salvadoran death squad, shortly after he asked the soldiers to stop killing each other. Romero was canonized in 2018 by Pope Francis.[1].

Although begun as a moral reaction against the poverty caused by social injustice in that part of the world, today liberation theology is an international movement that encompasses many churches and denominations, such as Jewish liberation or black liberation philosophy. Liberation theologians discuss theology from the point of view of the poor and the oppressed, and some interpret the scriptures as a call to action against poverty and injustice. In Europe and North America, feminist theology has emerged from liberation theology as a movement to bring social justice to women.

Liberation theology influences Pope Francis' philosophy from the Vatican today, as demonstrated by his pointed critiques of economic exploitation. In Pope Francis' first apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), he said, "Today we also have to say 'Thou shalt not' to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills." [2]

REligion and Gay PRide

What happens when a religious leader officiates a gay marriage against denomination policies? What about when that same minister defends the action in part by coming out and making her own lesbian relationship known to the church?

In the case of the Reverend Amy DeLong, it meant a church trial. Some leaders in her denomination assert that homosexuality is incompatible with their faith, while others feel this type of discrimination has no place in a modern church (Barrick 2011). As the LBGTQ+ community increasingly advocates for, and earns, basic civil rights, how will religious communities respond? Many

religious groups have traditionally discounted LBGTQ+ sexualities as “wrong.” However, these organizations have moved closer to respecting human rights by, for example, increasingly recognizing females as an equal gender.

Pope Francis, current head of the Catholic Church, has said that homosexual tendencies “are not a sin” and famously queried, “Who am I to judge?” Pope Francis was also the first pope to use the word “gay” in 2013. He also said no parent should throw a homosexual son or daughter out of their home [3]. This has resulted in a renewed conversation about homosexuality among the world’s Catholics, and among other religious denominations.

Link to Learning

Visit the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, a research institute examining U.S. and world religious trends, to learn more about religion and how it’s practiced.

Watch It

Watch this TEDTalk about Megan Phelps-Roper’s experience growing up in the controversial Westboro Baptist Church (WBC) and how and why she decided to leave the religious group. The WBC describes itself as “Primitive Baptist” that follows the five points of Calvinism, but it has been classified as a hate group, known for holding extreme views and for loudly picketing against homosexuality, Jews, the military, and other groups.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14717

glossary

liberation theology:
the use of a church to promote social change via the political arena

1. "Archbishop Oscar Romero," Liberation Theologies Online Library and Reference Center. https://liberationtheology.org/people-organizations/oscar-romero/. ↵
2. Stephenson, Wen. 2015. "How Pope Francis Came to Embrace..." The Nation. https://www.thenation.com/article/how-pope-francis-came-to-embrace-not-just-climate-justice-but-liberation-theology/. ↵
3. San Martin, Ines. 2019. "Pope Says Homosexual Tendencies..." https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2019/04/01/pope-francis-says-homosexual-tendencies-are-not-a-sin/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Religion in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:Xe8gZFyQ@3/Religion-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Liberation Theology. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberation_theology. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 14.15: Religion and Social Change is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.16: Putting It Together- Religion

In this module, you learned about religions around the world and the role that religion plays in society. Religion is a way to organize our values and beliefs, forming our world view, and often helping us to understand the difference between right and wrong. In some instances religion functions as a vehicle for social change. Religion is also a powerful force of contestation and of deciding which group is the "in-group" and which group is the "out-group." Geographical boundaries have been drawn and redrawn, and nation-states created over religious differences; wars and atrocities have been perpetrated under the mantle of religion.

Understanding religion also helps us to understand our social world. In this module, we used our sociological imaginations to examine religions historically and in their many variations. For example, most people know about a major world event like the Holocaust, but understanding the variety of Jewish people around the world can help us avoid stereotypes. Not all Jews wear yarmulkes (a small head covering) and while many do not eat pork, that is not all there is to being kosher (i.e., observing the dietary restrictions outlined in the Torah). Recent attacks on synagogues in the United States (Pittsburgh, PA in 2018 and Poway, CA in 2019 are just two recent examples) have reminded people all over the world of the dangers of anti-Semitism.

Islamophobia is also a concern in an increasingly polarized United States. A recent survey of 5,000 respondents showed that many do not consider Muslims to be sufficiently "American," with 67% of Democrats and only 36% of Republicans agreeing with the statement that "Muslim Americans want to fit in as American citizens." These skewed prejudices reveal a lack of understanding about religions.[1]. As the world becomes increasingly globalized, there is a greater need to better understand different religious perspectives and backgrounds. It is important to understand how religions norms and customs influence society, and to think critically about the intersectionality of religious background, gender, race, and other categories.

---

1. Sides, John and Dalia Mogahed. 2018. "Muslims in America: Public Perceptions in the Trump Era," Democracy Fund Voter Study Group. https://www.voterstudygroup.org/publication/muslims-in-america. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Putting It Together: Religion. **Authored by**: Sarah Hoiland for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 14.16: Putting It Together- Religion is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.17: Discussion- Religion

This module introduced two contrasting perspectives on religiosity in the United States: 1) society is becoming more secularized, or, 2) society is becoming more fundamentalist. Which position do you agree with and why? Provide relevant examples where possible.

Reply to two other students' posts, remembering to be courteous to others. Reply to one post you agree with and one you disagree with. Replies should add substance to the conversation.

Rubric

Criteria	Ratings			Points
Identifies position and defends it logically	No to few errors in logic or identification, treats topic with respect	Several errors in logic or displays misunderstanding of question, but attempts to answer	Riddled with errors in logic and/or shows blatant disrespect for subject	__/5
Replies to two other students' responses appropriately	Addresses two other students' arguments with sound logic with respect. Replies respectfully and logically to at least one opposing viewpoint	Replies may only agree, but add to the conversation, or responses to both viewpoints may exist, but display confusion	Replies to other students are insubstantial, such as "I agree," with little else; or disagree disrespectfully	__/5
			Total:	__/10

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Religion. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 14.17: Discussion- Religion is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

14.18: Assignment- World Religions

STEP 1: Choose a world religion to research, and briefly discuss religious experiences, beliefs, and rituals to which the religion subscribes.

STEP 2: Next, identify where it falls on the spectrum from cult to ecclesia, based on evidence you find in scholarly articles. Find at least two peer-reviewed articles from valid scholarly journals that support your claim. Then either write an essay or create an infographic poster about your findings.

STEP 3: **Write an essay.** Use proper APA citations. Essays should be at least 400-700 words long, written in academic and professional language, and be respectful of the topic you choose.

Rubric

Criteria	Ratings			Points
Identifies religion and classifies it correctly, using coherent logic throughout	No errors in logic or identification, treats topic with respect/ Few errors in logic or identification, treats topic with respect	Few to several errors in logic, identification is correct.	Riddled with errors in logic and/or shows blatant disrespect for subject religion	__/6
Finds two scholarly articles relevant to the topic, uses proper APA citations, meets length requirement	Cites two relevant scholarly articles appropriately, in text and with end of text citation	May not meet word count, but contains relevant scholarly sources, some errors in formatting	Articles are not relevant or from scholarly sources, or student uses incorrect APA formatting, fails to meet word count	__/6
Presentation	Creates well written essay or visually pleasing infographic that is informative	Partially meets requirement for a well-written essay or visually pleasing and informative infographic	Does not meet requirement for a well-written essay or visually pleasing and informative infographic	__/8
			Total	__/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: World Religions. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 14.18: Assignment- World Religions is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

15: Module 12- Education

15.1: Why It Matters- Education
15.2: Introduction to Global Education
15.3: Education Around the World
15.4: Universal Access to Education
15.5: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Education
15.6: Functionalist Theory on Education
15.7: Conflict Theory on Education
15.8: Symbolic Interactionist Theory on Education
15.9: Introduction to Issues in Education
15.10: Hot Topics in Education
15.11: Charter Schools and Homeschooling
15.12: Contemporary Issues in Education
15.13: Putting It Together- Education
15.14: Discussion- Education
15.15: Assignment- Education Infographic

This page titled 15: Module 12- Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.1: Why It Matters- Education

Why examine education as a social institution?



From the moment a child is born, his or her education begins. At first, education is an informal process in which an infant watches others and imitates them. As the infant grows into a young child, the process of education becomes more formal through play dates and preschool. Once in grade school, academic lessons become the focus of education as a child moves through the school system. But even then, education is about much more than the simple learning of facts.

Our education system also socializes us to our society through both formal processes and informal mechanisms. In addition to cognitive skills, we learn cultural expectations and norms, which are reinforced by our teachers, our textbooks, and our classmates. (For students outside the dominant culture, this aspect of the education system can pose significant challenges.) You might remember learning your multiplication tables in third grade and also learning the social rules of taking turns on the swings at recess.

Schools can be agents of change or conformity, teaching individuals to think outside of the family and the local norms into which they were born, while at the same time (as conflict theories will highlight) acclimatizing them to their tacit place in society. They provide students with skills for communication, social interaction, and work discipline that can create pathways to both independence and obedience.

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Education. **Authored by**: William Little. **Provided by**: BC OpenTextbooks. **Located at**: https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter16-education/. **Project**: Introduction to Sociology. **License**: *CC*

BY: Attribution

- Education image. **Authored by**: Nick Youngson. **Provided by**: Alpha Stock Images. **Located at**: http://alphastockimages.com/search.php?clearSearch=true&searchPhrase=education. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 15.1: Why It Matters- Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.2: Introduction to Global Education

What you'll learn to do: examine educational differences around the world



In today's world, some degree of education is necessary for people in most countries. Due to population growth and the proliferation of compulsory education, UNESCO has calculated that in the next 30 years, more people will receive formal education than in any prior period of human history. In fact, illiteracy and the percentage of populations without any schooling have already decreased, from 36% in 1960 to 25% in 2000, and under 14% in 2015.[1]

Education in its broadest, most general sense is a means through which the aims and habits of a group of people are transmitted from one generation to the next. Generally, education results from any experience that affects the way in which one thinks, feels, or acts—whether that be in a classroom setting, on your couch, or at the local recreation center. In its narrowest, most technical sense, education is the formal process (e.g., instruction in schools) by which society deliberately transmits accumulated knowledge, skills, customs, and values from one generation to the next. In this section, you'll examine the basic educational differences that exist around the world.

---

1. The World Bank. *Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)*. Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/se.adt.litr.zs. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Education and the Global Perspective. **Provided by**: Boundless. **Located at**: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/. **Project**: Boundless Sociology. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Singapore school hallway. **Authored by**: Cel Lisboa. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/us5m1-uOLfc. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 15.2: Introduction to Global Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.3: Education Around the World

Learning Outcomes

- Identify differences in educational resources around the world



Figure 1. These children are at a library in Singapore, where students are outperforming U.S. students on worldwide tests. (Photo courtesy of kodomut/flickr)

Education is a social institution through which a society's children are taught basic academic knowledge, learning skills, and cultural norms. Every nation in the world is equipped with some form of education system, though those systems vary greatly. The major factors that affect education systems are the resources and money that are utilized to support those systems in different nations, as well as how education is organized and administered to students. As you might expect, a country's wealth has much to do with the amount of money spent on education. Countries that do not have such basic amenities as running water are unable to support robust education systems or, in many cases, any formal schooling at all. The consequences of this worldwide educational inequality are of social concern for many countries, including the United States.

International differences in education systems are not solely a financial issue. The value placed on education, the amount of time devoted to it, and the distribution of education within a country also play a role in those differences. For example, students in South Korea spend 220 days a year in school, compared to the 180 days a year of their United States counterparts (Pellissier 2010). As of 2006, the United States ranked fifth among twenty-seven countries for college participation, but ranked sixteenth in the number of students who receive college degrees (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education 2006). These statistics may be related to how much time is spent on education in the United States.

Watch It

Watch this video to see ways that education varies throughout the globe as well as the important opportunity that education provides for those hoping to improve their circumstances.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=424

Results from the most recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2015, which is a test administered to 15-year-old students in participating economies every three years, showed that students in the United States lag far behind other high-income countries across different subjects, despite making the most progress in equity compared to other participating countries.[1] Countries in the Asian and Nordic regions tend to outperform other countries across all subjects tested (science, mathematics, and literacy), although their educational systems are vastly different in their goals and their administrative systems, suggesting that there is not a single recipe for "success" as measured by PISA.

Link to Learning

The PISA assessment is known to be influential around the world—watch this video to understand the system better: How does PISA work?

Analysts determined that the nations and city-states at the top of the rankings had several things in common. For one, they had well-established standards for education with clear goals for all students. Although these countries have well-delineated standards, they do not necessarily outline similar goals. For example, one country may emphasize cooperation, another student growth, or yet another may focus on equality, as in Finland.[2] Another thing the high-performing nations had in common was a tendency to

recruit teachers from the top 5 to 10 percent of university graduates each year, which is not the case for most countries (National Public Radio 2010).

Finally, there is the issue of social factors. One analyst from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the organization that created the test, attributed 20 percent of performance differences and the United States' low rankings to differences in social background. Researchers noted that educational resources, including money and quality teachers, are not distributed equitably in the United States. In the top-ranking countries, limited access to resources did not necessarily predict low performance. Analysts also noted what they described as "resilient students," or those students who achieve at a higher level than one might expect given their social background. In Shanghai and Singapore, the proportion of resilient students is about 70 percent. In the United States, it is below 30 percent. These insights suggest that the United States' educational system may be on a descending trajectory that could detrimentally affect the country's economy and its social landscape (National Public Radio 2010).

Recent research has found that the United States' low overall educational achievement is in large part due to an underperformance by the middle class. The poorest students in the United States, despite being among the most socioeconomically disadvantaged around the world, perform averagely relative to other poor students. The richest students from the U.S., despite being among the wealthiest, are also average when compared to other rich students – which is also an alarming finding. However, students in the middle of the SES distribution perform half a school year behind comparable middle-SES students, despite being among the wealthiest middle-SES groups in the world.[3]

Education in Finland

With public education in the United States under such intense criticism, why is it that Singapore, South Korea, and especially Finland (which is culturally most similar to the U.S. of those three), have such excellent educational achievement levels on PISA? Over the course of thirty years, Finland has pulled itself from among the lowest rankings by the Organization of Economic Cooperation (OEDC) to first place by 2012. Contrary to the rigid curriculum and long hours demanded of students in South Korea and Singapore, Finnish education often seems paradoxical to outside observers because it appears to break a lot of the rules we take for granted. It is common there for children to enter school at seven years old, where they will have more hours in recess and fewer hours in school than U.S. children—approximately 300 fewer hours. Their homework load is light when compared to all other industrialized nations (nearly 300 fewer hours per year in elementary school). There are no gifted programs, almost no private schools, and no high-stakes national standardized tests (Laukkanen 2008; LynNell Hancock 2011).

Prioritization is different than in the United States. In Finland, there is an emphasis on allocating resources for those who need them most, high standards, support for special needs students, qualified teachers taken from the top 10 percent of the nation's graduates (who must earn a Master's degree), and frequent evaluation of education methods, with a focus on balancing decentralization and centralization to maximize administrative efficiency.

"We used to have a system which was really unequal," stated the Finnish Education Chief in an interview. "My parents never had a real possibility to study and have a higher education. We decided in the 1960s that we would provide a free quality education to all. Even universities are free of charge. Equal means that we support everyone and we're not going to waste anyone's skills." As for teachers, "We don't test our teachers or ask them to prove their knowledge. But it's true that we do invest in a lot of additional teacher training even after they become teachers" (Gross-Loh 2014).

Finland has consistently performed among the top nations on the PISA. Despite the most recent PISA assessment showing that their scores have been declining since the 2006 assessment, Finland continues to be among the top performers and to exhibit some of the smallest achievement gaps between its richest and poorest students, a pattern that is consistent across the Nordic countries. Finland's school children didn't always excel. Finland built its excellent, efficient, and equitable educational system in a few decades from scratch, and the concept guiding almost every educational reform has been equity. The Finnish paradox is that by focusing on the bigger picture for all, Finland has succeeded at fostering the individual potential of most every child, a mechanism that has resulted in notable achievement on standardized international assessments.

Krista Kiuru, the Minister of Education, said "We created a school system based on equality to make sure we can develop everyone's potential. Now we can see how well it's been working. [In 2012] the OECD tested adults from twenty-four countries measuring the skill levels of adults aged sixteen to sixty-five on a survey called the PIAAC (Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies), which tests skills in literacy, numeracy, and problem solving in technology-rich environments. Finland scored at or near the top on all measures."

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14718

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14719

Formal and Informal Education

Education is not solely concerned with the basic academic concepts that a student learns in the classroom. Societies also educate their children, outside of the school system, in matters of everyday practical living. These two types of learning are referred to as formal education and informal education.

Formal education describes the learning of academic facts and concepts through a structured, programmatic curriculum. Arising from the tutelage of ancient Greek thinkers, centuries of scholars have examined topics through logical, systematic methods of learning. Education in earlier times was only available to the higher classes; they had the means for access to scholarly materials, plus the luxury of leisure time that could be used for learning. The Industrial Revolution, urbanization, the development of state-sponsored, publicly-funded institutions, and other social changes made education more accessible to the general population. Later, many families in the emerging middle class found new opportunities for schooling.



Figure 2. Parents teaching their children to cook provide an informal education. (Photo courtesy of eyeliam/flickr)

The modern U.S. educational system is the result of this progression. Today, basic education is considered a right and responsibility for all citizens. The United Nations outlines education as a basic human right in its Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Citation F), arguing that education must be free and universally-accessible.[4] Expectations of this system focus on formal education, with curricula and testing designed to ensure that students learn the facts and concepts that society believes are basic knowledge.

In contrast, **informal education** describes learning about cultural values, norms, and expected behaviors through societal participation. This type of learning occurs in family homes, community spaces, and through the education system. Our earliest learning experiences generally happen via parents, relatives, and others in our community. Through informal education, we learn how to dress for different occasions, how to perform regular life routines like shopping for and preparing food, and how to keep our bodies clean.

Cultural transmission refers to the way people come to learn the values, beliefs, and social norms of their culture. Both informal and formal education include cultural transmission. For example, a student will learn about cultural aspects of modern history in a U.S. History classroom. In that same classroom, the student might learn the cultural norm for asking a classmate out on a date through passing notes and whispered conversations, as well as learning how to respectfully voice opinions and meet deadlines for assignments.

Think It Over

- Has there ever been a time when your formal and informal educations in the same setting were at odds? How did you overcome that disconnect?

cultural transmission:

the way people come to learn the values, beliefs, and social norms of their culture

education:
a social institution through which a society's children are taught basic academic knowledge, learning skills, and cultural norms

formal education:
the learning of academic facts and concepts

informal education:
education that involves learning about cultural values, norms, and expected behaviors through participation in a society

1. PISA (2015). Results in Focus. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf. ↵
2. Gross-Loh, Christine (March 2014). *Finnish Education Chief: 'We Created a School System Based on Equality' An interview with the country's minister of education, Krista Kiuru.* Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/03/finnish-education-chief-we-created-a-school-system-based-on-equality/284427/. ↵
3. Kristie J. Rowley, Florencia Silveira, Mikaela J. Dufur, and Jonathan A. Jarvis. Forthcoming in Teachers' College Record. "US Achievement Underperformance in an International Context: Are Poor Students' PISA Scores to Blame?" ↵
4. United Nations (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/. ↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Education around the World. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:VdqlvHGw@6/Education-around-the-World. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- What does education mean to you?. **Authored by**: UNICEF. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un5msddQl6U. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 15.3: Education Around the World is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.4: Universal Access to Education

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the concept of universal access to education

Access to Education

Another global concern in education is **universal access**. This term refers to people's equal ability to participate in an education system. As called for by the UN's Universal Declaration on Human Rights, all individuals around the world are entitled to a free education at the primary level, both to develop skills and to become more functional members of society through learning tolerance and a respect for freedoms.

However, on a practical global level, educational access might be more difficult than the United Nations hoped for when first drafting the Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, particularly for certain groups based on class or gender. This was the case in much of the United States–even in the mid-twentieth century–though substantial progress has been made since that time.

Watch It

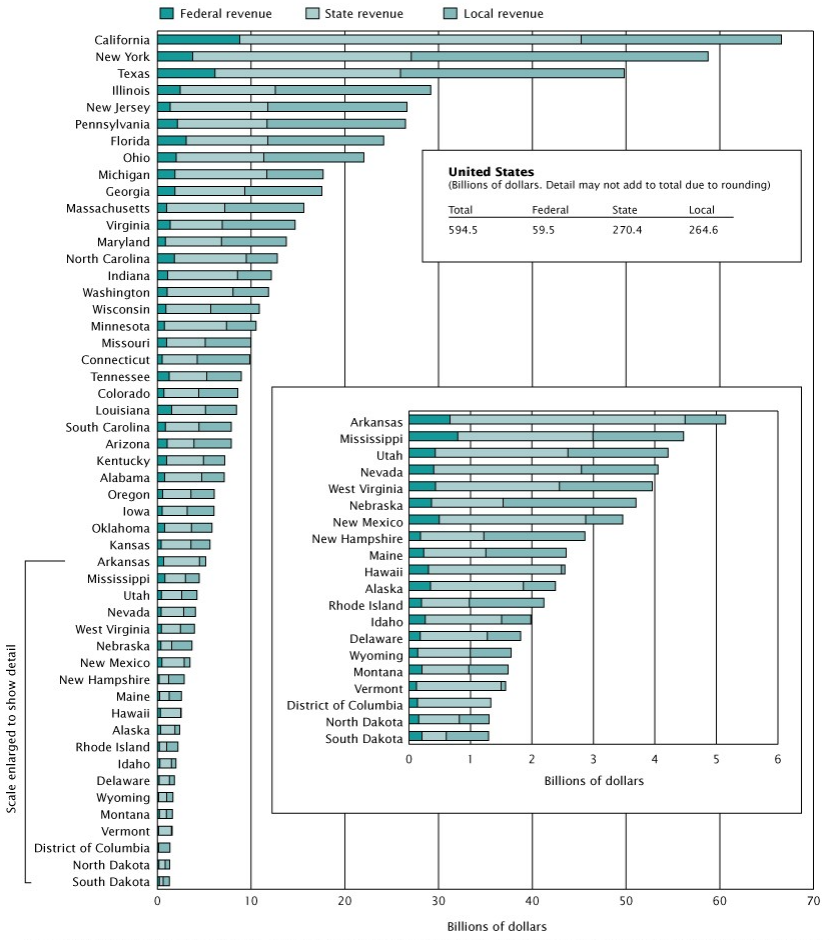
Watch this video, or other videos from Unicef's Education for All playlist to learn more about the importance of access to education.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=426

Universal Education in the United States

The modern idea of universal access arose in the United States as a concern for people with disabilities. In the United States, one way in which universal education is supported is through federal and state governments covering the cost of free public education. Of course, the way this plays out in terms of school budgets and taxes makes this an often-contested topic on the national, state, and community levels.

Figure 1.
Public Elementary-Secondary School System Revenue by Source and State: Fiscal Year 2012



Source: 2012 Census of Governments: Finance—Survey of School System Finances. Data are not subject to sampling error, but for information on nonsampling error and definitions, see introductory text. Data users who create their own estimates from these tables should cite the U.S. Census Bureau as the source of the original data only.

Figure 1. How has your state's revenue affected your educational opportunities? (Graph courtesy of Census of Governments: Survey of School System Finances 2012)

A precedent for universal access to education in the United States was set with the 1972 U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia's decision in *Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia*. This case was brought on the behalf of seven school-age children with special needs who argued that the school board was denying their access to free public education. The board maintained that the children's "exceptional" needs, which included mental retardation and mental illness, precluded their right to be educated for free in a public school setting. The board argued that the cost of educating these children would be too high and that the children would therefore have to remain at home without access to education.

This case was resolved in a hearing without any trial. The judge, Joseph Cornelius Waddy, upheld the students' right to education, finding that they were to be given either public education services or private education paid for by the Washington, D.C., board of education. He noted that

> Constitutional rights must be afforded citizens despite the greater expense involved … the District of Columbia's interest in educating the excluded children clearly must outweigh its interest in preserving its financial resources. … The inadequacies of the District of Columbia Public School System whether occasioned by insufficient funding or administrative inefficiency, certainly cannot be permitted to bear more heavily on the "exceptional" or handicapped child than on the normal child (*Mills v. Board of Education* 1972).

Today, the optimal way to include differently-abled students in standard classrooms is still being researched and debated. "Inclusion" is a method that involves complete immersion in a standard classroom, whereas "mainstreaming" balances time in a special-needs classroom with standard classroom participation. There continues to be social debate surrounding how to implement the ideal of universal access to education for students with a variety of needs.

WATCH IT

Inclusive education movements are not unique to the United States—UNICEF, which oversees education for the United Nations, encourages the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=426

UNIVERSAL EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD

Universal education continues to face challenges regarding geographical, socioeconomic and gender inequality. One of the United Nations' goals for Sustainable Development is that of a quality education for all—this is in response to the estimated 57 million children who are not enrolled in primary school, over half of which live in sub-Saharan Africa, and of which half live in violent conflict areas.[1]

Watch this video to better understand how poverty, lack of funding, teacher training, lack of supplies, discrimination, political instability, geography or distance, hunger or health concerns, and school fees or expenses all lead to unequal access to primary education: UN Goals: Achieving Universal Primary Education.

The following are the specific goals outlined by the UN:[2]

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes

4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and preprimary education so that they are ready for primary education

4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

4.A Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

4.B By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrollment in higher education, including vocational training and information and

communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

4.C By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states"

Further Research

Though it's a struggle, education is continually being improved in the developing world. To learn how educational programs are being fostered worldwide, explore the Education section of the Center for Global Development's website.

Think It Over

- Do you believe free access to schools has achieved its intended goal? Explain.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14722

glossary

universal access:
the equal ability of all people to participate in an education system

1. UN Sustainable Development Goals: Quality Education. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/. ↵
2. UN Sustainable Development Goals: Quality Education. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Education Around the World. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:VdqlvHGw@6/Education-around-the-World. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Bridging the education gap in Bangladesh. **Provided by**: UNICEF. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUYsAAUkQ_E&t=44s. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Inclusive Education and Children with Disabilities. **Provided by**: UNICEF. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=42&v=rfWhQUz2J70. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 15.4: Universal Access to Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.5: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Education

What you'll learn to do: examine the major theoretical perspectives on education



While it is clear that education plays an integral role in individuals' lives as well as society as a whole, sociologists view that role from many diverse points of view. Functionalists believe that education equips people to perform different functionally necessary roles in society. Conflict theorists view education as a means of widening the gap in social inequality through class reproduction and power imbalances. Feminist theorists point to evidence that sexism in education continues to prevent women from achieving a full measure of social equality. Symbolic interactionists study the dynamics of the classroom, the interactions between students and teachers, and how those negotiated meanings affect everyday life. In this section, you will learn about each of these perspectives.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Education. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Education. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.4:Q7ShLma2@8/16-2-Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Education. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Chairs, education, school. **Authored by**: Nathan Dumlao. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/ewGMqs2tmJI. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 15.5: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.6: Functionalist Theory on Education

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the functionalist view on education, including the manifest and latent functions of education

Functionalism

Functionalists view education as one of the more important social institutions in a society. They contend that education contributes two kinds of functions: manifest (or primary) functions, which are the intended and visible functions of education; and latent (or secondary) functions, which are the hidden and unintended functions.

Manifest Functions

There are several major manifest functions associated with education. The first is socialization. Beginning in preschool and kindergarten, students are taught to practice various societal roles that extend beyond the school setting. The French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), who is regarded as one of the founders of the academic discipline of sociology, characterized schools as "socialization agencies that teach children how to get along with others and prepare them for adult economic roles" (Durkheim 1898). Indeed, it seems that schools have taken on this responsibility in full.

This socialization also involves learning the rules and norms of the society as a whole. In the early days of compulsory education, students learned the dominant culture. Today, since the culture of the United States is increasingly diverse, students may learn a variety of cultural norms, not only that of the dominant culture. Conflict theorists, as we will discuss in the next section, would argue that we continue to instill dominant values in schools.

School systems in the United States also transmit the core values of the nation through manifest functions like social control. One of the roles of schools is to teach students conformity to law and respect for authority. Obviously, such respect, given to teachers and administrators, will help a student navigate the school environment. By organizing schools as bureaucracies, much like what is found in the labor market and in other social institutions, schools teach children what is commonly referred to as "the hidden curriculum." We will expand on this in the following section on conflict theory. This function also prepares students to enter the workplace and the world at large, where they will continue to be subject to people who have authority over them. Fulfillment of this function rests primarily with classroom teachers and instructors who are with students all day.

Education also provides one of the major methods used by people for upward social mobility through allowing individuals of all social backgrounds to gain credentials that will broaden their prospects in the future. This function is referred to as **social placement**. Colleges and graduate schools are viewed as vehicles for moving students closer to the careers that will give them the financial freedom and security they seek. As a result, college students are often more motivated to study areas that they believe will be advantageous on the socio-economic ladder. A student might value business courses over a class in Victorian poetry because she sees business coursework as a stronger vehicle for financial success and for higher placement within the social hierarchy.

Latent Functions

Education also fulfills latent functions. As you well know, much goes on in a school that has little to do with formal, programmatic education. For example, you might notice an attractive fellow student when he gives a particularly interesting answer in class—catching up with him and making a date speaks to the latent function of courtship fulfilled by exposure to a peer group in the educational setting.

The educational setting introduces students to social networks that might last for years and can help people find jobs after their schooling is complete. Of course, with the increase in social media platform use such as Facebook and LinkedIn, these networks established in school environments are easier than ever to maintain. Another latent function is the ability to work with others in small groups, a skill that is transferable to a workplace and that might not be learned in a homeschool setting.

The educational system, especially as experienced on university campuses, has traditionally provided a place for students to learn about various social issues. There is ample opportunity for social and political advocacy, as well as the ability to develop tolerance to the many views represented on campus. In 2011, the Occupy Wall Street movement swept across college campuses all over the United States, leading to demonstrations in which diverse groups of students were unified with the purpose of changing the political climate of the country. Social and political advocacy can take many forms, from joining established programs on international development to joining a particular party-affiliated group to supporting non-profit clubs at your school.

Table 1. According to functionalist theory, education contributes both manifest and latent functions.

Manifest and Latent Functions	
Manifest Functions: Openly stated functions with intended goals	Latent Functions: Hidden, unstated functions with sometimes unintended consequences
Socialization	Courtship
Transmission of culture	Social networks
Social control	Group work
Social placement	Creation of generation gap
Cultural innovation	Political and social integration



Figure 1. Starting each day with the Pledge of Allegiance is one way in which students are taught patriotism. (Photo courtesy of Jeff Turner/flickr)

Functionalists recognize other ways that schools educate and enculturate students. One of the most characteristic American values students in United States schools learn is that of individualism—the valuing of the individual over the value of groups or society as a whole. In countries such as Japan and China, where the good of the group is valued over the rights of the individual, students do not learn as they do in the United States that the highest rewards go to the “best” individual in academics or athletics. One of the roles of schools in the United States is fostering self-esteem; conversely, schools in Japan focus on fostering social esteem—the honoring of the group over the individual. As such, schools in the U.S. and around the world are teaching their students about larger national ideals and fostering institutions that are conducive to the cultural imprinting of those ideas.

In the United States, schools also fill the role of preparing students for competition in life. Obviously, athletics foster a competitive ethos, but even in the classroom students compete against one another academically. Schools also aid in teaching patriotism. Students recite the Pledge of Allegiance each morning and take history classes where they learn about national heroes and the nation’s past. The practice of saying the Pledge of Allegiance has become controversial in recent years, with individuals arguing that requiring or even expecting children to pledge allegiance is unconstitutional and as such may face legal challenges to its validity.[1][/footnote]

Another role of schools, according to functionalist theory, is that of sorting, or classifying students based on academic merit or potential. The most capable students are identified early in schools through testing and classroom achievements. Such students are placed in accelerated programs in anticipation of successful college attendance, a practice that is referred to as tracking, and which has also generated substantial opposition, both in the United States and abroad. This will be further discussed as it pertains to conflict theory, but a majority of sociologists are against tracking in schools because research has found that the positive effects of tracking do not justify the negative ones. Functionalists further contend that school, particularly in recent years, is taking over some of the functions that were traditionally undertaken by family. Society relies on schools to teach their charges about human sexuality as well as basic skills such as budgeting and filling out job applications—topics that at one time were addressed within the family.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14723

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14724

glossary

social placement:
the use of education to improve one’s social standing

1. [footnote]Bomboy, Scott (June 2018). "The history of legal challenges to the Pledge of Allegiance". Constitution Daily. Retrieved from https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/the-latest-controversy-about-under-god-in-the-pledge-of-allegiance. ↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Education. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.4:Q7ShLma2@8/16-2-Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Education. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 15.6: Functionalist Theory on Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.7: Conflict Theory on Education

Learning Outcomes

- Examine the perspective of conflict theory on education
- Examine the feminist theory on education

Conflict Theory

Conflict theorists do not believe that public schools reduce social inequality through providing equal opportunity. Rather, they believe that the educational system reinforces and perpetuates social inequalities that arise from differences in class, gender, race, and ethnicity. Where functionalists see education as serving a beneficial role, conflict theorists view it more negatively. To them, educational systems preserve the status quo and push people of lower status into obedience, which keeps them socioeconomically disadvantaged.



Figure 1. Conflict theorists see the education system as a means by which those in power stay in power. (Photo courtesy Thomas Ricker/flickr)

The fulfillment of one's education is closely linked to social class. Students of low socioeconomic status are generally not afforded the same opportunities as students of higher status, no matter how great their academic ability or desire to learn. Picture a student from a working-class home who wants to do well in school. On a Monday, he's assigned a paper that's due Friday. Monday evening, he has to babysit his younger sister while his divorced mother works. Tuesday and Wednesday, he works stocking shelves after school until 10:00 p.m. By Thursday, the only day he might have available to work on that assignment, he's so exhausted he can't bring himself to start the paper. His mother, though she'd like to help him, is so tired herself that she isn't able to give him the encouragement or support he needs. And since English is her second language, she has difficulty with some of his educational materials. They also lack a computer and printer at home, which most of his classmates have, so they rely on the public library or school system for access to technology. As this story shows, many students from working-class families have to contend with helping out at home, contributing financially to the family, poor study environments, and a lack of family support. This is a difficult match with education systems that adhere to a traditional curriculum that is more easily understood and completed by students of higher social classes.

Such a situation leads to social class reproduction, extensively studied by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. He researched how **cultural capital**, or cultural knowledge that serves as (metaphorical) currency that helps us navigate a culture, alters the experiences and opportunities available to French students from different social classes. Members of the upper and middle classes have more cultural capital than do families of lower-class status. As a result, the educational system maintains a cycle in which the dominant culture's values are rewarded and thus generationally reproduced. Instruction and tests cater to the dominant culture and leave others struggling to identify with values and competencies outside their social class. For example, there has been a great deal of discussion over what standardized tests such as the SAT truly measure. Many argue that the tests group students by cultural ability rather than by natural intelligence. For example, a question on the comprehensive reading section of the SAT inquires about a painting at an art museum. For a student who has not experienced art museums regularly, this question poses greater difficulty than it does for a student who grew up going to cultural events such as art exhibitions. Such mechanisms in public education reinforce and perpetuate inequalities.

Watch It

This video explains how cultural capital impacts a hypothetical student.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=432

Try It

Click through this presentation to learn more about cultural capital and consider the ways that it influences your own experiences with the world.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=432

The article referenced in the interactive above raises many important issues, and some questions we might pursue further are:

1. Are there any forms of cultural capital that can be acquired without economic capital? That is, can one cultivate habits of speech and appearance that suggest higher social status but which do not cost money? (or at least very much money?) What symbolic values are at work here?
2. If prestigious brand-name products, such as the Louis Vuitton handbag, confer some sort of high status on those who possess and display them, then how does the "branding" of the self function in our 21st-Century economy? When individuals brand themselves through social media and other public platforms, whether as employees or "influencers" and such, what status or characteristics are they trying to claim? What do they hope to gain?
3. The sociologist Charles Horton Cooley introduced the concept of the "looking glass self," which says we develop our sense of self according to how we believe others perceive us. Can this idea help us understand how social status and economic class are related? To what extent are status and class a matter of self-conscious performance for the benefit of an imagined audience?

The Hidden Curriculum

The cycle of rewarding those who possess cultural capital is found in formal educational curricula as well as in the **hidden curriculum**, which refers to the type of nonacademic knowledge that students learn through informal learning and cultural transmission. This hidden curriculum reinforces the positions of those with higher cultural capital and serves to bestow status unequally.

Watch IT

The Hidden Curriculum ideology is very prevalent in sociology, as sociologists seek to better understand how education is shaping society as a larger unit. This video explains what this means.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=432

This next video explains how sociologists examine the hidden curriculum from the various sociological perspectives.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=432

Tracking

Conflict theorists point to **tracking**, a formalized sorting system that places students on "tracks" (advanced versus low-achievers) that perpetuate inequalities. While educators may 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, conflict theorists feel that tracking leads to self-fulfilling prophecies in which students live up (or down) to teacher and societal expectations (Education Week 2004). The ways by which students are assigned to tracks differs both between and within schools. Today, it is less common for schools to rigidly track students in all subjects, and it is less common to track them into different vocational paths. Administrators and teachers in a given school may carefully avoid using the term "tracking" to describe the organization of their school's curriculum. Yet, schools maintain a variety of policies that sort students into different programs of study including: test scores and grade requirements, pre- and co-requisite requirements, and teacher recommendations.

Low-track classes tend to be primarily composed of low-income students, usually minorities, while upper-track classes are usually dominated by students from socioeconomically successful groups. In 1987, Jeannie Oakes theorized that the disproportionate

placement of poor and minority students into low tracks does not reflect their actual learning abilities. Rather, she argued that the ethnocentric claims of social Darwinists and the Anglo-Saxon-driven Americanization movement at the turn of the century combined to produce a strong push for “industrial” schooling, ultimately relegating the poorer minority students to vocational programs and a differentiated curriculum which she considered a lingering pattern in 20th century schools.

Some studies suggest that tracking can influence students’ peer groups and attitudes regarding other students. Adam Gamoran’s study (1992) shows that students are more likely to form friendships with other students in the same tracks than with students outside of their tracks. Since low-class and minority students are overrepresented in low tracks, and Whites and Asians generally dominate higher tracks, interaction among these groups can be discouraged by tracking. However, there is no research showing an academic benefit to low track students from such interaction.

Link to Learning

Tracking is not uncommon in the United States and can take many forms at any level of compulsory schooling. Did you experience tracking at your school? This student Ted talk explains some of the adverse consequences of separating students into high-performing, average, and below-average tracks: Student Tracking Needs to End.

To conflict theorists, schools play the role of training working-class students to accept and retain their position as lower-tier members of society. They argue that this role is fulfilled through the disparity of resources available to students in richer and poorer neighborhoods as well as through testing (Lauen and Tyson 2008). Did you know that a school’s resources are dependent on property taxes in the school district’s boundaries? This is a controversial policy, as it contributes to existing inequalities in the home and in the the neighborhood.

IQ tests have been attacked for being biased—for testing cultural knowledge rather than actual intelligence. For example, a test item may ask students what instruments belong in an orchestra. To correctly answer this question requires certain cultural knowledge—knowledge most often held by more affluent people who typically have more exposure to orchestral music. Though experts in the field of testing claim that bias has been eliminated from tests, conflict theorists maintain that this is impossible. These tests, to conflict theorists, are another way in which education does not so much provide opportunities as maintain established configurations of power.

Link to Learning

This NPR article, Why America’s Schools Have A Money Problem, explains more about inequalities in public schools created by differences in revenue generated through property taxes.

Think It Over

- Thinking of your school, what are some ways that a conflict theorist would say that your school perpetuates class differences?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14725

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14726

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14727

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14728

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14729

Feminist Theory



Figure 2. Some 1903 female graduates of Western University.

Feminist theory aims to understand the mechanisms and roots of gender inequality, particularly in education, as well as their societal repercussions. Like many other institutions of society, educational systems are characterized by unequal treatment and opportunity for women, despite the monumental progress that has been made in recent decades. The literacy rate among women worldwide is 83 percent, compared to the almost 90 percent observed for men,[1] and women around the world are still less likely than men to set foot in a school.[2]

Women in the United States have been relatively late, historically speaking, to be granted entry to the public university system. In fact, it wasn't until the establishment of Title IX of the Education Amendments in 1972 that discriminating on the basis of sex in U.S. education programs became illegal. In the United States, there is also a post-education gender disparity between what male and female college graduates earn, despite women now graduating college at higher rates than men (Citation C). A study released in May 2011 showed that, among men and women who graduated from college between 2006 and 2010, men out-earned women by an average of more than $5,000 each year. First-year job earnings for men averaged $33,150; for women the average was $28,000 (Godofsky, Zukin, and van Horn 2011). Similar trends are seen among salaries of professionals in virtually all industries.[3]

Here are a few facts about the gendered wage gap from the AAUW (2018):[4]

$$\text{EARNINGS RATIO} = \frac{\text{WOMEN'S MEDIAN EARNINGS}}{\text{MEN'S MEDIAN EARNINGS}}$$

$$\text{2017 EARNINGS RATIO} = \frac{\$41{,}997}{\$52{,}146} = 80\%$$

Figure 3. One way to think about the gender pay gap is by looking at the difference in median earnings for men and women.

1. Women earn 80% of what men make.
2. Racial minority women earn even less when compared to white men – with the lowest being Hispanic/Latina women making 53% of what men make.
3. Utah has the largest pay gap, California has the smallest.
4. The gender gap is found across nearly all professions.

When women face limited opportunities for education, their capacity to achieve equal rights, including financial independence, is limited. Feminist theory seeks to promote women's rights to equal education (and its resultant benefits) across the world.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14730

Glossary

cultural capital:
cultural knowledge that serves (metaphorically) as currency to help one navigate a culture

hidden curriculum:

the type of nonacademic knowledge that people learn through informal learning and cultural transmission

sorting:
classifying students based on academic merit or potential

tracking:
a formalized sorting system that places students on “tracks” (advanced, low achievers) that perpetuate inequalities

1. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Literacy rate, adult male (% of males ages 15 and above). Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.MA.ZS?view=chart. ↵
2. UNESCO. Gender Equality in Education. Retrieved from http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/gender-equality-education. ↵
3. Semuels, Alana (November 2017). "Poor Girls Are Leaving Their Brothers Behind." Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/11/gender-education-gap/546677/. ↵
4. AAUW. "The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap." Retrieved from https://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silviera for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Education. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.4:Q7ShLma2@8/16-2-Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Education. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Tracking (education). **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Tracking_(education). **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Cultural Capital Interactive. **Authored by**: Scott Barr for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

All rights reserved content

- Cultural Capital. **Authored by**: Sociology Live!. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DBEYiBkgp8. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- The Hidden Curriculum | Part 2 of 2: Sociological Perspectives. **Provided by**: HumberEDU. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77psBGyYj94. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- The Hidden Curriculum | Part 1 of 2: Norms, Values and Procedures. **Provided by**: HumberEDU. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuLhmDE9Exo. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Image on gender pay gap. **Provided by**: AAUW. **Located at**: https://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

Public domain content

- female graduates in 1903. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Group_of_women_in_cap_and_gown_at_Western_College_on_Tree_Day_1903_(3191801017).jpg. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 15.7: Conflict Theory on Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.8: Symbolic Interactionist Theory on Education

Learning Outcomes

- Examine the symbolic interactionist view of education

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism views education as one way that **labeling theory** can be seen in action. A symbolic interactionist might say that this labeling has a direct correlation to those who are in power and those who are labeled. For example, low standardized test scores or poor performance in a particular class often lead to a student who is labeled as a low achiever. Such labels are difficult to "shake off," which can create a **self-fulfilling prophecy** (Merton 1968) and result in outcomes that could have been prevented.

In his book *High School Confidential*, Jeremy Iverson details his experience as a Stanford graduate posing as a student at a California high school. One of the problems he identifies in his research is that of teachers applying labels that students are never able to lose. One teacher told him, without knowing he was a bright graduate of a top university, that he would never amount to anything (Iverson 2006). Iverson obviously didn't take this teacher's false assessment to heart. But when an actual seventeen-year-old student hears this from a person with authority over her, it's no wonder that the student might begin to "live down to" that label.

The labeling with which symbolic interactionists concern themselves extends to the very degrees that symbolize completion of education. **Credentialism** embodies the emphasis on certificates or degrees to show that a person has a certain skill, has attained a certain level of education, or has met certain job qualifications. These certificates or degrees serve as a symbol of what a person has achieved, allowing the labeling of that individual to be based on a recognized, sequential program of instruction.

Indeed, as these examples show, labeling theory can significantly impact a student's schooling. This is easily seen in the educational setting, as teachers and more powerful social groups within the school affix labels that are adopted by the larger school population and result in negative, wide repercussions.

Grade Inflation: When Is an A Really a C?

Consider a large-city newspaper publisher. Ten years ago, when culling résumés for an entry-level copywriter, they were well assured that if they selected a grad with a GPA of 3.7 or higher, they'd have someone with the writing skills to contribute to the workplace on day one. But over the last few years, they've noticed that A-level students don't have the competency evident in the past. More and more, they find themselves in the position of educating new hires in abilities that, in the past, had been mastered during their education.

This story illustrates a growing concern referred to as grade inflation—a term used to describe the observation that the correspondence between letter grades and the achievements they reflect has been declining over time. Put simply, what used to be considered C-level, or average, now often earns a student a B, or even an A.

Why is this happening? Research on this emerging issue is ongoing, so no one is quite sure yet. Some cite the alleged shift toward a culture that rewards effort instead of product, i.e., the amount of work a student puts in raises the grade, even if the resulting product is of poor quality. Another frequently cited contributor is the pressure many instructors feel to earn positive course evaluations from their students—records that can factor into teacher compensation, award of tenure, or the future career of a recent graduate teaching entry-level courses. The fact that these reviews are commonly posted online exacerbates this pressure.

Other studies don't agree that grade inflation exists at all. In any case, the issue is hotly debated, with many being called upon to conduct research to help us better understand and respond to this trend (National Public Radio 2004; Mansfield 2005).

Think It Over

- Which sociological theory best describes your view of education? Explain why.
- Based on what you know about symbolic interactionism and feminist theory, what do you think proponents of those theories see as the role of the school?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14731

glossary

credentialism:
the emphasis on certificates or degrees to show that a person has a certain skill, has attained a certain level of education, or has met certain job qualifications

labeling theory:
the idea that how people are labelled or classified influences the way they come to self-identify and behave; related to self-fulfilling prophecy

self-fulfilling prophecy:
an idea that becomes true when acted upon; the way that a person's beliefs can affect their behavior

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Education. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.4:Q7ShLma2@8/16-2-Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Education. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 15.8: Symbolic Interactionist Theory on Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.9: Introduction to Issues in Education

What you'll learn to do: identify and discuss historical and contemporary issues in education



As schools strive to fill a variety of roles in the lives of students, there are many issues and challenges beyond simply educating students, disseminating knowledge, and issuing credentials. Many students face myriad challenges including bullying, violence, the effects of declining funding, and other impediments to their education. In this section, you'll examine some of these modern issues and concerns.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Issues in Education. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Summary modified from Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- **Authored by**: Jerry Wang. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/jfnUC7s3iuw. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 15.9: Introduction to Issues in Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.10: Hot Topics in Education

Learning Outcomes

- Consider legal and equality concerns in education

When Americans are asked about their opinion of public education on the Gallup poll each year, reviews are mixed at best (Saad 2008). Schools are no longer merely a place for learning and socializing. With the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruling in 1954, schools became a repository of politicized legal action that is at the heart of several issues in education.

Equal Education

Until the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, schools had operated under the precedent set by *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, which allowed racial segregation in schools and private businesses (the case dealt specifically with railroads) and introduced the troubling phrase "separate but equal" into the U.S. lexicon. *Brown* overruled this, declaring that state laws establishing separate schools for black and white students were, in fact, unequal and therefore unconstitutional in light of the 14th Amendment (which guarantees equality before the law).

While the ruling paved the way toward civil rights, it was also met with opposition in many communities. In Arkansas in 1957, the governor mobilized the state National Guard to prevent black students from entering Little Rock Central High School. President Eisenhower, in response, sent members of the 101st Airborne Division from Kentucky to uphold the students' right to enter the school. In 1963, almost ten years after the ruling, Governor George Wallace of Alabama used his own body to block two black students from entering the auditorium at the University of Alabama to enroll in the school. Wallace's desperate attempt to uphold his policy of "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever," stated during his 1963 inauguration (PBS 2000), became known as the "Stand in the Schoolhouse Door." He refused to grant entry to the students until a general from the Alabama National Guard arrived on President Kennedy's order.

WATCH IT

Click on this link (https://youtu.be/xERXusiEszs?t=212) to watch a video showing footage of the Little Rock 9, the students who the National Guard was sent to prevent black students from entering Little Rock Central High School. This next video is an interview with one of the Little Rock 9 students discussing her experience.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=438



Figure 1. President Eisenhower sent members of the 101st Airborne Division from Kentucky to escort black students into Little Rock Central High School after the governor of Arkansas tried to deny them entry. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

Presently, students of all races and ethnicities are permitted in America's schools, but there remains a troubling gap in the relative quality of education they receive. The long-term socially embedded effects of racism—and other forms of discrimination and disadvantage—have produced a range of challenges for many students. Those from wealthy families and those of lower socioeconomic status do not receive the same opportunities. This the result of many factors, including the policy wherein economic resources are dependent on local property taxes, which results in wealthier neighborhoods having higher quality schools. In demographic and sociological literature, this is often referred to as cumulative advantage or disadvantage.

Today's public schools, at least in theory, are positioned to help remedy those gaps. To help ensure universal access, this system was legally mandated ed to accept and retain all students regardless of race, religion, social class, and the like. Moreover, public schools are held accountable to equitable per-student spending (Resnick 2004). Private schools, usually only accessible to students from high-income families, and schools in more affluent areas generally enjoy access to greater resources and better opportunities. In fact, the strongest predictors for student performance include socioeconomic status and family background. Children from families of lower socioeconomic status often enter school with already acquired learning deficits, and must overcome these obstacles alongside their institutionally assigned responsibilities. These patterns, uncovered in the landmark Coleman Report of 1966, are still relevant today, as sociologists generally agree that there is a great divide in the performance of white students from affluent backgrounds and their nonwhite, less affluent counterparts. The Coleman Report, commissioned in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, found that the racial and social demographics of schools, along with the student's home and family life, had a greater effect on student learning than the quality of the school institution itself.

Despite these shortcomings in equal access to education, which have been well-established by academic research, it is important to note that schools do narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. Research shows that it is often the non-school environment that presents the greatest inequality, and that schools, despite being unequal in quality and opportunity, present a smaller inequality than what is seen in students' homes. This conclusion is drawn from the evidence that the gap in cognitive skills grows mostly during the summer months, when students are not attending school and when their progress is exclusively dependent on the home environment and the resources there.[1]

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14732

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14733

Head Start

The findings in the Coleman Report were so powerful that they brought about two major changes to education in the United States. The federal **Head Start program**, which is still active and successful today, was developed to give low-income students an opportunity to make up the preschool deficit discussed in James S. Coleman's findings. The program provides academic-centered preschool to students of low socioeconomic status.

Busing

The second major change brought about after the release of the Coleman Report was less successful than the Head Start program, and has generated a great deal of controversy. With the goal of further desegregating education, courts across the United States ordered some school districts to begin a program known as "busing." This program involved transporting students to schools outside their neighborhoods (and therefore to schools they would not normally have the opportunity to attend) in an effort to balance racial diversity. This policy was met with substantial public resistance from people on both sides, whether dissatisfied with white students traveling to inner city schools, or minority students being transported to schools in the suburbs.

No Child Left Behind

In 2001, the George W. Bush administration passed the **No Child Left Behind Act**, which requires states to test students in designated grades. The results of those tests determine eligibility for schools to receive federal funding. Schools that do not meet the standards set by the act risk funding cuts. Sociologists and teachers alike have contended that the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act is far more negative than positive, arguing that a "one size fits all" concept cannot apply to education. The act's rationale for funding also seemed backwards. If students at a school are not performing as well as they might, shouldn't those very schools be the ones eligible for increased government funding?

Teaching to the Test

The funding implications of the No Child Left Behind Act have led to the phenomenon commonly called "teaching to the test," wherein a curriculum narrowly focuses on preparing students to succeed on standardized tests, but fails to address broader educational goals and learning concepts. At issue are two approaches to classroom education: the notion that teachers impart knowledge that students are obligated to absorb, versus the concept of student-centered learning that seeks to teach children not

facts, but problem solving abilities and learning skills. Both types of learning have been valued in the U.S. school system. The former, to critics of "teaching to the test," only equips students to regurgitate facts, while the latter, to proponents of the other camp, fosters lifelong learning and transferable work skills.

Bilingual Education

New issues of inequality have entered the national conversation in recent years regarding bilingual education, which attempts to give equal opportunity to minority students through offering instruction in languages other than English. Though it is actually an old issue (bilingual education was federally mandated in 1968), it remains a controversial one. Supporters of bilingual education argue that all students deserve equal opportunities in education—opportunities some students cannot access without instruction in their first language. On the other side, those who oppose bilingual education often point to the need for English fluency in everyday life and in the professional world.

waTCH IT

There are academic and professional benefits to being bilingual, which has also pushed for dual-language learning in the United States. This TED talk explains some of the benefits of multilingualism.

Common Core

"The Common Core is a set of high-quality academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy (ELA). These learning goals outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade." Included in the list of standards is that they be evidence-based, clear, understandable, consistent, aligned with college and career expectations, include the application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills, and are informed by other top-performing countries (The Common Core State Standards Initiative 2014).

The primary controversy over the Common Core State Standards, or simply the Common Core, from the standpoint of teachers, parents and students, and even administrators, is not so much the standards themselves, but the assessment process and the high stakes involved. Both the national teachers' unions in the United States initially agreed to them, at least in principle. But both have since become strongly critical. Given a public education system that is primarily funded by local property taxes, rather than by state and federal funds distributed to all schools equally, we see a wide disparity in funding-per-student throughout the country, with the result that students in schools funded by affluent communities are clearly better off than those who are not–even when the schools being compared are located just a few miles apart. As such, broad standards for academic performance that do not account for inherent disadvantages in the education system hurt certain groups of students.

What gets measured?

Much has been said about the quality, usefulness, and even accuracy of many of the standardized tests. Math questions have been found to be misleading and poorly phrased; for instance, "Tyler made 36 total snowfalls with is a multiple of how triangular snowflakes he made. How many triangular snowflakes could he have made?"

Some of the essays had questions that made little sense to the students, or to adults, for that matter. One notable test question in 2014 that dominated the Internet for a time was about "The Hare and the Pineapple." This was a parody of the well-known Aesop fable of the race between the hare and the tortoise that appeared on a standardized test for New York's eighth-grade exam–though with the tortoise changed into a talking pineapple. With the pineapple clearly unable to participate in a race and the hare winning, "the animals ate the pineapple." "Moral: Pineapples don't have sleeves."

At the end of the story, questions for the student included, "Which animal spoke the wisest words?" and "Why did the animals eat the talking fruit?" Evidently, this question is problematic and rather confusing, leading students to underperform based on standard measures.

Think It Over

- Is busing a reasonable method of serving students from diverse backgrounds? If not, suggest and support an alternative.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14734

glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]Head Start program:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]a federal program that provides academically focused preschool to students of low socioeconomic status[/glossary-definition]

[glossary-term]No Child Left Behind Act:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]an act that requires states to test students in prescribed grades, with the results of those tests determining eligibility to receive federal funding[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

---

1. Downey, D., Von Hippel, P., & Broh, B. (2004). Are Schools the Great Equalizer? Cognitive Inequality during the Summer Months and the School Year. American Sociological Review, 69(5), 613-635. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3593031↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Issues in Education. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:mEvgXsPr@4/Issues-in-Education. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- The Little Rock 9 - Arkansas 1957. **Authored by**: mrgreen1066. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=264&v=xERXusiEszs. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Little Rock Nine Member Looks Back At Integrating White High School In 1957 . **Provided by**: Today. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=329&v=9MDLJuLNxMc. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 15.10: Hot Topics in Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.11: Charter Schools and Homeschooling

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss alternatives to traditional public schools

Charter Schools and School Choice

Charter schools are self-governing public schools that have signed agreements with state governments to improve student outcomes when poor performance has been recorded on tests required by the No Child Left Behind Act. While such schools receive public money, they are not subject to the same rules that apply to regular, state-run public schools. In return, they make agreements to achieve specific results. Charter schools, as part of the public education system, are free to attend, and are accessible via lottery when there are more students seeking enrollment than there are spots available at the school. Some charter schools specialize in certain fields, such as the arts or science, while others are more generalized.

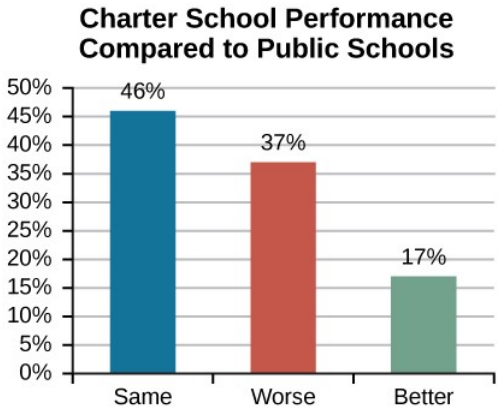


Figure 1. The debate over the performance of charter schools vs. public schools is a charged one. Dozens of studies have been made on the topic, and some, as reflected in Stanford's CREDO study above, do not support the claim that charter schools always outperform public schools. (Source: Based on the CREDO study Multiple Choice: Charter School Performance in 16 States)

President Trump appointed Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education at the start of his administration. DeVos had a history of supporting charter schools, which she argued were a significant part of the "school choice" movement. Mrs. DeVos' support for charter schools is rooted in the capitalist idea that if parents have a choice to send their children to a charter school, and charter schools receive funding from the government based on number of children, this will incentivize public schools to improve their quality of teaching.[1] School choice, however, does not merely include public and charter schools; DeVos wants to expand vouchers, which would allow lower- and middle-income families access to private schooling.

WATCH IT

Betsy DeVos, the current Secretary of Education, is an advocate for vouchers and charter schools, which has resulted in a revival in the school choice debate. This video clip from PBS explains just some of the mixed opinions on charter schools, their varied success rates, and the impact of charters in some predominately black communities.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=440

Money as Motivation in Charter Schools

Public school teachers typically find stability, comprehensive benefits packages, and long-term job security. In 2011, one charter school in New York City set out to learn if teachers would give up those protections if it meant an opportunity to make far more money than the typical teacher's salary. The Equity Project is a privately run charter school that offered teachers positions paying $125,000 per year (more than twice the average salary for teachers). The school's founder and principal, Zeke Vanderhoek, explained that this allows him to attract the best and brightest teachers to his school—to decide whom he hires and how much they are paid—and build a school where "every teacher is a great teacher" (CBS News 2011). He sees attracting top teachers as a direct

road to student achievement. A nationwide talent search resulted in the submission of thousands of applications. The final round of interviews consisted of a day-long trial run. The school looks for teachers who can show evidence of student growth and achievement. They also must be highly engaging.

The majority of students at the school are African American and Hispanic, from poor families, and reading below grade level. The school faces the challenge faced by schools all over the United States: getting poor, disadvantaged students to perform at the same level as their more affluent counterparts. Vanderhoek believes his team of dream teachers can help students close their learning gaps by several grade levels within one year.

This is not an affluent school. It is publicly funded and classes are held in trailers. Most of the school's budget goes into the teachers' salaries. There are no reading or math aides; those roles are filled by the regular classroom teachers.

The experiment may be working. Students who were asked how they feel about their education at The Equity Project said that their teachers care if they succeed and give them the attention they need to achieve at high levels. They cite the feeling that their teachers believe in them as a major reason for liking school for the first time.

Of course, with the high salary comes high risk. Most public schools offer contracts to teachers. Those contracts guarantee job security. But The Equity Project is an at-will employer. Those who don't meet the standards set by the school will lose their jobs. Vanderhoek does not believe in teacher tenure, which he feels gives teachers "a job for life no matter how they perform" (CBS News 2011). With a teaching staff of roughly fifteen, he terminated two teachers after the first year. In comparison, in New York City as a whole, only seven teachers out of 55,000 with tenure have been terminated for poor performance.

One of those two teachers who was let go said she was relieved, citing eighty- to ninety-hour work weeks and a decline in the quality of her family life. Meanwhile, there is some question as to whether the model is working. On one hand, there are individual success stories, such as a student whose reading skills increased two grade levels in a single year. On the other, there is the fact that on the state math and reading exams taken by all fifth graders, the Equity Project students remained out-scored by other district schools (CBS News 2011). Do charter schools actually work? A Stanford CREDO study in 2009 found "there is a wide variance in the quality of the nation's several thousand charter schools with, in the aggregate, students in charter schools not faring as well as students in traditional public schools" (CREDO 2009).

Home Schooling

Homeschooling refers to children being educated in their own homes, typically by a parent, instead of in a traditional public or private school system. Proponents of this type of education argue that it provides an outstanding opportunity for student-centered learning while circumventing problems that plague today's education system. Opponents counter that homeschooled children miss out on the opportunity for social development that occurs in standard classroom environments and school settings.

Proponents say that parents know their own children better than anyone else and are thus best equipped to teach them. Those on the other side of the debate assert that childhood education is a complex task and requires the degree (or several) that teachers spend years earning. After all, they argue, a parent may know their child's body better than anyone, yet they seeks out a doctor for their child's medical treatment. Just as a doctor is a trained medical expert, teachers are trained education experts.

The National Center for Education Statistics shows that the quality of the national education system is the major concern when choosing to homeschool their children, expressing particular concerns about school environments.[2] White families make up a significant majority of homeschooling environments (83 percent). To date, researchers have not found consensus in studies evaluating the success, or lack thereof, of homeschooling.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14735

---

1. Plesset, Emilie (March 2018). "U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos reopens the charter school debate." PBS. Retrieved from: https://www.pbs.org/weta/washingtonweek/blog-post/us-education-secretary-betsy-devos-reopens-charter-school-debate. ↵
2. Redford, J., Battle, D., and Bielick, S. (2017). Homeschooling in the United States: 2012 (NCES 2016-096REV). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=91. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Located at**: http://Lumen%20Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Issues in Education. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:mEvgXsPr@4/Issues-in-Education. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- In the black community, a division over charter schools. **Authored by**: PBS News Hour. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyBUlSrIOh4. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 15.11: Charter Schools and Homeschooling is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.12: Contemporary Issues in Education

Learning Outcomes

- Examine teacher training, affirmative action, and the cost of education as contemporary issues in education

Teacher Training

Schools face the difficult issue of measuring teacher effectiveness. For example, most high school teachers perceive students as being prepared for college, while most college professors do not see those same students as prepared for the rigors of collegiate study. Some feel that this is due to primary and secondary-level (i.e., high school) teachers being unprepared to teach, as many teachers in the United States teach subjects that are outside their own field of study. This is not the case in many European and Asian countries. Only eight percent of United States fourth-grade math teachers majored or minored in math, compared with 48 percent of math teachers in Singapore. Further, students in disadvantaged American schools are 77 percent more likely to be educated by a teacher who didn't specialize in the subject matter than students who attend schools in affluent neighborhoods (Holt, McGrath, and Seastrom 2006). Consequently, there are two broad structural problems in regards to teacher training in the United States: first, teachers are, according to some, underprepared to teach students due to a discrepancy between their academic preparation and their professional expectations; second, better-prepared teachers are more likely to be found in wealthier neighborhoods, further contributing to already existing educational inequality.

Social Promotion

Social promotion is another issue identified by sociologists. This is the concept of passing students to the next grade regardless of whether they've met the standards for that grade. Critics of this practice argue that students should never move to the next grade if they have not mastered the skills required to "graduate" from the previous grade. Proponents of the practice question what a school is to do with a student who is three to four years older than other students in his or her grade, saying this creates more pressing issues than the practice of social promotion. Others are more concerned about the social consequences of holding students back, and about the social development of older students who would be surrounded by younger students.

Affirmative Action

Affirmative action has been a subject of debate, primarily as it relates to the admittance of college students. Opponents suggest that, under affirmative action, minority students are given greater weighted priorities for admittance. Supporters of affirmative action point to the way in which it grants opportunities to students who are traditionally done a disservice in the college admission process.

WATCH IT

Affirmative action seeks to address racial/ethnic inequality in higher education, and is a heavily contested topic in education debates.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=442

Rising Student Loan Debt

In a growing concern, the amount of college loan debt that students are taking on is creating a new social challenge. As of 2018, the average debt of students with loans was $37,172[1] upon graduation, leaving students hard-pressed to repay their education while earning entry-level wages, even at the professional level (Lewin 2011). With the inconsistent state of unemployment since the 2008 recession, jobs are often scarce, making student debt more burdensome, and in some cases, unserviceable. As recent graduates find themselves unable to meet their financial obligations, all of society is affected.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14736

Is College Worth It?



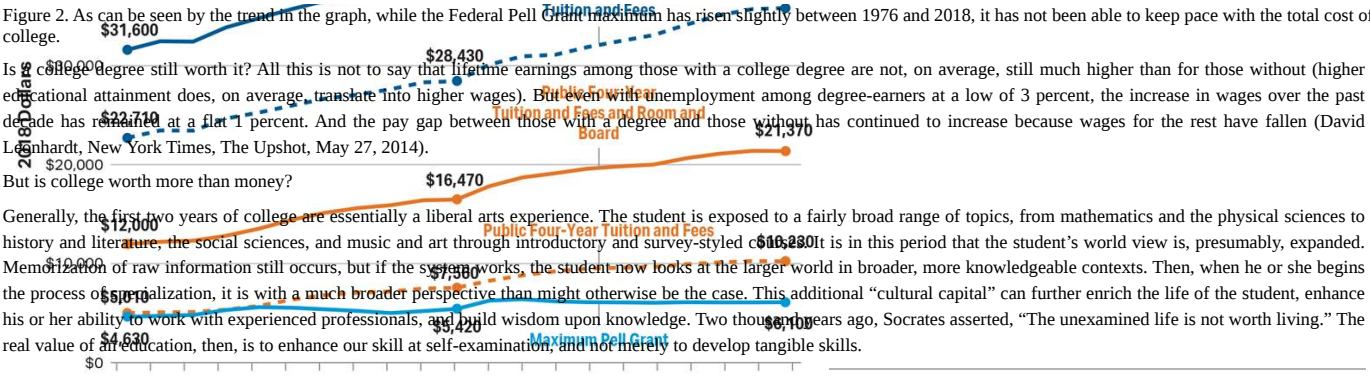
Figure 1. Students who do graduate from college are likely to begin a career in debt.
(Photo courtesy of Kevin Dooley/flickr)

"What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves" (Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed). David Simon, in his book *Social Problems and the Sociological Imagination: A Paradigm for Analysis* (1995), points to the notion that social problems are, in essence, contradictions—that is, statements, ideas, or features of a situation that are opposed to one another. Consider then, that one of the greatest expectations in U.S. society is that to attain any form of success in life, a person needs an education. In fact, a college degree is rapidly becoming an expectation at nearly all levels of middle-class success, and not merely an enhancement to our occupational choices. As you might expect, the number of people graduating from college in the United States continues to rise dramatically.

The contradiction, however, lies in the fact that the more necessary a college degree has become, the harder it has become to acquire one. The cost of getting a college degree has risen sharply since the mid-1980s, while government support in the form of Pell Grants and distributed tax revenue has decreased. The net result is that those who do graduate from college are likely to begin a career in debt. In 2013, the average of amount of a typical student's loans amounted to around $29,000. As of 2018, it was over $37,000.[2] Added to that is that employment opportunities have not met expectations. The *Washington Post* (Brad Plumer May 20, 2013) noted that in 2010, only 27 percent of college graduates had a job related to their major. The business publication Bloomberg News stated that among twenty-two-year-old degree holders who found jobs in the past three years, more than half were in roles not even requiring a college diploma (Janet Lorin and Jeanna Smialek, June 5, 2014), making people wonder if college really does pay off in the professional world (see Figure 2).[3]



Figure 2. As can be seen by the trend in the graph, while the Federal Pell Grant maximum has risen slightly between 1976 and 2018, it has not been able to keep pace with the total cost of college.



Is a college degree still worth it? All this is not to say that lifetime earnings among those with a college degree are not, on average, still much higher than for those without (higher educational attainment does, on average, translate into higher wages). But even with unemployment among degree-earners at a low of 3 percent, the increase in wages over the past decade has remained at a flat 1 percent. And the pay gap between those with a degree and those without has continued to increase because wages for the rest have fallen (David Leonhardt, New York Times, The Upshot, May 27, 2014).

But is college worth more than money?

Generally, the first two years of college are essentially a liberal arts experience. The student is exposed to a fairly broad range of topics, from mathematics and the physical sciences to history and literature, the social sciences, and music and art through introductory and survey-styled courses. It is in this period that the student's world view is, presumably, expanded. Memorization of raw information still occurs, but if the system works, the student now looks at the larger world in broader, more knowledgeable contexts. Then, when he or she begins the process of specialization, it is with a much broader perspective than might otherwise be the case. This additional "cultural capital" can further enrich the life of the student, enhance his or her ability to work with experienced professionals, and build wisdom upon knowledge. Two thousand years ago, Socrates asserted, "The unexamined life is not worth living." The real value of an education, then, is to enhance our skill at self-examination, and not merely to develop tangible skills.

1. Hess, Abigail (2018). "Here's how much the average student loan borrower owes when they graduate." CNBC. Retrieved from https://www.cnbc.com/2018/02/15/heres-how-much-the-average-student-loan-borrower-owes-when-they-graduate.html. ↵
2. Hess, Abigail (2018). "Here's how much the average student loan borrower owes when they graduate." CNBC. Retrieved from https://www.cnbc.com/2018/02/15/heres-how-much-the-average-student-loan-borrower-owes-when-they-graduate.html. ↵
3. The College Board, Trends in College Pricing 2018, Table 2 online; U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid Data Center. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Issues in Education. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:mEvgXsPr@4/Issues-in-Education. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- What we get wrong about affirmative action. **Provided by**: Vox. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=HuUDhfKV3bk. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 15.12: Contemporary Issues in Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.13: Putting It Together- Education

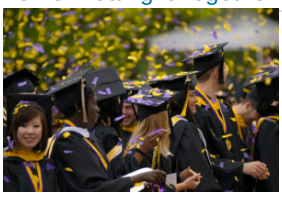


Figure 1. What is the ultimate benefit of going to college? For the most economically disadvantaged students, the boost in pay from earning a bachelor's degree is significantly less than what it is for their wealthier peers.

In this module, you examined education around the world. Education is an institution that helps to socialize people to the cultural norms of their society. What we learn may be about content (history, or math) but also about the hidden curriculum (like how to be a patriotic citizen). Education may be formal (in a school) or informal (like learning how to cook or how to tie your shoes), and it may be mandated by law, as it is in the United States where children must attend for at least ten years of their lives. The quality of education varies within our own country as well as across countries.

Historically, there has been an emphasis on the benefits of attending college to improve one's opportunities in life, but studies show that those who come from poor families do not see the same level of financial gain from attending college as their wealthier peers.[1] In light of these disparate outcomes, we should consider whether or not attending college really is the "great equalizer." A study by the Brookings Institute revealed that while attending college did result in salary gains for both poor and non-poor students, the benefits of attending college were not as pronounced for the economically disadvantaged students. Students who came from families below 185 percent of the federal poverty earned 91% more than their no-college peers, but college graduates from families above the 185 percent line earned significantly more—162% more than their peers with only a high school diploma. As you can see in Figure 1, this gap widens over time, so that by the time the college graduates are sixty, those who are above 185 percent of the federal poverty level earn around $80,000, while those below that same level with a bachelor's degree will earn closer to $25,000. These trends further illustrate the accumulation of advantage or, conversely, disadvantage, that is observed based on background characteristics such as family income.[2]

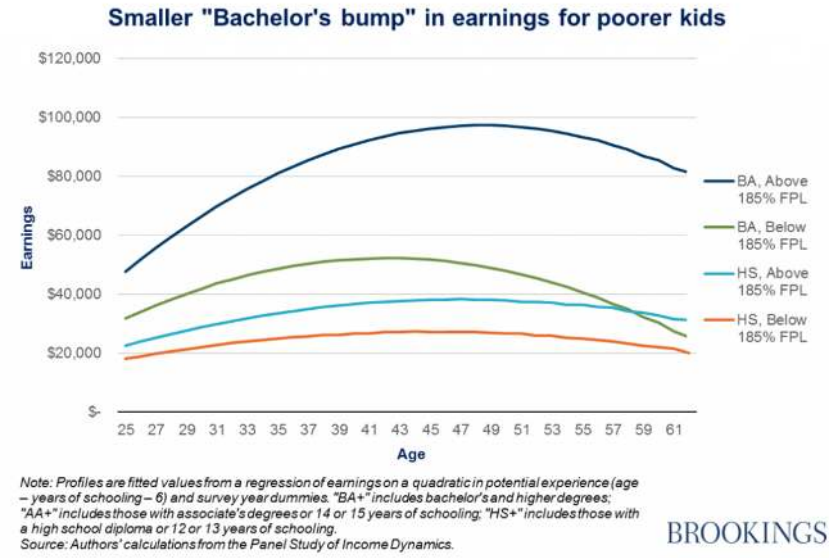


Figure 2. The "Bachelor's bump," or boost in earnings following college, is dramatically higher for those with incomes above 185% of the federal poverty level.

Many factors could be contributing to the disparities in earnings discussed above: career selection, debt at time of graduation, social capital (the social networks developed) from college, marriage preference, family structure, etc. Considering these external mechanisms, can we really argue for education as the great equalizer?

1. NCES. Postsecondary Attainment: Differences by Socioeconomic Status. Retrieved from Postsecondary Attainment: Differences by Socioeconomic Status. ↵
2. Beer, Todd (March 2016). "A PATH TO MOBILITY? How universities maintain the class structure." The Society Pages, Sociology Toolbox. Retrieved from https://thesocietypages.org/toolbox/a-path-to-mobility-how-universities-maintain-the-class-structure/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- A path to mobility? How universities maintain the class structure example. **Authored by**: Todd Beer. **Provided by**: Sociology Toolbox. **Located at**: https://thesocietypages.org/toolbox/a-path-to-mobility-how-universities-maintain-the-class-structure/. **License**: *CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike*
- Confetti - Undergrad Graduation. **Authored by**: m00by. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/m00by/2538526391. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 15.13: Putting It Together- Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.14: Discussion- Education

Pick TWO of the following discussion questions and write a response of at 150-200 words each, expressing your opinion on the matter. Once completed, return to comment on at least TWO other posts with thoughtful feedback.

- How has your formal and informal education influenced your educational pursuits?
- In thinking about your education experience, how have you witnessed universal learning? Was it effective or not?
- Is busing a reasonable method of serving students from diverse backgrounds? If not, suggest and support an alternative.
- What is the current state of credentialism? Are views of credentials changing? What credentials are becoming more important and which ones have become less important?
- What is your experience with inequality in education, either personally or observed?

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Education. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 15.14: Discussion- Education is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

15.15: Assignment- Education Infographic

STEP 1: Read the following articles to better understand equity and equality as they relate to education. Consider the status of school equity in America and reflect on what measures schools are taking to address inequality.

- The Glossary of Education: Equity Definition
- Center for Public Education: Equity Symposium
- U.S. Department of Education: Equity of Opportunity

STEP 2: Research a school, either one that you attended growing up, one in your area, or the college or university you currently attend. Visit websites such as greatschools.org, National Center for Education Statistics: Search for Public Schools (for K-12), College Factual, National Center for Education Statistics: College Navigator, or others to gather information about the demographics at the school. Compile pertinent information regarding equity, racial and ethnic diversity, gender diversity, socioeconomic status, graduation rates, grades, poverty, disability, etc. to get a comprehensive understanding about equity at your selected school. How does this school address issues of equity?

STEP 3: Create a poster or infographic that addresses the major sociological issues related to education equity at your school. This can be done as a powerpoint slide, or using a program of your choice, such as Easelly, Canva, or Pik to Chart. Include appropriate citations and references in your poster.

- You can choose one issue related to education, such as racial diversity, or you can provide a quick look at multiple issues related to educational equity. Include relevant data about the diversity present in the students and/or staff at your school, how issues related to equity are addressed. Focus on a few pieces of data or information about your school and bring attention to the key points with graphics or other pictures.
- The following is an example template of an infographic related to issues in higher education:



Next, share your creation with the world so that others can benefit from your work! Using either Flickr or Wikimedia Commons, upload your finished product and publish it so that other sociology instructors and students can use and reference your work. Although not required, we strongly recommend uploading and releasing your work with a Creative Commons license.

STEP 4: Write an essay (400-500 words) critique of how well your school is doing and areas for improvement. Be sure to include references and citations for your arguments.

Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (Exceeds Standards)	Good (Occasionally Exceeds)	Acceptable (Meets Standards)	Unacceptable (Below Standards)	Points
Education Equity Content	Strong presentation of key issues related to education equity, including data and terminology. Clearly delineates subtopics to be reviewed. Specific theme and connecting ideas evident.	Conveys topic of equity and key question(s). Clearly delineates subtopics to be reviewed. General theme is clear.	Conveys topic of equity, but not key question(s).Presents subtopics to be reviewed. General theme is present.	Does not adequately convey topic. Does not describe subtopics to be reviewed.Lacks adequate theme to portray issues of education equity.	__/10
Presentation	Superior use of visual graphics to convey important points related to the topic.	Generally easy to identify main points visually, and useful graphics present to highlight important points.	Some use of visuals to display information, but layout is confusing or without clear connections.	No attempt at presenting information in a creative manner. Project lacks visual cohesion.	__/10
Essay and Support	All material clearly related to subtopic, main topic. Strong organization and integration of material within subtopics. Very clear connections between ideas. Strong peer-reviewed or research based support for topic.	All material clearly related to subtopic, main topic and logically organized within subtopics. Connections between ideas are organized and mostly clear. Sources well selected to support the topic with some research in support of thesis.	Most material clearly related to subtopic, main topic. Material may not be organized within subtopics. Connections between ideas are hard to identify. Sources generally acceptable but not peer-reviewed research (evidence) based.	Little evidence material is logically organized into topic, subtopics or related to topic. Connections between ideas are unclear. Few or no supporting sources for topic. Sources used are insignificant or unsubstantiated.	__10
Grammar & Mechanics	The paper is free of grammatical errors and spelling & punctuation.	Grammatical errors or spelling & punctuation are rare and do not detract from the paper.	Very few grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors interfere with reading the paper.	Grammatical errors or spelling & punctuation substantially detract from the paper.	__5
				Total:	__/35

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Education Infographic. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 15.15: Assignment- Education Infographic is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

16: Module 13- Health and Medicine

16.1: Why It Matters- Health and Medicine
16.2: Introduction to The Social Construction of Health
16.3: The Cultural Significance of Health
16.4: Theoretical Perspectives on Health and Medicine
16.5: Introduction to Health in the United States and Abroad
16.6: Global Health and Epidemiology
16.7: Health and Inequality in the United States
16.8: Mental Health and Disabilities
16.9: Healthcare Systems
16.10: Putting It Together- Health and Medicine
16.11: Discussion- Health and Medicine
16.12: Assignment- The Evolution of Health Issues

This page titled 16: Module 13- Health and Medicine is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

16.1: Why It Matters- Health and Medicine

Why demonstrate an understanding of the social construction of health?



Figure 1. Medical personnel are at the front lines of extremely dangerous work. Personal protective clothing is essential for any health worker entering an infection zone, as shown by these trainees for the UK's National Health Service. (Photo courtesy of DFID – UK Department for International Development/flickr)

According to the World Health Organization and ABC Health News, on March 19, 2014, a "mystery" hemorrhagic fever outbreak occurred in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This outbreak was later confirmed to be Ebola, a disease that was first identified in 1976 in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The epidemic of 2014-2016 was sparked in a village of 31 households in Guinea, and was likely the result of deforestation causing infected wild animals to migrate closer to human settlements (A). The 2014 outbreak started a chain reaction in West Africa, sickening more than 8,000 people and leaving more than 4,000 dead by October of the same year.[1]

Ebola first entered the United States via missionary medical staff who were infected in West Africa and then transported home for treatment. The case of Thomas Eric Duncan, who unwittingly imported Ebola into the United States as he flew from Liberia to Texas in September 2014, increased the level of fear of the Ebola epidemic among the U.S. population.

As of April 24, 2016, the affected governments had reported a total of 28,657 suspected Ebola cases and 11,325 deaths caused by the disease, though the World Health Organization believes that this substantially understates the magnitude of the outbreak. Although the epidemic was contained for some time, the Ministry of Health of the Democratic Republic of the Congo later declared a new outbreak of Ebola; as of April, 2019, nearly 600 deaths had been confirmed to be due to the disease.[2]

What is the best response to a horrific and terminal virus like this? Restrict visitors from West Africa? Enhance training and protective gear for all U.S. medical workers and law enforcement? Many concerns continue to surround the disease and few agree upon the appropriate response(s).

The Ebola case brought many issues to the forefront. How would we know if we were at risk for a large-scale Ebola epidemic in the United States? In the short term, how do we best prevent, identify, and treat current and potential cases?

The sociology of health encompasses social epidemiology, disease, mental health, disability, demography, and medicalization. The way that we perceive and conceptualize health and illness is in constant evolution. As we learn to more efficiently control existing diseases and epidemics, new diseases develop. As our society evolves to be more global, the way that diseases spread evolves with it, and conventional approaches to prevent the spread of disease often fall short.

What does "health" mean to you? Do you believe that there are too many people taking prescription medications in U.S. society? Are you skeptical about people claiming they are "addicted" to gambling or "addicted" to sex? Can you think of anything that was historically considered a disease but is now considered within a range of normality? Or anything that has recently become known as a medical condition that was once considered evidence of laziness or other character flaws? These are some of the questions examined in the sociology of health.

1. World Health Organization (January 2015). *Origins of the 2014 Ebola epidemic: One year into the Ebola epidemic*. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebol...rus-origin/en/ ↵
2. Ebola situation reports: Democratic Republic of the Congo. World Health Organization (April 2019) Ebola situation reports: Democratic Republic of the Congo. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/ebola/situation-...s/drc-2018/en/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Health and Medicine. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:X5DRDy9q@3/Introduction-to-Health-and-Medicine. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Updated information about Ebola. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/West_African_Ebola_virus_epidemic. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 16.1: Why It Matters- Health and Medicine is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

16.2: Introduction to The Social Construction of Health

What you'll learn to do: describe the social construction of health and the theoretical perspectives on health and medicine



Medical sociology is the systematic study of how humans manage issues of health and illness, disease and disorders, and healthcare for both the sick and the healthy. In this section, you'll learn about the importance of medical practices and how the social construction of health explains how society both shapes medical ideas and is shaped by them.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to The Social Construction of Health. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The Social Construction of Health. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:4xxQBl4h@3/The-Social-Construction-of-Health. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Colorful medication. **Authored by**: freestocks.org. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/nss2eRzQwgw. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 16.2: Introduction to The Social Construction of Health is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

16.3: The Cultural Significance of Health

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the cultural significance and social construction of health

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 healthcare for both the sick and the healthy. Medical sociologists study the physical, mental, and social components of health and illness. Major topics for medical sociologists include the doctor/patient relationship and power dynamics within the relationship, the structure and socioeconomics of healthcare, unequal access to healthcare (what is often referred to as health inequality), and how culture impacts attitudes toward specific diseases, conditions, and wellness.

The social construction of health is a major research topic within medical sociology. 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 idea of the social construction of health emphasizes the socio-cultural aspects of the discipline's approach to physical, objectively definable phenomena. Sociologists Peter Conrad and Kristin Barker (2010) offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the major findings of the last fifty years of development in this concept. Their summary categorizes the findings in the field under three subheadings: the cultural meaning of illness, the social construction of the illness experience, and the social construction of medical knowledge.

The Cultural Meaning of Illness

Many medical sociologists contend that illnesses have both a biological and an experiential component, and that these components exist independently of and external to each other. Our culture, not our biology, dictates which illnesses are stigmatized and which are not, which are considered disabilities and which are not, and which are deemed contestable (meaning some medical professionals may find the existence of this ailment questionable) as opposed to definitive (illnesses that are unquestionably recognized in the medical profession) in the medical field (Conrad and Barker 2010).

For instance, sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) described how social stigmas hinder individuals from fully integrating into society. In essence, Goffman (1963) suggests we might view illness as a stigma that can push others to view the ill individual in an undesirable manner. The **stigmatization of illness** often has the greatest effect on the patient and the kind of care they receive. Many contend that our society and even our healthcare institutions discriminate against certain diseases—like mental disorders, AIDS, venereal diseases, and skin disorders (Sartorius 2007). Facilities for these diseases may be sub-par relative to facilities aimed at addressing and alleviating other conditions; they may be segregated from other healthcare areas or relegated to a poorer environment. The stigma attached to a specific condition may keep people from seeking help for such conditions, consequently being detrimental to the individual's and society's well-being.

Contested illnesses are those that are questioned or questionable by a fraction of medical professionals. Disorders like fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome may be either true, objective, and tangible illnesses or, as argued by some medical professionals, may exist only in patients' heads. This dynamic can affect how a patient seeks treatment and what kind of treatment they receive.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14737

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14738

The Sick Role

Sick role is a term used in medical sociology regarding sickness and the rights and obligations of the affected. It is a concept created by the American sociologist Talcott Parsons in 1951. Parsons argued that the best way to understand illness sociologically is to view it as a form of deviance that disturbs the social functioning of society. The general idea is that the individual who has fallen ill is not only physically sick, but now adheres to the specifically patterned social role of being sick. "Being Sick" is not simply a "condition"; it contains within itself customary rights and obligations based on the social norms that surround it, and therefore plays a role in everyday, normative interactions.

Parsons' theory outlined two rights of a sick person along with two obligations. The sick person's rights are: being exempt from normal social roles, and not being responsible for their condition. Conversely, the sick person's obligations include trying to get well and cooperating with medical professionals.

The Social Construction of the Illness Experience

The idea of the social construction of the illness experience is based on the concept of reality as a social construction. In other words, there is no objective reality; there are only individual perceptions of it, which are always relative and involve a process of construction. The social construction of the illness experience addresses the way some patients control the manner in which they reveal their diseases, and the lifestyle adaptations patients develop to cope with their illnesses.

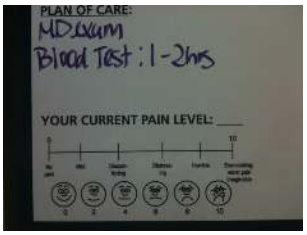


Figure 1. The Mosby pain rating scale helps health care providers assess an individual's level of pain. What might a symbolic interactionist observe about this method? (Photo courtesy of wrestlingentropy/flickr)

In terms of constructing the illness experience, culture and individual personality both play a significant role. For some people, a long-term illness can have the effect of making their world smaller, leading to a life that is more defined by the illness than by anything else. Their illness becomes their marker, or their focal status. For others, illness can be a chance for discovery, for re-imagining a new self (Conrad and Barker 2007). Culture plays a substantial role in how an individual experiences illness. Widespread diseases like AIDS or breast cancer have specific cultural markers that have changed over the years and that govern how individuals—and society—view both the condition and the individual directly affected by the condition.

Today, many institutions of wellness acknowledge the degree to which individual perceptions shape the nature of health and illness. Regarding physical activity, for instance, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that individuals use a standard level of exertion to assess their physical activity. This Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) gives a more complete view of an individual's actual exertion level, since heart rate or pulse measurements may be affected by medication or other factors (Centers for Disease Control 2011). Similarly, many medical professionals use a comparable, somewhat universal scale for perceived pain to help determine pain management strategies.

Watch It

Watch this video to learn more about the sick role and ways that society influences health. Look for examples of how health, disease, and illness are socially constructed.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=456

The Social Construction of Medical Knowledge

Conrad and Barker show how medical knowledge is socially constructed; that is, it can both reflect and reproduce inequalities in gender, class, race, and ethnicity. Conrad and Barker (2011) use the example of the social construction of women's health and how medical knowledge has changed significantly in the course of a few generations. For instance, in the early nineteenth century, pregnant women were discouraged from driving or dancing for fear of harming the unborn child, much as they are discouraged, with more valid and evidence-based reason, from smoking or drinking alcohol today.

Has Breast Cancer Awareness Gone Too Far?



Figure 2. Pink ribbons are a ubiquitous reminder of breast cancer. But do pink ribbon chocolates do anything to eradicate the disease? (Photo courtesy of wishuponacupcake/Wikimedia Commons)

Every October, the world turns pink. Football and baseball players wear pink accessories. Skyscrapers and large public buildings are lit with pink lights at night. Shoppers can choose from a huge array of pink products. In 2014, people wanting to support the fight against breast cancer could purchase any of the following pink products: KitchenAid mixers, Master Lock padlocks and bike chains, Wilson tennis rackets, Fiat cars, and Smith & Wesson handguns. You read that correctly. The goal of all these pink products is to raise awareness and money for breast cancer. However, the relentless creep of pink has many people wondering if the pink marketing juggernaut has gone too far.

Pink has been associated with breast cancer since 1991, when the Susan G. Komen Foundation handed out pink ribbons at its 1991 Race for the Cure event. Since then, the pink ribbon has appeared on countless products, and then by extension, the color pink has come to represent support for a cure of the disease. No one can argue about the Susan G. Komen Foundation's mission—to find a cure for breast cancer—or the fact that the group has raised millions of dollars for research and care. However, some people question if, or how much, all these products really help in the fight against breast cancer (Begos 2011).

The advocacy group Breast Cancer Action (BCA) position themselves as watchdogs of other agencies fighting breast cancer. They accept no funding from entities, like those in the pharmaceutical industry, with potential profit connections to this health industry. They've developed a trademarked "Think Before You Pink" campaign to provoke consumer questioning of the end contributions made to breast cancer by companies hawking pink wares. They do not advise against "pink" purchases; they just want consumers to be informed about how much money is involved, where it comes from, and where it will go. For instance, what percentage of each purchase goes to breast cancer causes? BCA does not judge how much is enough, but it informs customers and then encourages them to consider whether they feel the amount is enough (Think Before You Pink 2012).

BCA also suggests that consumers make sure that the product they are buying does not actually *contribute* to breast cancer, a phenomenon they call "pinkwashing." This issue made national headlines in 2010, when the Susan G. Komen Foundation partnered with Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) on a promotion called "Buckets for the Cure." For every bucket of grilled or regular fried chicken, KFC would donate fifty cents to the Komen Foundation, with the goal of reaching 8 million dollars: the largest single donation received by the foundation. However, some critics saw the partnership as an unholy alliance. Higher body fat and eating fatty foods has been linked to increased cancer risks, and detractors, including BCA, called the Komen Foundation out on this apparent contradiction. Komen's response was that the program did a great deal to raise awareness in low-income communities, where Komen previously had little outreach (Hutchison 2010), therefore justifying their seemingly contradictory goals.

What do you think? Are fundraising and awareness important enough to trump issues of health? What other examples of "pinkwashing" can you think of?

Further Research

Visit the Humanology Project website, which works to shift common perceptions and misconceptions about illnesses.

Think It Over

- Pick a common illness and describe which parts of it are medically constructed, and which parts are socially constructed.
- What diseases are the most stigmatized? Which are the least? Is this different in different cultures or social classes?

glossary

contested illnesses:
illnesses that are questioned or considered questionable by some medical professionals

medical sociology:
the systematic study of how humans manage issues of health and illness, disease and disorders, and healthcare for both the sick and the healthy

stigmatization of illness:
illnesses that are discriminated against and whose sufferers are looked down upon or even shunned by society

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Health and Medicine. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NGlENS1qgo&index=43&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The Social Construction of Health. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.4:4xxQBl4h@7/19-1-The-Social-Construction-of-Health. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- The Sick Role, The Functionalist Perspective. **Provided by**: Boundless. **Located at**: https://www.boundless.com/sociology/textbooks/boundless-sociology-textbook/health-and-illness-19/sociological-perspectives-on-health-and-illness-133/the-functionalist-perspective-737-8949/. **Project**: Boundless Sociology. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 16.3: The Cultural Significance of Health is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

16.4: Theoretical Perspectives on Health and Medicine

Learning Outcomes

- Apply functionalist, conflict theorist, and symbolic interactionist perspectives to health issues

Each of the three major sociological theoretical perspectives approach the topics of health, illness, and medicine differently. You may prefer just one of the theories that follow, or you may find that combining theories and perspectives provides a fuller and more accurate picture of how we experience and understand health and wellness.

Functionalism

According to the functionalist perspective, health is vital to the stability of the society, and therefore sickness is a sanctioned form of deviance. Talcott Parsons (1951) was the first to discuss this in terms of the **sick role**: patterns of expectations that define appropriate behavior for the sick and for those who take care of them.

According to Parsons, the sick person has a specific role with both rights and responsibilities. To start with, they have not chosen to be sick and should not be treated as responsible for their condition. The sick person also has the right of being exempt from normal social roles; they are not required to fulfill the obligation of a well person and can avoid normal responsibilities without censure. However, this exemption is temporary and relative to the severity of the illness. The exemption also requires **legitimization** by a physician; that is, a physician must certify that the illness is genuine.

The responsibility of the sick person is twofold: to try to get well and to seek technically competent help from a physician. If the sick person stays ill longer than is appropriate (malingers), they may be stigmatized.

Parsons argues that since the sick are unable to fulfill their normal societal roles, their sickness weakens the society. Therefore, it is sometimes necessary for various forms of social control to bring the behavior of a sick person back in line with normal expectations. In this model, doctors serve as gatekeepers, deciding who is healthy and who is sick—a relationship in which the doctor has all the power. Moreover, medical providers function as dispensers of resources for the healing of the sick. But is it appropriate to allow doctors so broad discretion in deciding who is and is not sick? And what about people who are sick, but are unwilling to leave their positions for any number of reasons? (e.g., personal/social obligations, financial need, or lack of insurance)

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14739

Conflict Perspective

Theorists using the conflict perspective suggest that issues with the healthcare system, as with most other social problems, are rooted in capitalist society. According to conflict theorists, capitalism and the pursuit of profit lead to the **commodification** of health: the changing of something not generally thought of as an abstract object into something that can be bought and sold in a marketplace in order to create profit for someone somewhere. In this view, people with money and power—the dominant group—are the ones who make decisions about how the healthcare system will be run. They therefore control the degree to which the individuals and groups without political and economic power will remain subordinate. This creates strife within the larger healthcare system and also results in personal health disparities between the dominant and subordinate groups. The inequality that is seen in other spheres and institutions is pervasive in healthcare access, further accumulating disadvantage to already subordinate groups.

Alongside the health disparities created by class inequalities, there are a number of health inequalities created by racism, sexism, ageism, and LGBTQ+ discrimination. When health is a commodity, the poor are more likely to experience illness caused by inadequate diet, to live and work in unhealthy environments, and are less likely to challenge the system or its authority. In the United States, a disproportionate number of racial minorities also have less economic power, so they bear a great deal of the burden of poor health. It is not only the poor who suffer from the conflict between dominant and subordinate groups. For many years, and only until very recently, homosexual couples had been denied spousal benefits, either in the form of health insurance or in terms of medical responsibility. Further adding to the issue, doctors hold a disproportionate amount of power in the doctor/patient relationship, which provides them with extensive social and economic benefits.

Discrimination is often the result of stigma towards specific groups or medical conditions. This stigma is rooted in the perception of an undesirable condition or attribute. Take HIV/AIDS, for example. Because of their illness, individuals with HIV/AIDS have lost jobs, been denied educational opportunities, been kicked out of their homes, or have been mistreated (or not treated at all) by the healthcare system.[1] Most importantly, because of the stigma attached to the disease, individuals have foregone medical assistance and have passed away as a consequence. Legal protections have been put in place, yet the stigma and discrimination remain prevalent. Until we de-stigmatize the condition itself, and despite the implementation of policy, individual acts of discrimination will likely continue. HIV continues to be an epidemic in parts of Africa, not necessarily because of stigma, but because of the lack of available treatment resources.

watch it

This first video clip gives some examples of ways that those with HIV are discriminated against, even within the medical community. The second clip shares the story of Joe and his experiences dealing with the stigma of being HIV positive.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=458

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=458

While conflict theorists are right to point out certain inequalities in the healthcare system, and their critiques have propelled equity-driven policy, they do not give enough credit to medical advances that would not have been made without an economic structure to support and reward researchers, a structure that has typically been dependent on profitability. While this market solutions model has indeed provided many advances, a conflict theorist would likely respond that greater state-sponsored investment–with better public health outcomes as the goal–could also effect the same evolutions in treatment. Also at issue for conflict theorists and their critics is the degree to which the hard-won medical expertise possessed by doctors and not patients might render a truly mutual understanding elusive.

Symbolic Interactionism

According to theorists working in this perspective, health and illness are both socially constructed. As we discussed in the beginning of the module, interactionists focus on the specific meanings and causes people attribute to illness. The term **medicalization of deviance** refers to the process that changes “bad” behavior into “sick” behavior. A related process is **demedicalization**, in which “sick” behavior is normalized again. Medicalization and demedicalization affect who responds to the patient, how people respond to the patient, and how people view the personal responsibility of the patient (Conrad and Schneider 1992). Under this perspective, as our perception of a condition changes, so do the social consequences of that condition.



Figure 1. In this engraving from the nineteenth century, “King Alcohol” is shown with a skeleton on a barrel of alcohol. The words “poverty,” “misery,” “crime,” and “death” hang in the air behind him. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress/Wikimedia Commons)

An example of medicalization is illustrated by the history of how our society views alcohol and alcoholism. During the nineteenth century, those who drank too much were considered bad, lazy people. They were called drunks, and it was not uncommon for them

to be arrested or run out of a town. Drunks were not treated in a sympathetic way because, at that time, it was thought that it was their own fault that they could not stop drinking. During the latter half of the twentieth century, however, people who drank too much were increasingly defined as alcoholics: people with a disease or a genetic predisposition to addiction who were not responsible for their drinking. With alcoholism defined as a disease and not a personal choice, alcoholics came to be viewed with more compassion and understanding. Thus, "badness" was transformed into "sickness."

There are numerous examples of demedicalization in history as well. During the Civil War era, slaves who frequently ran away from their owners were diagnosed with a mental disorder called *drapetomania*. This has since been reinterpreted, unsurprisingly, as a completely appropriate response to being enslaved. A more recent example is homosexuality, which was labeled a mental disorder or a sexual orientation disturbance by the American Psychological Association until 1973.

While interactionism does acknowledge the subjective nature of diagnosis, it is important to remember who most benefits when a behavior becomes defined as illness or condition. Pharmaceutical companies make billions treating illnesses such as fatigue, insomnia, and hyperactivity that may not actually be illnesses in need of treatment.

Watch It

Watch this video to review and see examples of how each of these key paradigms views medicine.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=458

Think It Over

- Which theoretical perspective do you think best explains the sociology of health? Why?
- What examples of medicalization and demedicalization can you think of?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14740

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14741

glossary

commodification:
the changing of something not generally thought of as a commodity into something that can be bought and sold in a marketplace

demedicalization:
the social process that normalizes "sick" behavior

legitimation:
the act of a physician certifying that an illness is genuine

medicalization of deviance:
the process that changes "bad" behavior into "sick" behavior

sick role:
the pattern of expectations that define appropriate behavior for the sick and for those who take care of them

1. Hiv.gov. (May 2017). Activities Combating HIV Stigma and Discrimination. Retrieved from https://www.hiv.gov/federal-response/federal-activities-agencies/activities-combating-hiv-stigma-and-discrimination. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Additional Content on Aids. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Health and Medicine. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:VJI0cK01@2/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Health-and-Medicine. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Relating social theories to medicine. **Provided by**: Khan Academy. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6c8BCZd6GXU. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- HIV, AIDS patients face discrimination. **Provided by**: ABC7 WJLA. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Tm0j07lJUw. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Living With The Stigma Of HIV. **Provided by**: BBC Three. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiU8nQ_-q9s. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

Lumen Learning authored content

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 16.4: Theoretical Perspectives on Health and Medicine is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

16.5: Introduction to Health in the United States and Abroad

What you'll learn to do: analyze health care in the United States and abroad

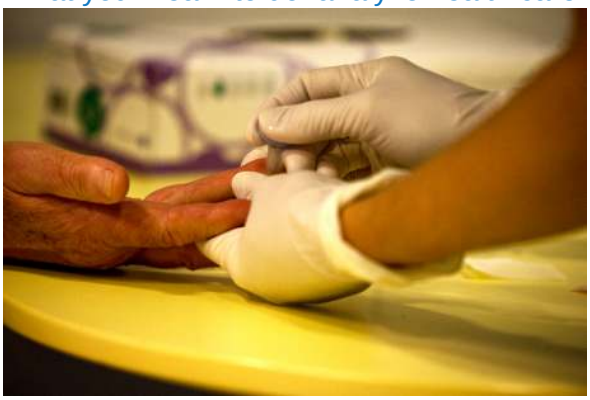


Figure 1. A patient has their blood glucose tested on World Diabetes Day (Photo courtesy of Gia Willow Alexa Annermarken/flickr)

Health in the United States is a complex and often contradictory issue. On the one hand, as one of the wealthiest nations, the United States fares well in health comparisons with the rest of the world. However, the United States also lags behind almost every industrialized country in terms of providing care to *all* of its citizens, as well as in the comparative cost-effectiveness of its healthcare system. The following sections examine different aspects of health in the United States and how this compares with general trends in global health.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Health in the United States and Abroad. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Health and Medicine. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:X5DRDy9q@3/Introduction-to-Health-and-Medicine. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- World Diabetes Day. **Authored by**: Gia Willow Alexa Annermarken. **Provided by**: Flickr. **Located at**: https://www.flickr.com/photos/oskarannermarken/6347508912/in/photostream/. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 16.5: Introduction to Health in the United States and Abroad is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

16.6: Global Health and Epidemiology

Learning Outcomes

- Apply theories of social epidemiology to an understanding of global health issues
- Compare and contrast health conditions in high- versus low-income countries

Social epidemiology is the study of the causes and distribution of diseases. Social epidemiology can reveal how social problems are connected to the health of different populations. These epidemiological studies show that the health problems of high-income nations differ greatly from those of low-income nations. Some diseases, like cancer, are universal. But others, like obesity, heart disease, respiratory disease, and diabetes are much more common in high-income countries and are a direct result of a sedentary lifestyle combined with poor diet. High-income nations also have a higher incidence of depression (Bromet et al. 2011). In contrast, low-income nations suffer significantly more from deadly diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, diseases that are rare in high-income contexts.

How does health differ around the world? Some economic and political theorists, most notably Immanuel Wallerstein, differentiate among three types of countries: core nations, semi-peripheral nations, and peripheral nations. Core nations are those that we think of as highly developed or industrialized, semi-peripheral nations are those that are often called developing or newly industrialized, and peripheral nations are those that are relatively underdeveloped. While the most pervasive issue in the U.S. healthcare system is affordable access to healthcare, other core countries have different issues, and semi-peripheral and peripheral nations are faced with a host of additional concerns. Reviewing the status of global health offers insight into the various ways that politics and wealth shape access to healthcare, and it shows which populations are most affected by health disparities. As we move across international contexts, it is imperative to keep in mind the influence of cultural significance on health, as it is a mechanism that plays a role in the conceptualization of health conditions, the role of healthcare and its providers, and the consequences of illnesses.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14742

Health in High-Income Nations

Obesity, which is on the rise in high-income nations, has been linked to many diseases, including cardiovascular problems, musculoskeletal problems, diabetes, and respiratory issues. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2011), obesity rates are rising in all countries, with the greatest increases occurring in the highest-income countries. Among OECD countries, which represent the most economically developed nations in the world, as of 2017, half of adults were overweight or obese, as well as nearly one in six children.[1] The United States has the highest obesity rate. Wallace Huffman and his fellow researchers (2006) contend that several factors are contributing to the rise in obesity in developed countries:

1. Improvements in technology and reduced family size have led to a reduction of work to be done in household production.
2. Unhealthy market goods, including processed foods, sweetened drinks, and sweet and salty snacks are replacing home-produced goods.
3. Leisure activities are growing more sedentary, for example, computer games, web surfing, and television viewing.
4. More workers are shifting from active work (agriculture and manufacturing) to service industries.
5. Increased access to passive transportation has led to more driving and less walking.

Obesity and weight issues have significant societal costs, including lower life expectancies and higher shared healthcare costs. While the United States fares well in terms of health outcomes, it actually has a relatively shorter life expectancy than countries similar in economic development, standards of living, and wealth,[2] which is partially due to obesity and its consequences.

High-income countries also have higher rates of depression than less affluent nations. A recent study (Bromet et al. 2011) shows that the average lifetime prevalence of major depressive episodes in the ten highest-income countries in the study was 14.6 percent, compared to 11.1 percent in the eight low- and middle-income countries. The researchers speculate that the higher rate of depression may be linked to the greater degree of income inequality that exists in the most affluent nations.

Remember from previous sections, however, how culture can shape medical conditions, the stigma attached to them, and how healthcare deals with specific conditions. It is possible that society has conceptualized conditions such as depression differently

across multiple contexts. Think about it: underdeveloped nations are facing deadly and terminal epidemics that are seemingly uncontrollable, with diseases and viruses like Zika, Ebola, and HIV being at the forefront of government policy and healthcare agendas. These societies are not yet concerned with mental illnesses, despite their well-documented effects on individuals.

Watch It

This video explains population health and describes some of the key health indicators that measure health for different populations. Consider what factors contribute to health disparities among populations.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=462

Health in Low-Income Nations



Figure 1. In low-income countries, malnutrition and lack of access to clean water contribute to a high child mortality rate. (Photo courtesy of Steve Evans/flickr)

In peripheral nations with low per capita income, it is not the cost of healthcare that is the most pressing concern. Rather, low-income countries must manage such problems as infectious disease, high infant mortality rates, scarce medical personnel, and inadequate water and sewer systems. Such issues, which high-income countries rarely even think about, are central to the lives of most people in low-income nations. Due to such health concerns, low-income nations have higher rates of infant mortality and lower average life spans.

In addition to these challenges, and largely *because* of these challenges, underdeveloped regions face epidemics of disease. As was mentioned in the introduction, several countries in Africa have dealt with the spread of Ebola in the last 5 years, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo is currently trying to address an Ebola epidemic. The Ebola epidemic is not the result of a single factor, but instead is the consequence of a combination of them, ranging from the lack of a cure, to Ebola being highly infectious and difficult to diagnose, to its being coupled with structural contexts of underdeveloped health systems, lack of workers, stigmatizing cultural beliefs, and migratory practices.

WATCH IT

Hear about Ebola's effects and consequences during the height of the epidemic, as well as the context in which Ebola-infected individuals seek assistance.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=462

The Zika virus, which was first discovered in Uganda over 6 decades ago, has resulted in recent outbreaks in the Pacific Islands and Brazil and in a widespread epidemic in 2015-2016. The virus causes Zika fever, which is a mild illness with symptoms such as a fever and a rash, but as the disease became more common, evidence suggested that the virus was also connected to Guillain–Barré syndrome in adults, as well as birth defects and other neurological problems. The virus can be transmitted from an infected pregnant woman to her fetus, then can cause microcephaly (an abnormally small head) and other severe brain anomalies in the infant. The virus is spread mainly by the Aedes aegypti mosquito, which is commonly found throughout the tropical and subtropical Americas, and in parts of the southern United States. It can also be spread by the Aedes albopictus ("Asian tiger") mosquito, which is distributed as far north as the Great Lakes region in North America. Men infected with Zika can transmit the virus to their sexual partners.

WATCH IT

Learn about the spread of the Zika virus—and beware of massive soccer events! The Zika virus is said to have begun its recent spread after visitors flocked to Brazil for the World Cup in 2014. Some athletes even declined to participate in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, citing ongoing concerns about the virus and its impact on fetal development.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=462

One of the biggest contributors to medical challenges in low-income countries is the lack of access to clean water and basic sanitation resources. According to a 2014 UNICEF report, almost half of the developing world's population lacks improved sanitation facilities. The World Health Organization (WHO) tracks health-related data for 194 countries. In their 2018 World Health Statistics report (supplemented by UNICEF 2018 demographic reports)[3] they document the following statistics:

1. Globally, the rate of mortality for children under age five in 2018 was 41 per 1,000 live births. More than half of under-five deaths occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa.[4] In low-income countries, however, that rate is almost double at 74 per 1,000 live births. In high-income countries, that rate is significantly lower than seven per 1,000 live births.
2. The most frequent causes of death for children under five were prematurity and respiratory infections, accounting for 18 an 16 percent, respectively. Diarrhea also accounts for 8% of deaths in children under five, and malaria in 5%. Many of these deaths could be easily avoided with cleaner water and more coverage of available medical care.
3. The availability of doctors and nurses in low-income countries is less than one-tenth that of nations with a high income. In 2006, per 1,000 population, African countries had 2.3 health workforce employees, while European countries had 18.9, and countries in the Americas had nearly 25.[5] Challenges in access to medical education and access to patients exacerbate this issue for would-be medical professionals in low-income countries (World Health Organization 2011).

Think It Over

- Study these maps on global life expectancies. What trends do you notice?
- If social epidemiologists studied the United States in the colonial period, what differences would they find between now and then?
- What do you think are some of the contributing factors to obesity-related diseases in the United States?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14743

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14744

glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]social epidemiology:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]the study of the causes and distribution of diseases[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

---

1. OECD (n.d.). *OECD Obesity Update 2017*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/health/obesity-update.htm. ↵
2. OECD (2019), Life expectancy at birth (indicator). doi: 10.1787/27e0fc9d-en (Accessed on 02 April 2019) ↵
3. World health statistics 2018: monitoring health for the SDGs, sustainable development goals. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. ↵
4. Unicef (March 2018). *Under-five mortality.* Retrieved from https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/under-five-mortality/. ↵
5. World Health Organiation (2006). *Health Workers: A Global Profile*. https://www.who.int/whr/2006/06_chap1_en.pdf↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Global Health. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:0e9TnTYS@2/Global-Health. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- 2015u201316 Zika virus epidemic. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/2015%E2%80%9316_Zika_virus_epidemic. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Dying at the Hospital Door: Ebola Virus Outbreak . **Provided by**: The New York Times. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUBpoyKxArU. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

All rights reserved content

- Population Health: Crash Course Sociology #43. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9SWRByzDSo&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=44. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Animated Map of Zika's Spread. **Provided by**: Business Insider. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLOWl8lyr6M. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 16.6: Global Health and Epidemiology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

16.7: Health and Inequality in the United States

Learning Outcomes

- Explain disparities of health based on gender, socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity in the United States

Health by Race and Ethnicity

When looking at the social epidemiology of the United States, it is hard to miss the disparities among races. Racial minorities exhibit lower life expectancy and a higher likelihood of death by heart disease and stroke. In terms of infant mortality, indigenous populations have an infant mortality rate that is 60% higher than the rate for whites, while infants born to African American women exhibited the highest rate of infant mortality.[1] According to a report from the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation (2007), African Americans also have a higher incidence of several other diseases and causes of mortality, from cancer to heart disease to diabetes. In a similar vein, it is important to note that ethnic minorities, including Mexican Americans and Native Americans, also have higher rates of these diseases and causes of mortality than whites.

Lisa Berkman (2009) notes that this gap started to narrow during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, but it began widening again in the early 1980s. What accounts for these perpetual disparities in health outcomes among different ethnic groups? Much of the answer lies in the level of healthcare that these groups receive. The National Healthcare Disparities Report (2010) shows that even after adjusting for insurance differences, racial and ethnic minority groups receive poorer quality of care and less access to care than dominant groups. The Report identified these racial inequalities in care:

1. Black Americans, American Indians, and Alaskan Natives received inferior care when compared with white Americans for about 40 percent of measures.
2. Asian ethnic groups received inferior care for about 20 percent of measures.
3. Among whites, Hispanic whites received 60 percent inferior care of measures compared to non-Hispanic whites (Agency for Health Research and Quality 2010). When considering access to care, the figures were comparable.

The Hispanic Paradox: The Curious Case of Hispanics in the United States

Recent academic research by Lariscy, Hummer, and Hayward (2015)[2] has sought to explore what is traditionally known as the Hispanic paradox of health. The paradox suggests that Hispanic older adult mortality is similar to that of whites and that it actually *exceeds* white life expectancy, despite their initial lower life expectancy at birth and their socioeconomic disadvantage, which is comparable to the one found among African Americans. These scholars found that Hispanics, regardless of where they were born, exhibit higher life expectancy as adults than any other group. Foreign-born Hispanics living in the U.S. have an even higher life expectancy and exhibit lower mortality ratios for lung cancer and respiratory diseases, which is likely a result of lower rates of smoking. All of this despite their lower socioeconomic status—this suggests that the protective influence of lower smoking prevalence among Hispanics is slightly offsetting their socioeconomic disadvantage.

Health by Socioeconomic Status

Discussions of health by race and ethnicity often overlap with discussions of health by socioeconomic status, since the two concepts are intertwined in the United States. As the Agency for Health Research and Quality (2010) notes, "racial and ethnic minorities are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to be poor or near poor," so many of the data pertaining to subordinate groups is also likely to be pertinent to low socioeconomic groups. Marilyn Winkleby and her research associates (1992) state that "one of the strongest and most consistent predictors of a person's morbidity and mortality experience is that person's socioeconomic status (SES). This finding persists across all diseases with few exceptions, continues throughout the entire lifespan, and extends across numerous risk factors for disease." **Morbidity** is the incidence of disease.

It is important to remember that economics are only part of the SES picture; research suggests that education also plays an important role. Phelan and Link (2003) note that many behavior-influenced diseases like lung cancer (from smoking), coronary artery disease (from poor eating and exercise habits), and AIDS initially were widespread across SES groups. However, once information linking habits to disease was disseminated, these diseases decreased in high SES groups and increased in low SES groups. This illustrates the important role of education initiatives regarding a given disease, as well as possible inequalities in how those initiatives effectively reach different SES groups.

Not unique to the United States, there is a pattern of social gradient in health based on education and socioeconomic status: wealthier and more educated households, on average, exhibit longer life expectancy at birth.

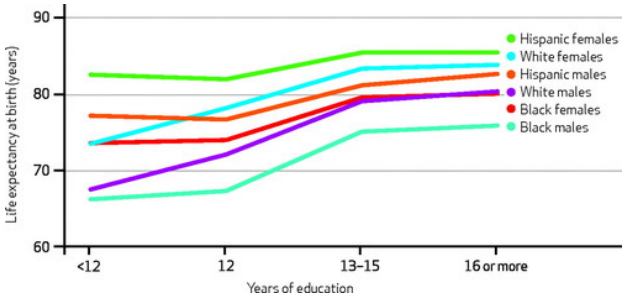


Figure 1. Life expectancy at birth by years of education, disaggregated by race and gender.

Health by Gender

Women are affected adversely both by unequal access to and institutionalized sexism in the healthcare industry. According a report from the Kaiser Family Foundation, women experienced a decline in their ability to see needed specialists between 2001 and 2008. In 2008, one quarter of females questioned the quality of her healthcare (Ranji and Salganico 2011). In this report, we also see the explanatory value of intersection theory. Recall that feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins developed this theory, which suggests we cannot separate the effects of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other attributes. Further examination of the lack of confidence in the healthcare system by women, as identified in the Kaiser study, found, for example, women categorized as low income were more likely (32 percent compared to 23 percent) to express concerns about healthcare quality, illustrating the multiple layers of disadvantage caused by race and sex.

We can see an example of institutionalized sexism in the way that women are more likely than men to be diagnosed with certain kinds of mental disorders. Psychologist Dana Becker notes that 75 percent of all diagnoses of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) are for women, according to the *Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. This diagnosis is characterized by instability of identity, of mood, and of behavior, and Becker argues that it has been used as a catch-all diagnosis for too many women. She further decries the pejorative connotation of the diagnosis, saying that it predisposes many people, both within and outside of the profession of psychotherapy, against women who have been so diagnosed (Becker). This is an example of how BPD is a gendered medical condition.

Many critics also point to the medicalization of women's issues as an example of institutionalized sexism. **Medicalization** refers to the process by which previously normal aspects of life are redefined as deviant and thus requiring medical attention. Historically and contemporaneously, many aspects of women's lives have been medicalized, including menstruation, pre-menstrual syndrome, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause. The medicalization of pregnancy and childbirth has been particularly contentious in recent decades, with many women opting out of the institutional medical process and choosing a more natural childbirth, perhaps at home and with the aid of a midwife. Fox and Worts (1999) find that all women experience pain and anxiety during the birth process, but that social support relieves both as effectively as medical support. In other words, medical interventions are no more effective than social ones at helping with the difficulties of pain and childbirth. Fox and Worts further found that women with supportive partners ended up with less medical intervention and fewer cases of postpartum depression. Of course, access to quality birth care outside the standard medical models may not be readily available to women of all social classes, and we again see the intersectionality of socioeconomic status and other markers of disadvantage or exclusion.

Link to Learning

Watch this video from Healthcare Triage "U.S. Maternal Mortality is Much Higher for African-Americans" to learn more about the statistics and history of unjust medical treatment for black women in the United States and measures that can be taken to improve maternal care for black women.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14746

The State of Health in the United States: The Opioid Epidemic

The opioid epidemic, which is really a subset narrative of significant increases in fatal drug overdoses, affects all races, ethnicities, genders, geographical locations, and socioeconomic groups. By 2016, overdoses from heroin and other opioids kill over 27,000 people annually.[3] (Note that "opioid" is a broad category that includes naturally-derived opiate substances like heroin as well as synthetic substances such as Oxycontin and fentanyl.) The opioid crisis is very closely linked to healthcare: a dozen states have more opioid prescriptions than people, suggesting that, on average, all individuals have been prescribed at least one drug. As such, healthcare providers are directly involved in the crisis, albeit not the culprit of it. Here are a few facts and graphics from PBS (2017) about the opioid crisis:

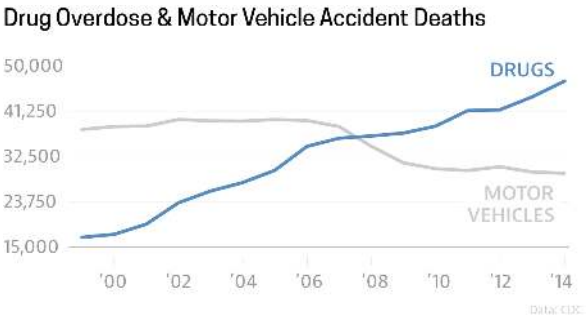


Figure 2. Data from 2014 shows that drugs kill more Americans that car accidents.

1. Drugs kill more Americans than cars do. The odds of dying from an accidental opioid overdose are 1 in 96, while the chances of dying in a motor vehicle crash are 1 in 103. Compare this to other leading causes of death: death from suicide (1 in 88) death from a fall (1 in 114),gun assaults (1 in 285), drowning (1 in 1,117), or choking (1 in 2,696). According to the CDC, 130 Americans die every day because of opioid overdoses.[4]
2. The group analyzed preventable injuries and deaths in 2017 and found the odds of dying by accidental opioid overdose to be 1 in 96 and the odds of a motor vehicle crash 1 in 103.
3. On average, 130 Americans die each day after overdosing on opioids, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
4. Opioids and heroin surpassed cocaine for most deaths. In 2014, Opiods caused 18,893 deaths from overdose, heroin caused 10,574, benzodiazephines caused 7,945, and cocaine caused 5,415.
5. Opioids and heroin have affected all races. While studies shows that some doctors are less likely to prescribe narcotics and painkillers to minority populations, potentially decreasing the number of minorities with access to opioids, minority populations are still affected by the crisis, with rates of deaths by overdoses for whites and Native Americans rising the most between 2010 and 2014.
6. Heroin affects younger populations; opioids older ones, especially those between ages 45 to 65.

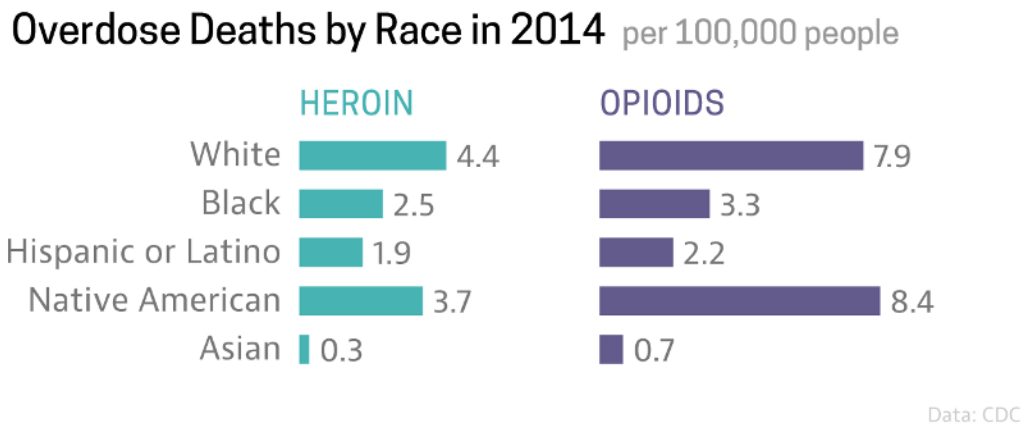


Figure 3. All races and ethnic groups have been affected by the opioid crisis.

WATCH IT

Watch this video to better understand the extent of the opioid epidemic in the U.S., the most detrimental drug crisis in American history, and a challenge faced by the medical field, sociologists, policymakers, and everyday people.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=464

Medicalization of Sleeplessness



Figure 1. Many people fail to get enough sleep. But is insomnia a disease that should be cured with medication? (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

How is your "sleep hygiene?" Sleep hygiene refers to the lifestyle and sleep habits that contribute to sleeplessness. Bad habits that can lead to sleeplessness include inconsistent bedtimes, lack of exercise, late-night employment, napping during the day, and sleep environments that include noise, lights, or screen time (National Institutes of Health 2011a).

According to the National Institute of Health, examining sleep hygiene is the first step in trying to solve a problem with sleeplessness.

For many people in the United States, however, making changes in sleep hygiene does not seem to be enough. According to a 2006 report from the Institute of Medicine, sleeplessness is an underrecognized public health problem affecting up to 70 million people. It is interesting to note that in the months (or years) after this report was released, advertising by the pharmaceutical companies behind Ambien, Lunesta, and Sepracor (three sleep aids) averaged $188 million weekly promoting these drugs (Gellene 2009).

According to a study in the *American Journal of Public Health* (2011), prescriptions for sleep medications increased dramatically from 1993 to 2007. While complaints of sleeplessness during doctor's office visits more than doubled during this time, insomnia diagnoses increased more than sevenfold, from about 840,000 to 6.1 million. The authors of the study conclude that sleeplessness has been medicalized as insomnia, and that "insomnia may be a public health concern, but potential overtreatment with marginally effective, expensive medications with nontrivial side effects raises definite population health concerns" (Moloney, Konrad, and Zimmer 2011). Indeed, a study published in 2004 in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* shows that cognitive behavioral therapy, not medication, was the most effective sleep intervention (Jacobs, Pace-Schott, Stickgold, and Otto 2004).

A century ago, people who couldn't sleep were told to count sheep. Now they pop a pill, and all those pills add up to a very lucrative market for the pharmaceutical industry. Is this industry behind the medicalization of sleeplessness, or is it just responding to a need?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14745

Think It Over

- What factors contribute to the disparities in health among racial, ethnic, and gender groups in the United States?

epidemiology:
the study of the incidence, distribution, and possible control of diseases

medicalization:
the process by which aspects of life that were considered bad or deviant are redefined as sickness and needing medical attention to remedy

morbidity:
the incidence of disease

mortality:
the number of deaths in a given time or place

1. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division; Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice; Committee on Community-Based Solutions to Promote Health Equity in the United States; Baciu A, Negussie Y, Geller A, et al., editors. Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2017 Jan 11. 2, The State of Health Disparities in the United States. Available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK425844/↵
2. Lariscy, Joseph T., Robert A. Hummer, and Mark D. Hayward. 2015. "Hispanic Older Adult Mortality in the United States: New Estimates and an Assessment of Factors Shaping the Hispanic Paradox." Demography 52(2015):1-14. ↵
3. Nolan, Dan and Chris Amico (February 2016). *How Bad is the Opioid Epidemic?* Frontline. Retrieved from https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/how-bad-is-the-opioid-epidemic/. ↵
4. Bursztynsky, Jessica (January 2019). *Americans more likely to die from opioid overdose today than car accident*. CNBC. Retrieved from https://www.cnbc.com/2019/01/15/americans-more-likely-to-die-from-opioid-overdose-than-car-accident.html↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Health in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.4:86Kxh-RN@10/19-3-Health-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Exhibit 1 Life Expectancy At Birth, By Years Of Education At Age 25, By Race And Sex, 2008. **Authored by**: S. Jay Olshansky, Toni Antonucci, Lisa Berkman, Robert H. Binstock, Axel Boersch-Supan, John T. Cacioppo, Bruce A. Carnes, Laura L. Carstensen, Linda P. Fried, Dana P. Goldman, James Jackson, Martin Kohli, John Rother, Yuhui Zheng, and John Rowe. **Provided by**: Health Affairs. **Located at**: https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2011.0746. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- Graphs on the Opioid Epidemic. **Authored by**: Dan Nolan and Chris Amico. **Provided by**: Frontline. **Located at**: https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/how-bad-is-the-opioid-epidemic/. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 16.7: Health and Inequality in the United States is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

16.8: Mental Health and Disabilities

Learning Outcomes

- Explain mental health and disability issues as they relate to society in the United States

Mental Health and Disability

The treatment received by those defined as mentally ill or disabled varies greatly from country to country. In the post-millennial United States, those of us who have never experienced such a disadvantage take for granted the rights our society guarantees for each citizen. We do not think about the relatively recent nature of the protections, unless, of course, we know someone constantly inconvenienced by the lack of accommodations or misfortune of suddenly experiencing a temporary disability.

Mental Health

People with mental disorders (a condition that makes it more difficult to cope with everyday life) and people with mental illness (a severe, lasting mental disorder that requires long-term treatment) experience a wide range of effects.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), one in five adults in the U.S. live with a mental illness, numbering 46.6 million in 2017 (Citation M).[1] The most common mental disorders in the United States are **anxiety disorders**. It is important to distinguish between occasional feelings of anxiety and a true anxiety disorder. Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress that we all feel at some point, but anxiety disorders are feelings of worry and fearfulness that last for months at a time. Anxiety disorders include obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), separation anxiety disoder, and both social and specific phobias. The NIMH reports that the prevalence of any anxiety disorder is higher for females than for males, estimating the prevalence at 23.4% and 14.3%, respectively. Anxiety is a prominent mental condition; one in three U.S. adults experience any anxiety disorder at some point throughout their lives.

The second most common mental disorders in the United States are **mood disorders**; roughly 10 percent of U.S. adults are likely to be affected yearly, while 21 percent are likely to be affected over the course of a lifetime (National Institute of Mental Health 2017). Major mood disorders are depression, bipolar disorder, and dysthymic disorder. Like anxiety, depression might seem like something that everyone experiences at some point, and it is true that most people feel sad or “blue” at times in their lives. A true depressive episode, however, is more than just feeling sad for a short period. It is a long-term, debilitating illness that usually needs treatment to cure. And bipolar disorder is characterized by dramatic shifts in energy and mood, often affecting the individual’s ability to carry out day-to-day tasks. Bipolar disorder used to be called manic depression because of the way people would swing between manic and depressive episodes. As with anxiety disorders, mood disorders are more prevalent among females than among males, and over 20% of adults in the U.S. experience a mood disorder at some point throughout their lifetime.

Depending on what definition is used, there is some overlap between mood disorders and **personality disorders**, which affect 9 percent of people in the United States yearly. Unlike with other types of mental disorders, there is no significant gender difference, although 84% of individuals with personality disorders also had one or more other mental disorders.

After a multilevel review of proposed revisions in the early 2010’s, including reducing the number of listed personality disorders to six, the American Psychiatric Association Board of Trustees ultimately decided to retain the DSM-IV categorical approach in the new DSM-5 with the same ten personality disorders (paranoid personality disorder, schizoid personality disorder, schizotypal personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, histrionic personality, narcissistic personality disorder, avoidant personality disorder, dependent personality disorder and obsessive-compulsive personality disorder). Personality disorders represent “an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the culture of the individual who exhibits it” (National Institute of Mental Health). In other words, personality disorders cause people to behave in ways that are seen as abnormal and deviant to society but seem normal to them. During revisions to the DSM, there were proposals to broaden this definition, and there was heated debate over the appropriate labels and proper diagnosis for personality disorders. As you’ve learned in this module already, the label we give an illness can impact how the affected person views themself as well as how they are treated by others.

Link to Learning

Interested in seeing more statistics about mental health or specific mental disorders/illnesses? Visit the NIMH statistics website.

You can also watch this CrashCourse video "Personality Disorders" covering the types of personality disorders.



Figure 1. Medication is a common option for children with ADHD. (Photo courtesy of Deviation56/Wikimedia Commons)

Another fairly commonly diagnosed mental disorder is Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which statistics suggest affects 11% percent of children and 8 percent of adults on a lifetime basis (National Institute of Mental Health 2017). ADHD is one of the most common childhood disorders, and it is marked by difficulty paying attention, difficulty controlling behavior, and hyperactivity. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), ADHD responds positively to stimulant drugs like Ritalin, which helps people stay focused. However, there is some social debate over whether such drugs are being over-prescribed (American Psychological Association) Consider the opioid crisis in relation to this; do we begin over-prescribing drugs targeted at children, and perhaps *create* a dependency and cycle? Some critics question whether this disorder is really as widespread as it seems, or if it is a case of over diagnosis. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, only 5 percent of children have ADHD. However, approximately 11 percent of children ages four through seventeen have been diagnosed with ADHD as of 2011. Contrary to what is observed with many other types of mental disorders, ADHD is more prevalent among males than among females.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) have gained a lot of attention in recent years. The term ASD encompasses a group of developmental brain disorders that are characterized by "deficits in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication, and engagement in repetitive behaviors or interests" (National Institute of Mental Health). Just over 1.5% of 8-year-old children were diagnosed as having ASD. Like with ADHD, ASD is more prevalent among boys than among girls, with boys being four times as likely to be diagnosed with ASD.

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) distinguishes between serious mental illness and other disorders. The key feature of serious mental illness is that it results in "serious functional impairment, which substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities" (National Institute of Mental Health). Thus, the characterization of "serious" refers to the *effect* of the illness (functional impairment), not the illness itself.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14747

Disability



Figure 2. The handicapped accessible sign indicates that people with disabilities can access the facility. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that access be provided to everyone. (Photo courtesy of

Ltljltlj/Wikimedia Commons)

Disability refers to a reduction in one's ability to perform everyday tasks. The World Health Organization makes a distinction between the various terms used to describe handicaps that's important to the sociological perspective. They use the term **impairment** to describe the physical limitations, while reserving the term disability to refer to the social limitation.

Before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, people in the United States with disabilities were often excluded from opportunities and social institutions many of us take for granted. This occurred not only through employment and other kinds of discrimination, but also through casual acceptance by most people in the United States of a world designed for the convenience of the able-bodied. Imagine being in a wheelchair and trying to use a sidewalk without the benefit of wheelchair-accessible curbs. Imagine as a blind person trying to access information without the widespread availability of Braille. Imagine having limited motor control and being faced with a difficult-to-grasp round door handle. Issues like these are what the ADA tries to address. Ramps on sidewalks, Braille instructions, and more accessible door levers are all accommodations to help people with disabilities.

People with disabilities can be stigmatized by their illnesses. **Stigmatization** means their identity is spoiled; they are labeled as different, discriminated against, and sometimes even shunned. They are labeled (as an interactionist might point out) and ascribed a master status (as a functionalist might note), becoming "the blind girl" or "the boy in the wheelchair" instead of someone afforded a full identity by society. This can be especially true for people who are disabled due to mental illness or disorders.

As discussed in the section on mental health, many mental health disorders can be debilitating and can affect a person's ability to cope with everyday life as well as their social interactions. This can affect social status, housing, and especially employment. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019), people with a disability had a higher rate of unemployment than people without a disability in 2018—8 percent compared to 3.7 percent. This unemployment rate refers only to people actively looking for a job. In fact, four out of five people with a disability are considered "out of the labor force;" that is, they do not have jobs and are not looking for them. The combination of this population and the high unemployment rate leads to an employment-population ratio of 19.1 percent among those with disabilities. The employment-population ratio for people without disabilities was much higher, at 65.9 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2019).[2]

Obesity: The Last Acceptable Prejudice



Figure 3. Obesity is considered the last acceptable social stigma. (Photo courtesy of Kyle May/flickr)

What is your reaction to the picture above? Compassion? Fear? Disgust? Many people will look at this picture and make negative assumptions about the man based on his weight. According to a study from the Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, large people are the object of "widespread negative stereotypes that overweight and obese persons are lazy, unmotivated, lacking in self-discipline, less competent, non-compliant, and sloppy" (Puhl and Heuer 2009).

Historically, both in the United States and elsewhere, it was considered acceptable to discriminate against people based on prejudiced opinions. Even after slavery was abolished in 1865, the next 100 years of U.S. history saw institutionalized racism and prejudice against black people. In an example of stereotype interchangeability, the same insults that are flung today at the overweight and obese population (lazy, for instance), have been flung at various racial and ethnic groups in earlier history. Of course, no one gives voice to these kinds of views in public now, except when talking about obese people.

Why is it considered acceptable to feel prejudice toward—even to hate—obese people? Puhl and Heuer suggest that these feelings stem from the perception that obesity is preventable through self-control, better diet, and more exercise. Highlighting this

contention is the fact that studies have shown that people's perceptions of obesity are more positive when they think the obesity was caused by non-controllable factors like biology (a thyroid condition, for instance) or genetics.

Even with some understanding of non-controllable factors that might affect obesity, obese people are still subject to stigmatization. Puhl and Heuer's study is one of many that document discrimination at work, in the media, and even in the medical profession. Obese people are less likely to get into college than thinner people, and they are less likely to succeed at work. Recent research finds that discrimination against obese people is still pervasive in employment.[3]

Stigmatization of obese people comes in many forms, from the seemingly benign to the potentially illegal. In movies and television shows, overweight people are often portrayed negatively, or as stock characters who are the butt of jokes. One study found that in children's movies "obesity was equated with negative traits (evil, unattractive, unfriendly, cruel) in 64 percent of the most popular children's videos. In 72 percent of the videos, characters with thin bodies had desirable traits, such as kindness or happiness" (Hines and Thompson 2007). In movies and television for adults, the negative portrayal is often meant to be funny. "Fat suits"—inflatable suits that make people look obese—are commonly used in a way that perpetuates negative stereotypes. Think about the way you have seen obese people portrayed in movies and on television; now think of any other subordinate group being openly denigrated in such a way—it is difficult to find a parallel example.

Think It Over

- Do you know anyone with a mental disorder? How does it affect his or her life?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14748

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14749

glossary

anxiety disorders:
feelings of worry and fearfulness that last for months at a time

disability:
a reduction in one's ability to perform everyday tasks; the World Health Organization notes that this is a social limitation

impairment:
the physical limitations a less-able person faces

mood disorders:
long-term, debilitating illnesses like depression and bipolar disorder

personality disorders:
disorders that cause people to behave in ways that are seen as abnormal to society but seem normal to them

stigmatization:
the act of spoiling someone's identity; they are labeled as different, discriminated against, and sometimes even shunned due to an illness or disability

1. National Institute of Mental Health (2017). Retrieved from https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml. ↵
2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019). *Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics Summary*. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm. ↵
3. Stuart W. Flint, Martin Čadek, Sonia C. Codreanu, Vanja Ivić, Colene Zomer, Amalia Gomoiu Front Psychol. 2016. *Obesity Discrimination in the Recruitment Process: "You're Not Hired!"* 7: 647. Published online 2016 May 3. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00647 ↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Health in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:86Kxh-RN@5/Health-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 16.8: Mental Health and Disabilities is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

16.9: Healthcare Systems

Learning Outcomes

- Explain healthcare in the United States, including healthcare reform (Affordable Care Act)
- Compare the healthcare system of the United States with that of other countries

There are broad, structural differences among the healthcare systems of different countries. In core nations, those differences might arise in the administration of healthcare, while the care itself is similar. In peripheral and semi-peripheral countries, a lack of basic healthcare administration can be the defining feature of the system. Most countries rely on some combination of modern and traditional medicine. In core countries with large investments in technology, research, and equipment, the focus is usually on modern medicine, with traditional (also called alternative or complementary) medicine playing a secondary role. In the United States, for instance, the American Medical Association (AMA) resolved to support the incorporation of complementary and alternative medicine in medical education. In developing countries, even quickly modernizing ones like China, traditional medicine (often understood as "complementary" by the western world) may still play a larger role.

U.S. Healthcare

Healthcare coverage can broadly be divided into two main categories: **public healthcare** (government-funded) and **private healthcare** (privately-funded).

In the United States, the healthcare system is more complex than what is found in other countries—there is no uniform health system nor universal healthcare coverage provided (Citation P), and it is more of a hybrid system that what is found in other developed nations. In 2014, 48% of healthcare spending came from private funds, both from businesses and individuals, 28% came from the federal government, and 17% came from state and local governments (Citation P). Political changes have also resulted in drastic policy changes regarding healthcare.[1]

The two main public, government funded healthcare programs are Medicare, which provides health services to people over sixty-five years old as well as people who meet certain standards for disability, and Medicaid, which provides services to people with very low incomes who meet other eligibility requirements. Other government-funded programs include service agencies focused on Native Americans (the Indian Health Service), Veterans (the Veterans Health Administration), and children (the Children's Health Insurance Program).

The most recent U.S. census (2011) divides private insurance into employment-based insurance and direct-purchase insurance. Employment-based insurance is health plan coverage that is provided in whole or in part by an employer or union; it can cover just the employee, or the employee and their family. Direct purchase insurance is coverage that an individual buys directly from a private company.

With all these insurance options, ranging from government-provided to employee-provided and individual-provided, insurance coverage must be almost universal, right? Unfortunately, the U.S. Census Current Population Survey of 2013 showed that 18 percent of people in the United States had no health insurance at all. Equally alarming, a study by the Commonwealth Fund showed that in 2010, 81 million adults were either uninsured or **underinsured**; that is, people who pay at least 10 percent of their income on healthcare costs not covered by insurance or, for low-income adults, those whose medical expenses or deductibles are at least 5 percent of their income (Schoen, Doty, Robertson, and Collins 2011). The Commonwealth study further reported that while underinsurance had historically been an issue that low-income families faced, today it is affecting middle-income families more and more.



Figure 1. Some in the United States worry that governmental oversight of healthcare represents a federal overstepping of constitutional guarantees of individual freedom. Others welcome a program that they believe will make healthcare accessible and affordable to everyone. (Photo courtesy of Fibonacci Blue/flickr)

Why were so many people uninsured or underinsured? Skyrocketing healthcare costs were part of the issue. Many people cannot afford private health insurance, but their income level is not low enough to meet eligibility standards for government supported insurance. Further, even for those who are eligible for Medicaid, the program is less than perfect. Many physicians refuse to accept Medicaid patients, citing low payments and extensive paperwork (Washington University Center for Health Policy, n.d.).

Healthcare in the United States looks different today than it did just a few years ago—a result of changes in policy, such as the Affordable Care Act (PPACA or ACA or "ObamaCare"). You've probably heard of ObamaCare at some point—but what did it seek to do? ObamaCare expanded eligibility to programs like Medicaid and CHIP, helped guarantee insurance coverage for people with pre-existing conditions, and established regulations to make sure that the premium funds collected by insurers and care providers go directly to medical care. It also included an **individual mandate**, which required everyone to have insurance coverage by 2014 or pay a penalty in their taxes. A series of provisions, including significant subsidies, were intended to address the discrepancies in income that are currently contributing to high rates of uninsurance and underinsurance.

While the program has been controversial and something of a flashpoint for strongly partisan politics, in 2012 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the PPACA's individual mandate. According to Blumenthal (2014), by 2014, 20 million people in the United States had gained health insurance under PPACA. This lowered the number of uninsured people to 13 percent. Three years later, by 2017, healthcare reform had lowered the number of uninsured people to the lowest it has ever been in the United States. In 2017, less than 9% of the population was uninsured at some point during the year[2]—a drastic drop relative to the alarming 18% in the early 2010's. Over half of the population was insured by an employer, over one third was covered by government-funded programs, and the rest were either covered by direct-purchase or by military funding.

The PPACA remains contentious and at the forefront of political debates. The Supreme Court ruled in the case of *National Federation of Independent Businesses v. Sebelius* in 2012, that states cannot be forced to participate in the PPACA's Medicaid expansion. This ruling has opened the door to challenges to the PPACA in Congress and the Federal courts, in some state governments, and among conservative groups and independent businesses.

WATCH IT

Still confused about the healthcare system in the United States? Watch this video for clarification.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=468

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14750

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14751

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14752

Healthcare Elsewhere

Other Developed Areas

Clearly, healthcare in the United States has some areas for improvement. But how does it compare to healthcare in other countries? Many people in the United States are fond of saying that this country has the best healthcare in the world, and while it is true that the United States has a higher quality of care available than many peripheral or semi-peripheral nations, it is not necessarily the "best in the world." In a report on how U.S. healthcare compares to that of other countries, researchers found that the United States does "relatively well in some areas—such as cancer care—and less well in others—such as mortality from conditions amenable to prevention and treatment" (Docteur and Berenson 2009). A 2016 study on global healthcare ranked the United States at 29th,[3] an improvement from its ranking of 37th by The World Health Organization in 2000.[4]

One critique of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is that it will create a system of socialized medicine, a term that for many people in the United States has negative connotations lingering from the Cold War era and earlier. Under a **socialized medicine** system, the government owns and runs the system. It employs the doctors, nurses, and other staff, and it owns and runs the hospitals (Klein 2009). The best example of socialized medicine is in Great Britain, where the National Health System (NHS) gives free healthcare to all its residents. And despite some U.S. citizens' knee-jerk reaction to any healthcare changes that hint of socialism, the United States has one socialized system in the form of the Veterans Health Administration.

It is important to distinguish between socialized medicine, in which the government owns the healthcare system, and **universal healthcare**, which is simply a system that guarantees healthcare coverage for everyone. Germany, Singapore, and Canada all have universal healthcare. People often look to Canada's universal healthcare system, Medicare, as a model for the system. In Canada, healthcare is publicly funded and is administered by the separate provincial and territorial governments. However, the care itself comes from private providers as opposed to government providers, and is therefore not a socialized medicine system. This is the main difference between universal healthcare and socialized medicine. The Canada Health Act of 1970 required that all health insurance plans must be "available to all eligible Canadian residents, comprehensive in coverage, accessible, portable among provinces, and publicly administered" (International Health Systems Canada 2010).

Underdeveloped and Undeveloped Regions

Heated discussions about socialization of medicine and managed-care options seem frivolous when compared with the issues of healthcare systems in developing or underdeveloped countries. In many countries, per capita income is so low, and governments are so fractured, that healthcare as we know it is virtually non-existent. Care that people in developed countries take for granted—like hospitals, healthcare workers, immunizations, antibiotics and other medications, and even sanitary water for drinking and washing—are unavailable to much of the population. Organizations like Doctors Without Borders, UNICEF, and the World Health Organization have played an important role in helping these countries get their most basic health needs met.

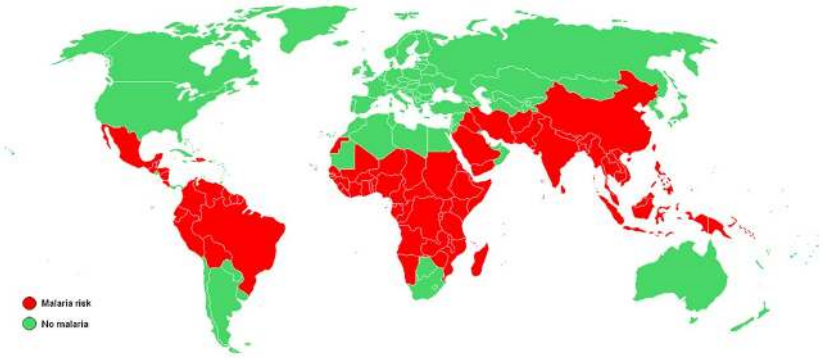


Figure 1. This map shows the countries where malaria is known to occur. In low-income countries, malaria is still a common cause of death. (Photo courtesy of the CDC/Wikimedia Commons)

WHO, which is the health arm of the United Nations, set eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 with the aim of reaching these goals by 2015. Some of the goals dealt more broadly with the socioeconomic factors that influence health, but MDGs 4, 5, and 6 all related specifically to large-scale health concerns, the likes of which most people in the United States will never contemplate. MDG 4 was to reduce child mortality, MDG 5 aimed to improve maternal health, and MDG 6 strived to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. The goals may not seem particularly dramatic, but the numbers behind them show how serious they are. In 2015, these goals were revised and were turned into the UN's Sustainable Development Goals—one of which is focused specifically on Good Health and Well-Being, another which is focused on Clean Water and Sanitation, and a myriad of other goals that would support the implementation and improvement of healthcare systems (Citation S). These goals seek to show tangible results by 2030.

The fact that these goals, some of which are closely related to healthcare, remain at the forefront of the United Nations' agenda suggests that preventable deaths and medical conditions continue to be an international issue. Maternal mortality has fallen by 37% since 2000, yet the maternal mortality ratio in developing countries is 14 times higher in developing regions relative to mothers in developed regions (Citation R). 37 million people globally were living with HIV in 2017, with tuberculosis being the leading cause of death among people living with HIV, accounting for roughly one third of deaths. Malaria incidence rates have dropped, as have mortality rates, but millions are still affected.[5] Access to healthcare would lower these numbers and improve the lives of individuals around the world.

An important component of disease prevention and control is **epidemiology**, or the study of the incidence, distribution, and possible control of diseases. Fear of Ebola contamination, primarily in Western Africa but also to a smaller degree in the United States, became national news in the summer and fall of 2014 and again in 2018, and Zika virus outbreaks in the Pacific Islands as well as in South America, now spreading to Central and North America, have been alarming. Countries might have their own healthcare systems, but we live in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, and the consequences of one system of healthcare do not stop at the country's borders.

WATCH IT

In 2018, the World Health Organization launched a pilot program for universal healthcare in a county in Kenya. Watch the video to learn more about it.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=468

Further Research

Project Mosquito Net says that mosquito nets sprayed with insecticide can reduce childhood malaria deaths by half.

Think It Over

- What do you think are the best and worst parts of the PPACA? Why?
- Compare and contrast the healthcare system of the United States with the WHO's Sustainable Development Goals

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14753

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14754

Glossary

individual mandate:
a government rule that requires everyone to have insurance coverage or they will have to pay a penalty

private healthcare:
health insurance that a person buys from a private company; private healthcare can either be employer-sponsored or direct-purchase

public healthcare:
health insurance that is funded or provided by the government

socialized medicine: when the government owns and runs the entire healthcare system

underinsured:
people who spend at least 10 percent of their income on healthcare costs that are not covered by insurance

universal healthcare:
a system that guarantees healthcare coverage for everyone

1. Department for Professional Employees. (2016) *The U.S. Health Care System: An International Perspective.* Retrieved from https://dpeaflcio.org/programs-publications/issue-fact-sheets/the-u-s-health-care-system-an-international-perspective/. ↵
2. Berchick, Edward R. and Emily Hood and Jessica C. Barnett. (2018) *Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2017.* Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2018/demo/p60-264.html. ↵
3. GBD 2016 Healthcare Access and Quality Collaborators (May 2018). *Measuring performance on the Healthcare Access and Quality Index for 195 countries and territories and selected subnational locations: a systematic analysis from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2016*. The Lancet. Volume 391, issue 10136, p2236-2271. Retrieved from https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)30994-2/fulltext#seccestitle190. ↵
4. The World Health Report (2000). Retrieved from https://www.who.int/whr/2000/en/whr00_en.pdf?ua=1. ↵
5. UN Sustainable Development Goals (n.d.). *Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/health/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Comparative Health and Medicine. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:htZZFvZp@3/Comparative-Health-and-Medicine. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- US Healthcare System Explained. **Provided by**: The Infographics Show. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=DublqkOSBBA. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 16.9: Healthcare Systems is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

16.10: Putting It Together- Health and Medicine

In this module, you examined health, medicine, and the ways that social influences impact health. Perhaps the most important discovery from this module was to better understand how the social institution of medicine is based on the socially constructed understandings of what is (and is not) illness and wellness. Let's take a closer look at an example of how sociology and medicine are interconnected.

In the United States in 2012, a pertussis (whooping cough) outbreak resulted in over 40,000 cases and twenty pertussis-related deaths, making it the worst outbreak in 65 years[1]. Researchers, suspecting that the primary cause of the outbreak was the waning strength of pertussis vaccines in older children, recommended a booster vaccination for 11–12-year-olds and pregnant women (Zacharyczuk 2011). Pertussis is most serious for babies; one in five must be hospitalized, and since they are too young for the vaccine themselves, it is crucial that people around them be immunized (Centers for Disease Control).



Figure 1. Vaccines are not linked to autism, yet the myth persists.

But what of people who do not want their children to have this vaccine, or any other? That question is at the heart of a debate that has been simmering for years. Vaccines are biological preparations that improve immunity against a certain disease. Vaccines have contributed to the eradication and weakening of numerous infectious diseases, including smallpox, polio, mumps, chicken pox, and meningitis.

However, many people express concern about potential negative side effects from vaccines. These concerns range from fears about overloading the child's immune system to controversial reports about devastating side effects of the vaccines. One misapprehension is that the vaccine itself might cause the disease it is supposed to be immunizing against. Another commonly circulated concern is that vaccinations, specifically the MMR vaccine (MMR stands for measles, mumps, and rubella), are linked to autism. The autism connection has been particularly controversial. In 1998, a British physician named Andrew Wakefield published a study in Great Britain's *Lancet* magazine that linked the MMR vaccine to autism. The report received a lot of media attention, resulting in British immunization rates decreasing from 91 percent in 1997 to almost 80 percent by 2003, accompanied by a subsequent rise in measles cases (Devlin 2008). A prolonged investigation by the *British Medical Journal* proved that not only was the link in the study nonexistent, but that Dr. Wakefield had falsified data in order to support his claims (CNN 2011). Dr. Wakefield was discredited and stripped of his license, but the doubt still lingers in many parents' minds. The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention has been vocal about the non-existent relationship between vaccinations and autism.[2]

In the United States, many parents still believe in the now-discredited MMR-autism link and refuse to vaccinate their children. Other parents choose not to vaccinate for various reasons like religious or health beliefs. In 2014, a boy whose parents opted not to vaccinate returned home after a trip abroad; no one yet knew he was infected with measles. The boy exposed 839 people to the disease and caused 11 additional cases of measles, all in other unvaccinated children, including one infant who had to be hospitalized. According to a study published in *Pediatrics*, the outbreak cost the public sector $10,376 per diagnosed case. The study further showed that the intentional non-vaccination of those infected occurred in students from private schools, public charter schools, and public schools in upper-socioeconomic areas (Sugerman et al. 2010), suggesting that differences in preferences regarding vaccination occur across the socioeconomic spectrum.

This heated topic is prevalent in today's political atmosphere and is the cause of many disagreements—stories about couples calling it quits because of differences in position regarding vaccines are no longer surprising. Should parents be forced to immunize their children? What might sociologists make of the fact that most of the families who chose not to vaccinate were of a higher socioeconomic group, which, as we know, is closely related to educational attainment? How does this story of vaccines in a high-income region compare to that in a low-income region, like sub-Saharan Africa, where populations are often eagerly seeking vaccines rather than refusing them?

---

1. http://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/outbreaks/trends.html ↵
2. CDC (n.d.). *Vaccines Do Not Cause Autism.* Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/concerns/autism.html. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Vaccination information. **Authored by**: William Little. **Provided by**: BC Open Textbooks. **Located at**: https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter19-health-and-medicine/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

Public domain content

- Infant vaccination image. **Provided by**: Public Domain Images. **Located at**: http://www.public-domain-image.com/free-images/science/medical-science/nurse-administering-an-intramuscular-vaccination-in-the-left-shoulder-muscle-of-this-young-pre-teen-boy. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 16.10: Putting It Together- Health and Medicine is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

16.11: Discussion- Health and Medicine

This discussion post about health and medicine should be at least 250 words and include relevant vocabulary and information from the module to support your response.

STEP 1: Search for a news article that describes or addresses an illness or disease in some way. Summarize the article in a few sentences, specifically explaining what it mentions about health or medicine. Include a link to the actual article in your response.

STEP 2: Do some research to write a short paragraph explaining the illness mentioned in the article. What is the illness? Where is it most prevalent? Who does it mostly affect? What is the experience for those who have the illness?

STEP 3: Use your sociological imagination to write a paragraph describing the social implications of the illness. Which parts of the illness are medically constructed, and which are socially constructed? Is the illness stigmatized?

STEP 4: Return to the discussion to post on and least TWO classmate's responses, adding supporting information and comments to their initial post.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Health and Medicine. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 16.11: Discussion- Health and Medicine is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

16.12: Assignment- The Evolution of Health Issues

STEP 1: The state of our health issues have changed over the decades. Choose a decade after 1900 and identify a health issue that was prevalent during that decade.

STEP 2: Using a reputable journal find an article about this health issue. Acceptable journals include Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, The Sociological Review, Journal of Public Health, Health Education Research, American Journal of Public Health, the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, or other similar journals. The study should have been performed within the past 10 years.

STEP 3: In an essay between 400-600 words,

- identify the decade you chose and the health issues
- provide a brief summary of the article
- compare and contrast the health issue of the decade with the same issue today. How has the health issue evolved? Include individual, environmental, medical, and societal influences on that health issue.

The essay should includes correct APA citations (both in-text and in a reference page) for the articles or other reference materials used.

Rubric

Criteria	Ratings					Points
Journal	Finds appropriate article in academic journal and summarizes it effectively.	Finds appropriate article in academic journal but does not summarize it effectively or is missing some key points as outlined.	Finds article but it is not relevant to the topic or missing connection of topic to article.	Does not provide enough detail and information or does not find an appropriate article	Poor choice of article, incomplete summary or difficult to understand	__/4
Health Issue	Identifies the health issue and decade. Comparison to current state of health is present.	Identifies the health issue but decade information is missing.	Health issue or decade information are present but vague.	Health issue or decade are present but information is missing.	Identifies neither the health issue nor the decade.	__/6
Discussion	Individual, environmental, medical and societal factors identified and discussed.	Three of four factors are identified and discussed.	Two of four factors are identified and discussed.	One of four factors are identified and discussed.	No factors are discussed or identified.	__/6
Grammar and Citations	Includes correct APA citations and writes in academic language with no to few errors.	Provides accurate in-text citations and a reference page for articles used but some information is missing or not cited correctly Writing is strong, but with some errors.	Some in-text citations inaccurate AND reference page is included but inaccurate. Several writing errors.	Does not fully provide accurate in-text citations AND in reference page for articles used. Writing is hard to read or filled with grammatical errors.	Does not provide accurate in-text citation AND a reference page for the article not completed. Writing is hard to read or filled with errors.	__/4
					Total:	__/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: The Evolution of Health Issues. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 16.12: Assignment- The Evolution of Health Issues is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

17: Module 14- Aging and the Elderly

17.1: Why It Matters- Aging and the Elderly
17.2: Introduction to Aging
17.3: Aging in Society
17.4: The Graying of the United States and the World
17.5: Introduction to the Aging Process
17.6: Growing Old
17.7: Death and Dying
17.8: Introduction to Sociology and Aging
17.9: Retirement and Poverty
17.10: Ageism and Abuse
17.11: Theoretical Perspectives on Aging
17.12: Putting It Together- Aging and the Elderly
17.13: Discussion- Health and Aging Assignment
17.14: Assignment- Aging and the Elderly

This page titled 17: Module 14- Aging and the Elderly is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.1: Why It Matters- Aging and the Elderly

Why learn about the processes, perceptions, and challenges of growing old?

Why are Americans so obsessed with looking and feeling younger? Think of U.S. movies and television shows you have watched recently. Did any of them feature older actors and actresses? What roles did they play? How were these older actors portrayed? Were they portrayed as characters who were healthy and happy? Were they cast as main characters in a love story? Or were they cast as grouchy, sick, incapable old people?

Many media portrayals of the elderly reflect negative cultural attitudes toward aging. In the United States, society tends to glorify youth and associate it with beauty and sexuality. In comedies, the elderly are often associated with grumpiness or hostility. Rarely do the roles of older people convey the fullness of life experienced by seniors—as employees, lovers, or the myriad roles they have in real life. What values does this reflect?

One hindrance to society's fuller understanding of aging is that people rarely understand the process of aging until they reach old age themselves. (As opposed to childhood, for instance, which we can all look back on.) Therefore, myths and assumptions about the elderly and aging are common. Many stereotypes exist surrounding the realities of being an older adult. While individuals often encounter stereotypes associated with race and gender and are thus more likely to think critically about them, many people accept age stereotypes without question (Levy 2002). Each culture has a certain set of expectations and assumptions about aging, all of which are part of our socialization.

In this module you'll examine the sociological processes that accompany growing old. You will also learn how and why people are living longer. Medical advancements, nutrition and health care have all contributed to the rise in life expectancy; however, age, race, social class, gender and other social factors all play a role in how long a person will live. Age is not merely a biological function of the number of years one has lived, or of the physiological changes the body goes through during the life course. It is also a product of the social norms and expectations that apply to each stage of life. Age represents the wealth of life experiences that shape whom we become.

CC licensed content, Original

- Why It Matters: Aging and the Elderly. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Aging and the Elderly. **Authored by**: William Little. **Provided by**: BC Open Textbook. **Located at**: https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter13-aging-and-the-elderly/. **Project**: Introduction to Sociology. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 17.1: Why It Matters- Aging and the Elderly is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.2: Introduction to Aging

What you'll learn to do: evaluate the aging of society and summarize the theoretical perspectives on aging



While the landmark achievements of maturing into adulthood are a source of pride, physical signs of natural aging can be cause for shame or embarrassment. Some people try to fight off the appearance of aging with cosmetic surgery. Although many seniors report that their lives are more satisfying than ever, and their self-esteem is stronger than when they were young, they are still subject to negative cultural attitudes that make them feel invisible and devalued. In this section, we'll examine aging in America and abroad and look at the theoretical perspectives on aging.

CC licensed content, Original

- Objectives and Activities. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Aging and the Elderly. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:rN3fhmfq@3/Introduction-to-Aging-and-the-Elderly. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Men playing chess. **Authored by**: Vlad Sargu. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/ItphH2lGzuI. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 17.2: Introduction to Aging is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.3: Aging in Society

Learning Outcomes

- Describe senior age groups and the study of the elderly population

Who Are the Elderly?



Figure 1. As senior citizens begin to make up a larger percentage of the United States, the organizations supporting them grow stronger. (Photo courtesy of Congressman George Miller/flickr)

What does it mean to be elderly? Some define it as an issue of physical health, while others simply define it by chronological age. The U.S. government, for example, typically classifies people aged sixty-five years old as elderly, at which point citizens are eligible for federal benefits such as Social Security and Medicare. The World Health Organization has no standard, other than noting that sixty-five years old is the commonly accepted definition in most core nations, but it suggests a cut-off somewhere between fifty and fifty-five years old for semi-peripheral nations, such as those in Africa (World Health Organization 2012).

AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons) cites fifty as the eligible age of membership. It is interesting to note AARP's name change; by taking the word "retired" out of its name, the organization can broaden its base to any older people in the United States, not just retirees. This is especially important now that many people are working to age seventy and beyond. There is an element of social construction, both local and global, in the way individuals and nations define who is elderly; that is, the shared meaning of the concept of elderly is created through interactions among people in society. This is exemplified by the truism that you are only as old as you feel.

Supercentenarians are people living to 110 years or more. In August 2014, there were seventy-five verified supercentenarians worldwide—seventy-three women and two men. These are people whose age has been carefully documented, but there are almost certainly others who have not been identified. The Gerontology Research Group (2014) estimates there are between 300 and 450 people worldwide who are at least 110 years of age.

Madame Jeanne Calment of France was the world's oldest living person until she died at 122 years old; there are currently six women in the world whose ages are well documented as 115 years or older (Diebel 2014). As of April 2019, the Guinness Book of World Records recognizes supercentenarian Tanaka Kane as the world's oldest living person. She was born in Japan on January 2, 1903. While living in Japan, Tanaka worked selling rice cakes with her husband and later moved to the United States after her husband's death. At the age of 103, Tanaka survived colon cancer and even at age 116, was still enjoying calligraphy and the board game Othello in a nursing home in Fukuoka, Japan. Tanaka credits sleep, family and hope for her long life.

Centenarians are people living to be 100 years old, and they are approximately 1,000 times more common than supercentenarians. According to the United States Census, in 2016 there were approximately 53,364 centenarians in the United States down from 80,0000 in 2010.[1] They make up one of the fastest-growing segments of the population (Boston University School of Medicine 2014).

The aging of the U.S. population has significant ramifications for social institutions such as business, education, the healthcare industry, and the family, as well as for the many cultural norms and traditions that focus on interactions with and social roles for older people. "Old" is a socially defined concept, and the way we think about aging is likely to change as the population ages.

We generally classify the elderly as the population above age 65. About 15.2 percent of the U.S. population or 49.2 million Americans are 65 and older.[2] This number is expected to grow to 98.2 million by the year 2060, at which time people in this age group will comprise nearly one in four U.S. residents. Of this number, 19.7 million will be age 85 or older. Developmental changes

vary considerably among this population, so it is further divided into categories of 65 plus, 85 plus, and centenarians for comparison by the census.[3]

Studying the Elderly



Figure 2. Society's view of the elderly is likely to change as the population ages. (Photo courtesy of sima dimitric/flickr)

Gerontology is a field of science that seeks to understand the process of aging and the challenges encountered as seniors grow older. Gerontologists investigate age, aging, and the aged. Gerontologists study what it is like to be an older adult in a society and the ways that aging affects members of a society. As a multidisciplinary field, gerontology includes the work of medical and biological scientists, social scientists, and even financial and economic scholars.

Social gerontology refers to a specialized field of gerontology that examines the social (and sociological) aspects of aging. Researchers focus on developing a broad understanding of the experiences of people at specific ages, such as mental and physical well being, plus age-specific concerns such as the process of dying. Social gerontologists work as social researchers, counselors, community organizers, and service providers for older adults. Because of their specialization, social gerontologists are in a strong position to advocate for older adults.

Scholars in these disciplines have learned that "aging" reflects not only the physiological process of growing older but also our attitudes and beliefs about the aging process. You've likely seen online calculators that promise to determine your "real age" as opposed to your chronological age. These ads target the notion that people may "feel" a different age than their actual years. Some sixty-year-olds feel frail and elderly, while some eighty-year-olds feel sprightly.[4]

Equally revealing is that as people grow older they define "old age" in terms of greater years than their current age (Logan 1992). Many people want to postpone old age and regard it as a phase that will never arrive. Some older adults even succumb to stereotyping their own age group (Rothbaum 1983).

In the United States, the experience of being elderly has changed greatly over the past century. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, many U.S. households were home to multigenerational families, and the experiences and wisdom of elders was respected. They offered wisdom and support to their children and often helped raise their grandchildren (Sweetser 1984).

Multigenerational U.S. families began to decline after World War II, and their numbers reached a low point around 1980, but they are on the rise again. In fact, a 2016 Pew Research Center analysis of census data found that multigenerational families in the United States have now reached a record high. Up from 49 million in 2008, 64 million people, or 20% of the U.S. population are living in multigenerational homes—defined as two or more adult generations living in the home or a home that includes grandparents and grandchildren under the age of 25.[5]

Attitudes toward the elderly have also been affected by large societal changes that have happened over the past 100 years. Researchers believe industrialization and modernization have contributed greatly to lowering the power, influence, and prestige the elderly once held. The elderly have both benefited and suffered from these rapid social changes. In modern societies, a strong economy created new levels of prosperity for many people. Healthcare has become more widely accessible, and medicine has advanced, which allows the elderly to live longer. However, older people are not as essential to the economic survival of their families and communities as they were in the past.

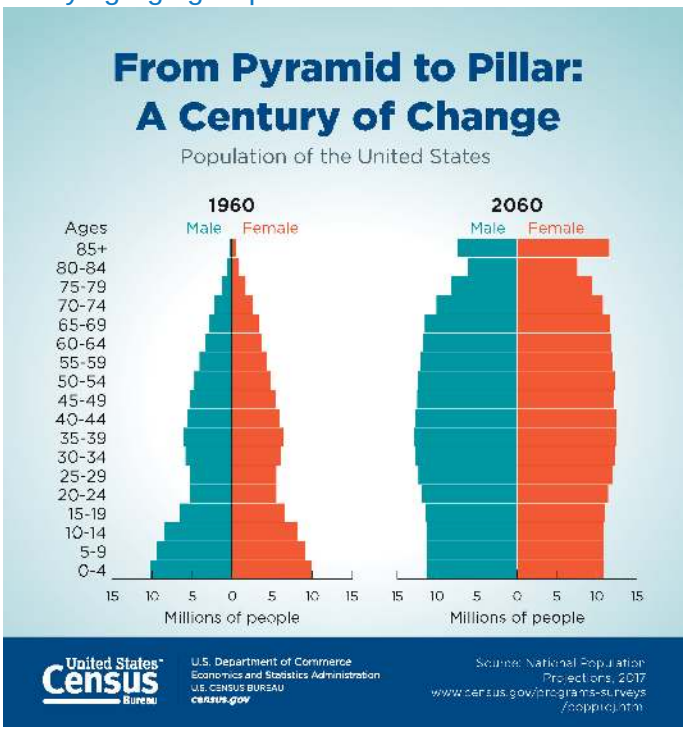


Figure 3. These population pyramids show how population distribution is gradually shifting in the United States, with a rising median age.

Since its creation in 1790, the U.S. Census Bureau has been tracking age in the population. Age is an important factor to analyze alongside other demographic figures, such as income and health.

Statisticians use data to calculate the median age of a population, that is, the number that marks the halfway point in a group's age range. The median age in the United States has been continually rising. In 2016 the median age was 37.9. up from 35.3 in 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2017). That means that about half of the people in the United States are under 37.9 and half are over 37.9. This increased indicates the population as a whole is growing older.[6]

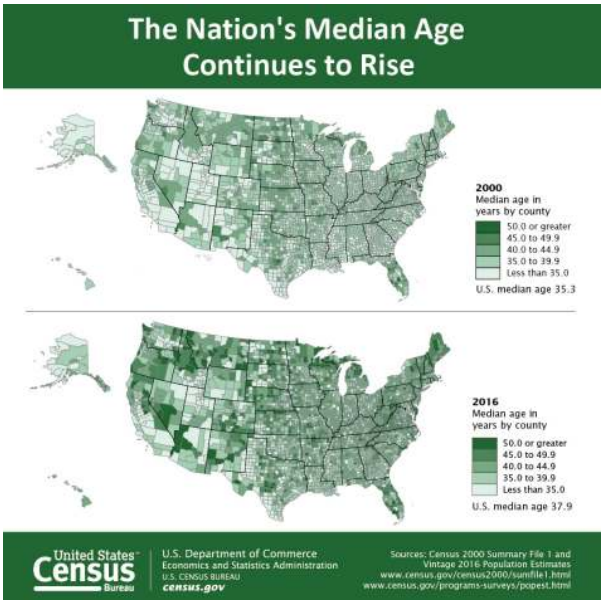


Figure 4. These maps show that the median age is gradually rising.

A **cohort** is a group of people who share a statistical or demographic trait. People belonging to the same age cohort were born in the same time frame. Understanding a population's age composition can point to certain social and cultural factors and help governments and societies plan for future social and economic challenges.

For instance, sociological studies on aging might help explain the difference between Native American age cohorts and the general population. While Native American societies have a strong tradition of revering their elders, they also have a lower life expectancy because of lack of access to healthcare and high levels of mercury in fish, which is a traditional part of their diet.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14755

Phases of Aging: The Young-Old, Middle-Old, and Old-Old

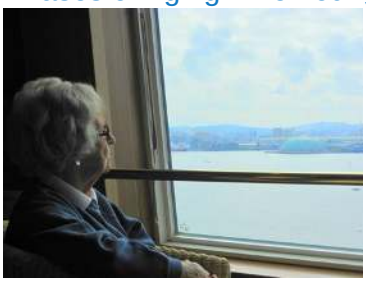


Figure 3. How old is this woman? In modern U.S. society, appearance is not a reliable indicator of age. In addition to genetic differences, health habits, hair dyes, Botox, and the like make traditional signs of aging increasingly unreliable. (Photo courtesy of the Sean and Lauren Spectacular/flickr)

In the United States, all people over eighteen years old are considered adults, but there is a substantial difference between a person who is twenty-one years old and a person who is forty-five years old. More specific categorical breakdowns, such as "young adult" and "middle-aged adult," are helpful. In the same way, groupings are helpful in understanding the elderly. The elderly are often lumped together to include everyone over the age of sixty-five. But a sixty-five-year-old's experience of life is much different from a ninety-year-old's.

The United States' older adult population can be divided into three life-stage subgroups: the young-old (approximately sixty-five to seventy-four years old), the middle-old (ages seventy-five to eighty-four years old), and the old-old (over age eighty-five). Today's young-old age group is generally happier, healthier, and financially better off than the young-old of previous generations. In the United States, people are better able to prepare for aging because resources are more widely available.

Also, many people are making proactive quality-of-life decisions about their old age while they are still young. In the past, family members made care decisions when an elderly person reached a health crisis, often leaving the elderly person with little choice about what would happen. The elderly are now able to choose housing, for example, that allows them some independence while still providing care when it is needed. Living wills, retirement planning, and medical power of attorney are other concerns that are increasingly handled in advance.

Further Research

Gregory Bator founded the television show *Graceful Aging* and then developed a web site offering short video clips from the show. The purpose of *Graceful Aging* is to both inform and entertain, with clips on topics such as sleep, driving, health, safety, and legal issues. This website if for seniors, as well as people responsible for caring for an elderly person. Bator, a lawyer, works on counseling seniors about their legal needs. Look at the *Graceful Aging* website for a visual understanding of aging.

Think It Over

- What social issues involve age disaggregation (breakdowns into groups) of a population? What impact does this age stratification have on the social institutions? What kind of sociological studies would consider age an important factor?

- Conduct a mini-census by counting the members of your extended family and include each person's age. Try to include three or four generations, if possible. Create a table and include total population plus percentages of each generation. Next, begin to analyze age patterns in your family. What issues are important and specific to each group? What trends can you predict about your own family over the next ten years based on this census? For example, how will family members' needs and interests and relationships change the family dynamic?

glossary

cohort:
a group of people who share a statistical or demographic trait

gerontology:
a field of science that seeks to understand the process of aging and the challenges encountered as seniors grow older

life expectancy:
the number of years a newborn is expected to live

social gerontology:
a specialized field of gerontology that examines the social (and sociological) aspects of aging

1. US Census Bureau. (2018, August 03). Older Americans Month: May 2017. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2017/cb17-ff08.html↵
2. US Census Bureau. (2018, April 10). The Nation's Older Population Is Still Growing, Census Bureau Reports. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/cb17-100.html↵
3. US Census Bureau. (2018, August 03). Newsroom. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2017/cb17-ff08.html↵
4. null ↵
5. Cohn, D., Passel, J. S., Cohn, D., & Passel, J. S. (2018, April 05). Record 64 million Americans live in multigenerational households. Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/05/a-record-64-million-americans-live-in-multigenerational-households/↵
6. US Census Bureau. (2018, October 01). From Pyramid to Pillar: A Century of Change, Population of the U.S. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2018/comm/century-of-change.html↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Who Are the Elderly? Aging in Society. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:9M5hBvVn@3/Who-Are-the-Elderly-Aging-in-Society. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Description of elderly. **Authored by**: Sonja Ann Miller for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **Located at**: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-lifespandevelopment/chapter/physical-development-4/. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Kane Tanaka. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Kane_Tanaka. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

Public domain content

- The Nations Median Age Continues to Rise. **Provided by**: United States Census Bureau. **Located at**: https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2017/comm/median-age.html. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*
- From Pyramid to Pillar. **Provided by**: United States Census Bureau. **Located at**: https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2018/comm/century-of-change.html. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 17.3: Aging in Society is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.4: The Graying of the United States and the World

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the graying of the United States, including the impact of aging baby boomers
- Examine aging and elder care as a global issue

The Graying of the United States

Demographically, the U.S. population over sixty-five years old increased from 3 million in 1900 to 33 million in 1994 (Hobbs 1994), 36.8 million in 2010, 47.8 million in 2015, and 49.2 million in 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). This is a greater than tenfold increase in the elderly population, compared to a mere tripling of both the total population and of the population under sixty-five years old (Hobbs 1994). This increase has been called "the graying of America," a term that describes the phenomenon of a larger and larger percentage of the population getting older and older.

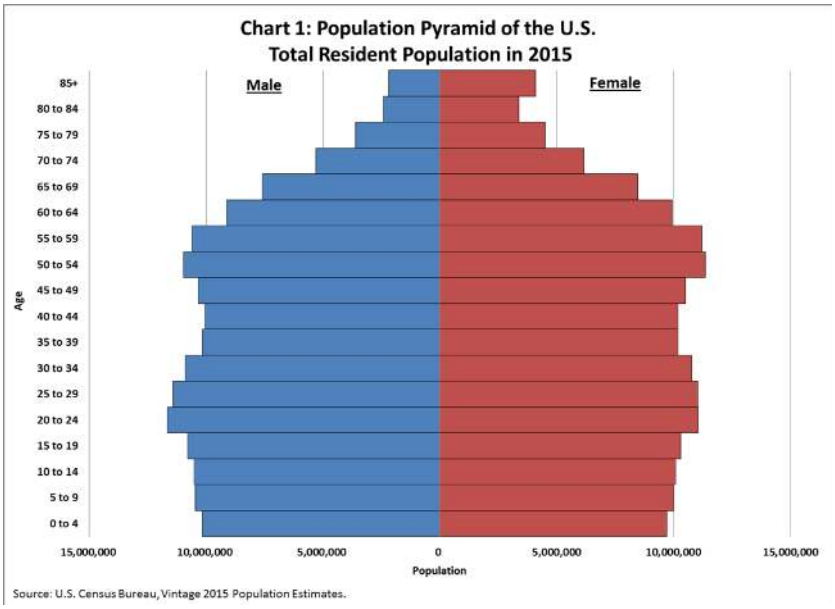


Figure 1. The population pyramid in the United States is beginning to look more like a column than a pyramid.

There are several reasons why the United States is graying so rapidly. One of these is **life expectancy**: the average number of years a person born today may expect to live. When we review Census Bureau statistics grouping the elderly by age, it is clear that in the United States, at least, we are living longer. In 2010, there were about 80,000 centenarians in the United States. According to the CDC, the number of centenarians in the United States in 2014 was 72,197. [1]. They make up one of the fastest-growing segments of the population (Boston University School of Medicine 2014).

People over ninety years of age now account for 4.7 percent of the older population, defined as age sixty-five or above; this percentage is expected to reach 10 percent by the year 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). As of 2018, about 15.2 percent of the U.S. population is age 65 or older.[2]

It is interesting to note that not all people in the United States age equally. Most glaring is the difference between men and women; as Figure 2 below shows, women have longer life expectancies than men. In 2010, there were ninety sixty-five-year-old men per one hundred sixty-five-year-old women. However, there were only eighty seventy-five-year-old men per one hundred seventy-five-year-old women, and only sixty eighty-five-year-old men per one hundred eighty-five-year-old women. Nevertheless, as the graph shows, the sex ratio actually increased over time, indicating that men are closing the gap between their life spans and those of women (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

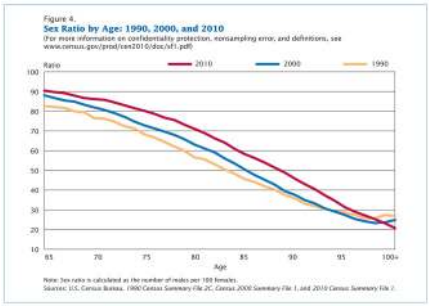


Figure 2. This U.S. Census graph shows that women live significantly longer than men. However, over the past two decades, men have narrowed the percentage by which women outlive them. (Graph courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau)

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14756

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14758

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14757

Baby Boomers

Of particular interest to gerontologists today is the population of **baby boomers**, the unprecedentedly large cohort born between 1946 and 1964 and now reaching their 70s. Coming of age in the 1960s and early 1970s, the baby boom generation was the first group of children and teenagers with their own spending power and therefore their own marketing power (Macunovich 2000). As this group has aged, it has redefined, particularly through the mass media forms that emerged during their adulthood, what it means to be young, middle-aged, and now old. People in the boomer

generation do not want to grow old the way their grandparents did. The result is a wide range of products designed to ward off the effects—or the signs—of aging, known as **senescence**. Previous generations of people over sixty-five were "old." Baby boomers are in "later life" or "the third age" (Gilleard and Higgs 2007).

The baby boom generation is the cohort driving much of the dramatic increase in the over-sixty-five population. Figure 3 shows a comparison of the U.S. population by age and gender between 2000 and 2010. The biggest bulge in the pyramid (representing the largest population group) moves up the pyramid over the course of the decade; in 2000, the largest population group was age thirty-five to fifty-five. In 2010, that group was age forty-five to sixty-five, meaning the oldest baby boomers were just reaching the age at which the U.S. Census considers them elderly. In 2020, we can predict, the baby boom bulge will continue to rise up the pyramid, making the largest U.S. population group between sixty-five and eighty-five years old.

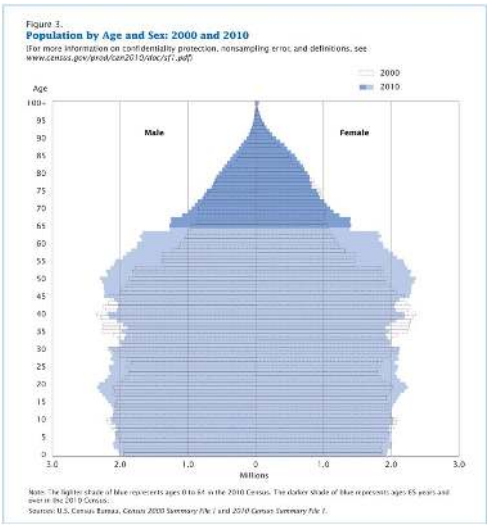


Figure 3. In this U.S. Census pyramid chart, the baby boom bulge was aged thirty-five to fifty-five in 2000. In 2010, they were aged forty-five to sixty-five. (Graph courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau).

This aging of the baby boom cohort has serious implications for our society. Healthcare is one of the areas most impacted by this trend. For years, hand-wringing has abounded about the additional burden the boomer cohort will place on Medicare, a government-funded program that provides healthcare services to people over sixty-five years old. And indeed, the Congressional Budget Office's 2008 long-term outlook report shows that Medicare spending is expected to increase from 3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2009 to 8 percent of GDP in 2030, and to 15 percent in 2080 (Congressional Budget Office 2008).

Certainly, as boomers age, they will put increasing burdens on the entire U.S. healthcare system. A study from 2008 indicates that medical schools are not producing enough medical professionals who specialize in treating geriatric patients (Gerontological Society of America 2008). However, other studies indicate that aging boomers will bring economic growth to the healthcare industries, particularly in areas like pharmaceutical manufacturing and home healthcare services (Bierman 2011). Further, some argue that many of our medical advances of the past few decades are a result of boomers' health requirements. Unlike the elderly of previous generations, boomers do not expect that turning sixty-five means their active lives are over. They are not willing to abandon work or leisure activities, but they may need more medical support to keep living vigorous lives. This desire of a large group of over-sixty-five-year-olds wanting to continue with a high activity level is driving innovation in the medical industry (Shaw).

The economic impact of aging boomers is also an area of concern for many observers. Although the baby boom generation earned more than previous generations and enjoyed a higher standard of living, they also spent their money lavishly and did not adequately prepare for retirement. According to a 2008 report from the McKinsey Global Institute, approximately two-thirds of early boomer households have not accumulated enough savings to maintain their lifestyles. This will have a ripple effect on the economy as boomers work and spend less (Farrel et al. 2008).

Just as some observers are concerned about the possibility of Medicare being overburdened, Social Security is considered to be at risk. Social Security is a government-run retirement program funded primarily through payroll taxes. With enough people paying into the program, there should be enough money for retirees to take out. But with the aging boomer cohort starting to receive Social Security benefits and fewer workers paying into the Social Security trust fund, economists warn that the system will collapse by the year 2037. A similar warning came in the 1980s. In response to recommendations from the Greenspan Commission, the retirement age (the age at which people could start receiving Social Security benefits) was raised from sixty-two to sixty-seven and the payroll tax was increased. A similar hike in retirement age, perhaps to seventy, is a possible solution to the current threat to Social Security (Reuteman 2010).

Dig Deeper: Social Security

Watch this video from the National Academy of Social Insurance to learn about the counter-argument that Social Security will last well into the future because it was designed to account for an aging population. You can also visit the National Issues Forum to learn more about alternatives to social security.

Think It Over

- Baby boomers have been called the "Me Generation." Do you know any baby boomers? In what way do they exemplify their generation? Do you think that is an accurate description?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14759

Aging around the World

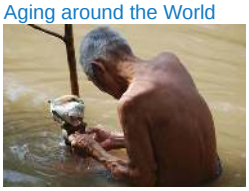


Figure 4. Cultural values and attitudes can shape people's experience of aging. (Photo courtesy of Tom Coppen/flickr)

From 1950 to approximately 2010, the global population of individuals age sixty-five and older increased by a range of 5–7 percent (Lee 2009). This percentage is expected to increase and will have a critical impact on the **dependency ratio**: the number of nonproductive citizens (young, disabled, or elderly) to productive working citizens (Bartram and Roe 2005). One country that will soon face a serious aging crisis is China, which is on the cusp of an "aging boom"— a period when its elderly population will dramatically increase. The number of people above age sixty in China today

is about 178 million, which amounts to 13.3 percent of its total population (Xuequan 2011). By 2050, nearly a third of the Chinese population will be age sixty or older, which will put a significant burden on the labor force and impacting China's economic growth (Bannister, Bloom, and Rosenberg 2010).

As healthcare improves and life expectancy increases across the world, elder care will be an emerging issue. Wienclaw (2009) suggests that with fewer working-age citizens available to provide home care and long-term assisted care to the elderly, the costs of elder care will increase. The cost of putting a parent into professional assisted-living averages about $42,000 a year, and approximately $87,000 in a private room. If the elder family member stays home, he or she is typically cared for by a woman, who is typically "a middle aged mother with children or adult children living in their household. [3]

Worldwide, the expectation governing the amount and type of elder care varies from culture to culture. For example, in Asia the responsibility for elder care lies firmly on the family (Yap, Thang, and Traphagan 2005). This is different from the approach in most Western countries, where the elderly are considered independent and are expected to tend to their own care. It is not uncommon for family members to intervene only if the elderly relative requires assistance, often due to poor health. Even then, caring for the elderly is considered voluntary. In the United States, decisions to care for an elderly relative are often conditionally based on the promise of future returns, such as inheritance or, in some cases, the amount of support the elderly provided to the caregiver in the past (Hashimoto 1996).

These differences are based on cultural attitudes toward aging. In China, several studies have noted the attitude of **filial piety** (deference and respect to one's parents and ancestors in all things) as fundamentally defining all other virtues (Hsu 1971; Hamilton 1990). Cultural attitudes in Japan prior to approximately 1986 supported the idea that the elderly deserve assistance (Ogawa and Retherford 1993). However, seismic shifts in major social institutions (like family and the economy) have created an increased demand for community and government care. For example, the increase in women working outside the home has made it more difficult to provide in-home care to aging parents, which leads to an increase in the need for government-supported institutions (Raikhola and Kuroki 2009).

In the United States, by contrast, many people view caring for the elderly as a burden. Even when there is a family member able and willing to provide for an elderly family member, 60 percent of family caregivers are employed outside the home and are unable to provide the needed support. At the same time, however, many middle-class families are unable to bear the financial burden of "outsourcing" professional healthcare, resulting in gaps in care (Bookman and Kimbrel 2011). It is important to note that even within the United States not all demographic groups treat aging the same way. While most people in the United States are reluctant to place their elderly members into out-of-home assisted care, demographically speaking, the groups least likely to do so are Latinos, African Americans, and Asians (Bookman and Kimbrel 2011).

Globally, the United States and other core nations are fairly well equipped to handle the demands of an exponentially increasing elderly population. However, peripheral and semi-peripheral nations face similar increases without comparable resources. Poverty among elders is a concern, especially among elderly women. The feminization of the aging poor, evident in peripheral nations, is directly due to the number of elderly women in those countries who are single, illiterate, and not a part of the labor force (Mujahid 2006).

In 2002, the Second World Assembly on Aging was held in Madrid, Spain, resulting in the Madrid Plan, an internationally coordinated effort to create comprehensive social policies to address the needs of the worldwide aging population. The plan identifies three themes to guide international policy on aging: 1) publically acknowledging the global challenges caused by, and the global opportunities created by, a rising global population; 2) empowering the elderly; and 3) linking international policies on aging to international policies on development (Zelenev 2008).

The Madrid Plan has not yet been successful in achieving all its aims. However, it has increased awareness of the various issues associated with a global aging population, as well as raising the international consciousness to the way that the factors influencing the vulnerability of the elderly (social exclusion, prejudice and discrimination, and a lack of socio-legal protection) overlap with other developmental issues (basic human rights, empowerment, and participation), leading to an increase in legal protections (Zelenev 2008).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14760

glossary

baby boomers:
unprecedentedly large cohort of people in the United States born between approximately 1946 and 1964

dependency ratio: the number of nonproductive citizens (young, disabled, elderly) to productive working citizens

filial piety:
deference and respect to one's parents and ancestors in all things

life expectancy:
the number of years a newborn is expected to live

senescence:
the aging process, including biological, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual changes

1. Jiaquan Xu, M.D. (2016, January). Mortality Among Centenarians in the United States, 2000–2014. NCHS Data Brief. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db233.pdf↵
2. US Census Bureau. (2018, April 10). The Nation's Older Population Is Still Growing, Census Bureau Reports. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/cb17-100.html↵
3. Geewax, M. (2012, May 01). Discovering The True Cost Of At-Home Caregiving. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/2012/05/01/151472617/discovering-the-true-cost-of-at-home-caregiving↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Who Are the Elderly? Aging in Society. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:9M5hBvVn@3/Who-Are-the-Elderly-Aging-in-Society. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Social Security: Just the Facts. **Authored by**: NASIchannel. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHAcy4SNVbo. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

Public domain content

- Americau2019s Age Profile Told through Population Pyramids. **Authored by**: Luke T. Rogers. **Provided by**: United States Census Bureau. **Located at**: https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2016/06/americas-age-profile-told-through-population-pyramids.html. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 17.4: The Graying of the United States and the World is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.5: Introduction to the Aging Process

What you'll learn to do: examine the process of aging and the biological, social, and psychological changes and perceptions associated with growing old



Old age affects every aspect of human life: biological, social, and psychological. Although medical technology has lengthened life expectancies, it cannot eradicate aging and death. Cultural attitudes shape the way our society views old age and dying, but these attitudes shift and evolve over time. In this section, you'll learn about the types of changes that occur during late adulthood and examine attitudes toward death and dying.

Watch It

Watch this video for some advice from a few of the world's oldest people to hear what they have to say about ways that you can also live to be the oldest person alive.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=486

CC licensed content, Original

- Objectives and Activities. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The Process of Aging. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:2d9eSEty@4/The-Process-of-Aging. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Old woman's smile. **Authored by**: Huyen Nguyen. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/ccaQyDwMCZ0. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

All rights reserved content

- How to Be the Oldest Person Alive. **Authored by**: Glamour Magazine. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I62njq9gsaI. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 17.5: Introduction to the Aging Process is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.6: Growing Old

Learning Outcomes

- Examine the biological changes of aging
- Explain social and psychological changes of aging

As human beings grow older, they go through different phases or stages of life. It is helpful to understand aging in the context of these phases. A **life course** is the period from birth to death, including a sequence of predictable life events such as physical maturation. Each phase comes with different responsibilities and expectations, which of course vary by individual and culture. Children love to play and learn, looking forward to becoming preteens. As preteens begin to test their independence, they are eager to become teenagers. Teenagers anticipate the promises and challenges of adulthood. Adults become focused on creating families, building careers, and experiencing the world as independent people. Finally, many adults look forward to old age as a wonderful time to enjoy life without as much pressure from work and family life.

In old age, grandparenthood can provide many of the joys of parenthood without all the hard work that parenthood entails. And as work responsibilities abate, old age may be a time to explore hobbies and activities that there was no time for earlier in life. But for other people, old age is not a phase that they look forward to. Some people fear old age and do anything to "avoid" it by seeking medical and cosmetic fixes for the natural effects of age. These differing views on the life course are the result of the cultural values and norms into which people are socialized, but in most cultures, age is a master status influencing self-concept, as well as social roles and interactions.

Through the phases of the life course, dependence and independence levels change. At birth, newborns are dependent on caregivers for everything. As babies become toddlers and toddlers become adolescents and then teenagers, they assert their independence more and more. Gradually, children come to be considered adults, responsible for their own lives, although the point at which this occurs is widely varied among individuals, families, and cultures.

As Riley (1978) notes, aging is a lifelong process and entails maturation and change on physical, psychological, and social levels. Age, much like race, class, and gender, is a hierarchy in which some categories are more highly valued than others. For example, while many children look forward to gaining independence, Packer and Chasteen (2006) suggest that even in children, age prejudice leads to a negative view of aging. This, in turn, can lead to a widespread segregation between the old and the young at the institutional, societal, and cultural levels (Hagestad and Uhlenberg 2006).

Dr. Ignatz Nascher and the Birth of Geriatrics

In the early 1900s, a New York physician named Dr. Ignatz Nascher coined the term geriatrics, a medical specialty that focuses on the elderly. He created the word by combining two Greek words: *geron* (old man) and *iatrikos* (medical treatment). Nascher based his work on what he observed as a young medical student, when he saw many acutely ill elderly people who were diagnosed simply as "being old." There was nothing medicine could do, his professors declared, about the syndrome of "old age."

Nascher refused to accept this dismissive view, seeing it as medical neglect. He believed it was a doctor's duty to prolong life and relieve suffering whenever possible. In 1914, he published his views in his book *Geriatrics: The Diseases of Old Age and Their Treatment* (Clarfield 1990). Nascher saw the practice of caring for the elderly as separate from the practice of caring for the young, just as pediatrics (caring for children) is different from caring for grown adults (Clarfield 1990).

Nascher had high hopes for his pioneering work. He wanted to treat the aging, especially those who were poor and had no one to care for them. Many of the elderly poor were sent to live in "almshouses," or public old-age homes (Cole 1993). Conditions were often terrible in these almshouses, where the aging were often sent and just forgotten.

As hard as it might be to believe today, Nascher's approach was once considered unique. At the time of his death, in 1944, he was disappointed that the field of geriatrics had not made greater strides. In what ways are the elderly better off today than they were before Nascher's ideas gained acceptance?

Biological Changes



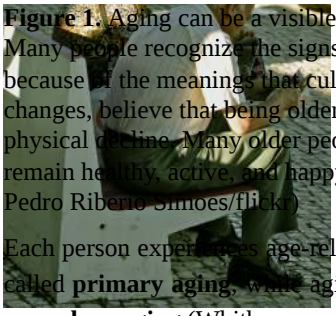


Figure 1. Aging can be a visible, public experience. Many people recognize the signs of aging and, because of the meanings that culture assigns to these changes, believe that being older means being in physical decline. Many older people, however, remain healthy, active, and happy. (Photo courtesy of Pedro Ribeiro Simoes/flickr)

Each person experiences age-related changes based on many factors. Biological factors such as molecular and cellular changes are called **primary aging**, while aging that occurs due to controllable factors such as lack of physical exercise and poor diet is called **secondary aging** (Whitbourne and Whitbourne 2010).

Most people begin to see signs of aging after fifty years old, when they notice the physical markers of age known as senescence. Skin becomes thinner, drier, and less elastic. Wrinkles form. Hair begins to thin and gray. Men prone to balding start losing hair. The difficulty or relative ease with which people adapt to these changes is dependent in part on the meaning given to aging by their particular culture. A culture that values youthfulness and beauty above all else leads to a negative perception of growing old. Conversely, a culture that reveres the elderly for their life experience and wisdom contributes to a more positive perception of what it means to grow old.

The effects of aging can feel daunting, and sometimes the fear of physical changes (like declining energy, food sensitivity, and loss of hearing and vision) is more challenging to deal with than the changes themselves. The way people perceive physical aging is largely dependent on how they were socialized. If people can accept the changes in their bodies as a natural process of aging, the changes will not seem as frightening.

According to the federal Administration on Aging (2011), in 2009 fewer people over sixty-five years old assessed their health as “excellent” or “very good” (41.6 percent) compared to those aged eighteen to sixty-four (64.4 percent). Evaluating data from the National Center for Health Statistics and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Administration on Aging found that from 2006 to 2008, the most frequently reported health issues for those over sixty-five years old included arthritis (50 percent), hypertension (38 percent), heart disease (32 percent), and cancer (22 percent). About 27 percent of people age sixty and older are considered obese by current medical standards. Parker and Thorslunf (2006) found that while the trend is toward steady improvement in most disability measures, there is a concomitant increase in functional impairments (disability) and chronic diseases. At the same time, medical advances have reduced some of the disabling effects of those diseases (Crimmins 2004).

Some impacts of aging are gender-specific. Some of the disadvantages aging women face arise from long-standing social gender roles. For example, Social Security favors men over women, inasmuch as women do not earn Social Security benefits for the unpaid labor they perform (usually at home) as an extension of their gender roles. In the healthcare field, elderly female patients are more likely than elderly men to see their healthcare concerns trivialized (Sharp 1995) and are more likely to have their health issues labeled psychosomatic (Munch 2004). Another female-specific aspect of aging is that mass-media outlets often depict elderly females in terms of negative stereotypes and as less successful than older men (Bazzini and Mclntosh I997).

For men, the process of aging—and society’s response to and support of the experience—may be quite different. The gradual decrease in male sexual performance that occurs as a result of primary aging is medicalized and constructed as needing treatment (Marshall and Katz 2002) so that a man may maintain a sense of youthful masculinity. On the other hand, aging men have fewer opportunities to assert their masculine identities in the company of other men (for example, through sports participation) (Drummond 1998). And some social scientists have observed that the aging male body is depicted in the Western world as genderless (Spector-Mersel 2006).

Watch It

Watch the selected first half of this video to learn more about the aging process.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=488

Aging and Sexuality



Figure 2. In Harold and Maude, a 1971 cult classic movie, a twenty-something young man falls in love with a seventy-nine-year-old woman. The world reacts in disgust. What is your response to this picture, given that that the two people are meant to be lovers, not grandmother and grandson? (Photo courtesy of luckyjackson/flickr)

It is no secret that people in the United States are squeamish about the subject of sex. And when the subject is the sexuality of elderly people? No one wants to think about it or even talk about it. That fact is part of what makes 1971's *Harold and Maude* so provocative. In this cult favorite film, Harold, an alienated young man, meets and falls in love with Maude, a seventy-nine-year-old woman. What is so telling about the film is the reaction of his family, priest, and psychologist, who exhibit disgust and horror at such a match.

Although it is difficult to have an open, public national dialogue about aging and sexuality, the reality is that our sexual selves do not disappear after age sixty-five. People continue to enjoy sex—and not always safe sex—well into their later years. In fact, some research suggests that as many as one in five new cases of AIDS occurs in adults over sixty-five years old (Hillman 2011).

Further Research

Read the article "A Study of Sexuality and Health among Older Adults in the United States." You will find it online at the *New England Journal of Medicine.*

In some ways, old age may be a time to enjoy sex more, not less. For women, the elder years can bring a sense of relief as the fear of an unwanted pregnancy is removed and the children are grown and taking care of themselves. However, while we have expanded the number of psycho-pharmaceuticals to address sexual dysfunction in men, it was not until very recently that the medical field acknowledged the existence of female sexual dysfunctions (Bryant 2004).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14761

Aging "Out:" LGBT Seniors

How do different groups in our society experience the aging process? Are there any experiences that are universal, or do different populations have different experiences? An emerging field of study looks at how lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people experience the aging process and how their experience differs from that of other groups or the dominant group. This issue is expanding with the aging of the baby boom generation; not only will aging boomers represent a huge bump in the general elderly population but also the number of LGBT seniors is expected to double by 2030 (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. 2011).

A recent study titled *The Aging and Health Report: Disparities and Resilience among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Older Adults* finds that LGBT older adults have higher rates of disability and depression than their heterosexual peers. They are also less likely to have a support system that might provide elder care: a partner and supportive children (Fredriksen-Goldsen et al. 2011).

As they transition to assisted-living facilities, LGBT people have the added burden of "disclosure management:" the way they share their sexual and relationship identity. In one case study, a seventy-eight-year-old lesbian lived alone in a long-term care facility. She had been in a long-term relationship of thirty-two years and had been visibly active in the gay community earlier in her life. However, in the long-term care setting, she was much quieter about her sexual orientation. She "selectively disclosed" her sexual identity, feeling safer with anonymity and silence (Jenkins et al. 2010). A study from the National Senior Citizens Law

Center reports that only 22 percent of LGBT older adults expect they could be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity in a long-term care facility. Even more telling is the finding that only 16 percent of non-LGBT older adults expected that LGBT people could be open with facility staff (National Senior Citizens Law Center 2011).

Social and Psychological Changes

Male or female, growing older means confronting the psychological issues that come with entering the last phase of life. Young people moving into adulthood take on new roles and responsibilities as their lives expand, but an opposite arc can be observed in old age. What are the hallmarks of social and psychological change?

Retirement—the withdrawal from paid work at a certain age—is a relatively recent idea. Up until the late nineteenth century, people worked about sixty hours a week until they were physically incapable of continuing. Following the American Civil War, veterans receiving pensions were able to withdraw from the workforce, and the number of working older men began declining. A second large decline in the number of working men began in the post-World War II era, probably due to the availability of Social Security, and a third large decline in the 1960s and 1970s was probably due to the social support offered by Medicare and an increase in Social Security benefits (Munnell 2011).



Figure 3. Aging is accompanied by a host of biological, social, and psychological changes. (Photo courtesy of Michael Cohen/flickr)

In the twenty-first century, most people hope that at some point they will be able to stop working and enjoy the fruits of their labor. Unfortunately, research indicates that baby boomers do not have enough in savings and are deeper in debt than the retirees a decade older than them.[1] But do we look forward to this time or fear it? When people retire from familiar work routines, some easily seek new hobbies, interests, and forms of recreation. Many find new groups and explore new activities, but others may find it more difficult to adapt to new routines and loss of social roles, losing their sense of self-worth in the process.

Each phase of life has challenges that come with the potential for fear. Erik H. Erikson (1902–1994), in his view of socialization, broke the typical life span into eight phases. Each phase presents a particular challenge that must be overcome. In the final stage, old age, the challenge is to embrace integrity over despair. Some people are unable to successfully overcome the challenge. They may have to confront regrets, such as being disappointed in their children's lives or perhaps their own. They may have to accept that they will never reach certain career goals. Or they must come to terms with what their career success has cost them, such as time with their family or declining personal health. Others, however, are able to achieve a strong sense of integrity and are able to embrace the new phase in life. When that happens, there is tremendous potential for creativity. They can learn new skills, practice new activities, and peacefully prepare for the end of life.

For some, overcoming despair might entail remarriage after the death of a spouse. A study conducted by Kate Davidson (2002) reviewed demographic data that asserted men were more likely to remarry after the death of a spouse and suggested that widows (the surviving female spouse of a deceased male partner) and widowers (the surviving male spouse of a deceased female partner) experience their postmarital lives differently. Many surviving women enjoyed a new sense of freedom, since they were living alone for the first time. On the other hand, for surviving men, there was a greater sense of having lost something, because they were now deprived of a constant source of care as well as the focus of their emotional life.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14762

Think It Over

- What is your relationship to aging and to time? Look back on your own life. How much and in what ways did you change in ten years and in twenty years? Does a decade seem like a long time or a short time in a life span? Now apply some of your ideas to the idea of aging. Do you think older people share similar experiences as they age?
- What do you think it will be like to be ten, twenty, and fifty years older than you are now? What facts are your assumptions based on? Are any of your assumptions about getting older false? What kind of sociological study could you establish to test your assumptions?

glossary

geriatrics:
a medical specialty focusing on the elderly

life course:
the period from birth to death, including a sequence of predictable life events

primary aging:
biological factors such as molecular and cellular changes

secondary aging:
aging that occurs due to controllable factors like exercise and diet

1. Seeing Our Way to Financial Security in the Age of Increased Longevity, (2017). http://longevity.stanford.edu/sightlines-financial-security-special-report-mobile/↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The Process of Aging. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:2d9eSEty@4/The-Process-of-Aging. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Age & Aging: Crash Course Sociology #36. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJ18whKduFo. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 17.6: Growing Old is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.7: Death and Dying

Learning Objectives

- Examine attitudes toward death and dying

Death and Dying



A young man sits at the grave of his great-grandmother. (Photo courtesy of Sara Goldsmith/flickr)

Every society must deal with the problems that come with an aging population. For most of human history, the standard of living has been significantly lower than it is now. Humans struggled to survive with few amenities and very limited medical technology. The risk of death due to disease or accident was high in any life stage, and life expectancy was low. Because of industrialization and more advanced medical technology people began to live longer and death became associated with old age.

For many teenagers and young adults, losing a grandparent or another older relative can be the first loss of a loved one they experience. It may be their first encounter with **grief**, a psychological, emotional, and social response to the feelings of loss that accompanies death or a similar event.

People tend to perceive death, their own and that of others, based on the values of their culture. While some may look upon death as the natural conclusion to a long, fruitful life, others may find the prospect of dying frightening to contemplate. People tend to have strong resistance to the idea of their own death, and strong emotional reactions of loss to the death of loved ones. Viewing death as a loss, as opposed to a natural or tranquil transition, is often considered normal in the United States.

Link to Learning

Sociologist Nancy Berns explains that in the United States and other western societies, people are encouraged to deal with grief or loss through closure. She contradicts this advice and explains that people do not necessarily need closure in order to "move on." Watch this Ted talk "Beyond Closure" to learn more.

What may be surprising is how few studies were conducted on death and dying prior to the 1960s. Death and dying were fields that had received little attention until a psychologist named Elisabeth Kübler-Ross began observing people who were in the process of dying. As Kübler-Ross witnessed people's transition toward death, she found some common threads in their experiences. She observed that the process had five distinct stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. She published her findings in a 1969 book called *On Death and Dying*. The book remains a classic on the topic today.

Kübler-Ross found that a person's first reaction to the prospect of dying is *denial*: this is characterized by the person's not wanting to believe he or she is dying, with common thoughts such as "I feel fine" or "This is not really happening to me." The second stage is *anger*, when loss of life is seen as unfair and unjust. A person then resorts to the third stage, *bargaining*: trying to negotiate with

a higher power to postpone the inevitable by reforming or changing the way he or she lives. The fourth stage, psychological *depression*, allows for resignation as the situation begins to seem hopeless. In the final stage, a person adjusts to the idea of death and reaches *acceptance*. At this point, the person can face death honestly, by regarding it as a natural and inevitable part of life and can make the most of their remaining time.

The work of Kübler-Ross was eye-opening when it was introduced. It opened up new avenues of exploration for sociologists, social workers, health practitioners, and therapists to study death and to help those who were facing death. Kübler-Ross's work is generally considered a major contribution to **thanatology**: the systematic study of death and dying. Over the years, her model has come under criticism for overgeneralizing the experience of grief and creating a false expectation that a person must pass through distinct stages in their grieving process.

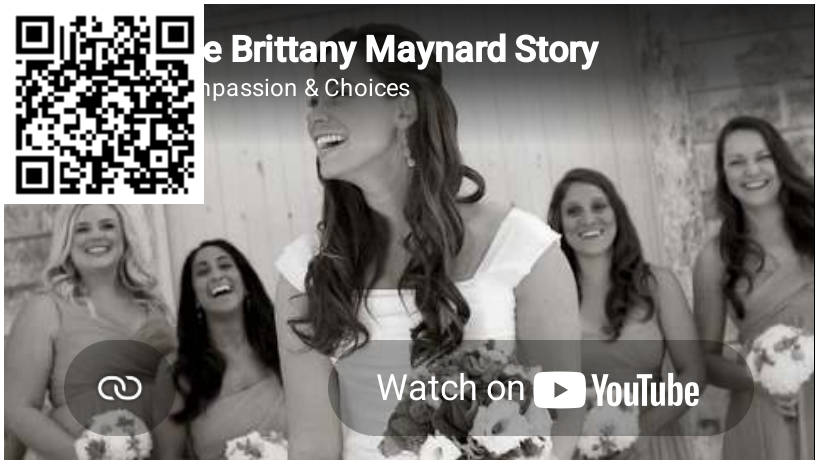
Link to Learning

Watch this SciShow video "The Truth About the Five Stages of Grief" to learn more about some criticisms of the Kübler-Ross model and to consider other theories about dealing with grief.

Of special interest to thanatologists is the concept of "dying with dignity." Modern medicine includes advanced medical technology that may prolong life without a parallel improvement to the quality of life one may have. In some cases, people may not want to continue living when they are in constant pain and no longer enjoying life. Should patients have the right to choose to die with dignity? Dr. Jack Kevorkian was a staunch advocate for **physician-assisted suicide**: the voluntary or physician-assisted use of lethal medication provided by a medical doctor to end one's life. This right to have a doctor help a patient die with dignity is controversial. In the United States, Oregon was the first state to pass a law allowing physician-assisted suicides. In 1997, Oregon instituted the Death with Dignity Act, which required the presence of two physicians for a legal assisted suicide. This law was successfully challenged by U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft in 2001, but the appeals process ultimately upheld the Oregon law. Subsequently, both Montana and Washington have passed similar laws.

Watch It

After Brittany Maynard was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer, she decided to move to Oregon so that she could end her life with physician-assisted suicide. She became an advocate for death with dignity and was interviewed for this video before she passed away in November 2014.



The controversy surrounding death with dignity laws is emblematic of the way our society tries to separate itself from death. Health institutions have built facilities to comfortably house those who are terminally ill. This is seen as a compassionate act, helping relieve the surviving family members of the burden of caring for the dying relative. But studies almost universally show that people prefer to die in their own homes (Lloyd, White, and Sutton 2011). Is it our social responsibility to care for elderly relatives up until their death? How do we balance the responsibility for caring for an elderly relative with our other responsibilities and obligations? As our society grows older, and as new medical technology can prolong life even further, the answers to these questions will develop and change.

The changing concept of **hospice** is an indicator of our society's changing view of death. Hospice is a type of healthcare that treats terminally ill people when "cure-oriented treatments" are no longer an option (Hospice Foundation of America 2012b). Hospice doctors, nurses, and therapists receive special training in the care of the dying. The focus is not on getting better or curing the illness, but on passing out of this life in comfort and peace. Hospice centers exist as a place where people can go to die in comfort, and increasingly, hospice services encourage at-home care so that someone has the comfort of dying in a familiar environment, surrounded by family (Hospice Foundation of America 2012a). While many of us would probably prefer to avoid thinking of the end of our lives, it may be possible to take comfort in the idea that when we do approach death in a hospice setting, it is in a familiar, relatively controlled place.

The Body after Death

In most cultures, after the last offices have been performed and before the onset of significant decay, relations or friends arrange for ritual disposition of the body, either by destruction, or by preservation, or in a secondary use. In the U.S., this frequently means either cremation or interment in a tomb.

There are various methods of destroying human remains, depending on religious or spiritual beliefs, and upon practical necessity. Cremation is a very old and quite common custom. For some people, the act of cremation exemplifies the belief of the Christian concept of "ashes to ashes". On the other hand, in India, cremation and disposal of the bones in the sacred river Ganges is common. Another method is sky burial, which involves placing the body of the deceased on high ground (a mountain) and leaving it for birds of prey to dispose of, as in Tibet. In some religious views, birds of prey are carriers of the soul to the heavens. Such practice may also have originated from pragmatic environmental issues, such as conditions in which the terrain (as in Tibet) is too stony or hard to dig, or in which there are few trees around to burn. As the local religion of Buddhism, in the case of Tibet, believes that the body after death is only an empty shell, there are more practical ways than burial of disposing of a body, such as leaving it for animals to consume. In some fishing or marine communities, mourners may put the body into the water, in what is known as burial at sea. Several mountain villages have a tradition of hanging the coffin in woods.

Since ancient times, in some cultures efforts have been made to slow, or largely stop the body's decay processes before burial, as in mummification or embalming. This process may be done before, during or after a funeral ceremony. The Toraja people of Indonesia are known to mummify their deceased loved ones and keep them in their homes for weeks, months, and sometimes even years, before holding a funeral service. Read more about the Toraja people's burial tradition.

Watch this TED talk, "The Corpses that Changed my Life" by Caitlin Doughty, a mortician and activist, who strives to encourage Americans to overcome their phobia of death and to be more open and involved in dealing with their deceased loved ones.

Think It Over

Test Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief. Think of someone or something you have lost. You might consider the loss of a relationship, possession, or aspect of your self-identity. For example, perhaps you dissolved a childhood friendship, sold your car, or got a bad haircut. For even a small loss, did you experience all five stages of grief? If so, how did the expression of each stage manifest? Did the process happen slowly or rapidly? Did the stages occur out of order? Did you reach acceptance? Try to recall the experience and analyze your own response to loss. Does your experience facilitate your empathizing with the elderly?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14764

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14763

Glossary

grief:
a psychological, emotional, and social response to the feelings of loss that accompanies death or a similar event

hospice:
healthcare that treats terminally ill people by providing comfort during the dying process

physician-assisted suicide:

the voluntary use of lethal medication provided by a medical doctor to end one’s life

thanatology:

the systematic study of death and dying

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The Process of Aging. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:2d9eSEty@4/The-Process-of-Aging. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- The Brittany Maynard Story. **Provided by**: CompassionChoices. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPfe3rCcUeQ. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 17.7: Death and Dying is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.8: Introduction to Sociology and Aging

What you'll learn to do: describe perceptions, challenges, and theories on aging and the elderly



As people enter old age, they face challenges such as ageism, poverty, or abuse. Ageism, which involves stereotyping and discrimination against the elderly, leads to misconceptions about their abilities. Although elderly poverty has been improving for decades, many older people may be detrimentally and disproportionately affected by the 2008 recession. Some elderly people grow physically frail and thus more dependent on caregivers, which may increase the possibility of elder abuse.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Challenges Facing the Elderly. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Challenges Facing the Elderly. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:oczeqG_4@2/Challenges-Facing-the-Elderly. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- An elderly man and woman sitting in chairs. **Authored by**: Elien Dumon. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/zdvrozV4Lr8. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 17.8: Introduction to Sociology and Aging is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.9: Retirement and Poverty

Learning Outcomes

- Explain the historical and current trends of poverty among elderly populations

As already observed, many older adults remain highly self-sufficient. Others require more care. Because the elderly typically no longer hold jobs, finances can be a challenge. And due to cultural misconceptions, older people can be targets of ridicule and stereotypes. The elderly face many challenges in later life, but they do not have to enter old age without dignity.

Poverty



Figure 1. While elderly poverty rates showed an improvement trend for decades, the 2008 recession changed some older people's financial futures. Some who had planned a leisurely retirement have found themselves at risk of late-age destitution. (Photo (a) courtesy of Michael Cohen/flickr; photo (b) courtesy of Alex Proimos/flickr)

For many people in the United States, growing older once meant living with less income. In 1960, almost 35 percent of the elderly existed on poverty-level incomes. A generation ago, the nation's oldest populations had the highest risk of living in poverty.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the older population was putting an end to that trend. Among people over sixty-five years old, the poverty rate fell from 30 percent in 1967 to 9.7 percent in 2008, well below the national average of 13.2 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). However, given the subsequent recession, which severely reduced the retirement savings of many while taxing public support systems, how are the elderly affected? According to the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, the national poverty rate among the elderly had risen to 14 percent by 2010 (Urban Institute and Kaiser Commission 2010), and up to 15 percent by 2015 (The Kaiser Family Foundation).

Before the recession hit, what had changed to cause a reduction in poverty among the elderly? What social patterns contributed to the shift? For several decades, a greater number of women joined the workforce. More married couples earned double incomes during their working years and saved more money for their retirement. Private employers and governments began offering better retirement programs. By 1990, senior citizens reported earning 36 percent more income on average than they did in 1980; that was five times the rate of increase for people under age thirty-five (U.S. Census Bureau 2009).

In addition, many people were gaining access to better healthcare. New trends encouraged people to live more healthful lifestyles by placing an emphasis on exercise and nutrition. There was also greater access to information about the health risks of behaviors such as cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, and drug use. Because they were healthier, many older people continue to work past the typical retirement age and provide more opportunity to save for retirement. Will these patterns return once the recession ends? Sociologists will be watching to see. In the meantime, they are realizing the immediate impact of the recession on poverty among the elderly.

During the recession, older people lost some of the financial advantages that they'd gained in the 1980s and 1990s. From October 2007 to October 2009, retirement accounts for people over age fifty lost 18 percent of their value. The sharp decline in the stock market also forced many to delay their retirement (Administration on Aging 2009). Among those older Americans who were not directly impacted, many assisted their grown children who did experience serious financial difficulties during this time.[1]

Watch It

Watch the selected second half of this video to learn more about the cultural implications of aging, including some of the challenges facing the elderly in America.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=494

World War II Veterans



Figure 2. World War II (1941–1945) veterans and members of an Honor Flight from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, visit the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. Most of these men and women were in their late teens or twenties when they served. (Photo courtesy of Sean Hackbarth/flickr)

World War II veterans are aging. Many are in their eighties and nineties. They are dying at an estimated rate of about 740 per day, according to the U.S. Veterans Administration (National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics 2011). Data suggest that by 2036, there will be no living veterans of WWII (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs).

When these veterans came home from the war and ended their service, little was known about posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These heroes did not receive the mental and physical healthcare that could have helped them. As a result, many of them, now in old age, are dealing with the effects of PTSD. Research suggests a high percentage of World War II veterans are plagued by flashback memories and isolation, and that many "self-medicate" with alcohol.

Research has found that veterans of any conflict are more than twice as likely as nonveterans to commit suicide, with rates highest among the oldest veterans. Reports show that WWII-era veterans are four times as likely to take their own lives as people of the same age with no military service (Glantz 2010).

In May 2004, the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC, was completed and dedicated to honor those who served during the conflict. Dr. Earl Morse, a physician and retired Air Force captain, treated many WWII veterans. He encouraged them to visit the memorial, knowing it could help them heal. Many WWII veterans expressed interest in seeing the memorial. Unfortunately, many were in their eighties and were neither physically nor financially able to travel on their own. Dr. Morse arranged to personally escort some of the veterans and enlisted volunteer pilots who would pay for the flights themselves. He also raised money, insisting the veterans pay nothing. By the end of 2005, 137 veterans, many in wheelchairs, had made the trip. The Honor Flight Network was up and running.

As of 2010, the Honor Flight Network had flown more than 120,000 U.S. veterans of World War II, and some veterans of the Korean War, to Washington. The round-trip flights leave for day-long trips from airports in thirty states, staffed by volunteers who care for the needs of the elderly travelers (Honor Flight Network 2011).

Further Research

Veterans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces during various conflicts represent cohorts. Veterans share certain aspects of life in common. To find information on veteran populations and how they are aging, study the information on the web site of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Learn more about the Honor Flight Network, the organization offering trips to national war memorials in Washington, DC, at no cost to the veterans.

Think It Over

- Think of an older person you know well, perhaps a grandparent, other relative, or neighbor. Ask them what they think about aging and how it's perceived? In what ways does this person defy certain stereotypes about aging?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14765
https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14766

---

1. Mather, M. (2015). Effects of the Great Recession on Older Americans' Health and Well-Being. Retrieved from https://www.prb.org/todays-research-aging-great-recession-2/https://www.prb.org/todays-research-aging-great-recession-2/↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision and Original Content with updated statistics on the elderly poverty rate. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Challenges Facing the Elderly. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:oczeqG_4@2/Challenges-Facing-the-Elderly. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Age & Aging: Crash Course Sociology #36. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJ18whKduFo&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=37. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 17.9: Retirement and Poverty is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.10: Ageism and Abuse

Learning Outcomes

- Recognize ageist thinking and ageist attitudes in individuals and institutions
- Discuss elderly individuals' risks of being mistreated and abused

Ageism



Figure 1. Are these street signs humorous or offensive? What shared assumptions make them humorous? Or is memory loss too serious to be made fun of? (Photo courtesy of Tumbleweed/flickr)

Driving to the grocery store, Peter, twenty-three years old, got stuck behind a car on a four-lane main artery through his city's business district. The speed limit was thirty-five miles per hour, and while most drivers sped along at forty to forty-five mph, the driver in front of him was going the minimum speed. Peter tapped on his horn. He tailgated the driver. Finally, Peter had a chance to pass the car. He glanced over. Sure enough, Peter thought, a gray-haired old man guilty of "DWE," driving while elderly.

At the grocery store, Peter waited in the checkout line behind an older woman. She paid for her groceries, lifted her bags of food into her cart, and toddled toward the exit. Peter, guessing her to be about eighty years old, was reminded of his grandmother. He paid for his groceries and caught up with her.

"Can I help you with your cart?" he asked.

"No, thank you. I can get it myself," she said and marched off toward her car.

Peter's responses to both older people, the driver and the shopper, were prejudiced. In both cases, he made unfair assumptions. He assumed the driver drove cautiously simply because the man was a senior citizen, and he assumed the shopper needed help carrying her groceries just because she was an older woman.

Responses like Peter's toward older people are fairly common. He didn't intend to treat people differently based on personal or cultural biases, but he did. **Ageism** is discrimination (when someone acts on a prejudice) based on age. Dr. Robert Butler coined the term in 1968, noting that ageism exists in all cultures (Brownell). Ageist attitudes and biases based on stereotypes reduce elderly people to inferior or limited positions and can reduce their quality life as they internalize these false stereotypes.

Ageism can vary in severity. Peter's attitudes are probably seen as fairly mild, but relating to the elderly in ways that are patronizing can be offensive. When ageism is reflected in the workplace, in healthcare, and in assisted-living facilities, the effects of discrimination can be more severe. Ageism can make older people fear losing a job, feel dismissed by a doctor, or feel a lack of power and control in their daily living situations.

In early societies, the elderly were respected and revered. Many preindustrial societies observed **gerontocracy**, a type of social structure wherein the power is held by a society's oldest members. In some countries today, the elderly still have influence and power and their vast knowledge is respected. Reverence for the elderly is still a part of some cultures, but it has changed in many places because of social factors.

In many modern nations, however, industrialization contributed to the diminished social standing of the elderly. Today wealth, power, and prestige are also held by those in younger age brackets. The average age of corporate executives was fifty-nine years

old in 1980. In 2008, the average age had lowered to fifty-four years old (Stuart 2008). Some older members of the workforce felt threatened by this trend and grew concerned that younger employees in higher level positions would push them out of the job market. Rapid advancements in technology and media have required new skill sets that older members of the workforce are less likely to have.

Changes happened not only in the workplace but also at home. In agrarian societies, a married couple cared for their aging parents. The oldest members of the family contributed to the household by doing chores, cooking, and helping with child care. As economies shifted from agrarian to industrial, younger generations moved to cities to work in factories. The elderly began to be seen as an expensive burden. They did not have the strength and stamina to work outside the home. What began during industrialization, a trend toward older people living apart from their grown children, has become commonplace.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14767

Mistreatment and Abuse

Mistreatment and abuse of the elderly is a major social problem. As expected, with the biology of aging, the elderly sometimes become physically frail. This frailty renders them dependent on others for care—sometimes for small needs like household tasks, and sometimes for assistance with basic functions like eating and toileting. Unlike a child, who also is dependent on another for care, an elder is an adult with a lifetime of experience, knowledge, and opinions—a more fully developed person. This makes the care-providing situation more complex.

Elder abuse occurs when a caretaker intentionally deprives an older person of care or harms the person in his or her charge. Caregivers may be family members, relatives, friends, health professionals, or employees of senior housing or nursing care. The elderly may be subject to many different types of abuse. In a 2009 study on the topic led by Dr. Ron Acierno, the team of researchers identified five major categories of elder abuse: 1) physical abuse, such as hitting or shaking, 2) sexual abuse, including rape and coerced nudity, 3) psychological or emotional abuse, such as verbal harassment or humiliation, 4) neglect or failure to provide adequate care, and 5) financial abuse or exploitation (Acierno 2010).

The National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA), a division of the U.S. Administration on Aging, also identifies abandonment and self-neglect as types of abuse. The table below shows some of the signs and symptoms that the NCEA encourages people to notice.

Signs of Elder Abuse. The National Center on Elder Abuse encourages people to watch for these signs of mistreatment. (Chart courtesy of National Center on Elder Abuse)

Type of Abuse	Signs and Symptoms
Physical abuse	Bruises, untreated wounds, sprains, broken glasses, lab findings of medication overdosage
Sexual abuse	Bruises around breasts or genitals, torn or bloody underclothing, unexplained venereal disease
Emotional/psychological abuse	Being upset or withdrawn, unusual dementia-like behavior (rocking, sucking)
Neglect	Poor hygiene, untreated bed sores, dehydration, soiled bedding
Financial	Sudden changes in banking practices, inclusion of additional names on bank cards, abrupt changes to will
Self-neglect	Untreated medical conditions, unclean living area, lack of medical items like dentures or glasses

How prevalent is elder abuse? Two recent U.S. studies found that roughly one in ten elderly people surveyed had suffered at least one form of elder abuse. Much like other types of abuse, some social researchers believe elder abuse is underreported and that the number may be higher. (The risk of abuse also increases in people with health issues such as dementia (Kohn and Verhoek-Oftedahl 2011). Similar to younger women, older women are more likely to be victims of verbal abuse than their male counterparts.

In Acierno's study, which included a sample of 5,777 respondents age sixty and older, 5.2 percent of respondents reported financial abuse, 5.1 percent said they'd been neglected, and 4.6 endured emotional abuse (Acierno 2010). The prevalence of physical and sexual abuse was lower at 1.6 and 0.6 percent, respectively (Acierno 2010).

Other studies have focused on the caregivers to the elderly in an attempt to discover the causes of elder abuse. Researchers identified factors that increased the likelihood of caregivers perpetrating abuse against those in their care. Those factors include inexperience, having other demands such as jobs (for those who weren't professionally employed as caregivers), caring for children, living full-time with the dependent elder, and experiencing high stress, isolation, and lack of support (Kohn and Verhoek-Oftedahl 2011).

A history of depression in the caregiver was also found to increase the likelihood of elder abuse. Neglect was more likely when care was provided by paid caregivers. Many of the caregivers who physically abused elders were themselves abused—in many cases, when they were children. Family members with some sort of dependency on the elder in their care were more likely to physically abuse that elder. For example, an adult child caring for an elderly parent while at the same time depending on some form of income from that parent, is considered more likely to perpetrate physical abuse (Kohn and Verhoek-Oftedahl 2011).

A survey in Florida found that 60.1 percent of caregivers reported verbal aggression as a style of conflict resolution. Paid caregivers in nursing homes were at a high risk of becoming abusive if they had low job satisfaction, treated the elderly like children, or felt burnt out (Kohn and Verhoek-Oftedahl 2011). Caregivers who tended to be verbally abusive were found to have had less training, lower education, and higher likelihood of depression or other psychiatric disorders. Based on the results of these studies, many housing facilities for seniors have increased their screening procedures for caregiver applicants.

Abuse in Nursing Homes

On December 29, 2018, a woman in a vegetative state at a nursing care facility in Arizona gave birth to a baby boy. The staff was surprised by both her pregnancy and birth, and investigation discovered that she had been raped by a nurse in the facility. This terrible case brought abuse in nursing and care facilities into the national limelight.

Institutional abuse refers to physical or psychological harms, as well as rights violations in settings where care and assistance is provided to dependent older adults or others, such as nursing homes. Recent studies of approximately 2,000 nursing home facility residents in the United States reported a growing abuse rate of 44% and neglect up to 95%, making elder abuse in nursing homes a growing danger. Exact statistics are rare due to elder abuse in general and specifically in nursing homes being a silent condition. Watch this TED talk, "Abuse Hurts at Any Age" by Catherine Aaronson to learn more about this type of abuse. You can also read more about elder abuse at the World Health Organization website.

Think It Over

- Make a list of all the biases, generalizations, and stereotypes about elderly people that you have seen or heard. Include everything, no matter how small or seemingly trivial. Try to rate the items on your list. Which statements can be considered myths? Which frequently turn into discrimination?
- Have you known any person who experienced prejudice or discrimination based on age? Think of someone who has been denied an experience or opportunity simply for being too old. Write the story as a case study.
- Older people suffer discrimination, and often, so do teenagers. Compare the discrimination of the elderly to that of teenagers. What do the groups share in common and how are they different?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14768

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14769

glossary

ageism:
discrimination based on age

elder abuse:

the act of a caretaker intentionally depriving an older person of care or harming the person in their charge

gerontocracy:

a type of social structure wherein the power is held by a society's oldest members

CC licensed content, Original

- Elder Abuse. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Elder_abuse. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Challenges Facing the Elderly. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:oczeqG_4@2/Challenges-Facing-the-Elderly. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 17.10: Ageism and Abuse is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.11: Theoretical Perspectives on Aging

Learning Outcomes

- Explain functionalist views on aging such as disengagement theory, activity theory, and continuity theory
- Explain conflict perspectives on aging such as modernization theory, age stratification theory, and exchange theory
- Explain symbolic interactionist theories on aging such as the subculture of aging theory, selective optimization with compensation theory, and gerotranscendence

What roles do individual senior citizens play in your life? How do you relate to and interact with older people? What role do they play in neighborhoods and communities, in cities and in states? Sociologists are interested in exploring the answers to questions such as these through three different perspectives: functionalism, symbolic interactionism, and conflict theory.

Functionalism

Functionalists analyze how the parts of society work together. Functionalists gauge how effectively society's parts form a systematic whole and do or do not keep society running smoothly. How does this perspective address aging? The elderly, as a group, are considered one of society's vital parts.

Functionalists find that people with better resources who stay active in other roles adapt more smoothly to old age (Crosnoe and Elder 2002). Three social theories within the functional perspective were developed to explain how older people might deal with later-life experiences.



Figure 1. Does being old mean disengaging from the world? (Photo courtesy of Candida Performa/Wikimedia Commons)

The earliest gerontological theory in the functionalist perspective is **disengagement theory**, which suggests that withdrawing from society and social relationships is a natural part of growing old. There are several main points to the theory. First, because everyone expects to die one day, and because we experience physical and mental decline as we approach death, it is natural to withdraw from individuals and society. Second, as the elderly withdraw, they receive less reinforcement to conform to social norms. Therefore, this withdrawal allows a greater freedom from the pressure to conform. Finally, social withdrawal is gendered, meaning it is experienced differently by men and women. Because men focus on work and women focus on marriage and family, when they withdraw they will be unhappy and directionless until they adopt a role to replace their accustomed role that is compatible with the disengaged state (Cummings and Henry 1961).

The suggestion that old age was a distinct state in the life course, characterized by a distinct change in roles and activities, was groundbreaking when it was first introduced. However, the theory is no longer accepted in its classic form. Criticisms typically focus on the application of the idea that seniors universally naturally withdraw from society as they age, and that it does not allow for a wide variation in the way people experience aging (Hothschild 1975).

The social withdrawal that Cummings and Henry recognized (1961), and its notion that elderly people need to find replacement roles for those they've lost, is addressed anew in **activity theory**. According to this theory, activity levels and social involvement are key to this process, and key to happiness (Havinghurst 1961; Neugarten 1964; Havinghurst, Neugarten, and Tobin 1968). According to this theory, the more active and involved an elderly person is, the happier he or she will be. Critics of this theory point out that access to social opportunities and activity are not equally available to all. Moreover, not everyone finds fulfillment in the presence of others or participation in activities. Reformulations of this theory suggest that participation in informal activities, such as hobbies, are what most effect later life satisfaction (Lemon, Bengtson, and Petersen 1972).

According to **continuity theory,** the elderly make specific choices to maintain consistency in internal (personality structure, beliefs) and external structures (relationships), remaining active and involved throughout their elder years. This is an attempt to maintain social equilibrium and stability by making future decisions on the basis of already developed social roles (Atchley 1971; Atchley 1989). One criticism of this theory is its emphasis on so-called "normal" aging, which marginalizes those with chronic diseases such as Alzheimer's.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14770

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14771

The Graying of American Prisons



Figure 2. Would you want to spend your retirement here? A growing elderly prison population requires asking questions about how to deal with senior inmates. (Photo courtesy of Claire Rowland/Wikimedia Commons)

Earl Grimes is a seventy-nine-year-old inmate at a state prison. He has undergone two cataract surgeries and takes about $1,000 a month worth of medication to manage a heart condition. He needs significant help moving around, which he obtains by bribing younger inmates. He is serving a life prison term for a murder he committed thirty-eight years—half a lifetime—ago (Warren 2002).

Grimes' situation exemplifies the problems facing prisons today. According to a recent report released by Human Rights Watch (2012), there are now more than 124,000 prisoners age fifty-five years or older and over 26,000 prisoners age sixty-five or older in the U.S. prison population. These numbers represent an exponential rise over the last two decades. Why are U.S. prisons graying so rapidly?

Two factors contribute significantly to this country's aging prison population. One is the tough-on-crime reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, when mandatory minimum sentencing and "three strikes" policies sent many people to jail for thirty years to life, even when the third strike was a relatively minor offense (Leadership Conference, n.d.). Many of today's elderly prisoners are those who were incarcerated thirty years ago for life sentences. The other factor influencing today's aging prison population is the aging of the overall population. As discussed in the section on aging in the United States, the percentage of people over sixty-five years old is increasing each year due to rising life expectancies and the aging of the baby boom generation.

So why should it matter that the elderly prison population is growing so swiftly? As discussed in the section on the process of aging, growing older is accompanied by a host of physical problems, like failing vision, mobility, and hearing. Chronic illnesses like heart disease, arthritis, and diabetes also become increasingly common as people age, whether they are in prison or not. In many cases, elderly prisoners are physically incapable of committing a violent—or possibly any—crime. Is it ethical to keep them locked up for the short remainder of their lives?

There seem to be a lot of reasons, both financial and ethical, to release some elderly prisoners to live the rest of their lives—and die—in freedom. However, few lawmakers are willing to appear soft on crime by releasing convicted felons from prison, especially if their sentence was "life without parole" (Warren 2002).



Figure 3. At a public protest, older people make their voices heard. In advocating for themselves, they help shape public policy and alter the allotment of available resources. (Photo courtesy of longislandwins/flickr)

Theorists working the conflict perspective view society as inherently unstable, an institution that privileges the powerful wealthy few while marginalizing everyone else. According to the guiding principle of conflict theory, social groups compete with other groups for power and scarce resources. Applied to society's aging population, the principle means that the elderly struggle with other groups—for example, younger society members—to retain a certain share of resources. At some point, this competition may escalate into conflict.

For example, some people complain that the elderly get more than their fair share of society's resources. In hard economic times, there is renewed concern about the mounting costs of Social Security and Medicare. One of every four tax dollars, or about 28 percent, is spent on these two programs. In 1950, the federal government paid $781 million in Social Security payments. Now, the payments are 870 times higher. In 2008, the government paid $296 billion (Statistical Abstract 2011). The medical bills of the nation's elderly population are rising dramatically. While there is more care available to certain segments of the senior community, it must be noted that the financial resources available to the aging can vary tremendously by race, social class, and gender.

There are three classic theories of aging within the conflict perspective. **Modernization theory** (Cowgill and Holmes 1972) suggests that the primary cause of the elderly losing power and influence in society are the parallel forces of industrialization and modernization. As societies modernize, the status of elders decreases, and they are increasingly likely to experience social exclusion. Before industrialization, strong social norms bound the younger generation to care for the older. Now, as societies industrialize, the nuclear family replaces the extended family. Societies become increasingly individualistic, and norms regarding the care of older people change. In an individualistic industrial society, caring for an elderly relative is seen as a voluntary obligation that may be ignored without fear of social censure.

The central reasoning of modernization theory is that as long as the extended family is the standard family, as in preindustrial economies, elders will have a place in society and a clearly defined role. As societies modernize, the elderly, unable to work outside of the home, have less to offer economically and are seen as a burden. This model may be applied to both the developed and the developing world, and it suggests that as people age they will be abandoned and lose much of their familial support since they become a nonproductive economic burden.

Another theory in the conflict perspective is **age stratification theory** (Riley, Johnson, and Foner 1972). Though it may seem obvious now, with our awareness of ageism, age stratification theorists were the first to suggest that members of society might be stratified by age, just as they are stratified by race, class, and gender. Because age serves as a basis of social control, different age groups will have varying access to social resources such as political and economic power. Within societies, behavioral age norms, including norms about roles and appropriate behavior, dictate what members of age cohorts may reasonably do. For example, it might be considered deviant for an elderly woman to wear a bikini because it violates norms denying the sexuality of older females. These norms are specific to each age strata, developing from culturally based ideas about how people should "act their age."

Thanks to amendments to the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), which drew attention to some of the ways in which our society is stratified based on age, U.S. workers no longer must retire upon reaching a specified age. As first passed in 1967, the ADEA provided protection against a broad range of age discrimination and specifically addressed termination of employment due

to age, age specific layoffs, advertised positions specifying age limits or preferences, and denial of healthcare benefits to those over sixty-five years old (U.S. EEOC 2012).

Age stratification theory has been criticized for its broadness and its inattention to other sources of stratification and how these might intersect with age. For example, one might argue that an older white male occupies a more powerful role, and is far less limited in his choices, compared to an older white female based on his historical access to political and economic power.

Finally, **exchange theory** (Dowd 1975), a rational choice approach, suggests we experience an increased dependence as we age and must increasingly submit to the will of others because we have fewer ways of compelling others to submit to us. Indeed, inasmuch as relationships are based on mutual exchanges, as the elderly become less able to exchange resources, they will see their social circles diminish. In this model, the only means to avoid being discarded is to engage in resource management, like maintaining a large inheritance or participating in social exchange systems via child care. In fact, the theory may depend too much on the assumption that individuals are calculating. It is often criticized for affording too much emphasis to material exchange and devaluing nonmaterial assets such as love and friendship.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14773

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14774



Figure 4. The subculture of aging theory posits that the elderly create their own communities because they have been excluded from other groups. (Photo courtesy of Icnacio Palomo Duarte/flickr)

Symbolic Interactionism

Generally, theories within the symbolic interactionist perspective focus on how society is created through the day-to-day interaction of individuals, as well as the way people perceive themselves and others based on cultural symbols. This microanalytic perspective assumes that if people develop a sense of identity through their social interactions, their sense of self is dependent on those interactions. A woman whose main interactions with society make her feel old and unattractive may lose her sense of self. But a woman whose interactions make her feel valued and important will have a stronger sense of self and a happier life.

Symbolic interactionists stress that the changes associated with old age, in and of themselves, have no inherent meaning. Nothing in the nature of aging creates any particular, defined set of attitudes. Rather, attitudes toward the elderly are rooted in society.

One microanalytical theory is Rose's (1962) **subculture of aging theory**, which focuses on the shared community created by the elderly when they are excluded (due to age), voluntarily or involuntarily, from participating in other groups. This theory suggests that elders will disengage from society and develop new patterns of interaction with peers who share common backgrounds and interests. For example, a group consciousness may develop within such groups as AARP around issues specific to the elderly like the Medicare "doughnut hole," focused on creating social and political pressure to fix those issues. Whether brought together by social or political interests, or even geographic regions, elders may find a strong sense of community with their new group.

Another theory within the symbolic interaction perspective is **selective optimization with compensation theory**. Baltes and Baltes (1990) based their theory on the idea that successful personal development throughout the life course and subsequent mastery of the challenges associated with everyday life are based on the components of selection, optimization, and compensation. Though this happens at all stages in the life course, in the field of gerontology, researchers focus attention on balancing the losses associated with aging with the gains stemming from the same. Here, aging is a process and not an outcome, and the goals (compensation) are specific to the individual.

According to this theory, our energy diminishes as we age, and we select (selection) personal goals to get the most (optimize) for the effort we put into activities, in this way making up for (compensation) the loss of a wider range of goals and activities. In this theory, the physical decline postulated by disengagement theory may result in more dependence, but that is not necessarily negative, as it allows aging individuals to save their energy for the most meaningful activities. For example, a professor who values teaching sociology may participate in a phased retirement, never entirely giving up teaching, but acknowledging personal physical limitations that allow teaching only one or two classes per year.

Swedish sociologist Lars Tornstam developed a symbolic interactionist theory called **gerotranscendence**: the idea that as people age, they transcend the limited views of life they held in earlier times. Tornstam believes that throughout the aging process, the elderly become less self-centered and feel more peaceful and connected to the natural world. Wisdom comes to the elderly, Tornstam's theory states, and as the elderly tolerate ambiguities and seeming contradictions, they let go of conflict and develop softer views of right and wrong (Tornstam 2005).

Tornstam does not claim that everyone will achieve wisdom in aging. Some elderly people might still grow bitter and isolated, feel ignored and left out, or become grumpy and judgmental. Symbolic interactionists believe that, just as in other phases of life, individuals must struggle to overcome their own failings and turn them into strengths.

Further Research

New Dynamics of Aging is a web site produced by an interdisciplinary team at the University of Sheffield. It is supposedly the largest research program on aging in the United Kingdom to date. In studying the experiences of aging and factors that shape aging, including behaviors, biology, health, culture, history, economics, and technology, researchers are promoting healthy aging and helping dispel stereotypes.

Think It Over

- Remember Madame Jeanne Calment of France was the world's oldest living person until she died at 122 years old? Consider her life experiences from all three sociological points of view. Analyze her situation as if you were a functionalist, a symbolic interactionist, and a conflict theorist.
- Which lifestyle do you think is healthiest for aging people—activity, continuity, or disengagement theories? What are the pros and cons of each theory? Find examples of real people who illustrate the theories, either from your own experience or your friends' relationships with older people. Do your examples show positive or negative aspects of the theory they illustrate?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14772

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14774

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14775

glossary

activity theory:
a theory which suggests that for individuals to enjoy old age and feel satisfied, they must maintain activities and find a replacement for the statuses and associated roles they have left behind as they aged

age stratification theory:
a theory which states that members of society are stratified by age, just as they are stratified by race, class, and gender

continuity theory:
a theory which states that the elderly make specific choices to maintain consistency in internal (personality structure, beliefs) and external structures (relationships), remaining active and involved throughout their elder years

disengagement theory:
a theory which suggests that withdrawing from society and social relationships is a natural part of growing old

exchange theory:
a theory which suggests that we experience an increased dependence as we age and must increasingly submit to the will of others, because we have fewer ways of compelling others to submit to us

gerotranscendence:
the idea that as people age, they transcend limited views of life they held in earlier times

modernization theory:
a theory which suggests that the primary cause of the elderly losing power and influence in society are the parallel forces of industrialization and modernization

selective optimization with compensation theory:
a theory based on the idea that successful personal development throughout the life course and subsequent mastery of the challenges associated with everyday life are based on the components of selection, optimization, and compensation

subculture of aging theory:
a theory that focuses on the shared community created by the elderly when they are excluded (due to age), voluntarily or involuntarily, from participating in other groups

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Aging. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:ref9dINA@3/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Aging. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 17.11: Theoretical Perspectives on Aging is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.12: Putting It Together- Aging and the Elderly

In this module you learned the impact that the “graying of America” is having on the United States and globally, which is presenting numerous challenges for the elderly population and social institutions such as health care and government. You also learned about the process and challenges of aging and cultural attitudes that shape the way society views and limits the elderly.

The module explained the three theoretical perspectives on aging. Functionalist perspectives focuses on the role of elders in terms of how the elderly disengage from society and assert this is a natural process for the elderly. Conflict theories concentrate on how elders, as a group, are at odds with other groups in society in terms of power and status. Conflict theories also focus on how race, class and gender continue to serve as a basis of inequality even in old age. And theories in the symbolic interactionist perspective focus on how elders’ identities are created through their interactions and the changes associated with old age have no inherent meaning.

The media plays a large role in societal attitudes towards the elderly—we know that in the U.S., society typically looks at the physical processes of aging such as graying hair and wrinkled skin as evidence of being less-than. Ageist attitudes and biases based on stereotypes reduce elderly people to inferior or limited positions and can reduce their quality life as they internalize these false stereotypes.

Watch It

In the following video, Ashton Applewhite, the author of “This Chair rocks: a manifesto of ageism,” asks society to reframe how society labels and values the elderly.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=500

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Aging and the Elderly Summaries. **Provided by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.6:gPqoZ9dJ@12.6/Section-Summary. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.

All rights reserved content

- Why stressing about aging shortens your life. **Authored by**: Ashton Applewhite. **Provided by**: Big Think. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FShQcFCiM4. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 17.12: Putting It Together- Aging and the Elderly is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.13: Discussion- Health and Aging Assignment

The geriatric/elderly population accounts for approximately 12% of the world's population and is rapidly increasing to become approximately ¼ of the world's population by 2050. The challenges facing the elderly are unique to other demographics of the population.

STEP 1: Visit the website for the National Council on Aging, review the information presented, and identify a health issue common to the elderly population.

STEP 2: Use a reputable journal to find an article about your selected health issue. Acceptable journals include Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, The Sociological Review, Journal of Public Health, Health Education Research, American Journal of Public Health, Journal of American Geriatric Society, Age and Ageing, and Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry and Neurology. The study should have been performed within the past 10 years.

STEP 3: Write a blog post of between 200-400 words that addresses all of the following:

- identify the health issue you selected
- discuss how this issue is unique to the elderly population.
- explain the individual, environmental, and societal connection between the health issue and the elderly/geriatric population
- give your own opinion about things society could do to help improve the quality of life for elderly with this health issue, citing evidences from the module.

Be sure to include a link to the original article or any other sources you use.

STEP 4: Comment on at least TWO other posts in a response of at least 100 words.

Rubric

Criteria	Ratings					Points
Journal	Finds appropriate article in academic journal and summarizes it effectively.	Finds appropriate article in academic journal but does not summarize it effectively or is missing some key points as outlined.	Finds article but it is not relevant to the topic or missing connection of topic to article.	Does not provide enough detail and information or does not find an appropriate article	Poor choice of article, incomplete summary or difficult to understand	__/4
Health Issue	Individual, environmental, and societal factors identified and impact to elderly is clearly identified.	Two of three factors are identified and discussed and impact to the elderly is clearly identified.	One of three factors are identified and discussed or factors are identified but impact to the elderly is vague.	Factors are vague or impact to elderly is vague.	No factors are discussed or identified.	__/6
Discussion	Thoroughly discusses what society can do to help improve the quality of life for elderly with this health issue, citing specific evidences from the module.	Discusses what society can do to help improve the quality of life for elderly with this health issue, citing evidences from the module.	Somewhat discusses what society can do to help improve the quality of life for elderly with this health issue, or does not cite evidence from the module.	Partially discusses what society can do to help improve the quality of life for elderly with this health issue, or does not cite evidence from the module.	Does not discuss what society can do or does not cite evidence from the module.	__/5
Responses	Includes TWO substantial responses on classmates' posts	Includes TWO responses on classmates' posts	Includes TWO substantial responses on classmates' posts	Includes one response on classmates' posts or two that are not thought out or meet the length requirement	Does not include responses on classmates' posts	__/5
					Total:	__/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Health, Aging, and the Elderly. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 17.13: Discussion- Health and Aging Assignment is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

17.14: Assignment- Aging and the Elderly

For this assignment, you will conduct at least a 30-60 minute interview of a person who is at least age 65 (family or non-family is fine). You will submit a paper that includes the questions and responses from the interviewee, unless you choose to submit the interview as a video or podcast. You'll also submit a final reflection essay.

STEP 1: Browse online for stories and interviews with the elderly. For example, visit websites like The Listening Ear Project (https://www.thelisteningearproject.c...ast-interviews), Memory Well (https://www.memorywell.com/family.html), and the Legacy Project (https://www.legacyproject.org/index.html). Look for suggestions of questions to ask and tips for interviewing, such as this document: https://legacyproject.org/guides/lifeintquestions.pdf.

STEP 2: Conduct an interview. You may be as creative as you would like for this interview, but you must have permission from your interviewee. Remember to follow ethical guidelines and to be respectful during the interview. You may conduct a video interview, a recorded audio interview, or take detailed notes with questions and answers. Be sure to let the individual know of your project and intentions from the beginning, and set aside a minimum of 30 minutes to conduct the interview. Be a good listener, and also a good facilitator. Be prepared with the questions you ask and be genuinely interested in their responses.

STEP 3: You must submit the following paper with your final project:

- The full name of the person you interviewed, with their age, and the date of the interview
- A description of your relationship to that person
- At least 15 of the questions you asked them, *with summarized answers*. At least three of the questions must clearly tie back to concepts you learned about in this module (ask about ageism, attitudes towards aging, etc.)

OR

- You can create a recorded video (with permission) or podcast with highlights from the video (no more than 6 minutes long). If you choose the video or podcast option, you don't need to submit the list of questions and answers, as the gist of those will be apparent in the video or podcast.

STEP 4: Type a 1-page reflection essay (500 words) addressing the following:

- A description of the stage of life the interviewee is in (young-old, middle-old, or old-old)
- An understanding of how the interviewee perceives the aging process, including attitudes and perceptions about growing old
- What did you find most interesting or informative about the interview?
- What are your personal thoughts on growing old, in the light of this interview and the content you learned about in this module?

Criteria	High Quality	Proficient	Not Proficient	Points
Interview	Prepares thoughtful interview questions and conducts an interview for at least 30 minutes with a person who is at least 65 years old.	Prepares questions for interview with a person at least 65 years of old. Questions help facilitate good responses from the interviewee.	Students does not demonstrate that they prepared for the interview, or the interview provides little information about the interviewee.	___/3
Q&A	Final product includes either a list of at least 15 questions and detailed summary responses from the interviewee OR a 4-6 minute video or podcast with edited clips from the actual interview.	Final product includes a list of at least 12 good questions and mostly complete responses from the interviewee OR video or podcast aptly demonstrates a quality interview.	Final product does not include a list of at least 12 good questions with responses from the interviewee OR video or podcast do not demonstrate a quality interview.	___/8
Reflection Essay	Reflective paragraph that describes the stage of life of the interviewee, their perception of the aging process, new things learned, and personal thoughts on aging. Reflection builds on concepts covered in the module. It is written in paragraph/essay form.	Reflective paragraph mostly describes the stage of life of the interviewee, their perception of the aging process, new things learned, and personal thoughts on aging.	Reflective paragraph does not describe the stage of life of the interviewee, their perception of the aging process, new things learned, and personal thoughts on aging. Reflection may be missing all or parts of these, or not be written in essay form.	___/9
			Total:	___/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Aging and the Elderly. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 17.14: Assignment- Aging and the Elderly is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

18: Module 15- Government and Politics

18.1: Why It Matters- Government and Politics
18.2: Introduction to Power and Authority
18.3: Types of Authority
18.4: Introduction to Types of Government
18.5: Forms of Government
18.6: Politics in the United States
18.7: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Government and Power
18.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Government
18.9: Putting It Together- Government and Politics
18.10: Discussion- Government and Politics
18.11: Assignment- Politics and Sociology

This page titled 18: Module 15- Government and Politics is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

18.1: Why It Matters- Government and Politics

Why analyze types of power and authority and explore political processes in the United States and abroad?



Figure 1. In 2011, thousands of Egyptian citizens demonstrated in the streets and protested political repression by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (Photo courtesy of Jonathan Rashad/flickr)

Hosni Mubarak had been the President of Egypt for nearly thirty years when massive public uprisings caused him to step down in 2011. Gaining the presidency in 1981 after President Anwar Sadat was assassinated, Mubarak had maintained his regime through a series of "monopoly" elections in which he was the only candidate. Popular unrest first drew significant notice in 2004, and by early 2011, thousands of Egyptians had begun protesting political oppression through demonstrations in the streets of several Egyptian cities, including the capital city of Cairo. There was sporadic violence between demonstrators and the military, but eventually Mubarak resigned and left the country. Within a year, a free, multi-candidate election was held in Egypt.

The "Arab Spring" refers to a series of uprisings in various countries throughout the Middle East, including Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Syria, Tunisia, Qatar, and Yemen. The extent of protest has varied widely among these countries, as have the outcomes, but all were based on popular uprisings of the people, who were dissatisfied with their respective government leaders but were unable to create change by less extreme methods. In countries such as Tunisia and Egypt, revolution did involve some violence, but relatively less than in other Middle Eastern countries. In Libya, the repressive regime of Muammar Gaddafi was brought to an end after forty-two years. The number of causalities reported differs depending on the source; the exact number is still unknown, but it is estimated to be in the thousands. Eight years after the initial uprising, Syria is still entrenched in an ongoing Civil War between the Syrian government, led by President Bashar al-Assad, and Syrian Opposition Forces, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and various other factions. Over half a million lives have been lost due to the Syrian conflict, and more than 50,000 civilians have been killed in Syria since 2015.[1]

Why did these uprisings occur in such rapid succession in the same region of the world? In what ways did governments influence the society in these Middle Eastern nations? What is the difference between having power and having authority? In what ways does the government influence society, and vice versa? These are the types of questions that sociologists ask in relation to government and politics. In this module, we'll strive to understand the essentials about the basic forms of government and explore the political process in the United States and globally.

1. I am Syria. Retrieved from http://www.iamsyria.org/death-tolls.html. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Government and Politics. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:dXA1d6sq@3/Introduction-to-Government-and-Politics. **License**: *CC BY:*

Attribution. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 18.1: Why It Matters- Government and Politics is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

18.2: Introduction to Power and Authority

What you'll learn to do: define and differentiate between power and authority



In this section, we will discuss the government and the political system in terms of their impact on individuals and larger social systems. In order to help us understand and discuss our political system, we must first define government. Government is a political institution with formal methods of acquiring and exercising power and authority. This political institution encompasses all the means and processes by which a society maintains order. The two underlying elements of a government are power and authority—as sociologists, let's examine them both separately, and then consider how they may be interrelated.

Power is an entity's or individual's ability to control or direct others, while authority is influence that is predicated on perceived legitimacy. Consequently, power is necessary for authority, but it is possible to have power without authority. In other words, power is necessary but not sufficient for authority. As you'll learn in this section, Max Weber studied power and authority, differentiating between the two concepts and formulating a system for classifying types of authority.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Power and Authority. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Power and Authority. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:GveClPvr@2/Power-and-Authority. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Icon. **Authored by**: TukTuk Design. **Provided by**: Pixabay. **Located at**: https://pixabay.com/illustrations/icon-leader-leadership-lead-boss-1623888/. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*

This page titled 18.2: Introduction to Power and Authority is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

18.3: Types of Authority

Learning Outcomes

- Explain political power and authority
- Identify and describe the three types of authority outlined by Max Weber

Despite the differences between government systems in the Middle East and the United States, their governments play the same fundamental role: in some fashion, they exert control over the people they govern. The nature of that control—what we will define as power and authority—is an important feature of society.

Sociologists have a distinctive approach to studying governmental power and authority that differs from the perspective of political scientists. For the most part, political scientists focus on studying how power is distributed in different types of political systems. They would observe, for example, that the United States' political system is divided into three distinct branches (legislative, executive, and judicial), and they would explore how public opinion affects political parties, elections, and the political process in general. Sociologists, however, tend to be more interested in the influences of governmental power on society and in how social conflicts arise from the distribution of power. Sociologists also examine how the use of power affects local, state, national, and global agendas, which in turn affect people differently based on status, class, and socioeconomic standing.

What Is Power?



Figure 1. Nazi leader Adolf Hitler was one of the most powerful and destructive dictators in modern history. He is pictured here with fascist Benito Mussolini of Italy. (Photo courtesy of U.S. National Archives and Records Administration)

For centuries, philosophers, politicians, and social scientists have explored and commented on the nature of power. Pittacus (c. 640–568 B.C.E.) opined, "The measure of a man is what he does with power," and Lord Acton perhaps more famously asserted, "Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely" (1887). Indeed, the concept of power can have decidedly negative connotations, and the term itself is difficult to define.

Many scholars adopt the definition developed by German sociologist Max Weber, who said that power is the ability to exercise one's will over others (Weber 1922). Power affects more than personal relationships; it shapes larger dynamics like social groups, professional organizations, and governments. Similarly, a government's power is not necessarily limited to control of its own citizens. A dominant nation, for instance, will often use its clout to influence or support other governments or to seize control of other nation states. Efforts by the U.S. government to wield power in other countries have included joining with other nations to form the Allied forces during World War II, entering Iraq in 2002 to topple Saddam Hussein's regime, and imposing sanctions on the government of North Korea in the hopes of constraining its development of nuclear weapons.



Figure 2. Young people and students were among the most ardent supporters of democratic reform in the recent Arab Spring. Social media also played an important role in rallying grassroots support. (Photo courtesy of cjb22/flickr)

Endeavors to gain power and influence do not necessarily lead to violence, exploitation, or abuse. Leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Mohandas Gandhi, for example, commanded powerful movements that effected positive change without military force. Both men organized nonviolent protests to combat corruption and injustice and succeeded in inspiring far-reaching reforms. They relied on a variety of nonviolent protest strategies such as rallies, sit-ins, marches, petitions, and boycotts.

Modern technology has made such forms of nonviolent reform easier to implement. Today, protesters can use cell phones and the Internet to disseminate information and plans to masses of protesters in a rapid and efficient manner. In the Arab Spring uprisings, for example, Twitter feeds and other social media helped protesters coordinate their movements, share ideas, and bolster morale, as well as gain global support for their causes. Social media was also important in getting accurate accounts of the demonstrations out to the world, in contrast to many earlier situations in which government control of the media censored news reports. Notice that in these examples, the users of power were the citizens rather than the governments. They found they had power because they were able to exercise their will over their own leaders. Thus, government power does not necessarily equate to absolute power.

Types of Authority

The protesters in Tunisia and the civil rights protesters of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s day had influence beyond their position in a government. Their influence came, in part, from their ability to advocate for what many people held as important values. Government leaders might have this kind of influence as well, but they also have the advantage of wielding the power associated with their official positions and considerable state resources. As this example indicates, there is more than one type of power in a community.

Authority refers to accepted power—that is, power that people agree to follow according to specific procedures. People listen to authority figures because they feel that these individuals are worthy of respect, or because they are in a position that inherently carries a degree of respect. Generally speaking, people perceive the objectives and demands of an authority figure as reasonable, legitimate, beneficial, or true.

A citizen's interaction with a police officer is a good example of how people react to and interact with authority in everyday life. For instance, a person who sees the flashing red and blue lights of a police car in their rearview mirror usually pulls to the side of the road without hesitation. Such a driver most likely assumes that the police officer behind them serves as a legitimate source of authority and has the right to pull them over. As part of their official duties, the police officer then has the power to issue a speeding ticket if the driver was driving too fast. If the same officer, however, were to command the driver to follow them home and mow their lawn, the driver would likely protest that the officer does not have the authority to make such a request. We are generally aware of what authority figures have power to request, and are also aware when authority figures overstep their position.

Not all authority figures are police officers, elected officials or government authorities. Besides formal offices, authority can arise from tradition and personal qualities. Max Weber, one of the key figures in sociology, realized this when he examined individual action as it relates to authority, as well as large-scale structures of authority and how they relate to a society's economy. Based on this

work, Weber developed a classification system for authority. His three types of authority are traditional authority, charismatic authority, and legal-rational authority (Weber 1922).

Table 1. Max Weber identified and explained three distinct types of authority.

Weber's Three Types of Authority			
	Traditional	Charismatic	Legal-Rational
Source of Power	Legitimized by long-standing custom	Based on a leader's personal qualities	Authority resides in the office, not the person
Leadership Style	Historic personality	Dynamic personality	Bureaucratic officials
Example	Patriarchy (traditional positions of authority), royal families with no political power but social influence	Napoleon, Jesus Christ, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Jr.	U.S. presidency and Congress, Modern British Parliament

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14776

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14780

Traditional Authority

According to Weber, the power of **traditional authority** is accepted because that has traditionally been the case; its legitimacy exists because it has been accepted for a long time. Britain's Queen Elizabeth, for instance, occupies a position that she inherited based on the traditional rules of succession for the monarchy. People adhere to traditional authority because they are invested in the past and feel obligated to perpetuate it. In this type of authority, a ruler typically has no real force to carry out their will, and their position depends primarily on a group's respect.

A more specific form of traditional authority is **patrimonialism**, which is traditional domination facilitated by an administration and military that are purely personal instruments of the master (Eisenberg 1998). In this form of authority, all officials are personal favorites appointed by the ruler. These officials have no rights, and their privileges can be increased or withdrawn based on the caprices of the leader. The political organization of ancient Egypt typified such a system: when the royal household decreed that a pyramid be built, every Egyptian was forced to work toward its construction.

Traditional authority can be intertwined with race, class, and gender. In most societies, for instance, men are more likely to be privileged than women and thus are more likely to hold roles of authority. It is not uncommon for a man to be the automatic leader of a family unit; in some countries, however, it is the woman who is the presumptive leader. Regardless, most contexts provide a traditional structure of authority, even among the household unit. Similarly, members of dominant racial groups or upper-class families win respect more readily. In the United States, the Kennedy family, which has produced many prominent politicians, exemplifies this model.

Charismatic Authority

Followers accept the power of **charismatic authority** because they are drawn to the leader's personal qualities. The appeal of a charismatic leader can be extraordinary, and can inspire followers to make unusual sacrifices or to persevere in the midst of great hardship and persecution. Charismatic leaders usually emerge in times of crisis and offer innovative or radical solutions. They may even offer a vision of a new world order. Despite the catastrophic consequences of events, Hitler's rise to power in the post-World War I economic depression of Germany is an example.

Charismatic leaders tend to hold power for short periods of time, and according to Weber, they are just as likely to be tyrannical as they are heroic. Diverse male leaders such as Hitler, Napoleon, Jesus Christ, César Chávez, Malcolm X, and Winston Churchill are all considered charismatic leaders. Some of them held formal positions of power, but many did not. Because so few women have held dynamic positions of leadership throughout history, the list of charismatic female leaders is comparatively short. Many historians consider figures such as Joan of Arc, Margaret Thatcher, and Mother Teresa to be charismatic leaders. Michelle Obama, who no longer holds a formal position of authority (and some might even argue that being First Lady itself does not translate into authority), is a current example of a charismatic leader.

WATCH IT

Greta Thunberg, a teenager from Sweden, has been making waves around the world, giving powerful and moving speeches about climate change. What started out as a protest led to speeches at forums such as the UN and the World Economic Forum. While she holds no formal position of authority, she is influencing change through being a leader that others can relate to, to the point of now hundreds of thousands of kids calling for radical changes in climate change policy.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=512

Rational-Legal Authority

According to Weber, power made legitimate by laws, written rules, and regulations is termed **rational-legal authority**. In this type of authority, power is vested in a particular rationale, system, or ideology and not necessarily in the person who implements the specifics of that doctrine. With rational-legal authority, the power to influence does not fall on individuals themselves, but instead falls on specific, structured, bureaucratic offices, and individuals holding specific positions have the authority to act in the name of such positions. A nation that follows a constitution applies this type of authority. On a smaller scale, you might encounter rational-legal authority in the workplace via the standards set forth in the employee handbook, which provides the employee with a different type of authority than that of the boss.

Of course, ideals are seldom replicated in the real world. Few governments or leaders can be neatly categorized. Some leaders, like Mohandas Gandhi for instance, can be considered charismatic *and* legal-rational authority figures. Similarly, a leader or government can start out exemplifying one type of authority and gradually evolve or change into another type. This is not unusual—charismatic leaders often enter rational-legal authority institutions and it is their charisma that facilitates their election. Similarly, an individual in a rational-legal authority position gains exposure, which may allow them to be charismatic leaders following their exit from formal authority positions.

Think It Over

- Explain why leaders as divergent as Hitler and Jesus Christ are both categorized as charismatic authorities.
- Why do people accept traditional authority figures even though these types of leaders have limited means of enforcing their power?
- Charismatic leaders are among the most fascinating figures in history. Select a charismatic leader about whom you wish to learn more and conduct online research to find out about this individual. Then write a paragraph describing the personal qualities that led to this person's influence, considering the society in which he or she emerged.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14777

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14778

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14779

glossary

authority:
power that people accept because it comes from a source that is perceived as legitimate

charismatic authority:
power legitimized on the basis of a leader's exceptional personal qualities

patrimonialism:
a type of authority wherein military and administrative factions enforce the power of the master

rational-legal authority:
power that is legitimized by rules, regulations, and laws

traditional authority:
power legitimized on the basis of long-standing customs

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Power and Authority. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:GveClPvr@2/Power-and-Authority. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Politics. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology/Politics. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

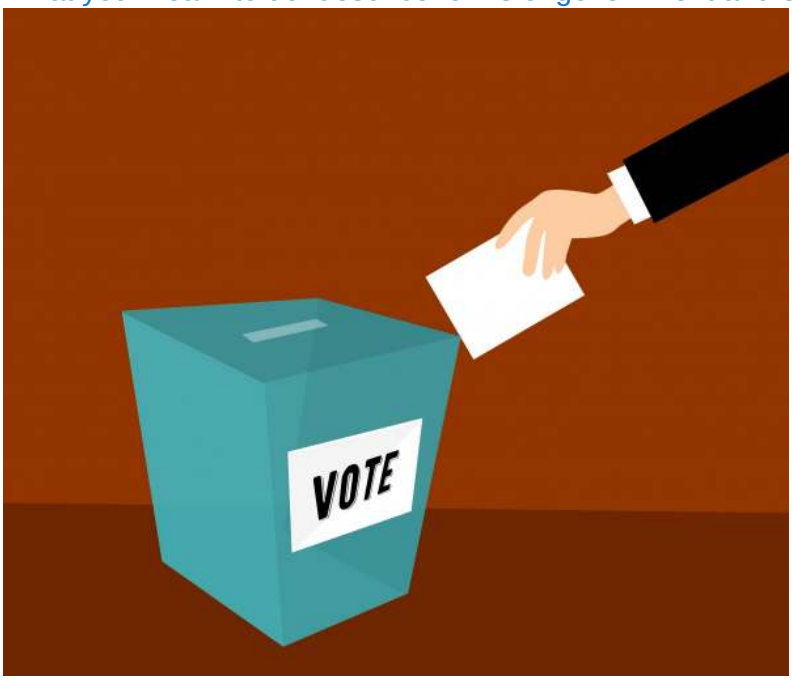
All rights reserved content

- Greta Thunberg full speech at UN Climate Change COP24 Conference. **Provided by**: Connect4Climate. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFkQSGyeCWg. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 18.3: Types of Authority is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

18.4: Introduction to Types of Government

What you'll learn to do: describe forms of government and explain politics in the United States



Nations are governed by different political systems, including monarchies, oligarchies, dictatorships, and democracies. Generally speaking, citizens of nations wherein power is concentrated in one leader or a small group are more likely to suffer violations of civil liberties and experience economic inequality. Many nations that are today organized around democratic ideals started out as monarchies or dictatorships but have evolved into more egalitarian systems. Democratic ideals, although hard to implement and achieve, promote basic human rights and justice for all citizens. The success and validity of democracy in the U.S. hinges on free and fair elections that are characterized by the support and participation of diverse citizens. In this section, we'll examine political systems and take a look at how politics work in the United States.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Types of Government. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Forms of Government. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:v2aY3cTX@5/Forms-of-Government. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- **Authored by**: Mohamed Hassan. **Provided by**: pxhere. **Located at**: https://pxhere.com/en/photo/1445485. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*

This page titled 18.4: Introduction to Types of Government is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

18.5: Forms of Government

Learning Outcomes

- Compare and identify common forms of government (monarchy, oligarchy, dictatorship, democracy)

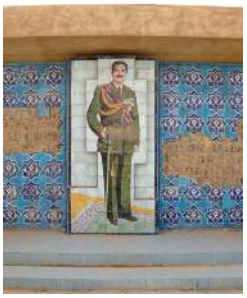


Figure 1. Former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein used fear and intimidation to keep citizens in check. (Photo courtesy of Brian Hillegas/flickr)

Most people generally agree that **anarchy**, or the absence of organized government, does not facilitate a desirable living environment for society, but it is much harder for individuals to agree upon the particulars of how a population should be governed. Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, three political philosophers that heavily influenced early sociologists and whose works are widely read across sociology classrooms today, all argued that the role of government is to facilitate a form of "social contract" among individuals living in a society. They presented different views on human nature, relationships, and governance, but they all agreed that government was a necessary mechanism in modern societies.

Throughout history, various forms of government have evolved to suit the needs of changing populations and mindsets, each with pros and cons. Today, a majority of citizens in Western societies hold that democracy is the most just and stable form of government, although former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill once declared to the House of Commons, "Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time" (Shapiro 2006).

Monarchy

Even though people in the United States tend to be most aware of Great Britain's royals, many other nations also recognize kings, queens, princes, princesses, and other figures with official royal titles. The power held by these positions varies from one country to another. Strictly speaking, a **monarchy** is a government in which a single person (a monarch) rules until he or she dies or abdicates the throne. Usually, a monarch claims the rights to the title by way of hereditary succession or as a result of some sort of divine appointment or calling. As mentioned above, the monarchies of most modern nations are ceremonial remnants of tradition (traditional authority as opposed to charismatic or legal-rational authority), and individuals who hold titles in such sovereignties are often aristocratic figureheads.

Very few nations today, however, are run by governments wherein a monarch has absolute or unmitigated power. In other words, very few nations today are run by monarchies exercising legal-rational authority. Nations that are run by monarchs with absolute power are called **absolute monarchies**. Although governments and regimes are constantly changing across the global landscape, it is generally safe to say that most modern absolute monarchies are concentrated in the Middle East and Africa. The small, oil-rich nation of Oman, for instance, is an example of an absolute monarchy. In this nation, Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said has ruled since the 1970s. Recently, living conditions and opportunities for Oman's citizens have improved, but many citizens who live under the reign of an absolute ruler must contend with oppressive or unfair policies that are installed based on the unchecked whims or political agendas of that leader.

In today's global political climate, monarchies far more often take the form of **constitutional monarchies**, governments of nations that recognize monarchs but require these figures to abide by the laws of a greater constitution. Many countries that are now

constitutional monarchies evolved from governments that were once considered absolute monarchies. In most cases, constitutional monarchies, such as Great Britain and Canada, feature elected prime ministers whose leadership role is far more involved and significant than that of its titled monarchs. In spite of their limited authority, monarchs endure in such governments because people enjoy their symbolic or ceremonial significance, as well as the pageantry of their weddings, funerals, and public performances of succession.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14781

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14782



Figure 2. Queen Noor of Jordan is the dowager queen of this constitutional monarchy and has limited political authority. Queen Noor is American by birth, but relinquished her citizenship when she married. She is a noted global advocate for Arab-Western relations. (Photo courtesy of Skoll World Forum/flickr)

Oligarchy

The power in an **oligarchy** is held by a small, elite group. Unlike in a monarchy, members of an oligarchy do not necessarily achieve their statuses based on ties to noble ancestry. Rather, they may ascend to positions of power because of military might, economic power, or similar circumstances.

The concept of oligarchy is somewhat elusive; rarely does a society openly define itself as an oligarchy. Generally, the word carries negative connotations and conjures notions of a corrupt group whose members make unfair policy decisions in order to maintain their privileged positions. Many modern nations that claim to be democracies are really oligarchies. In fact, some prominent journalists, such as Paul Krugman, who won a Nobel Laureate Prize in economics, have labeled the United States an oligarchy, pointing to the influence of large corporations and Wall Street executives on U.S. policy (Krugman 2011). Other political analysts assert that all democracies are really just “elected oligarchies,” or systems in which citizens must vote for an individual who is part of a pool of candidates who come from the society’s elite ruling class (Winters 2011).

Oligarchies have existed throughout history, and today many consider Russia an example of oligarchic political structure. After the fall of communism, groups of business owners captured control of the nation’s natural resources and have used the opportunity to expand their wealth and political influence. Once an oligarchic power structure has been established, it can be very difficult for middle and lower-class citizens to advance their socioeconomic status. The line between oligarchies and democracies is grayer than we probably want it to be, and some would even argue that no nation is a true democracy, as it is impossible to have no interest groups, companies, or economically advantaged elites seeking to influence policy.

Is the United States an Oligarchy?



Figure 3. The American Gilded Age was one of lavish parties hosted in the

grand mansions of wealthy families.
(Photo courtesy of Seniju/flickr)

The American Gilded Age saw the rise and dominance of ultra-rich families such as the Vanderbilts, Rockefellers, and Carnegies, and the wealthy often indulged in absurd luxuries. One example is a lavish dinner party hosted for a pampered pet dog who attended wearing a $15,000 diamond collar (PBS Online 1999). At the same time, most Americans barely scraped by, living below what was considered the poverty level.

Some scholars believe that the United States has now embarked on a second gilded age, pointing out that the "400 wealthiest American families now own more than the 'lower' 150 million Americans put together" (Schultz 2011), and "the top 10% of earners took in more than half of the country's overall income in 2012, the highest proportion recorded in a century of government record keeping" (Lowery 2014). Recent movements in the United States have drawn attention to the power and privilege of the extremely wealthy, often referred to as the 1%, and have sought to reform policy due to their lack of proportional contributions in taxes. In 2015, the 1% were those who earned over $480,930 annually, although this varies significantly based on location, with some areas being so costly that a person needs to earn nearly double that to be in the 1%. [1]

Many of the super–rich use their economic clout to purchase more than luxury items; wealthy individuals and corporations are major political donors. Based on campaign finance reform legislation in 1971 and 2002, political campaign contributions were regulated and limited; however, the 2012 Supreme Court decision in the case of Citizen's United versus the Federal Election Commission repealed many of those restrictions. The Court ruled that contributions of corporations and unions to Political Action Committees (PACs) are a form of free speech that cannot be abridged and so cannot be limited or disclosed. Opponents believe that this definition effectively promotes oligarchy in the United States. The ultra-wealthy and those who control the purse strings of large corporations and unions will, in effect, be able to elect their candidate of choice through their unlimited spending power, as well as influence policy decisions, appointments to non-elected government jobs, and other forms of political power. Krugman (2011) says, "We have a society in which money is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few people, and in which that concentration of income and wealth threatens to make us a democracy in name only."

Dictatorship

Power in a **dictatorship** is held by a single person (or a very small group) that wields complete and absolute authority over a government and population. Like some absolute monarchies, dictatorships may be corrupt and seek to limit or even eradicate the liberties of the general population. Dictators use a variety of means to perpetuate their authority. Economic and military might, as well as intimidation and brutality, are often foremost among their tactics; individuals are less likely to rebel when they are starving and fearful. Many dictators start out as military leaders and are conditioned to the use of violence against opposition.

Some dictators also possess the personal appeal that Max Weber identified with a charismatic leader. Subjects of such a dictator may believe that the leader has special ability or authority and may be willing to submit to his or her authority. The late Kim Jong-Il, North Korean dictator, and his successor, Kim Jong-Un, exemplify this type of charismatic dictatorship.

WATCH IT

North Korea is the least democratic country in the world, and exemplifies a modern dictatorship.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=516

Some dictatorships do not align themselves with any particular belief system or ideology; the goal of this type of regime is usually limited to preserving the authority of the dictator. A **totalitarian dictatorship** is even more oppressive and attempts to control all aspects of its subjects' lives, including occupation, religious beliefs, and number of children permitted to each family. Citizens may be forced to publicly demonstrate their faith in the regime by participating in marches and demonstrations.

Some "benevolent" dictators, such as Napoleon and Anwar Sadat, are credited with advancing their people's standard of living or exercising a moderate amount of evenhandedness. Others grossly abuse their power. Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Saddam Hussein, Cambodia's Pol Pot, and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, for instance, are heads of state who earned a reputation for leading through fear, violence, and intimidation.



Figure 4. Dictator Kim Jong-Il of North Korea was a charismatic leader of an absolute dictatorship. His followers responded emotionally to the death of their leader in 2011. (Photo courtesy of babeltrave/flickr)

Democracy

A **democracy** is a form of government that strives to provide all citizens with an equal voice, or vote, in determining state policy, regardless of their level of socioeconomic status or other attributes. Another important fundamental of the democratic state is the establishment and governance of a just and comprehensive constitution-like document that delineates the roles and responsibilities of leaders and citizens alike.

Democracies, in general, ensure certain basic rights for their citizens. First and foremost, citizens are free to organize political parties and hold elections. Leaders, once elected, must abide by the terms of the given nation's constitution and are limited in the powers they can exercise, as well as in the length of the duration of their terms. Most democratic societies also champion freedom of individual speech, the press, and assembly, and they prohibit unlawful imprisonment. Of course, even in a democratic society, the government constrains citizens' total freedom to act however they wish—a sacrifice that individuals must make in order to have other rights protected, as the social contract theorists first posited. A democratically elected government does this by passing laws and writing regulations that, at least ideally, reflect the will of the majority of its people.

Although the United States champions the democratic ideology, it is not a "pure" democracy. In a purely democratic society, all citizens would vote on all proposed legislation, and this is not how laws are passed in the United States. There is a practical reason for this: a pure democracy would be hard to implement. Thus, the United States is a constitution-based federal republic in which citizens elect representatives to make policy decisions on their behalf. The term **representative democracy**, which is virtually synonymous with *republic*, can also be used to describe a government in which citizens elect representatives to promote policies that favor their interests. In the United States, representatives are elected at local and state levels, and the votes of the Electoral College determine who will hold the office of president. Each of the three branches of the U.S. government—the executive, judicial, and legislative—is held in check by the other branches.

WATCH IT

The Electoral College is one of the hotly debated topics in today's political arena, and a rather complicated system to untangle. It has benefits and drawbacks, but watch this video to better understand its role in our democracy.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=516

Further Research

The Tea Party is among the highest-profile grassroots organizations active in U.S. politics today. What is its official platform? Examine the Tea Party website to find out more information.

Think It Over

- Do you feel the United States has become an oligarchy? Why, or why not?
- Explain how an absolute monarchy differs from a dictatorship.
- In which form of government do average citizens have the least political power? What options might they have for exerting political power under this type of regime?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14783

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14784

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14785

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14786

glossary

absolute monarchies:
governments wherein a monarch has absolute or unmitigated power

anarchy:
the absence of any organized government

constitutional monarchies:
national governments that recognize monarchs but require these figures to abide by the laws of a greater constitution

democracy:
a form of government that provides all citizens with an equal voice or vote in determining state policy

dictatorship:
a form of government in which a single person (or a very small group) wields complete and absolute authority over a government or populace after the dictator rises to power, usually through economic or military might

monarchy:
a form of government in which a single person (a monarch) rules until that individual dies or abdicates the throne

oligarchy:
a form of government in which power is held by a small, elite group

representative democracy:
a government wherein citizens elect officials to represent their interests

totalitarian dictatorship:
an extremely oppressive form of dictatorship in which most aspects of citizens' lives are controlled by the leader

1. Konish, Lorie (July 2018) "Here's how much money those 1 percenters really make." CNBC. Retrieved from https://www.cnbc.com/2018/07/10/here...ally-make.html. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Forms of Government. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:v2aY3cTX@5/Forms-of-Government. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- The North Korean Government Explained. **Provided by**: NowThisWorld. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGCodBnM2hI. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Does your vote count? The Electoral College explained - Christina Greer. **Provided by**: Ted-Ed. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9H3gvnN468. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 18.5: Forms of Government is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

18.6: Politics in the United States

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss issues surrounding voter participation in the U.S.
- Explore the influence of race, gender, and class issues on the voting process



Figure 1. Americans' voting rights are a fundamental element of the U.S. democratic structure. (Photo courtesy of David Goehring/flickr)

When discussing a nation's government, we should also define the word "politics." We may have associated the term with freedom, power, corruption, or rhetoric. Political science looks at **politics** as the interaction between citizens and their government. Sociology studies politics as a means to understand the underlying social norms and values of a group. A society's political structure and practices provide insight into the distribution of power and wealth, as well as larger philosophical and cultural beliefs. A cursory sociological analysis of U.S. politics might suggest that Americans' desire to promote equality and democracy on a theoretical level is at odds with the nation's real-life capitalist orientation.

Lincoln's famous phrase "of the people, by the people, for the people" is at the heart of the U.S. system and sums up its most essential aspect: that citizens willingly and freely elect representatives they believe will look out for their best interests. Although many Americans take free elections for granted, it is a vital foundation of any democracy. When the U.S. government was formed, however, African Americans and women were denied the right to vote. Democratic ideals and giving people a voice, which partially caused the American revolution and were fundamental ideals of American politics, initially failed specific groups and placed them at a further disadvantage than they were already in. Each of these groups struggled to secure the same suffrage rights as their white male counterparts, yet this history fails to inspire some Americans to show up at the polls and cast their ballots. Problems with the democratic process, including limited voter turnout, require us to more closely examine complex social issues that influence political participation.

Voter Participation

Voter participation is essential to the success of the U.S. political system. Although many Americans are quick to complain about laws and political leadership, a substantial portion of individuals do not vote. Likely the result of more polarized elections and partisan politics, voter turnout has actually increased dramatically in the past 12 years. In 2016, 61.4% of the qualifying population voted; in 2008, 63.3% did.[1] Even mid-term elections (the ones that do not encompass a presidential election) have seen an increase in voter turnout—in 2018, 47% of the voting-eligible population participated.[2] Even with recent increases in voter turnout, poor turnout can skew election results, particularly if one age or socioeconomic group is more diligent in its efforts to make it to the polls. Consequently, election outcomes can seem disconnected from substantial parts of the population they ostensibly represent.

Link to Learning

Want to better understand voter turnout? Watch this Khan Academy video "Voter turnout", which explains how voter turnout in the United States is related to political participation.

Certain voting advocacy groups work to improve turnout. Rock the Vote, for example, targets and reaches out to America's youngest potential voters to educate and equip them to share their voice at the polls. Public service promos from celebrity musicians support their cause. Native Vote is an organization that strives to inform American Indians about upcoming elections and encourages their participation. America's Hispanic population is reached out to by the National Council of La Raza, which strives to improve voter turnout among the Latino population. William Frey, author of Diversity Explosion, points out that Hispanics,

Asians, and multiracial populations is expected to double in the next forty years (Balz 2014), and they are therefore likely to increasingly influence elections.

Race, Gender, and Class Issues

Although recent records have shown more minorities voting now than ever before, this trend is still fairly new. Historically, African Americans and other minorities have been underrepresented at the polls. Black men were not allowed to vote at all until after the Civil War, and black women gained the right to vote along with other women only with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. For years, African Americans who were brave enough to vote were discouraged by discriminatory legislation, passed in many southern states, which required poll taxes and literacy tests of prospective voters. While voting was legal for African Americans, additional barriers kept them from reaching the polls. Literacy tests were not outlawed until 1965, when President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act.

Further Research

The 1965 Voting Rights Act was preceded by Lyndon Johnson's signing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Both articles were instrumental in establishing equal rights for African Americans. Check out Cornell University's website on this topic to learn more about this civil rights legislation.

The 1960s saw other important reforms in U.S. voting. Shortly before the Voting Rights Act was passed, the 1964 U.S. Supreme Court case *Reynolds v. Sims* changed the nature of elections. This landmark decision reaffirmed the notion of "**one person, one vote**," a concept holding that all people's votes should be counted equally. Before this decision, unequal distributions of population enabled small groups of people in sparsely populated rural areas to have as much voting power as the denser populations of urban areas. After *Reynolds v. Sims*, districts were redrawn so that they would include equal numbers of voters.

Unfortunately, in June 2013, the Supreme Court repealed several important aspects of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, ruling that southern states no longer need the stricter scrutiny that was once required to prohibit racial discrimination in voting practices in the South. Following this decision, several states moved forward with voter identification laws that had previously been banned by federal courts. Officials in Texas, Mississippi, and Alabama claim that new identification (ID) laws are needed to reduce voter fraud. Opponents point to the Department of Justice statistics indicating that only twenty-six voters, of 197 million voters in federal elections, were found guilty of voter fraud between 2002 and 2005. "Contemporary voter identification laws are trying to solve a problem that hasn't existed in over a century" (Campbell 2012). Opponents further note that new voter ID laws disproportionately affect minorities and the poor, potentially prohibiting them from exercising their right to vote. As such, modern forms of informal discrimination continue to exist, despite institutional policies that allow Americans to vote.

Evidence suggests that legal protection of voting rights does not directly translate into equal voting power. Relative to their presence in the U.S. population, women and racial/ethnic minorities are underrepresented in the U.S. Congress. Even though we had a record-breaking election in 2018, with 127 women elected to serve in the 116th Congress, women still remain far from having equal representation in Congress. White males still dominate both houses. And until the inauguration of Barack Obama in 2009, all U.S. presidents had been white men.

Like race and ethnicity, social class has also influenced voting practices. Voting rates among less-educated, lower-paid workers are lower than for people with comparatively higher socioeconomic status, which results in people with more power and access to resources having the means to perpetuate their political power. Several explanations have been offered to account for this difference (Raymond 2010). Workers in low-paying service jobs might find it harder to get to the polls because they lack flexibility in their work hours and quality daycare to look after children while they vote. Because a larger share of racial and ethnic minorities is employed in such positions, social class may be linked to race and ethnicity influencing voting rates. New requirements for specific types of voter identification in some states are likely to compound these issues, because it may take additional time away from work, as well as additional child care or transportation, for voters to get the needed IDs. The impact on minorities and the impoverished may cause a decrease in voter participation. Attitudes play a role as well. Some people of low socioeconomic status or minority race/ethnicity doubt their vote will count or voice will be heard because they have seen no evidence of their political power in their communities. Many believe that what they already have is all they can achieve. Furthermore, these individual characteristics (race, social class, gender), beyond influencing voting turnout and political activity, are linked to varying party voting patterns and preferences.[3]

As suggested earlier, money can carry a lot of influence in U.S. democracy, which has led some to argue that the U.S. is an informal oligarchy. But there are other means to make one's voice heard. Free speech can be influential, and people can participate in the democratic system through volunteering with political advocacy groups, writing to elected officials, sharing views in a public forum such as a blog or letter to the editor, forming or joining cause-related political organizations and interest groups, participating in public demonstrations, and even running for a local office.

The Judicial System

The third branch of the U.S. government is the judicial system, which consists of local, state, and federal courts. The U.S. Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States, and it has the final say on decisions about the constitutionality of laws that citizens and businesses challenge. As noted earlier, some rulings have a direct impact on the political system, such as recent decisions about voter identification and campaign financing. Other Supreme Court decisions affect different aspects of society, and they are useful for sociological study because they help us understand cultural changes, as Supreme Court rulings are often a reflection of shifts in popular ideas (which is actually often a critique of the Supreme Court, as it was meant to be independent of and external to public opinion). One example is a recent and highly controversial case that dealt with the religious opposition of Hobby Lobby Stores Inc. to providing employees with specific kinds of insurance mandated by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Another example was found same-sex marriage cases. In 2015, the Supreme Court overruled its previous decisions on same-sex marriage by a 5-4 vote, ruling that same-sex marriage is to be recognized across all 50 states in accordance with the Fourteenth Amendment.[4]

link to Learning

Curious about how cases get to the U.S. Supreme Court? Watch the video "How a Case Gets to the Supreme Court" to learn about how only a small number of cases even reach the highest court in the land.

Think It Over

- If the percentage of Asian Americans in Congress is far below the percentage of Asian Americans in the United States, does that mean Asian Americans lack political power? Why or why not?
- Explain how a voter's social position (race, class, gender) can affect their voting practices.
- Besides voting, how can U.S. citizens influence political processes and outcomes? Which of these strategies have you personally used?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14787

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14788

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14791

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14789

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14790

glossary

one person, one vote:
a concept holding that each person's vote should be counted equally

politics:
a means of studying a nation's or group's underlying social norms as values as evidenced through its political structure and practices

1. Manuel Krogsted, Jens and Mark Hugo Lopez (May 2017). *Black voter turnout fell in 2016, even as a record number of Americans cast ballots*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/12/black-voter-turnout-fell-in-2016-even-as-a-record-number-of-americans-cast-ballots/. ↵
2. Domonoske, Camila (November 2018). *A Boatload Of Ballots: Midterm Voter Turnout Hit 50-Year High*. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/2018/11/08/665197690/a-boatload-of-ballots-midterm-voter-turnout-hit-50-year-high. ↵

3. Tyson, Alec (November 2018). The 2018 midterm vote: Divisions by race, gender, education. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/08/the-2018-midterm-vote-divisions-by-race-gender-education/. ↵
4. Chappell, Bill (June 2015). *Supreme Court Declares Same-Sex Marriage Legal In All 50 States*. NPR. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/06/26/417717613/supreme-court-rules-all-states-must-allow-same-sex-marriages↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Politics in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:HEvq00iY@3/Politics-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 18.6: Politics in the United States is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

18.7: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Government and Power

What you'll learn to do: describe the varying theoretical perspectives on government and power



Sociologists use interpretive and theoretical frameworks to gain perspective on data and observations related to the study of power and government. Functionalism suggests that societal power and structure is predicated on cooperation, interdependence, and shared goals or values. Conflict theory, rooted in Marxism, asserts that societal structures are the result of social groups competing for wealth, power, and influence. Symbolic interactionism examines a smaller realm of sociological interest: the individual's perception of symbols of power and their subsequent reaction to the face-to-face interactions of the political realm.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Government and Power. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Image of hands. **Provided by**: pxhere. **Located at**: https://pxhere.com/en/photo/1563077. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Government and Power. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:lA3mBOAb@2/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Government-and-Power. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 18.7: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Government and Power is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

18.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Government

Learning Outcomes

- Describe how functionalists, conflict theorists, and interactionists view government and politics

Sociologists rely on organizational frameworks or paradigms to make sense of their study of society. Already there are many widely recognized broad schemas for evaluating sociological data and observations. Each paradigm looks at the study of society through a unique lens. The sociological examination of government and power can thus be evaluated using a variety of perspectives that help the evaluator gain a broader understanding. Functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism are are the three main philosophical stances in sociological practice today.

Functionalism

According to functionalism, the government has four main purposes: planning and directing society, meeting social needs, maintaining law and order, and managing international relations. Recall also that according to functionalism, all aspects of society serve a purpose.

Functionalists view government and politics as a mechanism to enforce norms and regulate conflict; they seek consensus and order in society. Dysfunction creates social problems that lead to social change. Functionalists see active social change, such as the sit-in on Wall Street, as undesirable because it forces change and, as a result, undesirable things that might require adaptation from society. For instance, functionalists would see monetary political contributions as a way of keeping people connected to the democratic process; in other words, political contributions serve as a tool for connecting individuals to their government. This would be in opposition to a conflict theorist, who would see this financial contribution as a way for the rich to perpetuate their own wealth and to further accrue political advantage.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14792

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14796

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory focuses on the social inequalities and power difference within a group, analyzing society through this lens. Philosopher and social scientist Karl Marx is the primary influence on the conflict theory perspective; he viewed social structure, rather than individual personality characteristics, as the cause of many social problems, such as poverty and crime. Marx believed that conflict between groups struggling to either attain wealth and power or keep the wealth and power they had was inevitable in a capitalist society, and conflict was the only way for the underprivileged to eventually gain some measure of equality.

C. Wright Mills (1956) elaborated on some of Marx's concepts, coining the phrase "power elite" to describe what he saw as the small group of powerful people who control much of a society. Mills believed the power elite use government to develop social policies that allow them to keep their wealth. While Marx argued that the small group at the top seeks power through wealth accumulation and security, Mills argued that the small group seeks economic, political, and social power. Contemporary theorist G. William Domhoff (2011) elaborated on ways in which the power elite may be seen as a subculture whose members follow similar social patterns such as joining elite clubs, attending select schools, and vacationing at a handful of exclusive destinations. This results in a social distance between groups, based on social, geographic, educational, political, and economic patterns of behavior.

Link to Learning

If you're interested in learning more about how someone from the conflict perspective may think about power, you can watch this video by We Are Change, who, as their name implies, are interested in defying the status quo and the elitist, competitive, societal structure by encouraging people to think differently about their social world.

Conflict Theory in Action



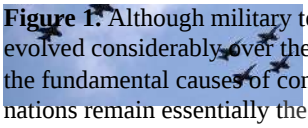


Figure 1. Although military technology has evolved considerably over the course of history, the fundamental causes of conflict among nations remain essentially the same: power. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Even before there were modern nation-states, political conflicts arose among competing societies or factions of people. Vikings attacked continental European tribes in search of loot, and later, European explorers landed on foreign shores to claim the resources of indigenous groups. Conflicts also arose among competing groups within individual sovereignties, as evidenced by the bloody French Revolution. Nearly all conflicts in the past and present, however, are spurred by basic desires: the drive to protect or gain territory and wealth, and the need to preserve liberty and autonomy.

According to Marx, such conflicts are necessary, although ugly, steps toward a more egalitarian society. Marx saw a historical pattern in which revolutionaries toppled elite power structures, after which wealth and authority became more evenly dispersed among the population, and the overall social order advanced. In this pattern of change through conflict, people tend to gain greater personal freedom and economic stability (1848), and conflict is therefore necessary to progress as a society. (Here's something to think about—if conflict is a necessary mechanism for progress, doesn't that make conflict functional?)

Modern-day conflicts are still driven by the desire to gain or protect power and wealth, whether in the form of land and resources or in the form of liberty and autonomy. Internally, groups within the U.S. struggle within the system by trying to achieve the outcomes they prefer. Political differences over budget issues for border control, for example, led to the recent shutdown of the federal government that lasted 35 days at the beginning of 2019. Alternative political groups, such as the Tea Party and the Libertarian Party, are also gaining a significant following.

The Arab Spring exemplifies oppressed groups acting collectively to change their governmental systems, seeking both greater liberty and greater economic equity. Some nations, such as Tunisia and Egypt, have successfully transitioned to governmental change; others, like Syria, have not yet reached consensus on a new government.

Unfortunately, the change process in some countries reached the point of active combat between the established government and the portion of the population seeking change, often called revolutionaries or rebels. Libya and Syria are two such countries; the multifaceted nature of the conflict, with several groups and factions, both from the government and from the general population, competing for their own desired ends, makes creation of a peaceful resolution more challenging and violent conflict more complicated.

In the last 5 years, popular uprisings of citizens seeking governmental change have occurred in Bosnia, Brazil, Greece, Iran, Jordan, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Venezuela, Ukraine, Hong Kong, and most recently in Armenia. Although much smaller in size and scope, demonstrations take place regularly in the United States, and their frequency has increased and their causes expanded in scope. From Women's Marches, to March for Our Lives and Black Lives Matter, people protest government policy and action, whether that government be local, state, or federal. Some claim we live in a golden era of protests in the United States.[1]

The internal situation in Ukraine in 2014 was compounded by military aggression from neighboring Russia, which forcibly annexed the Crimean Peninsula–a geographic region of Ukraine–and threatened further military action in that area. This is an example of conflict driven by a desire to gain wealth and power in the form of land and resources. In order to maintain international order and to protect individuals, the United States and the European Union implemented economic sanctions against Russia.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14793

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14794

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14795



Figure 2. What symbols of the Boston Tea Party are represented in this painting? How might a symbolic interactionist explain the way the modern-day Tea Party has reclaimed and repurposed these symbolic meanings? (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Symbolic Interactionism

Other sociologists study government and power by relying on the framework of symbolic interactionism, which is grounded in the works of Max Weber and George H. Mead.

Symbolic interactionism, as it pertains to government, focuses its attention on figures, emblems, or individuals that represent power and authority. Many diverse entities in larger society can be considered symbolic: trees, doves, wedding rings. Images that represent the power and authority of the United States include the White House, the eagle, and the American flag. The Seal of the President of the United States, along with the office in general, incites respect and reverence in many Americans and is a symbol of the United States around the world.

Symbolic interactionists are not interested in large-scale macro- structures such as the government. As micro-level sociologists, they are more interested in the face-to-face, interpersonal aspects of politics. In reality, much of politics consists of face-to-face backroom meetings and clandestine lobbyist efforts. Conversely, what the public typically sees is the less controversial media spectacle of speechmaking and ceremonial action from political leaders. Symbolic interactionists are most interested in the interaction between small groups who have the power to make decisions. The heart of politics, according to the symbolic interactionism perspective, is the result of interactions between individuals and small groups over time. These meetings produce new meanings and perspectives that individuals use to undertake political work.

Link to Learning

Learn more about interest groups and politics in this Crash Course video “Interest Groups”—are you part of any interest group, whether you’re affiliated with them or not?

Think It Over

- What is one criticism of functionalism?
- Explain what is meant by the term *power elite*. Consider its original intention as coined by C. Wright Mills as well as your understanding of it.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14797

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14798

glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]power elite:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]a small group of powerful people who control much of a society[/glossary-definition]
[/glossary-page]

1. Stewart, Emily (April 2018). Poll: More Americans are hitting the streets to protest in the era of Trump. Vox. Retrieved from https://www.vox.com/policy-and-polit...p-protest-poll ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Theoretical Perspectives on Government and Power. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:lA3mBOAb@2/Theoretical-Perspectives-on-Government-and-Power. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 18.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Government is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

18.9: Putting It Together- Government and Politics

In this module, you learned about government and the ways that political institutions influence society. Government is an overarching social institution which, through its power and authority, governs the affairs of citizens. Types of government may include a variety of forms, some voluntary and some involuntary. Regardless of the type of political system, we can say that the government strongly impacts society and societal interactions, particularly in regards to economic issues, which we cover in more detail in another module.

One example of the interconnectedness between government, politics, and economics is the emphasis on raising the minimum wage in recent years. In 2016, California became the first state to adopt legislation that gradually raised the minimum wage to $15 per hour. New York City, Seattle, and Washington D.C. also established plans to phase in a $15-per-hour wage floor. Other states raised wages above the federally mandated rate, according to the National Conference of State Legislators. On August 1, 2016, for example, Minnesota's minimum wage rose to $9.50 per hour at the state's largest companies. As of December of 2018, 29 states and D.C. had minimum wages above the federally-established minimum wage of $7.25.[1]

The changes come after years of national debate about the need to raise pay so families can earn a living wage. The U.S. federal minimum wage was first established during the Depression, and it has risen from 25 cents to $7.25 per hour since it was first instituted in 1938 as part of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Despite the increases, inflation has eroded its value; returning it to the value it held in 1968 would require an increase to nearly $10 per hour. In his 2013 State of the Union address, President Obama called for raising the minimum wage to $9 per hour, which in adjusted terms would put it back at its early 1980s level. According to administration estimates, this would boost the wages of some 15 million people. Supporters of these efforts note that women and racial/ethnic minorities in particular are likely to benefit significantly.

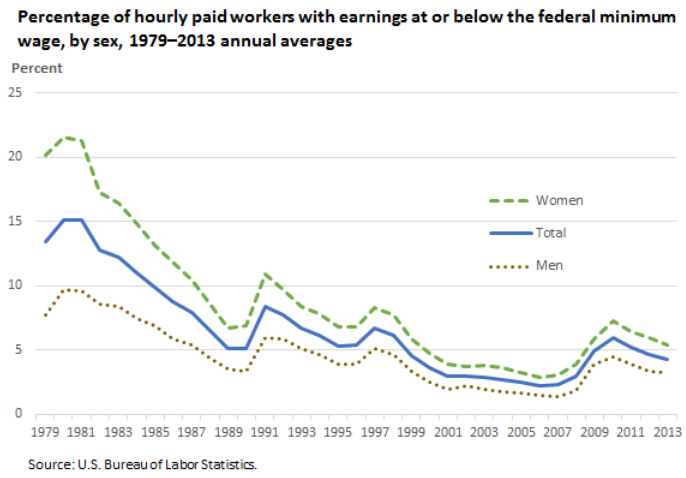
But increasing the minimum wage may have impacts beyond adding more money to employees' pockets. A Purdue University study released in July 2015 suggests that paying fast-food restaurant employees $15 an hour could lead to higher prices, as any economist would argue. Prices at those businesses could increase by an estimated 4.3 percent, according to the report.

Earlier studies have indicated that some businesses will cut jobs to pay employees more. In February 2014, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office issued a report, "The Effects of a Minimum-Wage Increase on Employment and Family Income," that explores two scenarios: Raising the minimum wage to $10.10 or to $9.00. The report concludes that there are distinct trade-offs. Under the $10.10 scenario, there would likely be a reduction of about 500,000 workers across the labor market, as businesses shed jobs, but about 16.5 million low-wage workers would see substantial gains in their earnings in an average week. Under the $9.00 scenario, the labor force would see a reduction of 100,000 jobs, but an estimated 7.6 million low-wage workers would see a boost in their weekly earnings. This is one example of the role of government and politics on economics and how policy influences directly— and further illustrates the complexity of policymaking. What would you do if you had the political power to make a decision about minimum wage?

Critics assert that the real effects of minimum-wage increases are negative: they hurt businesses, raise prices and ultimately are counterproductive for the working poor, as they can lead to unemployment. For a good sense of the partisan argument — and the statistics and studies that are often cited — see these position pieces from the right-leaning American Enterprise Institute and the left-leaning Center for American Progress. At the macro level, a substantial increase in the federal minimum wage is likely to have broad effects, with some studies predicting that it could "ripple" across the economy, boosting the wages of nearly 30 percent of the American workforce.

The best starting point for understanding the debate may be a factual picture of minimum-wage earners, as there are many myths. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported the following for the year of 2017:[2]

1. 542,000 workers earned federal minimum wage.
2. 1.3 million workers earned below the federal minimum wage.
3. Combined, those earning at or below minimum wage constituted 2.3 percent of all hourly paid workers.
4. Minimum wage workers were generally young, and half of those paid the federal minimum wage or less were under 25.
5. Those with fewer years of education were more likely to earn federal minimum wage or below it.



---

1. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (December 2018)."Policy Basics: The Minimum Wage." Retrieved from https://www.cbpp.org/research/economy/policy-basics-the-minimum-wage. ↵
2. BLS Reports (March 2018). *Characteristics of minimum wage workers, 2017*. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/minimum-wage/2017/pdf/home.pdf. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Putting It Together: Government and Politics. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Florencia Silveira for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Minimum wage: Updated research roundup on the effects of increasing pay. **Authored by**: John Wihbey . **Provided by**: Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center. **Located at**: http://journalistsresource.org/studies/economics/inequality/the-effects-of-raising-the-minimum-wage. **Project**: Journalist's Resource. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 18.9: Putting It Together- Government and Politics is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

18.10: Discussion- Government and Politics

STEP 1: For this discussion assignment, pick ONE of the following questions and respond to it in a post of at least 200 words. Your response should be supported by details and facts from this module as well as evidences you've seen from your own life, news articles, or other research. Include all relevant links in your discussion.

1. Do you feel the United States has become an oligarchy? Why, or why not?
2. Explain how a voter's social class can affect his or her voting practices.
3. Besides voting, how can U.S. citizens influence political processes and outcomes? Which of these strategies have you personally used or seen?

STEP 2: Post on at least TWO other posts in responses of at least 75 words or more.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Government and Politics . **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Sociology 2e discussion questions. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@11.1:TrIRM88K@7/Introduction-to-Sociology. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.

This page titled 18.10: Discussion- Government and Politics is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

18.11: Assignment- Politics and Sociology

STEP 1: Find a current news event article about politics, voting, or political leadership. Look specifically for an article that covers information related to concepts you learned about in this module, including power, authority, political systems, voting, or theoretical perspectives on government. You won't want to search for these specific terms using Google, but should instead peruse headline news or political sections and read through several articles.

The article you choose should be a minimum of 500 words, recent (within three weeks), and from a reputable news source (many colleges provide free access to national news sources).

STEP 2: Write a thorough summary of the article.

STEP 3: Using your sociological imagination, write an analysis of the article that connects the main idea/s of the article to specific key terms and theories from this module on government and politics.

STEP 4: Include the link to your article, check for any writing errors, and submit your article with your response paper.

Rubric

High Quality	**Proficient**	**Approaching Proficiency**	**Not Proficient**	**Points**
The article chosen is recent, relevant, and reputable.	The article missing 1 of the requirements (recent, relevant, and reputable)	The article is missing 2 of the requirements.	The article is missing the requirements.	___/3
Summary is succinct, thorough, original, and accurate.	Summary is missing 1 of the requirements (succinct, thorough, original and accurate).	Summary is missing 2 of the requirements.	Summary is missing 3 or 4 of the requirements.	___/6
Analysis clearly relates the article content from the article to key terms from this module on government and politics.	Analysis includes one or more key terms but does not provide a clear link to the article and/or does not use the term with 100% accuracy.	Analysis includes a key term without proper connection to the article and/or misuses the term.	Analysis does not include key terms from Module 6 and/or uses key terms incorrectly.	___/7
College-level writing grammar (spelling, punctuation, syntax, etc.) with 0-1 error.	College-level writing with 2-3 grammatical errors.	College-level writing with 3-4 grammatical errors.	College-level writing with 5+ grammatical errors.	___/4
			Total:	___/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Politics and Sociology. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 18.11: Assignment- Politics and Sociology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

19: Module 16- Work and the Economy

19.1: Why It Matters- Work and the Economy
19.2: Introduction to Economic Systems
19.3: The Development of Economic Systems
19.4: Capitalism and Socialism
19.5: Theoretical Perspectives on Economics
19.6: Introduction to Globalization and the Economy
19.7: Globalization
19.8: Introduction to Work in the United States
19.9: Work in the United States
19.10: Poverty and Unemployment in the United States
19.11: Putting It Together- Work and the Economy
19.12: Discussion- Work and the Economy
19.13: Assignment- Living in Poverty

This page titled 19: Module 16- Work and the Economy is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.1: Why It Matters- Work and the Economy

Why discuss the historical development of the types of economic systems and describe modern economies?

” 99 Weeks Later, Jobless Have Only Desperation, ” the headline said. It was August 2010, and the unemployment rate in the United States had climbed to 9.5%. Around the country, millions of people were out of work, and many had lost their unemployment insurance benefits, which ordinarily last 26 weeks but, thanks to Congressional action, were extended to 60 or 99 weeks based on a state ‘ s unemployment rate. An estimated 1.4 million had now exceeded the 99-week limit. For the many people in this group who had been getting benefits, dubbed the ” 99ers, ” according to a news report, their ” modest payments were a lifeline that enabled them to maintain at least a veneer of normalcy, keeping a roof over their heads, putting gas in their cars, paying electric and phone bills. ” One 99er was a 49-year-old woman who used to work as director of client services for a small technology company but now expected to be living in her car after being unable to find a job, despite many applications, being unable to pay her rent, and facing eviction. As she drove away from her apartment for good, she sobbed and later recalled, ” At one point, I thought, you know, what if I turned the wheel in my car and wrecked my car? ” Ironically, she had also fallen behind on her loan payments on her car, which was about to be repossessed. (Luo, 2010)[1]

This story is one example of the profound impact that work and the economy can have on an individual and a society. Following the 2008 Recession, many blamed the economic system for contributing to the failings that led to the housing crash and precipitated the rise in unemployment, the sudden drop in housing prices and stock market prices, as well as the sharp increase in national debt. In our modern, connected world, the crash in the United States also prompted a global recession.

An estimated 3.2 billion of the world’s 7.3 billion people are in traditional jobs, but lots of others are engaged in unpaid care, creative work, voluntary work, or other activities. Around the world, the nature of work is changing as the economy become increasingly globalized. The United Nations 2015 Human Development Report argues that the modern workplace needs to account for increased technological progress, aging societies, and environmental challenges.([2]

Watch It

Watch the following video to see how the Human Development Report is taking a broader look at work and human development.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=532

In this module, you’ll examine the nature of economies and come to understand the differences between capitalism and socialism. You’ll learn about the theories behind these economic systems, then study how economies and the workforce are changing because of globalization. Finally, you’ll analyze trends in the current workforce in the United States.Home

---

1. Luo, M. (2010, August 3). 99 weeks later, jobless have only desperation. The New York Times , p. A1. ↵
2. UN Human Development Report (2015). Retried from https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hdr/2015-human-development-report.html. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Why It Matters: Work and the Economy. **Located at**: http://www.peoi.org/Courses/Coursessp/socfwk/contents/frame13.html. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*
- Great Recession. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Recession. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Introduction by Selim Jahan, lead author of the 2015 Human Development Report. **Authored by**: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyLXsPRuR3w. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 19.1: Why It Matters- Work and the Economy is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.2: Introduction to Economic Systems

What you'll learn to do: differentiate between economic systems and discuss theoretical views of economics



Figure 1. Companies pay to advertise their goods and services in Times Square in New York City, NY. Advertisements are an important facet of the U.S. capitalist economic system. (Photo courtesy of Chris Tagupa/unsplash)

In this section, you'll examine the basics of economies, which refer to the social institution through which a society's resources (goods and services) are managed. You will also learn about the development of economies through the transformation of societies.

The Agricultural Revolution led to development of the first economies that were based on trading goods. Mechanization of the manufacturing process led to the Industrial Revolution and gave rise to two major competing economic systems: capitalism and socialism. Under capitalism, private owners invest their capital and that of others to produce goods and services they can sell in an open market. Prices and wages are set by supply and demand and competition. Under socialism, the means of production is commonly owned, and part or all of the economy is centrally controlled by government. There is no nation that is *completely* capitalist or socialist; many countries' economies feature a mix of both systems.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Economic Systems. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Economic Systems. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:NvnPk5xd@4/Economic-Systems. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Times Square, New York, NY. **Authored by**: Chris Tagupa. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/zM9_h_5N7Xw. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 19.2: Introduction to Economic Systems is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.3: The Development of Economic Systems

Learning Outcomes

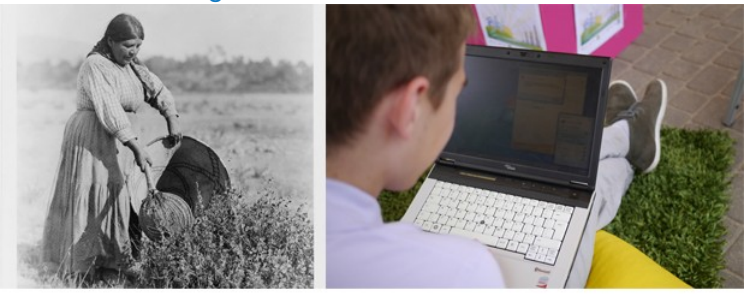
- Describe types of economic systems and their historical development
- Use primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary sectors of an economy to compare types of economies

Economy is one of human society's earliest social structures. In sociology, **economy** refers to the social institution through which a society's resources are exchanged and managed. The earliest economies were based on trade, which was often a simple exchange in which people traded one item for another. Our earliest forms of writing (such as Sumerian clay tablets) were developed to record transactions, payments, and debts between merchants. As societies grow and change, so do their economies—the economy of a small farming community is very different from the economy of a large nation with advanced technology.

While today's economic activities are more complex than those early trades, the underlying goals remain the same: exchanging goods and services allows individuals to meet their needs and wants. In 1893, Émile Durkheim noted the change in the way society was held together and was interested in how the division of labor in modern society impacted social solidarity (Ritzer, G 2008) [1] Durkheim described what he called "mechanical" and "organic" solidarity that correlates to a society's economy. **Mechanical solidarity** exists in simpler societies where social cohesion comes from sharing similar work, education, and religion. **Organic solidarity** arises out of the mutual interdependence created by the specialization of work. The complex U.S. economy, and the economies of other industrialized nations, meet the definition of organic solidarity. Most individuals perform a specialized task to earn money they use to trade for goods and services provided by others who perform different specialized tasks. In a simplified example, an elementary school teacher relies on farmers for food, doctors for healthcare, carpenters to build shelter, and so on. The farmers, doctors, and carpenters all rely on the teacher to educate their children. They are all dependent on each other and their work.

The dominant economic systems of the modern era are capitalism and socialism, and there have been many variations of each system across the globe. Countries have switched systems as their rulers and economic fortunes have changed. For example, Russia has been transitioning to a market-based economy since the fall of communism in that region of the world. Vietnam, where the economy was devastated by the Vietnam War, restructured to a state-run economy in response, and more recently has been moving toward a socialist-style market economy. In the past, other economic systems reflected the societies that formed them. Many of these earlier systems lasted centuries. These changes in economies raise many questions for sociologists. What are these older economic systems? How did they develop? Why did they fade away? What are the similarities and differences between older economic systems and modern ones?

Economics of Agricultural, Industrial, and Postindustrial Societies



(a) (b)

Figure 2. In an agricultural economy, crops and seeds are the most important commodity. Commodities are raw materials or basic goods that are often used as inputs to create other products. They are easily interchangeable, or fungible, meaning that there is little to no difference with other commodities of the same time—for example, wheat grown in Texas is essentially the same as wheat grown in Idaho. Or a barrel of oil from Saudi Arabia is the same as a barrel of oil from the Gulf of Mexico. In a postindustrial society, information is the most valuable resource. (Photo (a) courtesy of Edward S. Curtis/Wikimedia Commons. Photo (b) courtesy of Kārlis Dambrāns/flickr)

Our earliest ancestors lived as hunter-gatherers. Small groups of extended families roamed from place to place looking for subsistence. They would settle in an area for a brief time when there were abundant resources. They hunted animals for their meat

and gathered wild fruits, vegetables, and cereals. They ate what they caught or gathered more or less immediately, as they had no way of preserving or transporting it. Once the resources of an area ran low, the group had to move on, and everything they owned had to travel with them. Food reserves only consisted of what they could carry. Many sociologists contend that hunter-gatherers did not have a true economy, because groups did not typically trade with other groups due to the scarcity of goods.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14799

The Agricultural Revolution

The first true economies arrived when people started raising crops and domesticating animals, both of which required staying in one place for a period of time. Although there is still a great deal of disagreement among archeologists as to the exact timeline, research indicates that agriculture began independently and at different times in several places around the world. The earliest agriculture was in the Fertile Crescent in the Middle East around 11,000–10,000 years ago. Next were the valleys of the Indus, Yangtze, and Yellow rivers in India and China, between 10,000 and 9,000 years ago. The people living in the highlands of New Guinea developed agriculture between 9,000 and 6,000 years ago, while people were farming in Sub-Saharan Africa between 5,000 and 4,000 years ago. Agriculture developed later in the western hemisphere, arising in what would become the eastern United States, central Mexico, and northern South America between 5,000 and 3,000 years ago (Diamond 2003).

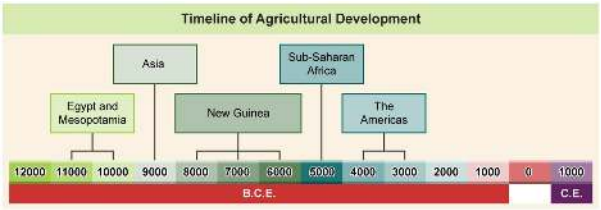


Figure 3. Agricultural practices have emerged in different societies at different times. (Information courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Agriculture began with the simplest of technologies—for example, a pointed stick to break up the soil—but advanced dramatically when people harnessed animals to pull an even more efficient tool for the same task: a plow. With this new technology, one family could grow enough crops not only to feed themselves but also to feed others. Knowing there would be abundant food each year as long as crops were tended, led people to abandon the nomadic life of hunter-gatherers and settle down to farm.

The improved efficiency in food production meant that not everyone had to toil all day in the fields. As agriculture grew, new jobs emerged, along with new technologies. Excess crops needed to be stored, processed, protected, and transported. Farming equipment and irrigation systems needed to be built and maintained. Wild animals needed to be domesticated and herds shepherded. Economies begin to develop because people now had goods and services to trade. At the same time, farmers eventually came to labor for the propertied ruling class.

As more people specialized in nonfarming jobs, villages grew into towns and then into cities. Urban areas created the need for administrators and public servants. Disputes over ownership, payments, debts, compensation for damages, and the like led to the need for laws and courts—and the judges, clerks, lawyers, and police who administered and enforced those laws.

At first, most goods and services were traded between small social groups by exchanging one form of goods or services for another known as bartering (Mauss 1922). This system only works when one person happens to have something the other person needs at the same time. To solve this problem, people developed the idea of a means of exchange that could be used at any time: that is, money. **Money** refers to an object that a society agrees to assign a value to so it can be exchanged for payment. In early economies, money was often objects like cowry shells, rice, barley, or even rum. Precious metals quickly became the preferred means of exchange in many cultures because of their durability and portability. The first coins were minted in Lydia in what is now Turkey around 650–600 B.C.E. (Goldsborough 2010). Early legal codes established the value of money and the rates of exchange for various commodities. They also established the rules for inheritance, fines as penalties for crimes, and how property was to be divided and taxed (Horne 1915). A symbolic interactionist would note that bartering and money are systems of symbolic exchange that require the negotiation of value. Monetary objects took on a symbolic meaning, one that carries into our modern-day use of cash, checks, and debit cards.

The Woman Who Lives without Money

Imagine having no money. If you wanted some french fries, needed a new pair of shoes, or were due to get an oil change for your car, how would you get those goods and services?

This isn't just a theoretical question. Think about it. What do those on the outskirts of society do in these situations? Think of someone escaping domestic abuse who gave up everything and has no resources. Or an immigrant who wants to build a new life but who had to leave another life behind to find that opportunity. Or a homeless person who simply wants a meal to eat.

This last example, homelessness, is what caused Heidemarie Schwermer to give up money. She was a divorced high school teacher in Germany, and her life took a turn when she relocated her children to a rural town with a significant homeless population. She began to question what serves as currency in a society and decided to try something new.

Schwermer founded a business called *Gib und Nimm*—in English, "give and take." It operated on a moneyless basis and strived to facilitate people swapping goods and services for other goods and services—no cash allowed (Schwermer 2007). What began as a short experiment has become a new way of life. Schwermer says the change has helped her focus on people's inner value instead of their outward wealth. She wrote two books that tell her story (she's donated all proceeds to charity) and, most importantly, a richness in her life she was unable to attain with money.

How might our three sociological perspectives view her actions? What would most interest them about her unconventional ways? Would a functionalist consider her aberration of norms a social dysfunction that upsets the normal balance? How would a conflict theorist place her in the social hierarchy? What might a symbolic interactionist make of her choice not to use money—such an important symbol in the modern world?

What do *you* make of *Gib und Nimm*?

As city-states grew into countries and countries grew into empires, their economies grew as well. When large empires broke up, their economies broke up too. The governments of newly formed nations sought to protect and increase their markets. They financed voyages of discovery to find new markets and resources all over the world, which ushered in a rapid progression of economic development.

Colonies were established to secure these markets, and wars were financed to take over territory. These ventures were funded in part by raising capital from investors who were paid back from the goods obtained. Governments and private citizens also set up large trading companies that financed their enterprises around the world by selling stocks and bonds.

Governments tried to protect their share of the markets by developing a system called mercantilism. **Mercantilism** is an economic policy based on accumulating silver and gold by controlling colonial and foreign markets through taxes and other charges. The resulting restrictive practices and exacting demands included monopolies, bans on certain goods, high tariffs, and exclusivity requirements. Mercantilistic governments also promoted manufacturing and, with the ability to fund technological improvements, they helped create the equipment that led to the Industrial Revolution.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14800

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14802

The Industrial Revolution

Until the end of the eighteenth century, most manufacturing was done by manual labor. This changed as inventors devised machines to manufacture goods. A small number of innovations led to a large number of changes in the British economy. In the textile industries, the spinning of cotton, worsted yarn, and flax could be done more quickly and less expensively using new machines with names like the Spinning Jenny and the Spinning Mule (Bond 2003). Another important innovation was made in the production of iron: coke from coal could now be used in all stages of smelting rather than charcoal from wood, which dramatically lowered the cost of iron production while increasing availability (Bond 2003). James Watt ushered in what many scholars recognize as the greatest change, revolutionizing transportation and thereby the entire production of goods with his improved steam engine.

As people moved to cities to fill factory jobs, factory production also changed. Workers did their jobs in assembly lines and were trained to complete only one or two steps in the manufacturing process. These advances meant that more finished goods could be

manufactured with more efficiency and speed than ever before.

The Industrial Revolution also changed agricultural practices. Until that time, many people practiced **subsistence farming** in which they produced only enough to feed themselves and pay their taxes. New technology introduced gasoline-powered farm tools such as tractors, seed drills, threshers, and combine harvesters. Farmers were encouraged to plant large fields of a single crop to maximize profits. With improved transportation and the invention of refrigeration, produce could be shipped safely all over the world.

The Industrial Revolution modernized the world. With growing resources came growing societies and economies. Between 1800 and 2000, the world's population grew sixfold, while per capita income saw a tenfold jump (Maddison 2003). While many people's lives were improving, the Industrial Revolution also birthed many societal problems. There were inequalities in the system. Owners amassed vast fortunes while laborers, including young children, toiled for long hours in unsafe conditions. Workers' rights, wage protection, and safe work environments are issues that arose during this period and remain concerns today.

Watch It

Watch this video for a summary of the agriculture and industrial revolution and see how these changes connect with economic growth.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=536

Postindustrial Societies and the Information Age

Postindustrial societies, also known as information societies, have evolved in modernized nations. One of the most valuable goods of the modern era is information. Those who have the means to produce, store, and disseminate information are leaders in this type of society. One way scholars understand the development of different types of societies (like agricultural, industrial, and postindustrial) is by examining their economies in terms of four sectors: primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary. Each has a different focus. The *primary sector* extracts and produces raw materials (like metals and crops). The *secondary sector* turns those raw materials into finished goods. The *tertiary sector* provides services: child care, healthcare, and money management. Finally, the *quaternary sector* produces ideas; these include the research that leads to new technologies, the management of information, and a society's highest levels of education and the arts (Kenessey 1987).

In underdeveloped countries, the majority of the people work in the primary sector. As economies develop, more and more people are employed in the secondary sector. In well-developed economies, such as those in the United States, Japan, and Western Europe, the majority of the workforce is employed in service industries. In the United States, for example, almost 80 percent of the workforce is employed in the tertiary sector (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2011).

The rapid increase in computer use in all aspects of daily life is a main reason for the transition to an information economy. Fewer people are needed to work in factories because computerized robots now handle many of the tasks. Other manufacturing jobs have been outsourced to less-developed countries as a result of the developing global economy. The growth of the Internet has created industries that exist almost entirely online. Within industries, technology continues to change how goods are produced. For instance, the music and film industries used to produce physical products like CDs and DVDs for distribution. Now those goods are increasingly produced digitally and streamed or downloaded at a much lower physical manufacturing cost. Information and the means to use it creatively have become commodities in a postindustrial economy.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14801

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14803

glossary

bartering:
a process where people exchange one form of goods or services for another

economy:

the social institution through which a society's resources (goods and services) are managed

mechanical solidarity:
a form of social cohesion that comes from sharing similar work, education, and religion, as might be found in simpler societies

mercantilism:
an economic policy based on national policies of accumulating silver and gold by controlling markets with colonies and other countries through taxes and customs charges

money:
an object that a society agrees to assign a value to so it can be exchanged as payment

organic solidarity:
a form of social cohesion that arises out of the mutual interdependence created by the specialization of work

subsistence farming:
farming where farmers grow only enough to feed themselves and their families

1. George Ritzer (2008). *Sociological Theory*. McGraw Hill. New York ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Economic Systems. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:NvnPk5xd@4/Economic-Systems. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Coal, Steam, and The Industrial Revolution: Crash Course World History #32. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhL5DCizj5c&feature=youtu.be. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 19.3: The Development of Economic Systems is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.4: Capitalism and Socialism

Learning Outcomes

- Compare and contrast capitalism and socialism both in theory and in practice



(a)



(b)

Figure 1. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin was one of the founders of Russian communism. J.P. Morgan was one of the most influential capitalists in history. They have very different views on how economies should be run. (Photos (a) and (b) courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Mechanization of the manufacturing process led to the Industrial Revolution which gave rise to two major competing economic systems: capitalism and socialism. Under capitalism, private owners invest their capital and that of others to produce goods and services they can sell in an open market. Prices and wages are set by supply and demand and competition. Under socialism, the means of production is commonly owned, and part or all of the economy is centrally controlled by government. Several countries' economies feature a mix of both systems.

Watch It

Watch this video to review the sectors of the economy and then to learn more about economic revolution and the main distinctions between capitalism and socialism.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=538

Capitalism



Figure 2. The New York Stock Exchange is where shares of stock in companies that are registered for public trading are traded (Photo courtesy of Ryan Lawler/Wikimedia Commons)

Scholars don't always agree on a single definition of capitalism. For our purposes, we will define **capitalism** as an economic system in which there is private ownership (as opposed to state ownership) and where there is an impetus to produce profit, and thereby wealth. This is the type of economy in place in the United States today. Under capitalism, people invest capital (money or property invested in a business venture) in a business to produce a product or service that can be sold in a market to consumers. The investors in the company are generally entitled to a share of any profit made on sales after the costs of production and distribution are taken out. These investors often reinvest their profits to improve and expand the business or acquire new ones. To illustrate how this works, consider this example. Sarah, Antonio, and Chris each invest $250,000 into a start-up company that offers an innovative baby product. When the company nets $1 million in profits its first year, a portion of that profit goes back to Sarah, Antonio, and Chris as a return on their investment. Sarah reinvests with the same company to fund the development of a second product line, Antonio uses his return to help another start-up in the technology sector, and Chris buys a yacht.

To provide their product or service, owners hire workers to whom they pay wages. The cost of raw materials, the retail price they charge consumers, and the amount they pay in wages are determined through the law of supply and demand and by competition. When demand exceeds supply, prices tend to rise. When supply exceeds demand, prices tend to fall. When multiple businesses market similar products and services to the same buyers, there is competition. Competition can be good for consumers because it can lead to lower prices and higher quality as businesses try to get consumers to buy from them rather than from their competitors.

Wages tend to be set in a similar way. People who have talents, skills, education, or training that is in short supply and is needed by businesses tend to earn more than people without comparable skills. Competition in the workforce helps determine how much people will be paid. In times when many people are unemployed and jobs are scarce, people are often willing to accept less than they would when their services are in high demand. In this scenario, businesses are able to maintain or increase profits by not increasing workers' wages.

Capitalism in Practice

As capitalists began to dominate the economies of many countries during the Industrial Revolution, the rapid growth of businesses and their tremendous profitability gave some owners the capital they needed to create enormous corporations that could monopolize an entire industry. Many companies controlled all aspects of the production cycle for their industry, from the raw materials, to the production, to the stores in which they were sold. These companies were able to use their wealth to buy out or stifle any competition.

In the United States, the predatory tactics used by these large monopolies caused the government to take action. Starting in the late 1800s, the government passed a series of laws that broke up monopolies and regulated how key industries—such as transportation, steel production, and oil and gas exploration and refining—could conduct business. The main statutes were the Sherman Act of 1890, the Clayton Act of 1914, and the Federal Trade Commission Act of 1914. These Acts, first, restricted the formation of cartels and prohibit other collusive practices regarded as being in restraint of trade. Second, they restricted the mergers and acquisitions of organizations that could substantially lessen competition. Third, they prohibited the creation of a monopoly and the abuse of monopoly power.

The United States is considered a capitalist country. However, the U.S. government has a great deal of influence on private companies through the laws it passes and the regulations enforced by government agencies. Through taxes, regulations on wages, guidelines to protect worker safety and the environment, plus financial rules for banks and investment firms, the government exerts a certain amount of control over how all companies do business. State and federal governments also own, operate, or control large parts of certain industries, such as the post office, schools, hospitals, highways and railroads, and many water, sewer, and power utilities. Debate over the extent to which the government should be involved in the economy remains an issue of contention today. Some criticize such involvements as socialism (a type of state-run economy), while others believe intervention and oversight is necessary to protect the rights of workers and the well-being of the general population.



Figure 3. This chart shows how Amazon has developed monopoly-like power in retail when compared with other major corporations like Walmart, Target and JCPenny. How do you think monopolies are in direct contradiction to the idea of competition in capitalist societies? Source: Visual Capitalist, https://www.visualcapitalist.com/ext...zon-one-chart/.

Further Research

One alternative to traditional capitalism is to have the workers own the company for which they work. To learn more about company-owned businesses check out The National Center for Employee Ownership.

Socialism



Figure 4. The economies of China and Russia after World War II were both based on a communist system. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Socialism is an economic system in which there is government ownership (often referred to as "state run") of goods and their production, with an impetus to share work and wealth equally among the members of a society. Under socialism, everything that people produce, including services, is considered a social product. Everyone who contributes to the production of a good or to providing a service is entitled to a share in any benefits that come from its sale or use. To make sure all members of society get their fair share, governments must be able to control property, production, and distribution.

The focus in socialism is on benefitting society, whereas capitalism seeks to benefit the individual. Socialists claim that a capitalistic economy leads to inequality, with unfair distribution of wealth and individuals who use their power at the expense of society. Socialism strives, ideally, to control the economy to avoid the problems inherent in capitalism.

Within socialism, there are diverging views on the extent to which the economy should be controlled. One extreme believes all but the most personal items are public property. Other socialists believe only essential services such as healthcare, education, and utilities (electrical power, telecommunications, and sewage) need direct control. Under this form of socialism, farms, small shops, and businesses can be privately owned but are subject to government regulation.

The other area on which socialists disagree is on what level society should exert its control. In **communist** countries like the former Soviet Union, or modern-day China, Vietnam, and North Korea, the national government controls both politics and the economy, and many goods are owned in common. Ideally, these goods would be available to all as needed, although this often plays out differently in theory than in practice. Communist governments generally have the power to tell businesses what to produce, how much to produce, and what to charge for it. There are varying practices within and between communist nations; for example, while China is still considered to be a communist nation, it has adopted many aspects of a market economy. Other socialists believe control should be decentralized so it can be exerted by those most affected by the industries being controlled. An example of this would be a town collectively owning and managing the businesses on which its residents depend.

Because of challenges in their economies, several of these communist countries have moved from central planning to letting market forces help determine many production and pricing decisions. **Market socialism** describes a subtype of socialism that adopts certain traits of capitalism, like allowing limited private ownership or consulting market demands. This could involve situations like profits generated by a company going directly to the employees of the company or being used as public funds (Gregory and Stuart 2003). Many Eastern European and some South American countries have mixed economies. Key industries are nationalized and directly controlled by the government; however, most businesses are privately owned but regulated by the government.

LInk to Learning

Watch this Crash Course video "Capitalism and Socialism" on capitalism and socialism to learn more about the historical context and modern applications of these two political and economic systems.

Organized socialism never became powerful in the United States. The success of labor unions and the government in securing workers' rights, joined with the high standard of living enjoyed by most of the workforce, made socialism less appealing than the controlled capitalism practiced here.

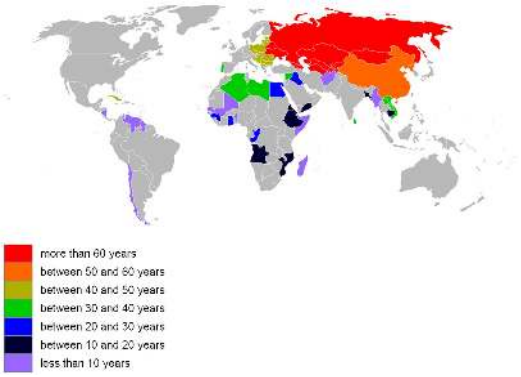


Figure 5. This map shows countries that have self-proclaimed to be a socialist state at some point. Most of these followed Marxist-Leninist socialism and were also considered communist. The colors indicate the duration that socialism prevailed. (Map courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14805

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14806

Socialism in Practice

As with capitalism, the basic ideas behind socialism go far back in history. Plato, in ancient Greece, suggested a republic in which people shared their material goods. Early Christian communities believed in common ownership, as did the systems of monasteries set up by various religious orders. Many of the leaders of the French Revolution called for the abolition of all private property, not just the estates of the aristocracy they had overthrown. Thomas More's *Utopia*, published in 1516, imagined a society with little private property and mandatory labor on a communal farm. A *utopia* has since come to mean an imagined place or situation in which everything is perfect. Most experimental utopian communities have had the abolition of private property as a founding principle.

Modern socialism really began as a reaction to the excesses of uncontrolled industrial capitalism in the 1800s and 1900s. The enormous wealth and lavish lifestyles enjoyed by the propertied classes contrasted sharply with the miserable conditions of the workers.

Some of the first great sociological thinkers studied the rise of socialism. Max Weber admired some aspects of socialism, especially its rationalism and its emphasis on social reform, but he worried that letting the government have complete control could result in an "iron cage of future bondage" from which there is no escape (Greisman and Ritzer 1981). Pierre-Joseph Proudon (1809−1865) was another early socialist who thought socialism could be used to create utopian communities. In his 1840 book, *What Is Property?*, he famously stated that "property is theft" (Proudon 1840). By this he meant that if an owner did not work to produce or earn the property, then the owner was stealing it from those who did. Proudon believed economies could work using a principle called **mutualism**, under which individuals and cooperative groups would exchange products with one another on the basis of mutually satisfactory contracts (Proudon 1840).

By far the most important influential thinker on socialism is Karl Marx. Through his own writings and those with his collaborator, industrialist Friedrich Engels, Marx used a scientific analytical process to show that throughout history, the resolution of class struggles caused economic and cultural changes. He saw the relationships evolving from slave and owner, to serf and lord, to journeyman and master, to worker and owner. Neither Marx nor Engels thought socialism could be used to set up small utopian communities. Rather, they believed a socialist society would be created after workers rebelled against capitalistic owners and seized the means of production. They felt industrial capitalism was a necessary step that raised the level of production in society to a point where it could then be reconfigured so as to produce a more egalitarian socialist and then communist state (Marx and Engels 1848). Marxist ideas have provided much of the foundation for the influential sociological paradigm called conflict theory.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14804

POlitics and Socialism: A Few Definitions

In the 2008 presidential election, the Republican Party latched onto what is often considered a dirty word to describe then-Senator Barack Obama's politics: socialist. (Watch clip from the History channel on Socialism to learn more about the history of the word "socialism.") It may have been because the president was campaigning by telling workers it's good for everybody to "spread the wealth around." But whatever the reason, the label became a weapon of choice for Republicans during and after the campaign. In 2012, Republican presidential aspirant Rick Perry continued this pitch. A *New York Times* article quotes him as telling a group of Republicans in Texas that President Obama is "hell bent on taking America towards a socialist country" (Wheaton 2011). Meanwhile, during the first few years of his presidency, Obama worked to create universal healthcare coverage and pushed forth a partial bailout of the nation's failing automotive industry. President Obama is not the first president to be called a socialist. Franklin D. Roosevelt, 32nd

president of the U.S., was attacked as being a socialist when he proposed his New Deal, which included Social Security and unemployment insurance, both of which Americans still enjoy today [1].

In 2016, Bernie Sanders ran for president on the Democratic party platform as a self-described democratic socialist. Two prominent democratic socialists were elected to Congress during the 2018 midterm elections: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, from New York's 14th congressional district, and Rashida Tlaib, representing Michigan's 13th congressional district. They are all part of a broader movement within the Democratic party to address inequality in the United States with the goal of instituting some socialist policies alongside existing democratic features.

In Donald Trump's 2019 State of the Union address, he said, "Here, in the United States, we are alarmed by new calls to adopt socialism in our country. … Tonight, we renew our resolve that America will never be a socialist country,"[2]

Are Rick Perry and Donald Trump correct? Is America headed towards socialism?

Socialism can be interpreted in different ways; however it generally refers to an economic or political theory that advocates for shared or governmental ownership and administration of production and distribution of goods. Often held up in counterpoint to capitalism, which encourages private ownership and production, socialism is not typically an all-or-nothing plan. For example, both the United Kingdom and France, as well as other European countries, have socialized medicine, meaning that medical services are run nationally to reach as many people as possible. These nations are, of course, still essentially capitalist countries with free-market economies.

It seems as though the complicated past of the word socialism, especially as that term has been confused with the repressive totalitarian communism of the Cold War period (1945-1991), has many people worried that any sort of socialist policy, such as universal healthcare, is also an attack on personal freedom. Watch this clip from a Washington Post opinion piece that explains how socialism today is not "your grandfather's concept of socialism." Do you think the term means the same thing that it used to?

Convergence Theory

We have seen how the economies of some capitalist countries such as the United States have features that are very similar to socialism. Some industries, particularly utilities, are either owned by the government or controlled through regulations. Public programs such as welfare, Medicare, and Social Security exist to provide public funds for private needs. We have also seen how several large communist (or formerly communist) countries such as Russia, China, and Vietnam have moved from state-controlled socialism with central planning to market socialism, which allows market forces to dictate prices and wages and for some business to be privately owned. In many formerly communist countries, these changes have led to economic growth compared to the stagnation they experienced under communism (Fidrmuc 2002).

In studying the economies of developing countries to see if they go through the same stages as previously developed nations did, sociologists have observed a pattern they call convergence. This describes the theory that societies move toward similarity over time as their economies develop.

Convergence theory explains that as a country's economy grows, its societal organization changes to become more like that of an industrialized society. Rather than staying in one job for a lifetime, people begin to move from job to job as conditions improve and opportunities arise. This means the workforce needs continual training and retraining. Workers move from rural areas to cities as they become centers of economic activity, and the government takes a larger role in providing expanded public services (Kerr et al. 1960).

Supporters of the theory point to Germany, France, and Japan—countries that rapidly rebuilt their economies after World War II. They point out how, in the 1960s and 1970s, East Asian countries like Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan converged with countries with developed economies. They are now considered developed countries themselves.

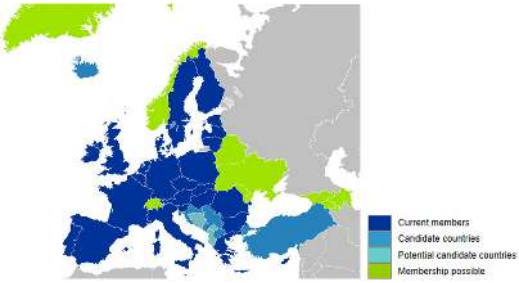


Figure 6. Sociologists look for signs of convergence and divergence in the societies of countries that have joined the European Union. (Map courtesy of the European Union)

To experience this rapid growth, the economies of developing countries must to be able to attract inexpensive capital to invest in new businesses and to improve traditionally low productivity. They also need access to new, international markets for buying and selling goods. If these characteristics are not in place, then their economies cannot catch up. This is why the economies of some countries are diverging rather than converging (Abramovitz 1986).

Another key characteristic of economic growth regards the implementation of technology. A developing country can bypass some steps of implementing technology that other nations faced earlier. Television and telephone systems are a good example. While developed countries spent significant time and money establishing elaborate system infrastructures based on metal wires or fiber-optic cables, developing countries today can go directly to cell phone and satellite transmission with much less investment.

Another factor affects convergence concerning social structure. Early in their development, countries such as Brazil and Cuba had economies based on cash crops (coffee or sugarcane, for instance) grown on large plantations by unskilled workers. The elite ran the plantations and the government, with little interest in training and educating the populace for other endeavors. This restricted economic growth until the power of the wealthy plantation owners was challenged (Sokoloff and Engerman 2000). Improved economies generally lead to wider social improvement. Society benefits from improved educational systems, and more broadly shared prosperity will ideally allow people more time for learning and leisure.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14807

Short Answer

- Explain the difference between state socialism with central planning and market socialism.
- In what ways can capitalistic and socialistic economies converge?

glossary

capitalism:
an economic system in which there is private ownership (as opposed to state ownership) and where there is an impetus to produce profit, and thereby wealth

communism
as an ideal, it is a political theory supporting equality and a classless society where everyone collectively owns the goods; in practice, it is generally a political and economic system in which the central makes and controls market decisions

convergence theory:
a sociological theory to explain how and why societies move toward similarity over time as their economies develop

market socialism:
a subtype of socialism that adopts certain traits of capitalism, like allowing limited private ownership or consulting market demand

mutualism:
a form of socialism under which individuals and cooperative groups exchange products with one another on the basis of mutually satisfactory contracts

socialism:
an economic system in which there is government ownership (often referred to as “state run”) of the means of production, with an impetus to share work and wealth equally among the members of a society

1. Roosevelt Institute (2012). Franklin D. Roosevelt: Socialist or “Champion of Freedom”? Retrieved from http://rooseveltinstitute.org/rediscovering-governmentfranklin-d-roosevelt-socialist-or-champion-freedom/. ↵
2. Pramuk, Jacob (2019). *Expect Trump to make more ‘socialism’ jabs as he faces tough 2020 re-election fight.* CNBC. Retrieved from https://www.cnbc.com/2019/02/06/trump-warns-of-socialism-in-state-of-the-union-as-2020-election-starts.html. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Economic Systems. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:NvnPk5xd@4/Economic-Systems. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.
- Antitrust Law. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_antitrust_law. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Economic Systems & the Labor Market: Crash Course Sociology #29. **Provided by**: CrashCourse. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wslCc0Di978&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMJ-AfB_7J1538YKWkZAnGA&index=31&t=0s. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- The Extraordinary Size of Amazon in One Chart. **Authored by**: Jeff Desjardins. **Provided by**: Visual Capitalist. **Located at**: https://www.visualcapitalist.com/extraordinary-size-amazon-one-chart/. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 19.4: Capitalism and Socialism is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.5: Theoretical Perspectives on Economics

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss how functionalists, conflict theorists, and symbolic interactionists view the economy and work

Theoretical Perspectives on the Economy

Now that we've developed an understanding of the history and basic components of economies, let's turn to sociological theory. How might social scientists study these topics? What questions do they ask? What theories might they develop to add to the body of sociological knowledge?

Functionalist Perspective

Someone taking a functional perspective will most likely view work and the economy as a well-oiled machine that is designed for maximum efficiency. The Davis-Moore thesis, for example, suggests that some social stratification is a social necessity. The need for certain highly skilled positions, combined with the relative difficulty of the occupation and the length of time it takes to qualify for it, will result in a greater reward for that job, and will provide a financial motivation to pursue advanced education (Davis and Moore 1945). This theory can be used to explain the prestige and salaries that go with careers only available to those with highly specialized educations and advanced degrees or other credentials.

The functionalist perspective would assume that the continued health of the economy is vital to the health of the nation, as it ensures the distribution of goods and services. For example, we need food to travel from farms (high-functioning and efficient agricultural systems) via roads (safe and effective trucking and rail routes) to urban centers (high-density areas where workers can gather). However, sometimes a **dysfunction**—a function with the potential to disrupt social institutions or organization (Merton 1968)—in the economy occurs, usually because some institutions fail to adapt quickly enough to changing social conditions. This lesson has been driven home recently with the bursting of the housing bubble. Due to risky lending practices and an underregulated financial market, we are still recovering from the after-effects of the Great Recession, which Merton would likely describe as a major dysfunction.

Some of this is cyclical. Markets produce goods as they are supposed to, but eventually the market is saturated and the supply of goods exceeds the demands. Typically the market goes through phases of surplus production and inflation, where the money in your pocket today buys less than it did yesterday, and **recession**, which occurs when there are two or more consecutive quarters of economic decline. The functionalist would say to let market forces fluctuate through these stages. In reality, to control the risk of an economic **depression** (a sustained recession across several economic sectors), the U.S. government will often adjust interest rates to encourage more lending—and consequently more spending and investment. In short, letting the natural cycle fluctuate is not a gamble most governments are willing to take.

Conflict Perspective

To a conflict theorist, the economy is not a source of stability for society. Instead, the economy reflects and reproduces economic inequality, particularly in a capitalist marketplace. The conflict perspective is classically Marxist, with the bourgeoisie (the propertied ruling class) accumulating wealth and power by exploiting the proletariat (workers), and regulating those who cannot work (the aged, the infirm) into the great mass of the unemployed (Marx and Engels 1848). From the symbolic statement of Marie Antoinette, who purportedly said, "Let them eat cake" when told that the peasants were starving, to the Occupy Wall Street movement that began during the Great Recession, the concern with inequality is almost unchanged. Conflict theorists believe wealth and political power are concentrated in the hands of those who do not legitimately possess them. Now the wealthiest 1 percent in the United States own 40 percent of the nation's wealth. Nine percent more own another 36 percent, and just 20 percent of Americans own 90 percent of U.S. wealth.[1] While the inequality might not be as extreme as in pre-revolutionary France, it is enough to make many believe that the United States is not the work-rewarding meritocracy it claims to be.



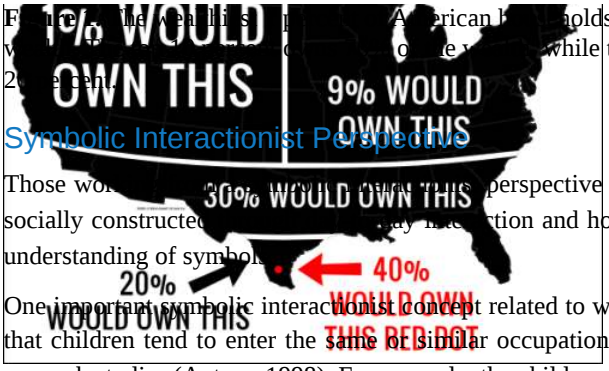


Figure 1. The wealthiest American households own 40 percent of the country's wealth, while the bottom 90 percent owns just over 20 percent.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Those working from this perspective take a microanalytical view of society. They focus on the way reality is socially constructed through day-to-day interaction and how society is composed of people communicating according to a shared understanding of symbols.

One important symbolic interactionist concept related to work and the economy is **career inheritance**. This concept means simply that children tend to enter the same or similar occupations as their parents, which is a correlation that has been demonstrated in research studies (Antony 1998). For example, the children of police officers learn the norms and values that will help them succeed in law enforcement, and since they have a model career path to follow, they may find law enforcement even more attractive. Related to career inheritance is career socialization—learning the norms and values of a particular job.

Finally, a symbolic interactionist might study what contributes to job satisfaction. Melvin Kohn and his fellow researchers (1990) determined that workers were most likely to be happy when they believed they controlled some part of their work, when they felt they were part of the decision-making processes associated with their work, when they had freedom from surveillance, and when they felt integral to the outcome of their work. Sunyal, Sunyal, and Yasin (2011) found that a greater sense of vulnerability to stress, the more stress experienced by a worker, and a greater amount of perceived risk consistently predicted a lower worker job satisfaction.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14809
https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14808
https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14810

Short Answer

- Describe the impact a rapidly growing economy can have on families.
- How do you think the United States economy will change as we move closer to a technology-driven service economy?

glossary

career inheritance:
a practice where children tend to enter the same or similar occupation as their parents

depression:
a sustained recession across several economic sectors

recession:
two or more consecutive quarters of economic decline

1. Sahidi, Jeanne (2016). The Richest 10% Hold 76% of the Wealth. Retrieved from: https://money.cnn.com/2016/08/18/pf/...ity/index.html ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- If US land mass were distributed like US wealth. **Authored by**: Stephen Ewen. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/File:If_US_land_mass_were_distributed_like_US_wealth.png. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Economic Systems. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:NvnPk5xd@4/Economic-Systems. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 19.5: Theoretical Perspectives on Economics is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.6: Introduction to Globalization and the Economy

What you'll learn to do: define globalization and describe its manifestation in modern society



Globalization refers to the process of integrating governments, cultures, and financial markets through international trade into a single world market. There are benefits and drawbacks to globalization. Often the countries that fare the worst are those that depend on natural resource extraction for their wealth. Many critics fear globalization gives too much power to multinational corporations and that political decisions are influenced by these major financial players.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Globalization and the Economy. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Globalization and the Economy. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- McDonalds in St. Petersburg . **Authored by**: Dirk Ingo Franke. **Provided by**: Wikimedia Commons. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:McDonalds_in_St_Petersburg_2004.JPG. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 19.6: Introduction to Globalization and the Economy is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.7: Globalization

Learning Outcomes

- Define globalization and describe its manifestation in modern society
- Discuss the pros and cons of globalization



Figure 1. Instant communications have allowed many international corporations to move parts of their businesses to countries such as India, where labor and production costs are lower, and where environmental laws are weaker or non-existent. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

What Is Globalization?

Globalization refers to the process of integrating governments, cultures, and financial markets through international trade into a single world market. You've already learned about globalization as it applies to culture and technology, as well as stratification and inequality. In this context, you'll examine its application as it connects to a global economy.

Often the process of globalization begins with a single motive, such as market expansion (on the part of a corporation) or increased access to healthcare (on the part of a nonprofit organization). But usually there is a snowball effect, and globalization becomes a mixed bag of economic, philanthropic, entrepreneurial, and cultural efforts. Sometimes the efforts have obvious benefits, even for those who worry about cultural colonialism, such as campaigns to bring clean-water technology to rural areas that do not have access to safe drinking water.

Other globalization efforts, however, are more complex. Let us look, for example, at the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The agreement is among the countries of North America, including Canada, the United States, and Mexico and allows much freer trade opportunities without the kind of tariffs (taxes) and import laws that restrict international trade. Often, trade opportunities are misrepresented by politicians and economists, who may offer them up as a panacea for economic woes. For example, trade can lead to both increases and decreases in job opportunities. This is because while more lax export laws mean there is the potential for job growth in the United States, more imports can mean the exact opposite. As the United States imports more goods from outside the country, jobs here typically decrease, as more and more products are made overseas.

Many prominent economists believed that when NAFTA was created in 1994 it would lead to major gains in jobs. But by 2010, the evidence showed an opposite impact, including 682,900 U.S. jobs lost across all states (Parks 2011). While NAFTA did increase the flow of goods and capital across the northern and southern U.S. borders, it also increased unemployment in Mexico, which spurred greater amounts of illegal immigration motivated by a search for work. Most economic analyses indicate that NAFTA has been beneficial to the North American economies and the average citizen, but harmed a small minority of workers in industries with the greatest exposure to trade competition. Economists hold that withdrawing from NAFTA or renegotiating NAFTA in a way that reestablishes trade barriers will adversely affect the U.S. economy and cost jobs. However, Mexico would be much more severely affected by job loss and reduction of economic growth in both the short term and long term. This remains a controversial topic, especially since the election of Donald Trump and a heightened concern about border crossings into the United States. On September 30, 2018, it was announced that the United States, Mexico, and Canada had come to an agreement to replace NAFTA with the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA). The USMCA is the result of the renegotiation of NAFTA that the member states undertook from 2017 to 2018, and though it was signed by each nation's leader, as of May 2019, it was not yet ratified.

There are several forces driving globalization, including the global economy and multinational corporations that control assets, sales, production, and employment (United Nations 1973). Characteristics of multinational corporations include the following: A large share of their capital is collected from a variety of nations, their business is conducted without regard to national borders, they concentrate wealth in the hands of core nations and already wealthy individuals, and they play a key role in the global economy.

Another impact of globalization is the emergence of **global assembly lines**, where products are assembled over the course of several international transactions. For instance, Apple designs its next-generation Mac prototype in the United States, components are made in various peripheral nations, they are then shipped to another peripheral nation such as Malaysia for assembly, and tech support is outsourced to India.

Globalization has also led to the development of **global commodity chains**, where internationally integrated economic links connect workers and corporations for the purpose of manufacture and marketing (Plahe 2005). For example, in *maquiladoras*, mostly found in northern Mexico, workers may sew imported precut pieces of fabric into garments. Furthermore, globalization also brings an international division of labor, in which comparatively wealthy workers from core nations compete with the low-wage labor pool of peripheral and semi-peripheral nations. This can lead to a sense of **xenophobia**, which is an illogical fear and even hatred of foreigners and foreign goods. Corporations trying to maximize their profits in the United States are conscious of this risk and attempt to "Americanize" their products, selling shirts printed with U.S. flags that were nevertheless made in Mexico or elsewhere.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14812

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14813

Aspects of Globalization

Globalized trade is nothing new. Societies in ancient Greece and Rome traded with other societies in Africa, the Middle East, India, and China. Trade expanded further during the Islamic Golden Age and after the rise of the Mongol Empire. The establishment of colonial empires after the voyages of discovery by European countries meant that trade was going on all over the world. In the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution led to even more trade of ever-increasing amounts of goods. However, the advance of technology, especially communications, after World War II and the Cold War, triggered the explosive expansion of global markets that we see today.

Further Research

The World Social Forum (WSF) was created in response to the creation of the World Economic Forum (WEF). The WSF is a coalition of organizations dedicated to the idea of a worldwide civil society and presents itself as an alternative to WEF, which it says is too focused on capitalism.

One way to look at the similarities and differences that exist among the economies of different nations is to compare their standards of living. The statistic most commonly used to do this is the domestic product per capita. This is the gross domestic product, or GDP, of a country divided by its population. The table below compares the top 11 countries with the bottom 11 out of the 228 countries listed in the *CIA World Factbook*.

Not every country is benefitting from globalization. The GDP per capita of the poorest country is 255 times less than that of the wealthiest country. (Table courtesy of the CIA, World Factbook 2014)

Gross Domestic Product Per Capita		
Rank	Country	GDP – per capita
		(PPP)
1	Qatar	$102,100
2	Liechtenstein	$89,400
3	Macau	$88,700
4	Bermuda	$86,000
5	Monaco	$85,500
6	Luxembourg	$77,900
7	Singapore	$62,400
8	Jersey	$57,000
9	Norway	$55,400
10	Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)	$55,400
11	Switzerland	$54,800
218	Guinea	$1,100
219	Tokelau	$1,000
220	Madagascar	$1,000
221	Malawi	$900
222	Niger	$800
223	Liberia	$700
224	Central African Republic	$700
225	Burundi	$600
226	Somalia	$600
227	Zimbabwe	$600
228	Congo, Democratic Republic of the	$400

There are benefits and drawbacks to globalization. Some of the benefits include the exponentially accelerated progress of development, the creation of international awareness and empowerment, and the potential for increased wealth (Abedian 2002). However, experience has shown that countries can also be weakened by globalization. Some critics of globalization worry about the growing influence of enormous international financial and industrial corporations that benefit the most from free trade and unrestricted markets. They fear these corporations can use their vast wealth and resources to control governments to act in their

interest rather than that of the local population (Bakan 2004). Indeed, when looking at the countries at the bottom of the list above, we are looking at places where the primary benefactors of mineral exploitation are major corporations and a few key political figures.

The Dark Side of Globalization

Globalization isn't always a beneficial thing. This article by Andreas Exenberger and Simon Hartmann on the dark side of globalization details some of the devastating consequences of globalization in the Congo.

You can also watch this CrashCourse History video about globalization to better understand its pros and cons: Globalization II – Good or Bad?

Other critics oppose globalization for what they see as negative impacts on the environment and local economies. Rapid industrialization, often a key component of globalization, can lead to widespread economic damage due to the lack of regulatory guidelines (Speth 2003). Further, as there are often no social institutions in place to protect workers in countries where jobs are scarce, some critics state that globalization leads to weak labor movements (Boswell and Stevis 1997). Finally, critics are concerned that wealthy countries can force economically weaker nations to open their markets while protecting their own local products from competition (Wallerstein 1974). This can be particularly true of agricultural products, which are often one of the main exports of poor and developing countries (Koroma 2007). In a 2007 article for the United Nations, Koroma discusses the difficulties faced by "least developed countries" (LDCs) that seek to participate in globalization efforts. These countries typically lack the infrastructure to be flexible and nimble in their production and trade, and therefore are vulnerable to everything from unfavorable weather conditions to international price volatility. In short, rather than offering them more opportunities, the increased competition and fast pace of a globalized market can make it more challenging than ever for LDCs to move forward (Koroma 2007).

The increasing use of outsourcing of manufacturing and service-industry jobs to developing countries has caused increased unemployment in some developed countries. Countries that do not develop new jobs to replace those that move, and train their labor force to do them, will find support for globalization weakening.

Watch It

This video illustrates some of the sociological advantages and disadvantages of globalization.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=544

Think It Over

- What impact has globalization had on the music you listen to, the books you read, or the movies or television you watch?
- What effect can immigration have on the economy of a developing country?
- Is globalization a danger to local cultures? Why, or why not?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14814

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14811

Glossary

global assembly lines:

a practice where products are assembled over the course of several international transactions

global commodity chains:

internationally integrated economic links that connect workers and corporations for the purpose of manufacture and marketing

xenophobia:

an illogical fear and even hatred of foreigners and foreign goods

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Globalization and the Economy. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:X-GQNJpT@2/Globalization-and-the-Economy. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- North American Free Trade Agreement. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_Free_Trade_Agreement. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Globalization- trade and transnational corporations. **Provided by**: Khan Academy. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmomzubjO1I&feature=youtu.be. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 19.7: Globalization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.8: Introduction to Work in the United States

What you'll learn to do: describe working trends in the United States



The job market in the United States is meant to be a meritocracy that creates social stratifications based on individual achievement. Economic forces, such as outsourcing and automation, are polarizing the workforce, with most job opportunities being either low-level, low-paying manual jobs or high-level, high-paying jobs based on abstract skills. Women's role in the workforce has increased, although women have not yet achieved full equality. Immigrants play an important role in the U.S. labor market. The changing economy has forced more people into poverty even if they are working. Welfare, Social Security, and other social programs exist to protect people from the worst effects of poverty, though they are increasingly coming under considerable strain.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Work in the United States. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Work in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- New York workers. **Authored by**: Nicolas J Leclercq. **Provided by**: Unsplash. **Located at**: https://unsplash.com/photos/WJg2bynUWOk. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: https://unsplash.com/license

This page titled 19.8: Introduction to Work in the United States is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.9: Work in the United States

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the current U.S. workforce and the trend of polarization
- Describe the U.S. workforce as pertaining to women, racial minorities, and immigrants



Figure 1. Many people attend job fairs looking for their first job or for a better one. (Photo courtesy of Daniel Ramirez/flickr)

The American Dream has always been based on the availability of opportunity. There is a great deal of mythologizing about the energetic upstart who can climb to success based on hard work alone. Common wisdom states that if you study hard, develop good work habits, and excel in school, then you'll have the opportunity to land a good job. And although the reality has always been more complex than the myth might lead us to believe, the worldwide recession that began in 2008 took its toll on the American Dream. During the recession, more than 8 million U.S. workers lost their jobs, and unemployment rates surpassed 10 percent. Today, while the recovery is still incomplete, many sectors of the economy are expanding, and unemployment rates have receded.

The Changing Workforce

The mix of jobs available in the United States began changing many years before the 2008 recession, and, as mentioned above, the American Dream has not always been easy to achieve. Geography, race, gender, and other factors have complicated the pathway to success. More recently, the increased **outsourcing**—or contracting a job or set of jobs to an outside source—of manufacturing jobs to developing nations has greatly diminished the number of high-paying, often unionized, blue-collar positions available. A similar problem has arisen in the white-collar sector, with many low-level clerical and support positions also being outsourced, as evidenced by the international technical-support call centers in Mumbai, India, and Newfoundland, Canada. The number of supervisory and managerial positions has been reduced as companies streamline their command structures and industries continue to consolidate through mergers. Even highly educated skilled workers such as computer programmers have seen their jobs vanish overseas.

The **automation** of the workplace, which replaces workers with technology, is another cause of changes in the job market. Computers can be programmed to do many routine tasks faster and less expensively than people who used to do such tasks. Jobs like bookkeeping, clerical work, and repetitive tasks on production assembly lines all lend themselves to automation. Envision your local supermarket's self-scan checkout aisles. The automated product scanners, card readers, and change dispensers can largely take the place of paid employees. Now one cashier can oversee transactions at six or more self-scan aisles, which was a job that used to require one cashier per aisle.

Real Money, Virtual Worlds



Figure 2. In a virtual world, living the good life still costs real money. (Photo courtesy of Juan Pablo Amo/flickr)

If you are not one of the tens of millions gamers who enjoy World of Warcraft or other online virtual world games, you might not even know what MMORPG stands for. But if you made a living playing massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs), as a growing number of enterprising gamers do, then massive multiplayer online role-playing games might matter a bit more. According to an article in *Forbes* magazine, the online world of gaming has been yielding very real profits for entrepreneurs who are able to buy, sell, and manage online real estate, currency, and more for cash (Holland and Ewalt 2006). If it seems strange that people would pay real money for imaginary goods, consider that for serious gamers the online world is of equal importance to the real one.

These entrepreneurs can sell items because the gaming sites have introduced scarcity into the virtual worlds. The game makers have realized that MMORPGs lack tension without a level of scarcity for needed resources or highly desired items. In other words, if anyone can have a palace or a vault full of wealth, then what's the fun?

So how does it work? One of the easiest ways to make such a living is called gold farming, which involves hours of repetitive and boring play, hunting, and shooting animals like dragons that carry a lot of wealth. This virtual wealth can be sold on eBay for real money: a timesaver for players who don't want to waste their playing time on boring pursuits. Players in parts of Asia engage in gold farming and play eight hours a day or more to sell their gold to players in Western Europe or North America. From virtual prostitutes to power levelers (people who play the game logged in as you so your characters get the wealth and power), to architects, merchants, and even beggars, online players can offer to sell any service or product that others want to buy. Whether buying a magic carpet in World of Warcraft or a stainless-steel kitchen appliance in Second Life, gamers have the same desire to acquire as the rest of us—never mind that their items are virtual. Once a gamer creates the code for an item, she can sell it again and again for real money. And finally, you can sell yourself. According to *Forbes*, a University of Virginia computer science student sold his World of Warcraft character on eBay for $1,200, due to the high levels of powers and skills it had gained (Holland and Ewalt 2006).

So should you quit your day job to make a killing in online games? Probably not. Those who work hard might eke out a decent living, but for most people, grabbing up land that doesn't really exist or selling your body in animated action scenes is probably not the best opportunity. Still, for some, it offers the ultimate in work-from-home flexibility, even if that home is a mountain cave in a virtual world.

Recovery from the Great Recession

The Great Recession of 2007-2009 was brought on, at least in part, by the lending practices of the early twenty-first century. During this time, banks provided adjustable-rate mortgages (ARM) to customers with poor credit histories at an attractively low introductory rate (often after convincing the buyer that the property's value would quickly increase to such a degree that the unrealistic debt would become realistic). After the introductory rate expired, the interest rate on these ARM loans rose, often dramatically, creating a sizable increase in the borrower's monthly mortgage payments. As their rates adjusted upward, many of these "subprime" mortgage customers were unable to make their monthly payments and stopped doing so, known as defaulting. The widespread implosion of these mortgages, which had themselves been used to secure other forms of risky borrowing and speculation, put a strain on the financial institutions that had made the loans, and this stress rippled throughout the entire global economy.

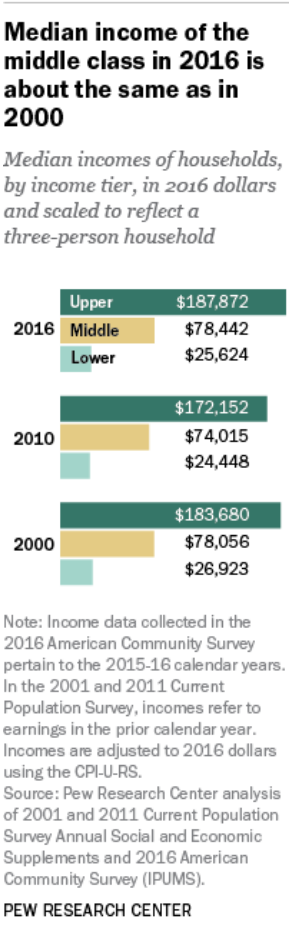


Figure 3. Median income dropped during the recession for all income levels, but the upper-class faired best in its aftermath. By 2016, the median income level for the upper-income tier was 2.4 times that of the middle-class level and 7.3 times that of someone in the lower-income level.

The United States fell into a period of high and prolonged unemployment, extreme reductions in wealth (except at the very top), stagnant wages, and loss of value in personal property (houses and land). The S&P 500 Index, which measures the overall share value of selected leading companies whose shares are traded on the stock market, fell from a high of 1565 in October 2007 to 676 by March 2009. Today, however, unemployment rates are down in many areas of the United States, the Gross Domestic Product increased 4.6 percent in the second quarter of 2014 (US Department of Commerce–Bureau of Economic Analysis), property owners have noted a slight increase in the valuation of housing, and the stock market appears to be reinvigorated.

While these and several other factors indicate the United States is on the road to recovery, many people are still struggling. The size, income, and wealth of the middle class have been declining since the 1970s— effects that were hastened by the recession. Overall, the number of adults in the middle class fell by ten percent between 1971 and 2011. Before the recession, the median household income for a lower-income family was $26,923, but that amount actually dropped to $25,624 by 2016. While the income levels of middle-income Americans remained more stable over this same time period (declining from around $78,000 to $74,000 and then back up to $78,000 in 2016), only higher-income houses saw significant financial gains, other furthering the income disparity between the lower, middle, and upper-class.[1] Today, wealth is distributed inequitably at the top. Corporate profits have increased more than 141 percent, and CEO pay has risen by more than 298 percent. G. William Domhoff (University of California at Santa Cruz) reported that “In 2010, the top 1% of households (the upper class) owned 35.4% of all privately held wealth, and the

next 19% (the managerial, professional, and small business stratum) had 53.5%, which means that just 20% of the people owned a remarkable 89%, leaving only 11% of the wealth for the bottom 80% (wage and salary workers)."

One indicator of general economic conditions is the rate at which individuals are accessing the country's safety net or social welfare programs. Between 2000 and 2013, the number of people relying on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as the "food stamp" program), climbed from 17,194,000 to more than 47,636,000. The sharpest increase paralleled the subprime mortgage crisis of 2009, with the rolls rising from 28,000,000 to more than 40,000,000 individuals receiving food assistance in a span of two years (United States Department of Agriculture 2014). In 2018, the number of SNAP recipients was 40,324,000, the same number as in 2010[2]

The economic downturn had a ripple effect throughout the economy. For instance, it delivered a significant blow to the once-vibrant U.S. automotive industry. While consumers found loans harder to get due to the subprime mortgage lending crisis and increasing fuel costs, they also grew weary of large, gas-guzzling sport utility vehicles (SUVs) that were once the bread-and-butter product of U.S. automakers. As customers became more aware of the environmental impact of such cars and the cost of fuel, the large SUV ceased to be the status symbol it had been during the 1990s and 2000s. It became instead a symbol of excess and waste. All these factors created the perfect storm that nearly decimated the U.S. auto industry. To prevent mass job loss, the government provided emergency loans funded by taxpayer dollars, as well as other forms of financial support, to corporations like General Motors and Chrysler. (General Motors, once the world's largest corporation, declared bankruptcy in 2009.) While the companies eventually recovered, the landscape of the U.S. auto industry was changed as result of the economic decline.

Recent Economic Conditions

While the job market on the whole is again growing, it is doing so in a polarized fashion. **Polarization** means that a gap has developed in the job market, with most employment opportunities at the lowest and highest levels and few jobs for those with midlevel skills and education. At one end, there has been strong demand for low-skilled, low-paying jobs in industries like food service and retail. On the other end, some research shows that in certain fields there has been a steadily increasing demand for highly skilled and educated professionals, technologists, and managers. These high-skilled positions also tend to be highly paid (Autor 2010).

The fact that some positions are highly paid while others are not is a characteristic of the class system, an economic hierarchy in which movement (both upward and downward) between various rungs of the socioeconomic ladder is possible. Theoretically, at least, the class system as it is organized in the United States is an example of a meritocracy, an economic system that rewards merit—typically in the form of skill and hard work—with upward mobility. A theorist working in the functionalist perspective might point out that this system is designed to reward hard work, which encourages people to strive for excellence in pursuit of reward, while a theorist working in the conflict perspective might counter that hard work does not guarantee success even in a meritocracy, because social capital—the accumulation of a network of social relationships and knowledge that will provide a platform from which to achieve financial success—is often required to access the high-paying jobs. Increasingly, we are realizing intelligence and hard work aren't enough. If a person lacks access, connections, and certain forms of knowledge, they are unlikely to experience upward mobility.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14815

With so many jobs being outsourced or eliminated by automation, what kind of jobs are in demand in the United States? While fishing and forestry jobs are in decline, other labor markets jobs are expanding. These include community and social service, personal care and service, finance, computer and information services, and healthcare. The chart below, from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, illustrates areas of projected growth.

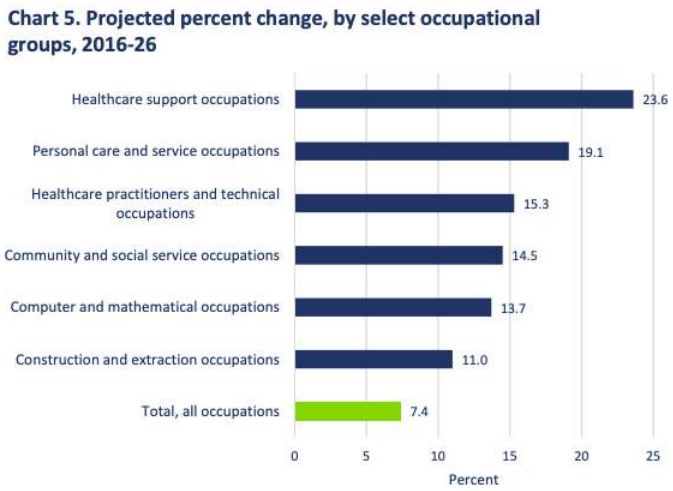


Figure 4. This chart shows the projected growth of several occupational groups. Source: https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecopro.pdf.

The professional sector and related jobs, which include any number of positions, typically require significant education and training and tend to be lucrative career choices. Service jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, can include everything from jobs with the fire department to jobs scooping ice cream (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2010). There is a wide variety of training needed, and therefore an equally large wage discrepancy. One of the largest areas of growth by industry, rather than by occupational group (as seen above), is in the health field. This growth is across occupations, from associate-level nurse's aides to management-level assisted-living staff. As baby boomers age, they are living longer than any generation before, and the growth of this population segment requires an increase in capacity throughout our country's elder care system, from home healthcare nursing to geriatric nutrition.

Notably, jobs in farming are in decline. This is an area where those with less education traditionally could be assured of finding steady, if low-wage, work. With these jobs disappearing, more and more workers will find themselves untrained for the types of employment that are available.

Another projected trend in employment relates to the level of education and training required to gain and keep a job. Growth rates are higher for those with more education. Those with a professional or master's degree may expect job growth of 13.1 and 16.7 percent respectively between 2016 and 2026, while jobs that require a bachelor's degree are projected to grow 10.1 percent. At the other end of the spectrum, jobs that require a high school diploma or equivalent are projected to grow at only 5.1 percent, while jobs that require less than a high school diploma will grow 6.4 percent. Quite simply, without a degree, it will be more difficult to find a job. It is worth noting that these projections are based on overall growth across all occupation categories, so obviously there will be variations within different occupational areas. However, once again, those who are the least educated will be the ones least able to fulfill the American Dream.[3]

In the past, rising education levels in the United States had been able to keep pace with the rise in the number of education-dependent jobs. However, since the late 1970s, men have been enrolling in college at a lower rate than women, and graduating at a rate of almost 10 percent less. The lack of male candidates reaching the education levels needed for skilled positions has opened opportunities for women, minorities, and immigrants (Wang 2011).

The Wage Gap in the United States

The Equal Pay Act, passed by the U.S. Congress in 1963, was designed to reduce the wage gap between men and women. The act in essence required employers to pay equal wages to men and women who were performing substantially similar jobs. However, more than fifty years later, women continue to make less money than their male counterparts. According to a report released by the White House (National Equal Pay Taskforce 2013), "On average, full-time working women make just 77 cents for every dollar a

man makes. This significant gap is more than a statistic—it has real-life consequences. When women, who make up nearly half the workforce, bring home less money each day, it means they have less for the everyday needs of their families, and over a lifetime of work, far less savings for retirement."

Women have been entering the workforce in ever-increasing numbers for several decades. They have also been finishing college and going on to earn advanced degrees at a higher rate than men do. This has resulted in many women being better positioned to obtain high-paying, high-skill jobs. In 2018, women still earned 85% of what men earned, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of median hourly earnings for both full- and part-time workers in the United States. Based on this estimate, it would take an extra 39 days of work for women to earn what men did in 2018 (Pew Research, 2019). Countless studies that have controlled for work experience, education, and other factors unanimously demonstrate that disparity between wages paid to men and to women still exists (Pew Research Center 2014).

Further Research

- Read the following article from The Pew Research Center to see more statistics about the gender wage gap.
- The role of women in the workplace is constantly changing. To learn more, check out information from the U.S. Department of Labor.
- The Employment Projections Program of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics looks at a ten-year projection for jobs and employment. To see some trends for the next decade, visit the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website.
- Robert Putnam wrote the influential book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* about the collapse of social capital. Watch a video about the book *Bowling Alone*.

Race and The Workforce

As shocking as it is, the gender wage gap actually widens when we add race and ethnicity to the picture. For example, African American women make on average 64 cents for every dollar a Caucasian male makes. Latina women make 56 cents, or 44 percent less, for every dollar a Caucasian male makes. African American and Latino men also make notably less than Caucasian men. Asian Americans tend to be the only minority that earns as much as or more than Caucasian men.[4]

This discrimination is also evidenced by the fact that blacks and Latinos get fewer callbacks for job interviews and have fewer job opportunities, when compared with whites. In a meta-analysis of research conducted since 1990, sociologists found that white applicants with identical résumés as black applicants consistently received an average of 36% more callbacks than black applicants. This number remained essentially unchanged in 25 years, between 1990 and 2015. White applicants also received 24% more callbacks than Latino applicants, and this number has improved slightly over the same time period.[5]

The black unemployment rate is essentially double that of whites. Data from the third quarter of 2018 revealed the black unemployment rate to be about 6.3 percent, while the white unemployment was at 3.2 percent. Hispanic unemployment was also higher than whites, at 4.5%, whereas Asian workers had a slightly lower rate, at 3.0%.[6]

Watch It

Watch this video as Harvard sociologist William Julius Wilson explains how finding a job can be extremely complicated for those in poor or minority neighborhoods.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=548

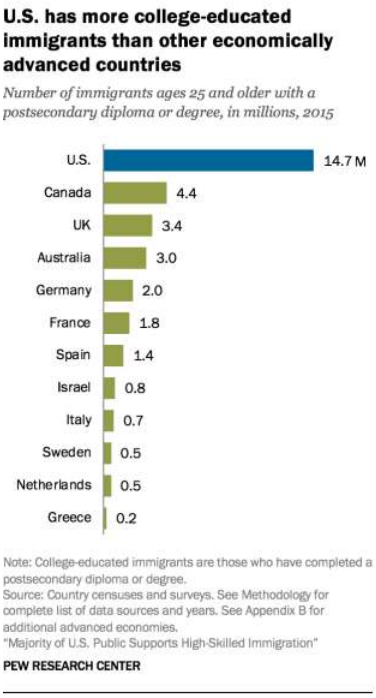


Figure 5. 14.7 Million immigrants in the United States have postsecondary degrees. From https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tan...rk-in-the-u-s/

Simply put, people will move from where there are few or no jobs to places where there are jobs, unless something prevents them from doing so. The process of moving to a country is called immigration. Due to its reputation as the land of opportunity, the United States has long been the destination of all skill levels of workers. While the rate decreased somewhat during the economic slowdown of 2008, immigrants, both legal and illegal, continue to be a major part of the U.S. workforce.

In 2005, before the recession arrived, immigrants made up a historic high of 14.7 percent of the workforce (Lowell et al. 2006). During the 1970s through 2000s, the United States experienced both an increase in college-educated immigrants and in immigrants who lacked a high school diploma. With this range across the spectrum, immigrants are well positioned for both the higher-paid jobs and the low-wage low-skill jobs that are predicted to grow in the next decade (Lowell et al. 2006).

A 2016 survey revealed that foreign-born full-time workers had a median salary at 83.1% of the median earnings for native-born workers ($715 compared to $860); foreign born men earned 79% of the median earnings of native-born men, while foreign-born women earned 86% of their native-born counterparts.[7]

In the early 2000s, it certainly seemed that the United States was continuing to live up to its reputation of opportunity. But what about during the recession of 2008, when so many jobs were lost and unemployment hovered close to 10 percent? How did immigrant workers fare then? The answer is that as of June 2009, when the National Bureau of Economic Research (NEBR) declared the recession officially over, “foreign-born workers gained 656,000 jobs while native-born workers lost 1.2 million jobs” (Kochhar 2010). As these numbers suggest, the unemployment rate that year decreased for immigrant workers and increased for native workers. The reasons for this trend are not entirely clear. Some Pew research suggests immigrants tend to have greater flexibility to move from job to job and that the immigrant population may have been early victims of the recession, and thus were quicker to rebound (Kochhar 2010). Regardless of the reasons, the 2009 job gains are far from enough to keep them inured from the country’s economic woes. As Brookings Senior Fellow Vanda Felbab-Brown explains “the impact of immigrant labor on the wages of native-born workers is low… However, undocumented workers often work the unpleasant, back-breaking jobs that native-born workers are not willing to do.”[8]

While the political debate is often fueled by conversations about low-wage-earning immigrants, there are actually as many highly skilled—and high-earning—immigrant workers as well. Many immigrants are sponsored by their employers who claim they

possess talents, education, and training that are in short supply in the U.S. These sponsored immigrants account for 15 percent of all legal immigrants (Batalova and Terrazas 2010). Interestingly, the U.S. population generally supports these high-level workers, believing they will help lead to economic growth and not be a drain on government services (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010). On the other hand, illegal immigrants tend to be trapped in extremely low-paying jobs in agriculture, service, and construction with few ways to improve their situation without risking exposure and deportation.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14816

Think It Over

- As polarization occurs in the U.S. job market, this will affect other social institutions. For example, if midlevel education won't lead to employment, we could see polarization in educational levels as well. Use the sociological imagination to consider what social institutions may be impacted, and how.
- What, in your view, are the major barriers to obtaining work in the United States and how can these barriers best be overcome?

glossary

automation:
workers being replaced by technology

outsourcing:
a practice where jobs are contracted to an outside source, often in another country

polarization:
a practice where the differences between low-end and high-end jobs become greater and the number of people in the middle levels decreases

1. Kochhar, Rakesh (September 2018). The American middle class is stable in size, but losing ground financially to upper-income families. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/06/the-american-middle-class-is-stable-in-size-but-losing-ground-financially-to-upper-income-families/. ↵
2. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation and Costs (2019). Retrieved from https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/pd/SNAPsummary.pdf. ↵
3. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016). Employment, wages, and projected change in employment by typical entry-level education. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/education-summary.htm. ↵
4. Ariane Hegewisch (September 2018). The Gender Wage Gap: 2017; Earnings Differences by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity. Institute for Women's Policy Research. Retrieved from https://iwpr.org/publications/gender-wage-gap-2017/. ↵
5. Lincoln Quillian, Devah Pager, Ole Hexel, Arnfinn H. Midtbøen (2017). The persistence of racial discrimination in hiring. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Oct 2017, 114 (41) 10870-10875; DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1706255114. ↵
6. Janelle Jones (October 2018). Black unemployment is at least twice as high as white unemployment at the national level and in 12 states and D.C. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from https://www.epi.org/publication/2018q3_unemployment_state_race_ethnicity/.↵
7. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, The Economics Daily, Foreign-born workers made 83.1 percent of the earnings of their native-born counterparts in 2016 on the Internet at https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2017/foreign-born-workers-made-83-point-1-percent-of-the-earnings-of-their-native-born-counterparts-in-2016.htm (visited May 20, 2019). ↵
8. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2017/08/24/do-immigrants-steal-jobs-from-american-workers/ ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Work and the Economy and Work in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.4:cdCaIHP1@7/18-3-Work-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Joblessness and Poor Neighborhoods: William Julius Wilson. **Authored by**: Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=17&v=deI1sq17VTI. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Graph from 4 paths highly educated immigrants take to study and work in the U.S. . **Authored by**: Neil G. Ruiz and John Gramlich. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/02/01/4-paths-highly-educated-immigrants-take-to-study-and-work-in-the-u-s/. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- Figure 5 on occupational projections. **Provided by**: Bureau of Labor Statistics. **Located at**: https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecopro.pdf. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- Graphic on median income in the United States between 2000 and 2016. **Authored by**: Rakesh Kochhar. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: https://pewrsr.ch/2NkG4JD. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 19.9: Work in the United States is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.10: Poverty and Unemployment in the United States

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the relationship between poverty, work, and unemployment

Poverty in the United States

When people lose their jobs during a recession or in a changing job market, it takes longer to find a new one, if they can find one at all. Also, according to (Hicks 2013), those with higher human capital, or years of education, have a much more difficult time finding work. When people do find a job, it is often at a much lower wage or not full time. This can force people into poverty. In the United States, we tend to have what is called relative poverty, defined as being unable to live the lifestyle of the average person in your country. This must be contrasted with the absolute poverty that is frequently found in underdeveloped countries and defined as the inability, or near-inability, to afford basic necessities such as food (Byrns 2011). (You can review more about poverty and differences in terminology in the module on inequality.) [1]

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14817

The Historical U.S. Unemployment Rate

Examining unemployment can help us better understand poverty in the United States. Let's look at what the unemployment rate is really telling us. The **unemployment rate** is not the percentage of the total adult population without jobs, but rather the percentage of adults who are in the labor force but who do not have jobs. Even with the "out of the labor force" category, there are still some people that are mislabeled in the categorization of employed, unemployed, or out of the labor force. There are some people who have only part time or temporary jobs and who are looking for full time and permanent employment that are counted as employed, though they are not employed in the way they would like or need to be. Additionally, there are individuals who are **underemployed**. This includes those that are trained or skilled for one type or level of work who are working in a lower paying job or one that does not utilize their skills. For example, an individual with a college degree in finance who is working as a sales clerk would be considered underemployed. They are, however, also counted in the employed group. All of these individuals fall under the umbrella of the term "hidden unemployment." **Discouraged workers**, those who have stopped looking for employment and, hence, are no longer counted in the unemployed also fall into this group.

Let's look at how unemployment rates have changed over time and how various groups of people are affected by unemployment differently. Figure 1 shows the historical pattern of U.S. unemployment since 1948. While it clearly fluctuates over time, the unemployment rate seems to return to a range of 4% to 6%. There does not seem to be a long-term trend toward the rate moving generally higher or generally lower.

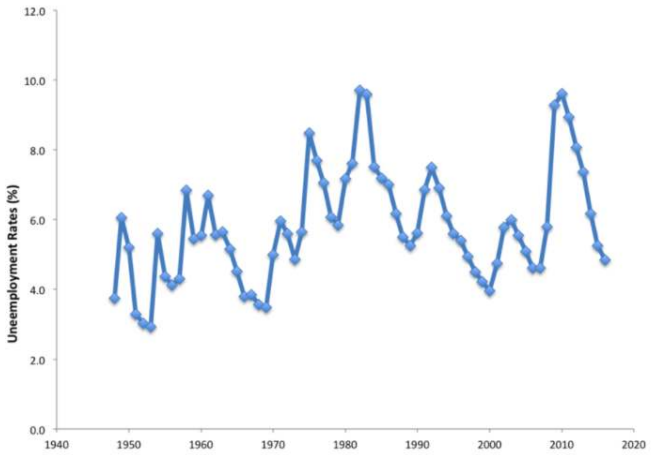


Figure 1. The U.S. Unemployment Rate, 1948–2016. The U.S. unemployment rate moves up and down as the economy moves in and out of recessions. (Source: www.census.gov/cps).

As we look at this data, several patterns stand out:

1. Unemployment rates do fluctuate over time. During the deep recessions of the early 1980s and of 2007–2009, unemployment reached roughly 10%. For comparison, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the unemployment rate reached almost 25% of the labor force.
2. Unemployment rates in the late 1990s and into the mid-2000s were rather low by historical standards. The unemployment rate was below 5% from 1997 to 2000 and near 5% during almost all of 2006–2007. The previous time unemployment had been less than 5% for three consecutive years was three decades earlier, from 1968 to 1970. It has returned to this level in 2016.
3. The unemployment rate never falls all the way to zero. Indeed, it never seems to get below 3%—and it stays that low only for very short periods. (Reasons why this is the case will be discussed later.)
4. The timing of rises and falls in unemployment matches fairly well with the timing of upswings and downswings in the overall economy. During periods of recession and depression, unemployment is high. During periods of economic growth, unemployment tends to be lower.
5. No significant upward or downward trend in unemployment rates is apparent. This point is especially worth noting because the U.S. population nearly quadrupled from 76 million in 1900 to over 314 million by 2012. Moreover, a higher proportion of U.S. adults are now in the paid workforce, because women have entered the paid labor force in significant numbers in recent decades. Women composed 18% of the paid workforce in 1900 and nearly half of the paid workforce in 2012. But despite the increased number of workers, as well as other economic events like globalization and the continuous invention of new technologies, the economy has provided jobs without causing any long-term upward or downward trend in unemployment rates.

Unemployment is not distributed evenly across the U.S. population. Figure 2 shows unemployment rates broken down in various ways: by gender, age, and race/ethnicity.

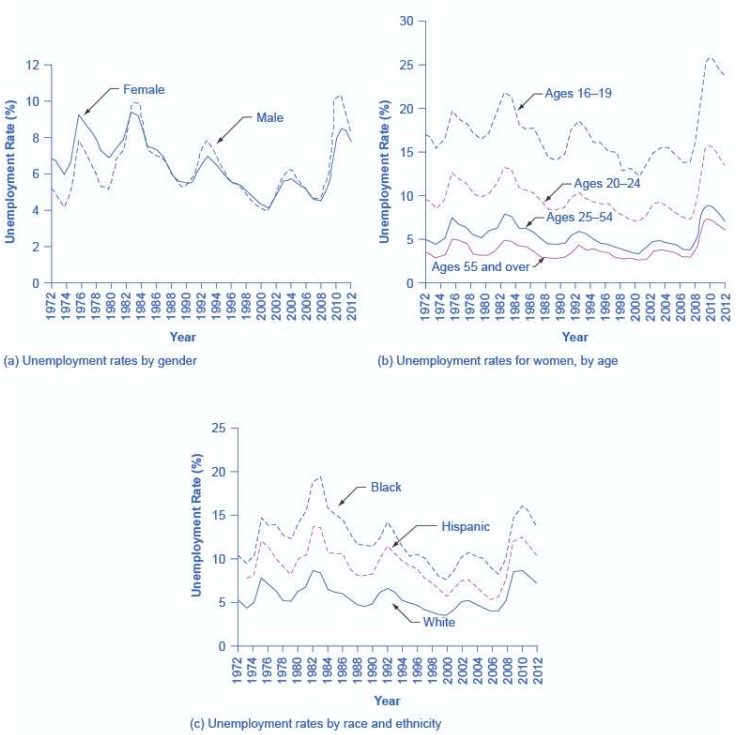


Figure 2.Unemployment Rate by Demographic Group.(a) By gender, 1972–2012. Unemployment rates for men used to be lower than unemployment rates for women, but in recent decades, the two rates have been very close, often with the unemployment rate for men somewhat higher. **(b) By age, 1972–2012.** Unemployment rates are highest for the very young and become lower with age. **(c) By race and ethnicity, 1972–2012**. Although unemployment rates for all groups tend to rise and fall together, the unemployment rate for whites has been lower than the unemployment rate for blacks and Hispanics in recent decades. (Source: www.census.gov/bls).

The unemployment rate for women had historically tended to be higher than the unemployment rate for men, perhaps reflecting the historical pattern that women were seen as "secondary" earners. By about 1980, however, the unemployment rate for women was essentially the same as that for men, as shown in 2(a). During the recession of 2008–2009, however, the unemployment rate climbed higher for men than for women.

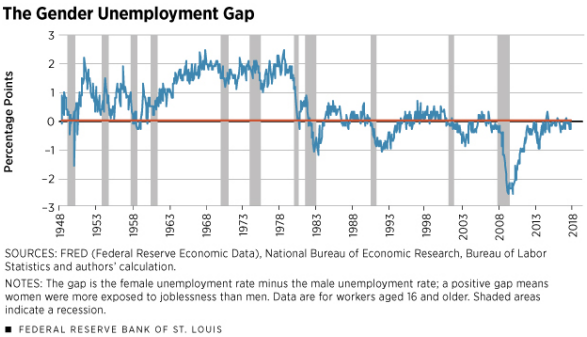


Figure 3. While women had historically more affected by unemployment, there is very little gender unemployment gap today.

Younger workers tend to have higher unemployment, while middle-aged workers tend to have lower unemployment, probably because the middle-aged workers feel the responsibility of needing to have a job more heavily, in addition to having more experience. Younger workers move in and out of jobs (and in and out of the labor force) more easily. Elderly workers have extremely low rates of unemployment, because those who do not have jobs often exit the labor force by retiring, and thus are not counted in the unemployment statistics. Figure 2(b) shows unemployment rates for women divided by age; the pattern for men is similar.

The unemployment rate for African-Americans is substantially higher than the rate for other racial or ethnic groups, a fact that surely reflects, to some extent, a pattern of discrimination that has constrained blacks' labor market opportunities. However, the gaps between unemployment rates for whites and for blacks and Hispanics diminished in the 1990s, as shown in Figure 3(c). In fact, unemployment rates for blacks and Hispanics were at the lowest levels for several decades in the mid-2000s before rising during the Great Recession of 2008.

Finally, those with less education typically suffer higher unemployment. In early 2013, for example, the unemployment rate for those with a college degree was 3.7%; for those with some college but not a four-year degree, the unemployment rate was 6.0%; for high school graduates with no additional degree, the unemployment rate was 7.6%; and for those without a high school diploma, the unemployment rate was 10.3%. This pattern may arise because additional education offers better connections to the labor market and higher demand, or it may occur because the labor market opportunities for low-skilled workers are less attractive than the opportunities for the more highly-skilled. Because of lower pay, low-skilled workers may be less motivated to find jobs.

Thinking about Unemployment

We cannot rely on unemployment statistics to provide a clear picture of total unemployment in the United States. First, unemployment statistics do not take into account **underemployment**, a state in which a person accepts a lower paying, lower status job than their education and experience qualifies them to perform. Second, unemployment statistics only count those:

1. who are actively looking for work
2. who have not earned income from a job in the past four weeks
3. who are ready, willing, and able to work

The unemployment statistics provided by the U.S. government are rarely accurate, because many of the unemployed become discouraged and stop looking for work. Not only that, but these statistics undercount the youngest and oldest workers, the chronically unemployed (e.g., homeless), and seasonal and migrant workers.

A certain amount of unemployment is a direct result of the relative inflexibility of the labor market, considered **structural unemployment**, which describes when there is a societal level of disjuncture between people seeking jobs and the available jobs. This mismatch can be geographic (they are hiring in California, but most unemployed live in Alabama), technological (skilled workers are replaced by machines, as in the auto industry), or can result from any sudden change in the types of jobs people are seeking versus the types of companies that are hiring.

Because of the high standard of living in the United States, many people are working at full-time jobs but are still poor by the standards of relative poverty. They are the working poor. The United States has a higher percentage of working poor than many other developed countries (Brady, Fullerton and Cross 2010). In terms of employment, the Bureau of Labor Statistics defines the working poor as those who have spent at least 27 weeks working or looking for work, and yet remain below the poverty line. Many of the facts about the working poor are as expected: Those who work only part time are more likely to be classified as working poor than those with full-time employment; higher levels of education lead to less likelihood of being among the working poor; gender and race impact ones odds of being in this group and those with children under 18 are four times more likely than those without children to fall into this category. In 2016, the working poor rate, which is the the ratio of the working poor to all individuals in the labor force for at lest 27 weeks or more, was 4.9 percent, or 7.6 million Americans, down from 2015. In that same year women were more likely than men to be among the working poor. The rate for blacks and Hispanics were 8.7 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively, compared with 4.3 percent for whites and 3.5 percent for Asians (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016).

Chart 2. Working-poor rates by gender, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 2016

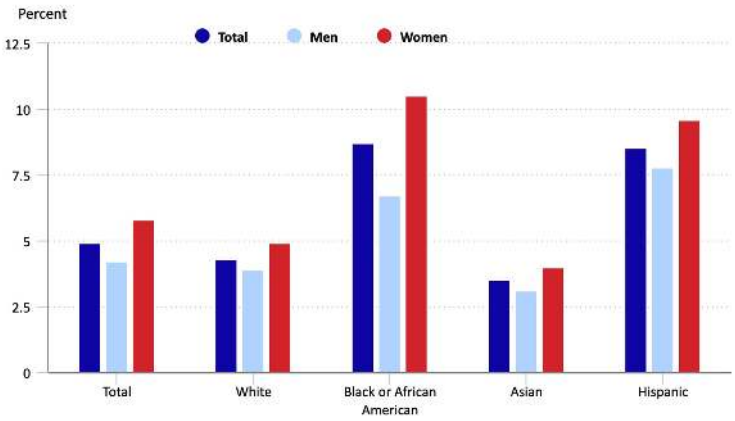


Figure 4. Women are disproportionately represented in the working-poor, especially black and Hispanic women.

Age also plays a factor in being classified as the working poor. The working-poor rate of employed youths 20 to 24 years old was 8.7 percent in 2016, considerably higher than the rates for workers ages 35 to 44 (5.6 percent) and 55 to 64 (2.8 percent). Workers age 65 and older had a working-poor rate of 1.5 percent. (Chart 1) [2]

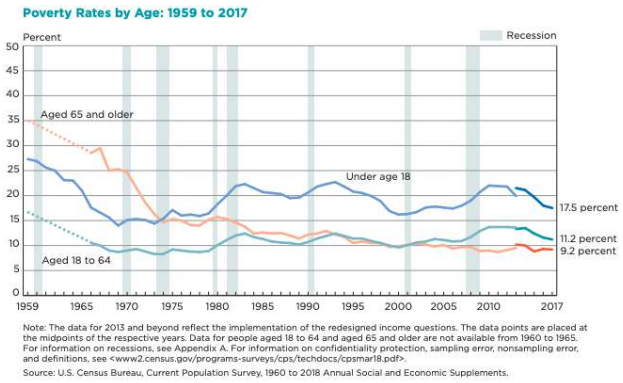


Figure 5. While poverty rates among the elderly have fallen, a larger number of children and working-age adults are living in poverty. (Graph courtesy of the U.S. Census Burea/Carmen DeNavas-Walt and Bernadette D. Proctor, Income and Poverty in the United States 2010)

MillenNials and Poverty

Millennials, or Americans born between 1982 and 2000, now number 83.1 million and represent more than one quarter of the nation's population. Young adults today are marrying at lower rates than previous generations, and self-reports suggest that a lack of economic security including wages, poverty, and housing (e.g., housing costs and living arrangements) are all associated with lower marriage rates among young adults. [3]. According to Pew Research (2017) more millennial households are in poverty than households headed by any other generation. In 2016, of the approximate 17 million U.S. household living in poverty, 5.3 million were headed by a millennial.[4]\

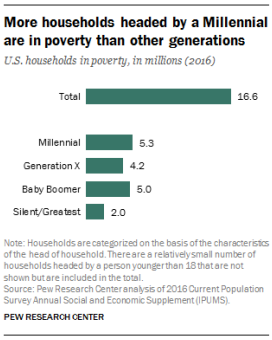


Figure 5. Millennials face greater rates of poverty when compared with other generations.

Most developed countries such as the United States protect their citizens from absolute poverty by providing different levels of social services such as unemployment insurance, welfare, food assistance, and so on. They may also provide job training and retraining so that people can reenter the job market. In the past, the elderly were particularly vulnerable to falling into poverty after they stopped working; however, pensions, retirement plans, and Social Security were designed to help prevent this. A major concern in the United States is the rising number of young people growing up in poverty. Growing up poor can cut off access to the education and services people need to move out of poverty and into stable employment. As we saw, more education was often a key to stability, and those raised in poverty are the ones least able to find well-paying work, perpetuating a cycle.

There is a lively debate about how much support local, state, and federal governments should give to help the unemployed and underemployed. The decisions made on these issues will have a profound effect on working in the United States.

Think It Over

- Why do you think millennials have such a high number of households living in poverty?

glossary

[glossary-page]
[glossary-term]discouraged workers:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]those who have stopped looking for employment due to the lack of suitable positions available[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]structural unemployment:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]a societal level of disjuncture between people seeking jobs and the jobs that are available[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]out of the labor force:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]those who are not working and not looking for work—whether they want employment or not; also termed "not in the labor force"[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]underemployed:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]individuals who are employed in a job that is below their skills[/glossary-definition]
[glossary-term]underemployment:[/glossary-term]
[glossary-definition]a state in which a person accepts a lower paying, lower status job than his or her education and experience qualifies him or her to perform[/glossary-definition][/glossary-page]

1. Hicks, M. J. (2013). Notes On: Labor Markets After the Great Recession: Unemployment and Policy for Indiana. Labor Law Journal, 64(2), 103–113. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=88045408&site=ehost-live↵
2. BLS Reports. A profile of the working poor, 2016. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/working-poor/2016/home.htm. ↵
3. Gurrentz, Benjamin (April 2018) Millennial Marriage: How Much Does Economic Security Matter to Marriage Rates for Young Adults? Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/2018/demo/SEHSD-WP2018-09.html ↵
4. Fry, Richard (2017). *5 facts about Millennial households*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/06/5-facts-about-millennial-households/ ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Work in the United States. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:cdCaIHP1@3/Work-in-the-United-States. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Patterns of Unemployment. **Authored by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/vEmOH-_p@4.44:82qMsJce/Patterns-of-Unemployment. **Project**: Economics. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Patterns of Unemployment. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **Located at**: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-macroeconomics/chapter/patterns-of-unemployment/. **Project**: Macroeconomics. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

All rights reserved content

- 5 facts about Millennial households (graph). **Authored by**: Richard Fry. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/06/5-facts-about-millennial-households/. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- The Gender Unemployment Gap Image. **Authored by**: Guillaume Vandenbroucke and Heting Zhu . **Provided by**: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. **Located at**: https://www.stlouisfed.org/publications/regional-economist/second-quarter-2018/gender-risk-unemployment. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 19.10: Poverty and Unemployment in the United States is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.11: Putting It Together- Work and the Economy

We talk a lot about the economy, how it's doing, and the impact it has on our lives. Rightly so, because the economy has always been an important institution that details how we get the resources we need to live. Humans have transitioned through many structural shifts, moving along a continuum from hunter-gather societies to our contemporary post-industrial, globalized information economy. Currently, there are an array of economies and governments. While the United States frequently emphasizes the American Dream and the ideal that even Americans born into poverty can work their way up the economic ladder, recent studies show that economic mobility is not so easily accomplished. One way to assess if the American Dream is a reality is to examine mobility patterns. If mobility really is about hard work and merit, we would expect that individuals have an equal chance at moving up and down the class hierarchy.

Watch It

The following video from the PEW Economic Mobility Project helps us by providing visual animations that depict *income mobility*. It looks at how *absolute mobility* (when a person earns more money in inflation-adjusted dollars than their parents did at the same age) and *relative mobility* (a person's rank within the income distribution as a whole) work—while also highlighting how both types of movement relate to American Individualism. It shows that the U.S. is doing well in absolute mobility, but not relative mobility. When explaining relative mobility, the video highlights "stickiness at the ends" by showing how there is a great deal of movement in the middle classes—but the poor and the wealthy at the top and bottom of the social hierarchy tend to experience little if any movement both within, and across generations. In other words, where you start can have decisive impact on where you end up.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=552

CC licensed content, Original

- Putting It Together: Work and the Economy. **Authored by**: Cathy Matresse and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

All rights reserved content

- Economic Mobility & the American Dream . **Authored by**: PEW. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTDhi12rqYc. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 19.11: Putting It Together- Work and the Economy is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.12: Discussion- Work and the Economy

Visit this website to play the game "Spent". Walk through each of the scenarios to see how long you can make it without running out of money.

STEP 1: After completing the Spent activity, consider how the economy impacts wages, and the effect that has on society. Write a blog post responding to the prompt: "I think the minimum wage in our state should be _____, because…" Provide evidences and examples, and include links to at least ONE relevant news article that helps support your claim. Your post should be a minimum of 250 words.

STEP 2: Return to the discussion to post on at least TWO classmates' posts in posts of at least 75 words.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Work and the Economy . **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 19.12: Discussion- Work and the Economy is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

19.13: Assignment- Living in Poverty

In this assignment, you will apply things you've learned about in this course, particularly this module on work and the economy, to consider what life would be like to budget and live as a parent in a family below the poverty line. After you create a monthly budget with a breakdown of expenses, you'll write a reflection paper about the experience and its application to the course materials.

STEP 1: Imagine you are a single parent with two kids, ages 1 and 6 (a first-grader). You work a full-time minimum wage job. Make a bulleted list with all of the categories below and write a paragraph for each, explaining how you would plan for monthly expenses.

- **Family:** Describe your fictional family. Where specifically do you work? What are your kids names and interests?
- **Budget**: What is you annual income at the current minimum wage rate? What is your monthly income?
- **Housing**: Where will your family live? Look up actual apartments or houses using websites like Zillow or Craigslist to find a good place for your family to live. Where is it relation to the place you work?
- **Childcare and Education**: Look up your new address to find what school your children will attend. What is the school's rating? Next, you will need to find full-time childcare for your youngest child. Look up prices and options in your area (having family or someone watch him or her voluntarily is not an option in this case). How much will it cost?
- **Food**: write down everything your family will eat, in detail, for every meal of one day. Estimate the expenses for each of those items. Use this daily information to create a weekly grocery list. Look up prices and write down how much you will need to spend on groceries per month.
- **Utilities and phone**: If not included in the rent, look up average utility costs in your area to pay for electricity, water, garbage, cable, internet, and phone bills.
- **Transportation**: How will you get around? Do you have a car payment? If you have a car, include an estimated monthly cost. What will you pay in gas expenses? Or is public transportation a feasible option?
- **Others**: You'll need to reserve some funds for needs like diapers, wipes, clothes, toilet paper, toiletries, etc. Look up average needs and costs and include that information here.
- **Miscellaneous**: What other monthly expenses do you anticipate needing for you or your family?

STEP 2: Write up an analysis paper between 400-600 words, describing your reactions to this exercise, as well as its sociological implications. Consider the following questions:

- Did anything surprise you about this exercise?
- Do you feel that it is reasonable to live off the minimum wage in America?
- What expenses seemed to be the most burdensome?
- How does this exercise tie in with concepts you learned about in this module? Specifically tie in at least two specific terms or concepts.
- What recommendations would you make for government or economic programs to better aid those in poverty?
- In what ways did this assignment make you think about the current state of the economy and things like welfare programs?

Criteria	Rating			Points
Budget	Creates budget with all necessary components with accurate descriptions and explanations of each category: family, budget, housing, childcare and education, food, utilities and phone, transportation, other, and miscellaneous	Creates budget but misses some of the key components or does not elaborate or describe all of the expenses in each category	Partially creates budget and/or does not describe expenses	___/18
Analysis	Writes thorough analysis paper between 400-600 words that ties it at least TWO key concepts from the module and provides a reaction to the budget exercise.	Writes analysis paper that ties in to one sociological concept or provides only light analysis of the budget exercise	Does not tie in analysis to sociological concepts	___/12
			Total:	__/30

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Living in Poverty. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 19.13: Assignment- Living in Poverty is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

20: Module 17- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment

20.1: Why It Matters- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment
20.2: Introduction to Demography and Population Growth
20.3: Demography and Population Growth
20.4: Demographic Theories
20.5: Immigration in the United States
20.6: Introduction to Urbanization
20.7: Urbanization on the Rise
20.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Urbanization
20.9: Introduction to the Environment and Society
20.10: Environmental Sociology
20.11: Environmental Racism
20.12: Putting It Together- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment
20.13: Discussion- Population and Urbanization
20.14: Assignment- Population and Urbanization

This page titled 20: Module 17- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.1: Why It Matters- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment

Why should we study and understand the nature and growth of population and the resultant impacts on the environment?

Fracking, another word for hydraulic fracturing, is a method used to recover gas and oil from shale by drilling down into the earth and directing a high-pressure mixture of water, sand, and proprietary chemicals into the rock. Commonly, this process also includes drilling horizontally into the rock to create new pathways for gas to travel. While energy companies view fracking as a profitable revolution in the industry, there are a number of concerns associated with the practice.



Figure 1. This is a Marcellus shale gas-drilling site where fracking takes place in Lycoming County, Pennsylvania. (Photo courtesy of Nicholas A. Tonelli/flickr)

First, fracking requires huge amounts of water. Water transportation comes at a high environmental cost, and once mixed with fracking chemicals, water is unsuitable for human and animal consumption, though it is estimated that between 10 percent and 90 percent of the contaminated water is returned to the water cycle. Second, the chemicals used in a fracking mix are potentially carcinogenic. These chemicals may pollute groundwater near the extraction site (Colborn, Kwiatkowski, Schultz, and Bachran 2011; United States 2011). Industry leaders suggest that such contamination is unlikely, and that when it does occur, it is incidental and related to unavoidable human error rather than an expected risk of the practice, but the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's study of fracking is ongoing (Environmental Protection Agency 2014). The third concern is that fracking may cause minor earthquakes by undermining the seismic stability of an area—a concern downplayed by the companies involved (Henry 2012). Finally, gas is not a renewable source of energy; this is a negative in the eyes of those who oppose continued reliance on fossil fuels.

Fracking is not without its advantages. Its supporters offer statistics that suggest it reduces unemployment and contributes to economic growth (IHS Global Insights 2012). Since it allows energy companies access to previously nonviable and completely untapped oil and gas reserves, fracking boosts domestic oil production and lowers energy costs (IHS Global Insights 2012). Finally, fracking expands the production of low-emission industrial energy.

As you read this module, consider how an increasing global population can balance environmental concerns with opportunities for industrial and economic growth. Think about how much water pollution can be justified by the need to lower U.S. dependence of foreign energy supplies. Is the potential employment and economic growth associated with fracking worth some environmental degradation?

As the discussion of fracking illustrates, there are important societal issues connected to the environment and how and where people live. Sociologists begin to examine these issues through demography, or the study of population dynamics such as growth, decline, and migration. One sub-focus is on urbanization, and the study of the social, political, and economic relationships that populations have in cities. Environmental sociologists look at the study of how humans interact with their environments. Today, as has been the case previously, we are at a point of conflict in a number of these areas. The world's population reached seven billion between 2011 and 2012. When will it reach eight billion? Can our planet sustain such a population? We generate more trash than ever, from Starbucks cups to obsolete cell phones containing toxic chemicals, to food waste that could have been composted. You

may be unaware of where your trash ends up. And while this problem exists worldwide, trash issues are often more acute in urban areas. Cities and urban living create new challenges for both society and the environment that make interactions between people and places of critical importance.



Figure 2. Sights like this are common for anyone who lives near the water, creating problems not only for the residents but also for the health of ecosystems. (Photo courtesy of Jim Linwood/flickr)

How do sociologists study population and urbanization issues? Functionalist sociologists might focus on the way all aspects of population, urbanization, and the environment serve as vital and cohesive elements, ensuring the continuing stability of society. They might study how the growth of the global population encourages emigration and immigration, and how both serve to strengthen ties between nations. Or they might research the way migration affects environmental issues; for example, how have forced migrations, and the resulting changes in a region's ability to support a new group, affected both the displaced people and the area of relocation?

A conflict theorist, interested in the creation and reproduction of inequality, might ask how peripheral nations' lack of family planning affects their overall population in comparison to core nations that tend to have lower fertility rates. Or, how do inner cities become ghettos, nearly devoid of jobs, education, and other opportunities? A conflict theorist might also study environmental racism and other forms of environmental inequality. For example, which parts of New Orleans society were the most responsive to the evacuation order during Hurricane Katrina?

A symbolic interactionist interested in the day-to-day interaction of groups and individuals might research topics like the way family-planning information is presented to and understood by different population groups, the way people experience and understand urban life, and the language people use to convince others of the presence (or absence) of global climate change. For example, some politicians wish to present the study of global warming as junk science, and other politicians insist it is a proven fact.

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Introduction to Sociology 2e. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c8-441e-a685-20e9333f3e1d/Introduction_to_Sociology_2e. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 20.1: Why It Matters- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.2: Introduction to Demography and Population Growth

What you'll learn to do: describe demographic measurements, read population graphs, and describe demographic theories



Figure 1. The population in some countries, particularly India, Pakistan, and much of Africa, will increase tremendously in coming years.

Scholars understand demography through various analyses—Malthusian theory, Zero population growth, cornucopian theory, and demographic transition theory all help sociologists study demography. The earth's human population has doubled in the past 43 years, especially in peripheral countries, and some are concerned that we will not have enough food and other resources to sustain the expanding population. Factors that impact population include birthrates, mortality rates, and migration, this last a term that includes immigration (entering a country to live permanently) and emigration (leaving a country). There are numerous potential outcomes of the growing population, and sociological perspectives vary in their findings regarding the potential effect of these increased numbers. From any point of view, it seems clear that the growth will put additional pressure the already taxed planet and its finite natural resources.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Demography and Population Growth. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Demography and Population. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:LPE0-fiO@3/Demography-and-Population. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- World Population Data image. **Authored by**: Kaneda Oshiko, Charlotte Green, and Kaitlyn Patierno . **Provided by**: Population Reference Bureau. **Located at**: https://www.prb.org/2018-world-population-data-sheet-with-focus-on-changing-age-structures/. **Project**: PRB Projects 2.3 Billion More People Living on Earth by 2050. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 20.2: Introduction to Demography and Population Growth is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.3: Demography and Population Growth

Learning Outcomes

- Describe demography and the main demographic measurements used to project population growth



Figure 1. At over 7 billion, Earth's population is always on the move. (Photo courtesy of David Sim/flickr)

Between 2011 and 2012, we reached a population milestone of 7 billion humans on the earth's surface. The rapidity with which this happened demonstrated an exponential increase from the time it took to grow from 5 billion to 6 billion people. In short, the planet is filling up. How quickly will we go from 7 billion to 8 billion? How will that population be distributed? Where is population the highest? Where is it slowing down? Where will people live? To explore these questions, we turn to **demography**, or the study of populations. Three of the most important components that affect the issues above are fertility, mortality, and migration.

The **fertility rate** of a society is a measure noting the number of children born. The fertility number is generally lower than the **fecundity rate**, which measures the potential number of children that could be born to women of childbearing age. Sociologists measure fertility using the crude birthrate (the number of live births per 1,000 people per year). Just as fertility measures childbearing, the **mortality rate** is a measure of the number of people who die. The crude death rate is a number derived from the number of deaths per 1,000 people per year. When analyzed together, fertility and mortality rates help researchers understand the overall growth occurring in a population.

Another key element in studying populations is the movement of people into and out of an area. Migration may take the form of immigration, which describes movement into an area to take up permanent residence, or emigration, which refers to movement out of an area to another place of permanent residence. Migration might be voluntary (as when college students study abroad), involuntary (as when Syrians evacuated war-torn areas), or forced (as when many Native American tribes were removed from the lands they'd lived in for generations).

The 2014 Child Migration Crisis

Children have always contributed to the total number of migrants crossing the southern border of the United States illegally, but in 2014, a steady overall increase in unaccompanied minors from Central America reached crisis proportions when tens of thousands of children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras crossed the Rio Grande and overwhelmed border patrols and local infrastructure (Dart 2014).

Since legislators passed the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 in the last days of the Bush administration, unaccompanied minors from countries that do not share a border with the United States are guaranteed a hearing with an immigration judge where they may request asylum based on a "credible" fear of persecution or torture (U.S. Congress 2008). In some cases, these children are looking for relatives and can be placed with family while awaiting a hearing on their immigration status; in other cases they are held in processing centers until the Department of Health and Human Services makes other arrangements (Popescu 2014).

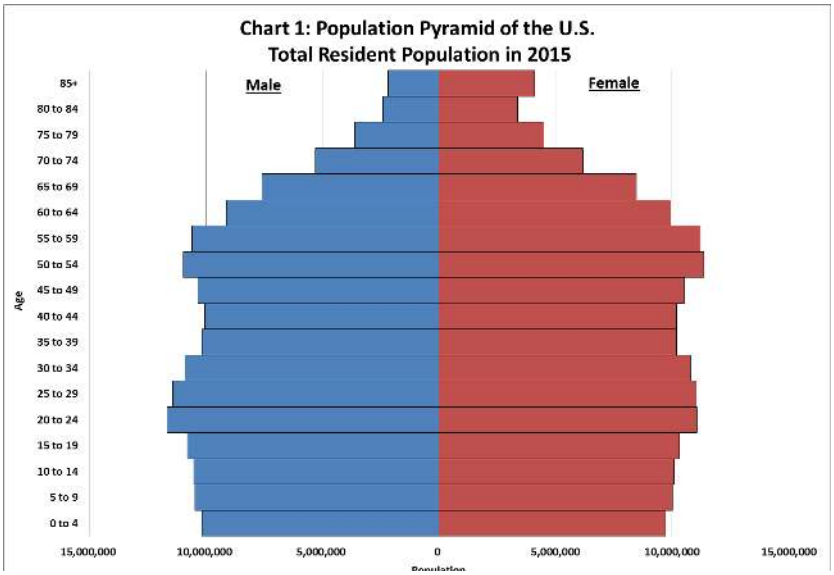
The 2014 surge placed such a strain on state resources that Texas began transferring the children to Immigration and Naturalization facilities in California and elsewhere, without incident for the most part. On July 1, 2014, however, buses carrying the migrant children were blocked by protesters in Murrietta, California, who chanted, "Go home" and "We don't want you." (Fox News and Associated Press 2014; Reyes 2014).

Given the fact that these children are fleeing various kinds of violence and extreme poverty, how should the U.S. government respond? Should the government pass laws granting a general amnesty? Or should it follow a zero-tolerance policy, automatically returning any and all unaccompanied minor migrants to their countries of origin so as to discourage additional immigration that will stress the already overwhelmed system?

A functional perspective theorist might focus on the systemic dysfunctions caused by the sudden influx of underage asylum seekers, while a conflict perspective theorist might look at the way social stratification influences how the members of a developed country are treating the lower-status migrants from less-developed countries in Latin America. An interactionist theorist might see significance in the attitudes and shared understandings of the Murrietta protesters regarding the migrant children. Which theoretical perspective makes the most sense to you?

Population Growth

Changing fertility, mortality, and migration rates make up the total **population composition**, a snapshot of the demographic profile of a population. This number can be measured for societies, nations, world regions, or other groups. The population composition includes the **sex ratio**, the number of men for every hundred women, as well as the **population pyramid**, a picture of population distribution by sex and age.



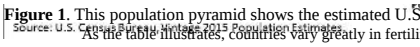


Figure 1. This population pyramid shows the estimated U.S. population broken down by sex and years of age as of July 1 2107

As the table illustrates, countries vary greatly in fertility rates and mortality rates—the components that make up a population composition. (Chart courtesy of CIA World Factbook)[1][/footnote]

Varying Fertility and Mortality Rated by Country				
Country	Population (in millions)	Fertility Rate	Mortality Rate	Sex Ratio Male to Female
Afghanistan	35	5.12%	13.2%	1.03
Sweden	10	1.88%	9.4%	1
United States of America	329	1.87%	8.2%	.97

Comparing the three countries in the table above reveals that there are more men than women in Afghanistan, whereas the reverse is true in Sweden and the United States. Afghanistan also has significantly higher fertility and mortality rates than either of the other two countries. Do these statistics surprise you? How do you think the population makeup affects the political climate and economics of the different countries?

Think It Over

- Given what we know about population growth, what do you think of China's policies that limit the number of children a family can have? Do you agree with it? Why, or why not? What other ways might a country of over 1.3 billion people manage its population?
- Describe the effect of immigration or emigration on your life or in a community you have seen. What are the positive effects? What are the negative effects?
- What responsibility does the United States have toward underage asylum-seekers?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14818

glossARY

demography:
the study of population

fecundity rate:
potential number of children that could be born to women of childbearing age

fertility rate: a measure noting the actual number of children born

mortality rate:
a measure of the number of people in a population who die

population composition:
a snapshot of the demographic profile of a population based on fertility, mortality, and migration rates

population pyramid:
a graphic representation that depicts population distribution according to age and sex

sex ratio:
the ratio of men to women in a given population

1. [footnote]The World Factbook 2016-17. Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2016. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Demography and Population. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:LPE0-fiO@3/Demography-and-Population. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Americau2019s Age Profile Told through Population Pyramids. **Authored by**: Luke T. Rogers. **Provided by**: U.S. Census Bureau. **Located at**: https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2016/06/americas-age-profile-told-through-population-pyramids.html. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 20.3: Demography and Population Growth is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.4: Demographic Theories

Learning Outcomes

- fDescribe demographic theories—Malthusian, cornucopian, zero population growth, and demographic transition theories

Demographic Theories

Sociologists have long looked at population issues as central to understanding human interactions. Understanding population growth gives us some insight on how many schools, homes, hospitals and even prisons we need to build, as well as other economic factors that impact societies. Below we will look at four theories about population that inform sociological thought: Malthusian, zero population growth, cornucopian, and demographic transition theories.

Malthusian Theory

Thomas Malthus (1766–1834) was an English clergyman who made dire predictions about earth's ability to sustain its growing population. According to **Malthusian theory**, three factors would control human population that exceeded the earth's **carrying capacity**, or how many people can live in a given area considering the amount of available resources. Malthus identified these factors as war, famine, and disease (Malthus 1798). He termed them "positive checks" because they increase mortality rates, thus keeping the population in check. They are countered by "preventive checks," which also control the population but by reducing fertility rates; preventive checks include birth control and celibacy. Thinking practically, Malthus saw that people could produce only so much food in a given year, yet the population was increasing at an exponential rate. Eventually, he thought people would run out of food and begin to starve. They would go to war over increasingly scarce resources and reduce the population to a manageable level, and then the cycle would begin anew.

Watch It

Watch the following video about Malthus' *Essay on the Principle of Population* to learn more about his theory.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=566

Of course, this has not exactly happened. The human population has continued to grow well beyond Malthus's predictions. So what happened? Why didn't we die off? There are three reasons sociologists believe we are continuing to expand the population of our planet. *First*, technological increases in food production have increased both the amount and quality of calories we can produce per person. *Second*, human ingenuity has developed new medicine to curtail death from disease. *Finally*, the development and widespread use of contraception and other forms of family planning have decreased the speed at which our population increases. But what about the future? Some still believe Malthus was correct and that ample resources to support the earth's population will soon run out.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14819

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14820

Zero Population Growth

A neo-Malthusian researcher named Paul Ehrlich brought Malthus's predictions into the twentieth century. However, according to Ehrlich, it is the environment, not specifically the food supply, that will play a crucial role in the continued health of planet's population (Ehrlich 1968). Ehrlich's ideas suggest that the human population is moving rapidly toward complete environmental collapse, as privileged people use up or pollute a number of environmental resources such as water and air. He advocated for a goal of **zero population growth** (ZPG), in which the number of people entering a population through birth or immigration is equal to the number of people leaving it via death or emigration. While support for this concept is mixed, it is still considered a possible solution to global overpopulation.

Further Research

To learn more about population concerns, from the new-era ZPG advocates to the United Nations reports, check out Population Connection and the UN Populatin Division.

Cornucopian Theory

Of course, some theories are less focused on the pessimistic hypothesis that the world's population will meet a detrimental challenge to sustaining itself. **Cornucopian theory** scoffs at the idea of humans wiping themselves out; it asserts that human ingenuity can resolve any environmental or social issues that develop. As an example, it points to the issue of food supply. If we need more food, the theory contends, agricultural scientists will figure out how to grow it, as they have already been doing for centuries. (A "cornucopia" is a horn-shaped container overflowing with sources of nourishment; it traditionally symbolizes abundance.) After all, in this perspective, human ingenuity has been up to the task for thousands of years and there is no reason for that pattern not to continue (Simon 1981).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14821

Demographic Transition Theory

Whether you believe that we are headed for environmental disaster and the end of human existence as we know it, or you think people will always adapt to changing circumstances, we can see clear patterns in population growth. Societies develop along a predictable continuum as they evolve from unindustrialized to postindustrial. **Demographic transition theory** (Caldwell and Caldwell 2006) suggests that future population growth will develop along a predictable four-stage (sometimes five-stage) model.

In Stage 1, birth, death, and infant mortality rates are all high, while life expectancy is short. An example of this stage is the 1800s in the United States. As countries begin to industrialize, they enter Stage 2, where birthrates are higher while infant mortality and the death rates drop. Life expectancy also increases. Afghanistan is currently in this stage. Stage 3 occurs once a society is thoroughly industrialized; birthrates decline, while life expectancy continues to increase. Death rates continue to decrease. Mexico's population is at this stage. In the final phase, Stage 4, we see the postindustrial era of a society. Birth and death rates are low, people are healthier and live longer, and society enters a phase of population stability. Overall population may even decline. For example, Sweden is considered to be in Stage 4. Some scholars have added Stage 5, suggesting another stage when fertility either remains below replacement levels, or begins to rise slowly again.

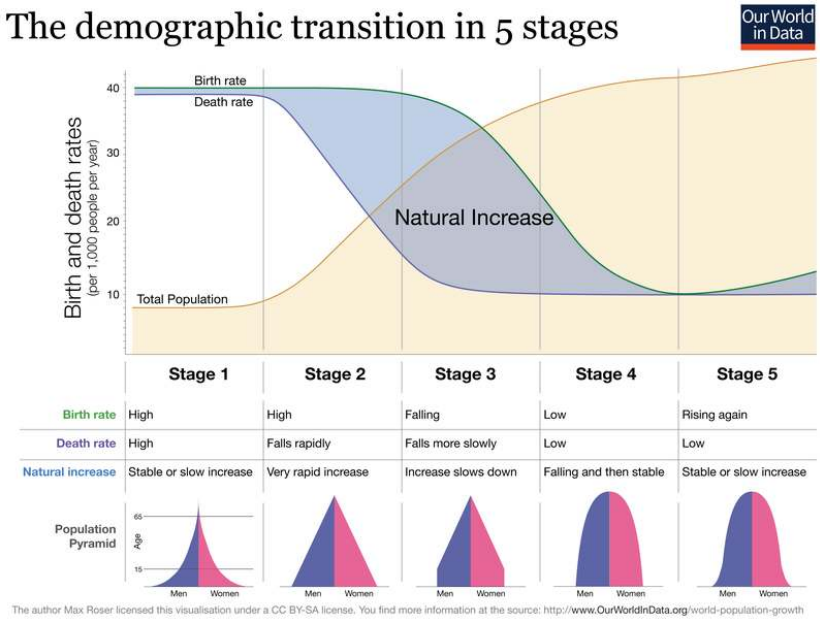


Figure 1. This shows how the changes in birth and death rates affect total population during the demographic transition stages.

The United Nations Population Fund (2008) categorizes nations as high fertility, intermediate fertility, or low fertility. The United Nations (UN) anticipates the population growth will triple between 2011 and 2100 in high-fertility countries, which are currently concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa.

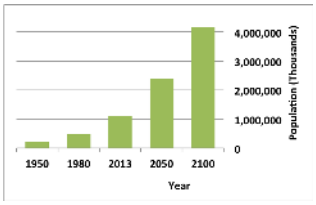


Figure 2. Projected Population in Africa: This graph shows the population growth of countries located on the African continent, many of which have high fertility rates. (Graph courtesy of USAID)

For countries with intermediate fertility rates (the United States, India, and Mexico all fall into this category), growth is expected to be about 26 percent.

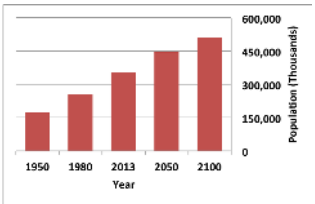


Figure 3. Projected Population in the United States: The United States has an intermediate fertility rate, and

therefore, a comparatively moderate projected population growth. (Graph courtesy of USAID)

And low-fertility countries like China, Australia, and most of Europe will actually see population declines of approximately 20 percent.

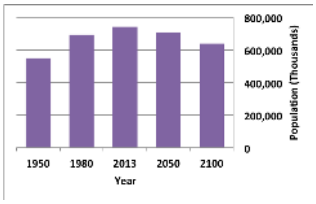


Figure 4. Projected Population in Europe: This chart shows the projected population growth of Europe for the remainder of this century. (Graph courtesy of USAID)

GLOSSARY

carrying capacity:
the amount of people that can live in a given area considering the amount of available resources

cornucopian theory:
a theory that asserts human ingenuity will rise to the challenge of providing adequate resources for a growing population

demographic transition theory:
a theory that describes four stages of population growth, following patterns that connect birth and death rates with stages of industrial development

Malthusian theory:
a theory, associated with English clergyman Thomas Malthus, asserting that population is controlled through positive checks (war, famine, disease) and preventive checks (measures to reduce fertility such as birth control or celibacy)

zero population growth
a theoretical goal in which the number of people entering a population through birth or immigration is equal to the number of people leaving it via death or emigration

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Demography and Population. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:LPE0-fiO@3/Demography-and-Population. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- The demographic transition in five stages. **Authored by**: Max Roser. **Provided by**: Wikimedia. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Demographic-TransitionOWID.png. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- An Introduction to Thomas Malthus' An Essay on the Principle of Population- Macat Economics Analysis. **Provided by**: Macat. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_Mw0WEbqrI. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License
- Main Source Countries/Regions of Immigrant Population Image. **Provided by**: National Conference of State Legislature. **Located at**: http://Main%20Source%20Countries/Regions%20of%20Immigrant%20Population. **Project**: Snapshot of U.S. Immigration 2019. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 20.4: Demographic Theories is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.5: Immigration in the United States

Learning Outcomes

- Describe patterns and issues surrounding immigration to the United States

Changes in U.S. Immigration Patterns and Attitudes

Worldwide patterns of migration have changed, though the United States remains the most popular destination. In 2016, there were over 43.7 million immigrants living in the United States, constituting 13.5% of the population. This is more than four times the number of the 9.7 million immigrants in the United States in 1960.[1] From 1990 to 2013, the number of migrants living in the United States increased from one in six to one in five (The Pew Research Center 2013). Overall, in 2013 the United States was home to about 46 million foreign-born people, while only about 3 million U.S. citizens lived abroad. Of foreign-born citizens emigrating to the United States, over 50 percent originated in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 26.7 percent come from South or East Asia.[2]

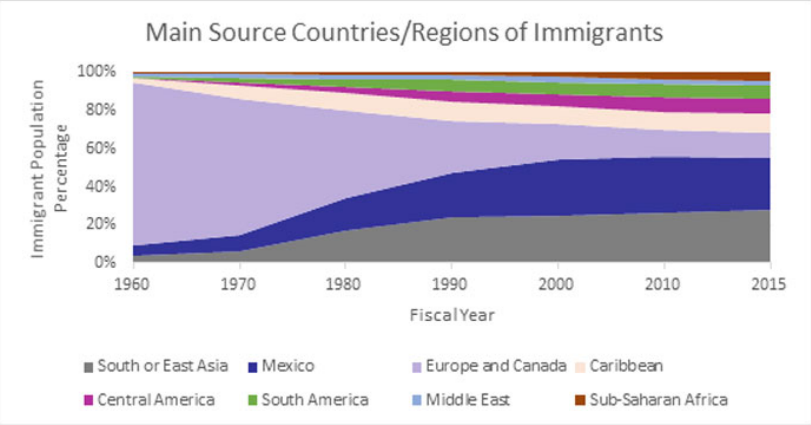


Figure 1. In 2015, there were 12.1 million immigrants to the United States from South or East Asia, 11.6 million from Mexico, and 5.6 million from Canada or Europe. Note how these percentages have changed in recent years.

While there are more foreign-born people residing in the United States legally (76% of immigrants in 2016), about 10.7 million are unauthorized immigrants. This is a 13% decline from a peak of 12.2 million in 2007. This decline is the result of less immigration from Mexico, even with rising immigration from other Central American countries. A growing number of unauthorized immigrants entered the country legally and are now considered illegal due to overstaying their visas.[3]

Most citizens agree that our national immigration policies are in need of major adjustment—almost three-quarters of those in a recent national survey believed illegal immigrants should have a path to citizenship provided they meet other requirements, such as speaking English or paying restitution for the time they spent in the country illegally. Interestingly, 55 percent of those surveyed who identified as Hispanic think a pathway to citizenship is of secondary importance to provisions for living legally in the United States without the threat of deportation (The Pew Research Center 2013). Even more recently, partisan politics have people in the United States deeply divided about the importance of addressing illegal immigration, particularly along the U.S. Southern border with Mexico. President Donald Trump was elected in 2016 with the promise to build a wall along the border, but despite efforts to fund the building of the wall (and a government shutdown as the result of it), there are no immediate plans to construct a wall along the entire border, instead money has been designated to repair and add particular sections to existing border walls and fences.

Managing Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in the Modern World

In 2013, the number of refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced people worldwide exceeded 50 million people for the first time since the end of World War II. Half these people were children. A **refugee** is defined as an individual who has been forced to leave his or her country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster, while **asylum-seekers** are those whose claim to refugee status has not been validated. Asylum has two basic requirements. First, an asylum applicant must establish that he or she fears persecution in their home country. Second, the applicant must prove that he or she would be persecuted on account of one of five protected grounds: race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or particular social group. An **internally displaced person**, on the other hand, is neither a refugee nor an asylum-seeker. Displaced persons have fled their homes while remaining inside their country's

borders. The number of displaced persons and refugees who fall under the jurisdiction of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2015 was 57.9 million, up from 21 million in 2007.

The war in Syria caused most of the 2013 increase, forcing 2.5 million people to seek refugee status while internally displacing an additional 6.5 million. Violence in Central African Republic and South Sudan also contributed a large number of people to the total (The United Nations Refugee Agency 2014). Refugees need help in the form of food, water, shelter, and medical care, which has worldwide implications for nations contributing foreign aid, the nations hosting the refugees, and the non-government organizations (NGOs) working with individuals and groups on site (The United Nations Refugee Agency 2014).

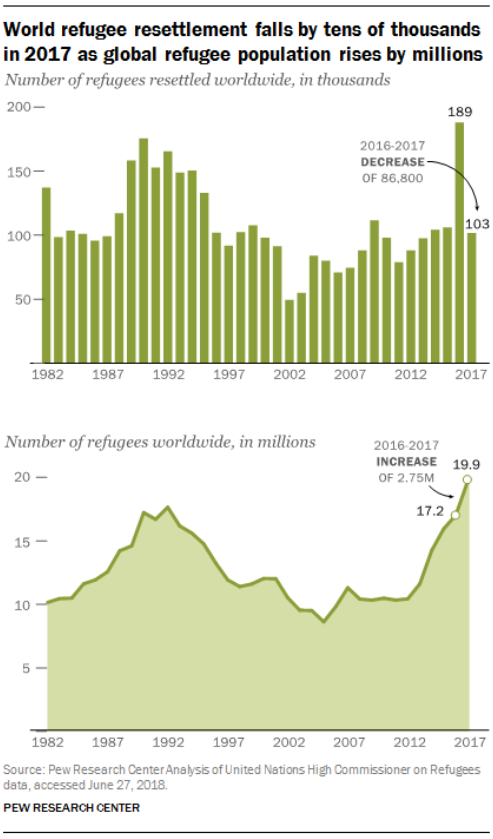


Figure 2. A global concern is the falling rates of refugee resettlement, yet the rising number of refugees.

The United States recognizes the right of asylum for individuals as specified by international and federal law. A specified number of legally defined refugees who either apply for asylum from inside the U.S. or apply for refugee status from outside the U.S., are admitted annually. Refugees compose about one-tenth of the total annual immigration to the United States, though some large refugee populations are very prominent. Since World War II, more refugees have found homes in the U.S. than any other nation and more than two million refugees have arrived in the U.S. since 1980. This number is declining, however, as 2017 marked the first year that the U.S. resettled fewer refugees than the rest of the world. In 2017, the U.S. resettled about 33,000 refugees, which is a dramatic decrease from the 97,000 resettled in the United States in 2016. Other countries are also limiting the number of refugee resettlements, which is especially problematic since the number of refugees is on the rise.[4]

Visit this factsheet from the National Immigration Forum to learn more about the process of seeking asylum.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14822

GLOSSARY

asylum-seekers:
those whose claim to refugee status have not been validated

internally displaced person:
someone who fled his or her home while remaining inside the country's borders

refugee:
an individual who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster

1. Radford, Jynnah and Abby Budiman (September 2018). Facts on U.S. Immigrants, 2016 Statistical portrait of the foreign-born population in the United States. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2019/06/03/facts-on-u-s-immigrants/↵
2. Snapshot of U.S. Immigration 2019 (March 2019. National Conference of State Legislatures. Retrieved from http://www.ncsl.org/research/immigration/snapshot-of-u-s-immigration-2017.aspx#1. ↵
3. Gramlich, John (January 2019). How Americans see illegal immigration, the border wall and political compromise. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/16/how-americans-see-illegal-immigration-the-border-wall-and-political-compromise/. ↵
4. Connor, Phillip and Jens Manuel Krogstad (July 2018). For the first time, U.S. resettled fewer refugees than the rest of the world. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/05/for-the-first-time-u-s-resettles-fewer-refugees-than-the-rest-of-the-world/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Paragraph on asylum in the United States. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Asylum_in_the_United_States. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Demography and Population. **Provided by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:LPE0-fiO@3/Demography-and-Population. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Updated information on the number of displaced persons, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_High_Commissioner_for_Refugees. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- For the first time, U.S. resettles fewer refugees than the rest of the world, graph. **Authored by**: Phillip Connor and Jens Manuel Krogstad. **Provided by**: Pew Research Center. **Located at**: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/05/for-the-first-time-u-s-resettles-fewer-refugees-than-the-rest-of-the-world/. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 20.5: Immigration in the United States is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.6: Introduction to Urbanization

What you'll learn to do: describe the growth of cities, understand and the process of urbanization

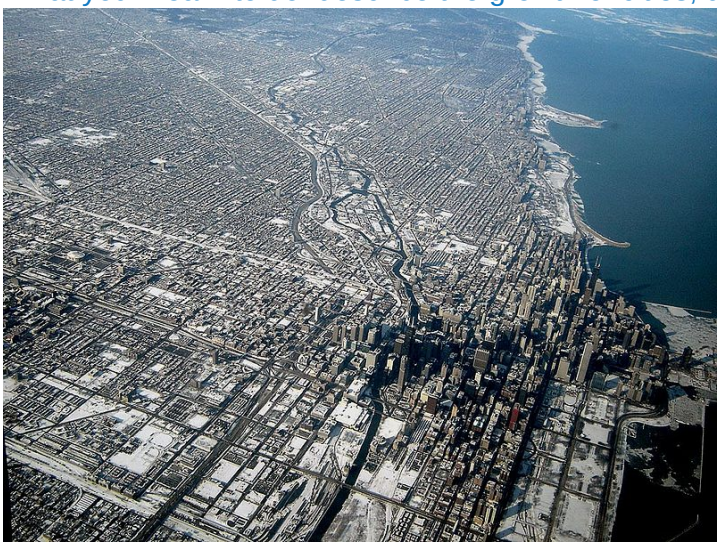


Figure 1. An aerial view of Chicago, Illinois in the United States. (Photo courtesy of Leslie/Wikimedia Commons)

Cities provide numerous opportunities for their residents and offer significant benefits including access to consumer goods and to a diverse range of job prospects. At the same time, high population areas can lead to tensions between demographic groups over jobs and resources, as well as to environmental strain. While the population of urban dwellers is continuing to rise, sources of social strain are rising along with it. The ultimate challenge for today's urbanites is finding an equitable way to share the city's resources while reducing the pollution and energy use that negatively impacts the environment.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Urbanization. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Urbanization. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:TBFyiU0Z@3/Urbanization. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

Public domain content

- Chicago Downtown Aerial View. **Authored by**: Leslie. **Provided by**: Wikimedia Commons. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chicago_Downtown_Aerial_View.jpg. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 20.6: Introduction to Urbanization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.7: Urbanization on the Rise

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the process of urbanization in the United States and the growth of urban populations worldwide
- Describe the evolution of suburbs, exurbs, and concentric zones, including white flight and gentrification

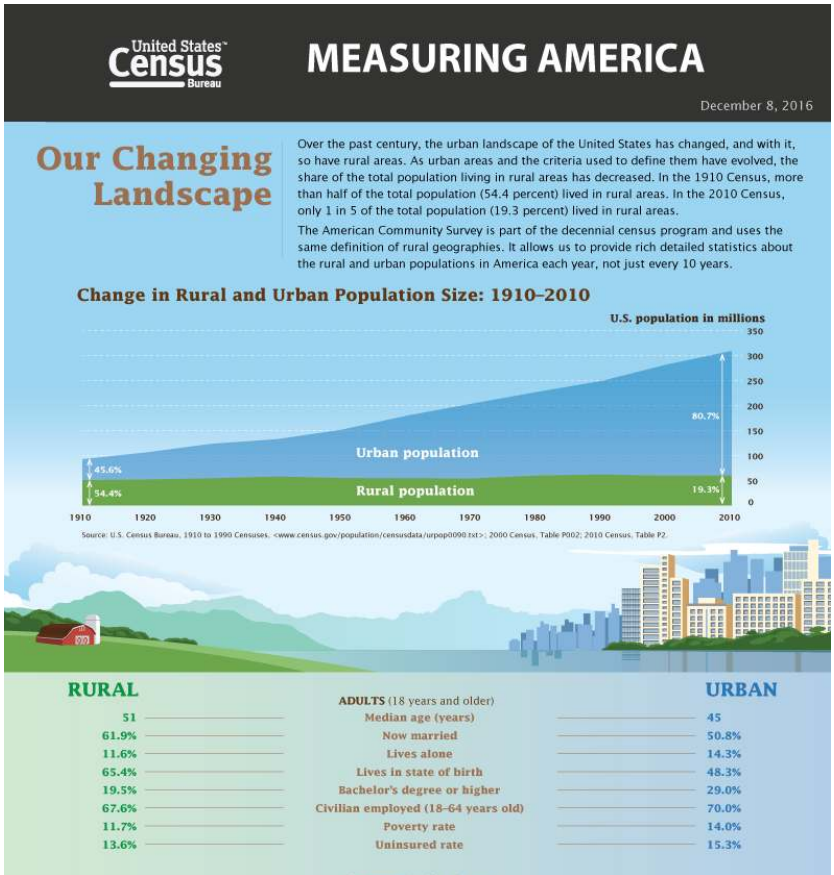


Figure 1. The lights of New York City are an iconic image of city life. (Photo courtesy of Or Hiltch/flickr)

Urbanization is the study of the social, political, and economic relationships in cities, and someone specializing in **urban sociology** studies those relationships. In some ways, cities can be microcosms of universal human behavior, while in others they provide a unique environment that yields its own brand of human behavior. There is no strict dividing line between rural and urban; rather, there is a continuum where one bleeds into the other. However, once a geographically concentrated population has reached approximately 100,000 people, it typically behaves like a city regardless of what its designation might be.

The Growth of Cities

According to sociologist Gideon Sjoberg (1965), there are three prerequisites for the development of a city: First, good environment with fresh water and a favorable climate; second, advanced technology, which will produce a food surplus to support nonfarmers; and third, strong social organization to ensure social stability and a stable economy. Most scholars agree that the first cities were developed somewhere in ancient Mesopotamia, though there are disagreements about exactly where. Most early cities were small by today's standards, and the largest was most likely Rome, with about 650,000 inhabitants (Chandler and Fox 1974). The factors limiting the size of ancient cities included lack of adequate sewage control, limited food supply, and immigration restrictions. For example, serfs were tied to the land, and transportation was limited and inefficient. Today, the primary influence on cities' growth is economic forces. Since the recent economic recession caused housing prices to decline, researchers have been waiting to see what happens to urban migration patterns in response.



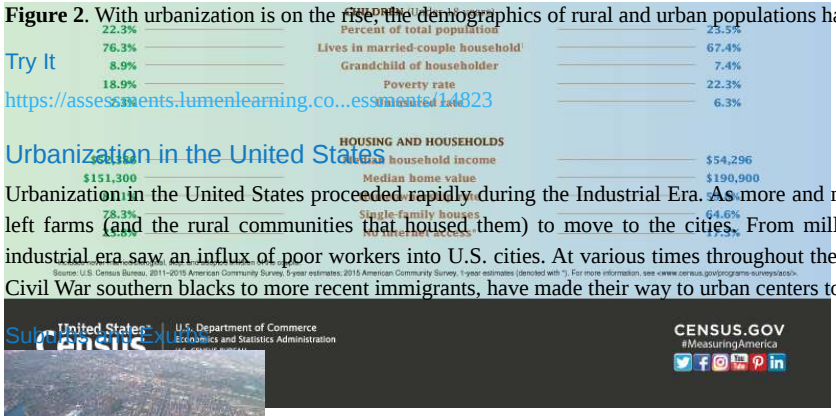


Figure 2. With urbanization is on the rise, the demographics of rural and urban populations have also shifted dramatically in the past fifty years.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14823

Urbanization in the United States

Urbanization in the United States proceeded rapidly during the Industrial Era. As more and more opportunities for work appeared in factories, workers left farms (and the rural communities that housed them) to move to the cities. From mill towns in Massachusetts to tenements in New York, the industrial era saw an influx of poor workers into U.S. cities. At various times throughout the country's history, certain demographic groups, from post-Civil War southern blacks to more recent immigrants, have made their way to urban centers to seek a better life in the city.

Suburbs and the Exurbs



Figure 3. The suburban sprawl in Toronto means long commutes and traffic congestion. (Photo courtesy of Payon Chung/flickr)

As cities grew more crowded, and often more impoverished and costly, more and more people began to migrate back out of them. But instead of returning to rural small towns (like they'd resided in before moving to the city), these people needed close access to the cities for their jobs. In the 1850s, as the urban population greatly expanded and transportation options improved, suburbs developed. **Suburbs** are the communities surrounding cities, typically close enough for a daily commute, but far enough away to allow for more space than city living affords. The bucolic suburban landscape of the early twentieth century has largely disappeared due to what demographers refer to as sprawl, or the haphazard expansion of commercial or light industrial development into previously rural areas. Suburban sprawl contributes to traffic congestion, which in turn contributes to commuting time. And commuting times and distances have continued to increase as new suburbs have developed farther and farther from city centers. Simultaneously, this dynamic contributed to an exponential increase in the use of natural resources like petroleum, which then increased pollution in the form of carbon emissions.

As the suburbs became more crowded and lost their charm, those who could afford it turned to the **exurbs**, communities that exist outside the ring of suburbs and are typically populated by wealthier families who want more space and have the resources to lengthen their commute. Together, the suburbs, exurbs, and metropolitan areas all combine to form a **metropolis**. New York was the first U.S. **megalopolis**, a huge urban corridor encompassing multiple cities and their surrounding suburbs. These metropolises use vast quantities of natural resources and are a growing part of the U.S. landscape.

Suburbs Are Not All White Picket Fences: The Banlieues of Paris

What makes a suburb a suburb? Simply, a suburb is a community surrounding a city. But when you picture a suburb in your mind, your image may vary widely depending on which nation you call home. In the United States, most consider the suburbs home to upper— and middle—class people with private homes. In other countries, like France, the suburbs—or "banlieues"— are synonymous with housing projects and impoverished communities. In fact, the banlieues of Paris are notorious for their ethnic violence and crime, with higher unemployment and more residents living in poverty than in the city center. Further, the banlieues have a much higher immigrant population, which in Paris is made up mostly by Arabic and African immigrants. This contradicts the clichéd U.S. image of a typical white-picket-fence suburb.

In 2005, serious riots broke out in the banlieue of Clichy-sous-Bois after two boys were electrocuted while hiding from the police. They were hiding, it is believed, because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time, near the scene of a break-in, and they were afraid the police would not believe in their innocence. Only a few days earlier, interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy (who later became president), had given a speech touting new measures against urban violence and referring to the people of the banlieue as "rabble" (BBC 2005). After the deaths and subsequent riots, Sarkozy reiterated his zero-tolerance policy toward violence and sent in more police. Ultimately, the violence spread across more than thirty towns and cities in France. Thousands of cars were burned, many hundreds of people were arrested, and both police and protesters suffered serious injuries.

Then-President Jacques Chirac responded by pledging more money for housing programs, jobs programs, and education programs to help the banlieues solve the underlying problems that led to such disastrous unrest. But none of the newly launched programs were effective. Sarkozy ran for president on a platform of tough regulations toward young offenders, and in 2007 the country elected him. More riots ensued as a response to his election. In 2010, Sarkozy promised "war without mercy" against the crime in the banlieues (France24 2010). Six years after the Clichy-sous-Bois riot, circumstances are no better for those in the banlieues.

As the Social Policy & Debate feature illustrates, the suburbs also have their share of socio-economic problems. In the United States, **white flight** refers to the migration of economically secure white people from racially mixed urban areas and toward the suburbs. This occurred throughout the twentieth

century, due to causes as diverse as the legal end of racial segregation established by *Brown v. Board of Education* to the Mariel boatlift of Cubans fleeing Cuba's Mariel port for Miami. Current trends include middle-class African-American families following white flight patterns out of cities, while affluent whites return to cities that have historically had a black majority. The result is that the issues of race, socio-economics, neighborhoods, and communities remain complicated and challenging.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14824

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14827

Urbanization around the World

During the Industrial Era, there was a growth spurt worldwide. The development of factories brought people from rural to urban areas, and new technology increased the efficiency of transportation, food production, and food preservation. For example, from the mid-1670s to the early 1900s, London's population increased from 550,000 to 7 million (Old Bailey Proceedings Online 2011). Global favorites like New York, London, and Tokyo are all examples of postindustrial cities. As cities evolve from manufacturing-based industrial to service- and information-based postindustrial societies, gentrification becomes more common. **Gentrification** occurs when members of the middle and upper classes enter and renovate city areas that have been historically less affluent while the poor urban underclass are forced by resulting price pressures to leave those neighborhoods for increasingly decaying portions of the city.

Watch It

Watch this video to better understand urban renewal and gentrification as it happened in the Philadelphia neighborhood of Society Hill.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=572

Globally, 54 percent of the world's 7 billion people currently reside in urban areas, with the most urbanized region being North America (82 percent), followed by Latin America/the Caribbean (80 percent), with Europe coming in third (72 percent). In comparison, Africa is only 40 percent urbanized. With 38 million people, Tokyo is the world's largest city by population. The world's most densely populated cities are now largely concentrated in the global south, a marked change from several decades ago when the biggest cities were found in the global north. In the next forty years, the biggest global challenge for urbanized populations, particularly in less developed countries, will be to achieve development that occurs without depleting or damaging the natural environment, also called **sustainable development** (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2014).

Think It Over

- What are the differences between the suburbs and the exurbs, and who is most likely to live in each?
- How will the growth in urban populations affect the world over the next ten years?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14826

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14825

Glossary

exurbs:
communities that arise farther out than the suburbs and are typically populated by residents of high socioeconomic status

gentrification:
the entry of upper- and middle-class residents to city areas or communities that have been historically less affluent

megalopolis:
a large urban corridor that encompasses several cities and their surrounding suburbs and exurbs

metropolis:
the area that includes a city and its suburbs and exurbs

suburbs:
the communities surrounding cities, typically close enough for a daily commute

sustainable development:
development that occurs without depleting or damaging the natural environment

urban sociology:
the subfield of sociology that focuses on the study of urbanization

urbanization:
the study of the social, political, and economic relationships of cities

white flight:
the migration of economically secure white people from racially mixed urban areas toward the suburbs

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Urbanization. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:TBFyiU0Z@3/Urbanization. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

All rights reserved content

- Measuring America: Our Changing Landscape Graphic. **Provided by**: United States Census Bureau. **Located at**: https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2016/comm/acs-rural-urban.html. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*
- Urban Renewal: The Remaking of Society Hill. **Provided by**: Philadelphia: The Great Experiment. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPuqgOyu8iU. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 20.7: Urbanization on the Rise is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Urbanization

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss human ecology and sociological perspectives on urbanization

Theoretical Perspectives on Urbanization

Let's look at urbanization through the sociological perspectives of functionalism and conflict theory. Functional perspectives on urbanization generally focus on the ecology of the city, while conflict perspective tends to focus on political economy.

Functionalist Views on Urbanization

Human ecology is a functionalist field of study that looks at the relationship between people and their built and natural physical environments (Park 1915). Generally speaking, urban land use and urban population distribution occur in a predictable pattern once we understand how people relate to their living environment. For example, in the United States, we have a transportation system geared to accommodate individuals and families in the form of interstate highways built for cars. In contrast, most parts of Europe emphasize public transportation such as high-speed rail and commuter lines, as well as walking and bicycling. The challenge for a human ecologist working in U.S. urban planning is to design landscapes and waterscapes with natural beauty, while also figuring out how to provide for free-flowing transport of innumerable vehicles, not to mention parking!

Link to Learning

Interested in learning more about the latest research in the field of human ecology? Visit the Society for Human Ecology website to discover what's emerging in this field.

Getting from place to place in urban areas might be more complicated than you think. Read the latest on pedestrian-traffic concerns at the Urban Blog website.

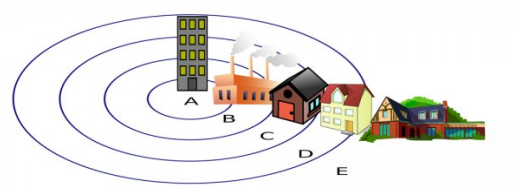


Figure 1. This illustration depicts the zones that make up a city in the concentric zone model. (Photo courtesy of Zeimusu/Wikimedia Commons)

The **concentric zone model** (Burgess 1925) is perhaps the most famous example of human ecology. This model views a city as a series of concentric circular areas, expanding outward from the center of the city, with various "zones" invading adjacent zones (as new categories of people and businesses overrun the edges of nearby zones) and succeeding (then after invasion, the new inhabitants repurpose the areas they have invaded and push out the previous inhabitants). In this model, Zone A, in the heart of the city, is the center of the business and cultural district. Zone B, the concentric circle surrounding the city center, is composed of formerly wealthy homes split into cheap apartments for new immigrant populations; this zone also houses small manufacturers, pawn shops, and other marginal businesses. Zone C consists of the homes of the working class and established ethnic enclaves. Zone D holds wealthy homes, white-collar workers, and shopping centers. Zone E contains the estates of the upper class (in the exurbs) and the suburbs.

Conflict Views on Urbanization

In contrast to the functionalist approach, theoretical models in the conflict perspective focus on the way urban areas change according to specific decisions made by political and economic leaders. These decisions generally benefit the middle and upper classes while exploiting the working and lower classes. A conflict theorist would focus on gentrification—the process of renewal and rebuilding accompanying the influx of middle class or affluent people into deteriorating areas that often displaces earlier, usually poorer residents. Conflict theorists would point out that gentrification occurs when wealthier people buy or rent property in low- income or working class neighborhoods, driving up property values and rent. While it brings money into blighted urban areas, it often comes at the expense of poorer, pre-gentrification residents who cannot afford increased rents and property taxes.

Sociologists Feagin and Parker (1990) suggested three factors by which political and economic leaders control urban growth. *First*, these leaders work alongside each other to influence urban growth and decline, determining where money flows and how land use is regulated. *Second*, exchange value and use value of land are balanced to favor the middle and upper classes so that, for example, public land in poor neighborhoods may be rezoned for use as industrial land. *Finally*, urban development is dependent on both structure (groups such as local government) and agency (individuals including businessmen and activists), and these groups engage in a push-pull dynamic that determines where and how land is actually used. For example, Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) movements are more likely to emerge in middle and upper-class neighborhoods as engaged citizens protest poor environmental practices they fear will affect them, so these groups have more control over the use of local land.

Think It Over

- Considering the concentric zone model, what type of zone were you raised in? Is this the same or different as that of earlier generations in your family?
- What type of zone do you reside in now? Do you find that people from one zone stereotype those from another? If so, how?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14828

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14829

glossary

concentric zone model:
a model of human ecology that views cities as a series of circular rings or zones

human ecology:
a functional perspective that looks at the relationship between people and their built and natural environment

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Urbanization. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:TBFyiU0Z@3/Urbanization. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Section on gentrification. **Provided by**: Boundless Sociology. **Located at**: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/chapter/urban-problems-and-policy/. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 20.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Urbanization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.9: Introduction to the Environment and Society

What you'll learn to do: understand the impact of climate change and pollution on the environment and society



As the population continues to grow at a very fast rate, the human impact on the environment has become a very important concern. As the population grows, so does the need for land, water and other natural habitat. From the air we breath to the water we drink, everything humans create has some type of consequence on the environment. Nations, from core nations to peripheral and semi-peripheral nations alike, have to devise a plan for how to preserve natural resources while this expansion occurs. Human activities create many environmental issues from global warming to pollution, to toxic waste and an abundance of garbage. One attempt to address the issue of environmental damage caused by human activity is the Kyoto Protocol, now known as the Paris Agreement. We'll learn more about these issues and concerns in this section.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to the Environment and Society. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The Environment and Society. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:qcF-h8Jp@4/The-Environment-and-Society. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

Public domain content

- The Garbage Waste Management Waste Society Landfill Image. **Provided by**: Maxpixel. **Located at**: https://www.maxpixel.net/The-Garbage-Waste-Management-Waste-Society-Landfill-879437. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*

This page titled 20.9: Introduction to the Environment and Society is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.10: Environmental Sociology

Learning Outcomes

- Explain climate change and its consequences
- Understand the challenges presented by pollution, garbage, e-waste, and toxic hazards

The subfield of **environmental sociology** studies the way humans interact with their environments. This field is closely related to human ecology, which focuses on the relationship between people and their built and natural environments. This is an area that is garnering more attention as extreme weather patterns and policy battles over climate change dominate the news. A key factor of environmental sociology is the concept of carrying capacity, which describes the maximum amount of life that can be sustained within a given area. While this concept can refer to grazing lands or to rivers, we can also apply it to the earth as a whole.

The Tragedy of the Commons

You might have heard the expression “the tragedy of the commons.” In 1968, an article of the same title written by Garrett Hardin described how a common pasture was ruined by overgrazing. But Hardin was not the first to notice the phenomenon. Back in the 1800s, Oxford economist William Forster Lloyd looked at the devastated public grazing commons and the unhealthy cattle subject to such limited resources, and saw, in essence, that the carrying capacity of the commons had been exceeded. However, since no one was held responsible for the land (as it was open to all), no one was willing to make sacrifices to improve it. Cattle grazers benefitted from adding more cattle to their herds, but they did not have to take on the responsibility of the lands that were being damaged by overgrazing. So there was an incentive for them to add more head of cattle, and no incentive for restraint.

Satellite photos of Africa taken in the 1970s showed this practice to dramatic effect. The images depicted a dark irregular area of more than 300 square miles. There was a large fenced area, where plenty of grass was growing. Outside the fence, the ground was bare and devastated. The reason was simple: the fenced land was privately owned by informed farmers who carefully rotated their grazing animals and allowed the fields to lie fallow periodically. Outside the fence was land used by nomads. Like the herdsmen in 1800s Oxford, the nomads increased their heads of cattle without planning for any possible future impact on the greater good. The soil eroded, the plants died, then the cattle died, and, ultimately, some of the people died.

How does this lesson affect those of us who don’t need to graze our cattle? Well, like the cows, we all need food, water, and clean air to survive. With the increasing world population and the ever-larger megalopolises with tens of millions of people, the limit of the earth’s carrying capacity is called into question. When too many take while giving too little thought to the rest of the population, whether cattle or humans, the result is usually tragedy.



Figure 1. Too little land for grazing means starving cattle. (Photo courtesy of newbeatphoto/flickr)

Climate Change

While you might be more familiar with the phrase “global warming,” **climate change** is the term now used to refer to long-term shifts in temperatures due to human activity and, in particular, the release of greenhouse gases into the environment. The planet as a whole is warming, but the term climate change acknowledges that the short-term variations in this process can include both higher and lower temperatures, despite the overarching trend toward warmth.

Climate change is a deeply controversial subject, despite decades of scientific research and a high degree of scientific consensus that supports its existence. For example, according to NASA scientists, 2013 tied with 2009 and 2006 as the seventh-warmest year since 1880, continuing the overall trend of increasing worldwide temperatures (NASA 2014). More recently, NASA scientists have noted that 2015 surface temperatures were the warmest ever seen since we began keeping records in 1880.[1]One effect of climate

change is more extreme weather. There are increasingly more record-breaking weather phenomena, from the number of Category 4 hurricanes to the amount of snowfall in a given winter. These extremes, while they make for dramatic television coverage, can cause immeasurable damage to crops, property, and even lives. In May 2019, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) released a report explaining how tens of thousands of plant and animal species are in jeopardy of losing their habitats and becoming extinct due to urbanization, deforestation, overfishing, burning fossil fuels, pollution, and through invasive alien plant and animal species. If the world continues to warm at its current pace, even another 0.9 degrees Fahrenheit (0.5 degrees Celsius) will cause coral reefs to dwindle by 70-90%, which will have severe consequences for other plant and animal lives.[2]

So why is there a controversy? The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) recognizes the existence of climate change (as do the scientists at NASA, along with all of America's intelligence agencies–who consider climate change to be matter of national security). Climate change is also quite real to the 192 countries that signed the Kyoto Protocol , a document intended to engage countries in voluntary actions to limit the activity that leads to climate change. The United States signed the document in 1998 during the Clinton administration, but it has not subsequently been submitted to the Senate for ratification. What's the argument about? For one thing, for companies making billions of dollars in the production of goods and services, the idea of costly regulations that would require expensive operational upgrades has been a source of anxiety. They argue via lobbyists that such regulations would be disastrous for the economy. Some go so far as to question the overwhelming scientific consensus cited by environmental activists. There is also a lot of finger-pointing between countries, especially when the issue arises of who will be permitted to pollute and at what levels.

World systems analysis suggests that while historically, core nations (like the United States and Western Europe) were the greatest source of greenhouse gases, they have now evolved into postindustrial societies. Industrialized semi-peripheral and peripheral nations are releasing increasing quantities of carbon emissions. The core nations, now post-industrial and less dependent on greenhouse-gas-causing industries, wish to enact strict protocols regarding the causes of global warming, but the semi-peripheral and peripheral nations rightly point out that they only want the same economic chance to develop their economies. Since they were unduly affected by the progress of core nations, if the core nations now insist on "green" policies, they should pay offsets or subsidies of some kind. There are no easy answers to this conflict. It may well not be "fair" that the core nations benefited from ignorance during their industrial boom.The international community continues to work toward a way to manage climate change. During the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagean, the United States agreed to fund global climate change programs. In September 2010, President Obama announced the Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCI) as part of his administration's Global Development Policy. The GCCI is a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded program intended to improve the economic and environmental sustainability of peripheral and semi-peripheral countries by encouraging the use of alternative, low-carbon, energy sources with financial incentives. Programming is organized around three pillars: (1) climate change adaptation, (2) clean energy, and (3) sustainable landscapes (Troilo 2012). Many of these initiatives were revised or reversed under President Trump, who does not believe that climate change is of major importance. Trump's controversial initiative, called the America First Energy Plan, focuses on building up the American fossil fuel industry and loosen restrictions from the EPA in order to foster economic growth.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14830

Pollution

Pollution describes what happens when contaminants are introduced into an environment (water, air, land) at levels that are damaging. Environments can often sustain a limited amount of contaminants without marked change, and water, air, and soil can "heal" themselves to a certain degree. However, once contaminant levels reach a certain point, the results can be catastrophic.

Water

Look at your watch. Wait fifteen seconds. Then wait another fifteen seconds. In that time, two children have died from lack of access to clean drinking water. Access to safe water is one of the most basic human needs, and it is woefully out of reach for millions of people on the planet. Many of the major diseases that peripheral countries battle, such as diarrhea, cholera, and typhoid, are caused by contaminated water. Often, young children are unable to go to school because they must instead walk several hours a day just to collect potable water for their family. The situation is only getting more dire as the global population increases. Water is a key resource battleground in the twenty-first century.

As every child learns in school, 70 percent of earth is made of water. Despite that figure, there is a finite amount of water usable by humans and it is constantly used and reused in a sustainable water cycle. The way we use this abundant natural resource, however, renders much of it unsuitable for consumption and unable to sustain life. For instance, it takes two and a half liters of water to produce a single liter of Coca-Cola. The company and its bottlers use close to 300 billion liters of water a year, often in locales that are short of useable water (Blanchard 2007).

As a consequence of population concentrations, water close to human settlements is frequently polluted with untreated or partially treated human waste (sewage), chemicals, radioactivity, and levels of heat sufficient to create large “dead zones” incapable of supporting aquatic life. The methods of food production used by many core nations rely on liberal doses of nitrogen and pesticides, which end up back in the water supply. In some cases, water pollution affects the quality of the aquatic life consumed by water and land animals. As we move along the food chain, the pollutants travel from prey to predator. Since humans consume at all levels of the food chain, we ultimately consume the carcinogens, such as mercury, accumulated through several branches of the food web.

Soil

You might have read *The Grapes of Wrath* in English class at some point in time. Steinbeck’s tale of the Joads, driven out of their home by the Dust Bowl, is still playing out today. In China, as in Depression-era Oklahoma, over-tilling soil in an attempt to expand agriculture has resulted in the disappearance of large patches of topsoil.

Soil erosion and desertification are just two of the many forms of soil pollution. In addition, all the chemicals and pollutants that harm our water supplies can also leach into soil with similar effects. Brown zones where nothing can grow are common results of soil pollution. One demand the population boom makes on the planet is a requirement for more food to be produced. The so-called “Green Revolution” in the 1960s saw chemists and world aid organizations working together to bring modern farming methods, complete with pesticides, to developing countries. The immediate result was positive: food yields went up and burgeoning populations were fed. But as time has gone on, these areas have fallen into even more difficult straits as the damage done by modern methods leave traditional farmers with less than they had to start.

Dredging certain beaches in an attempt to save valuable beachfront property from coastal erosion has resulted in greater storm impact on shorelines, and damage to beach ecosystems (Turneffe Atoll Trust 2008). These dredging projects have damaged reefs, sea grass beds, and shorelines and can kill off large swaths of marine life. Ultimately, this damage threatens local fisheries, tourism, and other parts of the local economy.

Garbage



Figure 2. Where should garbage go when you’ve run out of room? This is a question that is increasingly pressing the planet. (Photo courtesy of Kevin Krejci/flickr)

Where is your last cell phone? What about the one before that? Or the huge old television set your family had before flat screens became popular? For most of us, the answer is a sheepish shrug. We don’t pay attention to the demise of old items, and since

electronics drop in price and increase in innovation at an incredible clip, we have been trained by their manufacturers to upgrade frequently.

Garbage creation and control are major issues for most core and industrializing nations, and it is quickly becoming one of the most critical environmental issues faced in the United States. People in the United States buy products, use them, and then throw them away. Did you dispose of your old electronics according to government safety guidelines? Chances are good you didn't even know there are guidelines. Multiply your electronics times a few million, take into account the numerous toxic chemicals they contain, and then imagine either burying those chemicals in the ground or lighting them on fire.

Those are the two primary means of waste disposal in the United States: landfill and incineration. When it comes to getting rid of dangerous toxins, neither is a good choice. Styrofoam and plastics that many of us use every day do not dissolve in a natural way. Burn them, and they release carcinogens into the air. Their improper incineration (intentional or not) adds to air pollution and increases smog. Dump them in landfills, and they do not decompose. As landfill sites fill up, we risk an increase in groundwater contamination.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14831

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14832

What Should Apple (and Friends) Do about E-Waste?



Figure 3. A parking lot filled with electronic waste, known as e-waste. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Army Environmental Command/flickr)

Electronic waste, or e-waste, is one of the fastest growing segments of garbage. And it is far more problematic than even the mountains of broken plastic and rusty metal that plague the environment. E-waste is the name for obsolete, broken, and worn-out electronics—from computers to mobile phones to televisions. The challenge is that these products, which are multiplying at alarming rates thanks in part to planned obsolescence (the designing of products to quickly become outdated and then be replaced by the constant emergence of newer and cheaper electronics), have toxic chemicals and precious metals in them, which makes for a dangerous combination.

So where do they go? Many companies ship their e-waste to developing nations in Africa and Asia to be "recycled." While they are, in some senses, recycled, the result is not exactly clean. In fact, it is one of the dirtiest jobs around. Overseas, without the benefit of environmental regulation, e-waste dumps become a kind of boomtown for entrepreneurs willing to sort through endless stacks of broken-down electronics for tiny bits of valuable copper, silver, and other precious metals. Unfortunately, in their hunt, these workers are exposed to deadly toxins.

Governments are beginning to take notice of the impending disaster, and the European Union, as well as the state of California, put stricter regulations in place. These regulations both limit the amount of toxins allowed in electronics and address the issue of end-of-life recycling. But not surprisingly, corporations, while insisting they are greening their process, often fight stricter regulations. Meanwhile, many environmental groups, including the activist group Greenpeace, have taken up the cause. Greenpeace states that it is working to get companies to:

1. measure and reduce emissions with energy efficiency, renewable energy, and energy policy advocacy
2. make greener, efficient, longer lasting products that are free of hazardous substance
3. reduce environmental impacts throughout company operations, from choosing production materials and energy sources right through to establishing global take-back programs for old products (Greenpeace 2011).

Greenpeace produces annual ratings of how well companies are meeting these goals so consumers can see how brands stack up. For instance, Apple moved from ranking fourth overall to sixth overall from 2011 to 2012. The hope is that consumers will vote with their wallets, and the greener companies will be rewarded.

Further Research

Visit the Cleanups in My Community website to see where environmental hazards have been identified in your backyard, and what is being done about them.

What is your carbon footprint? Find out using the carbon footprint calculator.

Find out more about greening the electronics process by looking at Greenpeace's guide to Greener Electronics.

Air

China's fast-growing economy and burgeoning industry have translated into notoriously poor air quality. Smog hangs heavily over the major cities, sometimes grounding aircraft that cannot navigate through it. Pedestrians and cyclists wear air-filter masks to protect themselves. In Beijing, citizens are skeptical that the government-issued daily pollution ratings are trustworthy. Increasingly, they are taking their own pollution measurements in the hopes that accurate information will galvanize others to action. Given that some days they can barely see down the street, they hope action comes soon (Papenfuss 2011).

Humanity, with its growing numbers, use of fossil fuels, and increasingly urbanized society, is putting too much stress on the earth's atmosphere. The amount of air pollution varies from locale to locale, and you may be more personally affected than you realize. How often do you check air quality reports before leaving your house? Depending on where you live, this question can sound utterly strange or like an everyday matter. Along with oxygen, most of the time we are also breathing in soot, hydrocarbons, carbon, nitrogen, and sulfur oxides.

Much of the pollution in the air comes from human activity. How many college students move their cars across campus at least once a day? Who checks the environmental report card on how many pollutants each company throws into the air before purchasing a cell phone? Many of us are guilty of taking our environment for granted without concern for how everyday decisions add up to a long-term global problem. How many minor adjustments can you think of, like walking instead of driving, that would reduce your overall carbon footprint?

Remember the "tragedy of the commons." Each of us is affected by air pollution. But like the herder who adds one more head of cattle to realize the benefits of owning more cows but who does not have to pay the price of the overgrazed land, we take the benefit of driving or buying the latest cell phones without worrying about the end result. Air pollution accumulates in the body, much like the effects of smoking cigarettes accumulate over time, leading to more chronic illnesses. And in addition to directly affecting human health, air pollution affects crop quality as well as heating and cooling costs. In other words, we all pay a lot more than the price at the pump when we fill up our tank with gas.

Toxic and Radioactive Waste



Figure 4. An aerial view of the Gulf Coast, taken in May 2010, illustrates the damage done by the BP Deep Water Horizon spill. (Photo courtesy of Jeff Warren/flickr)

Radioactivity is a form of air pollution. While nuclear energy promises a safe and abundant power source, increasingly it is looked upon as a danger to the environment and to those who inhabit it. We accumulate nuclear waste, which we must then keep track of long term and ultimately figure out how to store the toxic waste material without damaging the environment or putting future generations at risk.



Figure 5. Oil on the gulf shore beaches caused great destruction, killing marine and land animals and crippling local business. (Photo courtesy of AV8ter/flickr)

The 2011 earthquake in Japan illustrates the dangers of even safe, government-monitored nuclear energy. When disaster occurs, how can we safely evacuate the large numbers of affected people? Indeed, how can we even be sure how far the evacuation radius should extend? Radiation can also enter the food chain, causing damage from the bottom (phytoplankton and microscopic soil organisms) all the way to the top. Once again, the price paid for cheap power is much greater than what we see on the electric bill.

The enormous oil disaster that hit the Louisiana Gulf Coast in 2010 is just one of a high number of environmental crises that have led to toxic residue. They include the pollution of the Love Canal neighborhood of the 1970s to the Exxon *Valdez* oil tanker crash of 1989, the Chernobyl disaster of 1986, and Japan's Fukushima nuclear plant incident following the earthquake in 2011. Often, the stories are not newsmakers, but simply an unpleasant part of life for the people who live near toxic sites such as Centralia, Pennsylvania and Hinkley, California. In many cases, people in these neighborhoods can be part of a **cancer cluster** without realizing the cause.

The Fire Burns On: Centralia, Pennsylvania

There used to be a place called Centralia, Pennsylvania. The town incorporated in the 1860s and once had several thousand residents, largely coal workers. But the story of its demise begins a century later in 1962. That year, a trash-burning fire was lit in the pit of the old abandoned coal mine outside of town. The fire moved down the mineshaft and ignited a vein of coal. It is still burning.

For more than twenty years, people tried to extinguish the underground fire, but no matter what they did, it returned. There was little government action, and people had to abandon their homes as toxic gases engulfed the area and sinkholes developed. The situation drew national attention when the ground collapsed under twelve-year-old Todd Domboski in 1981. Todd was in his yard when a sinkhole four feet wide and 150 feet deep opened beneath him. He clung to exposed tree roots and saved his life; if he had fallen a few feet farther, the heat or carbon monoxide would have killed him instantly.

In 1983, engineers studying the fire concluded that it could burn for another century or more and could spread over nearly 4,000 acres. At this point, the government offered to buy out the town's residents and wanted them to relocate to nearby towns. A few determined Centralians refused to leave, even though the government bought their homes, and they are the only ones who remain. In one field, signs warn people to enter at their own risk, because the ground is hot and unstable. And the fire burns on (DeKok 1986).

Think It Over

- After reading this section, will you change the way you treat your household waste? Explain.
- How do you think the issue of e-waste should be dealt with? Should the responsibility fall to the companies that make the products or the consumer who buys them? Would your buying habits be different if you had to pay to recycle old electronics?
- Can you think of a modern example of the tragedy of the commons, where public use without accountability has created a negative outcome?

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14833

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14834

glossary

cancer cluster:

a geographic area with high levels of cancer within its population

climate change:

long-term shifts in temperature and climate due to human activity

environmental racism: the burdening of economically and socially disadvantaged communities with a disproportionate share of environmental hazards

environmental sociology:

the sociological subfield that addresses the relationship between humans and the environment

e-waste:

the disposal of broken, obsolete, and worn-out electronics

pollution:

the introduction of contaminants into an environment at levels that are damaging

---

1. NASA (January 2016). NOAA Analyses Reveal Record-Shattering Global Warm Temperatures in 2015. Retrieved from https://www.nasa.gov/press-release/nasa-noaa-analyses-reveal-record-shattering-global-warm-temperatures-in-2015. ↵
2. Borenstein, Seth. UN report: Humans accelerating extinction of species. Associated Press. Retrieved from https://www.apnews.com/aaf1091c5aae40b0a110daaf04950672. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Environmental policy of the Donald Trump administrationu2014sentences about America First Energy Plan. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_policy_of_the_Donald_Trump_administration. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The Environment and Society. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:qcF-h8Jp@4/The-Environment-and-Society. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 20.10: Environmental Sociology is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.11: Environmental Racism

Learning Outcomes

- Discuss instances of environmental racism

Environmental Racism

Environmental racism refers to the way in which minority group 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. All around the globe, members of minority groups bear a greater burden of the health problems that result from higher exposure to waste and pollution. This can occur due to unsafe or unhealthy work conditions where no regulations exist (or are enforced) for poor workers, or in neighborhoods that are uncomfortably close to toxic materials.

The statistics on environmental racism are shocking. Research shows that it pervades all aspects of African Americans' lives: environmentally unsound housing, schools with asbestos problems, facilities and playgrounds with lead paint. A twenty-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 African American children are five times more likely to have lead poisoning (the leading environmental health threat for children) than their Caucasian counterparts, and that a disproportionate number of people of color reside in areas with hazardous waste facilities (Bullard et al. 2007). Sociologists with the project are examining how environmental racism is addressed in the long-term cleanup of the environmental disasters caused by Hurricane Katrina.

American Indian Tribes and Environmental Racism

Native Americans are unquestionably victims of environmental racism. The Commission for Racial Justice found that about 50 percent of all American Indians live in communities with uncontrolled hazardous waste sites (Asian Pacific Environmental Network 2002). 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 complicated 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 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 Indian 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). 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 American Indian 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?

Why does environmental racism exist? Certain industries and lax government regulations are the source for environmental racism; government and corporate policies like redlining, zoning, and colorblind adaptation planning cause the problem. Environmental racism persists because factors inhibit residents from preventing these practices—such as low socioeconomic status, and lack of political representation or mobility.

Those with resources and means can more easily raise awareness, money, and public attention to ensure that their communities are unsullied. Examples of this include **NIMBY** (Not In My Back Yard) protests. Chemical plants, airports, landfills, and other municipal or corporate projects are often the subject of NIMBY demonstrations. And equally often, the NIMBYists win, and the objectionable project is moved closer to those who have fewer resources to fight it.

Watch It

Watch this video from Sociology Live! to see more examples of environmental racism.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=580

Think It Over

- NIMBY protests occur when concerned citizens band together to speak up against something that will impact them negatively. Is this a positive or negative trend? Give an example of a NIMBY protest and whether you support it or not.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14835

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14836

glossary

environmental racism:

the burdening of economically and socially disadvantaged communities with a disproportionate share of environmental hazards

NIMBY:

“Not In My Back Yard,” the tendency of people to protest poor environmental practices when those practices will affect them directly

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- The Environment and Society. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:qcF-h8Jp@4/The-Environment-and-Society. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Section on causes of environmental racism. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_racism#cite_note-:5-4. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Environmental Racism. **Authored by**: Sociology Live!. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPB5RzReiIY. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 20.11: Environmental Racism is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.12: Putting It Together- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment

In this module, you learned that the global population is growing and that people are flocking to urban areas. The population growth of some developed countries has slowed, while growth in the developing countries is burgeoning. People move more readily from country to country than ever before. You were introduced to several concepts such as Malthusian doctrine, zero population growth, cornucopia theory, and demographic transition theory. These ideas attempt to explain human interactions both regionally and globally and help us understand the sociological impact of the changing world.



Figure 2. An aerial view of Maldives.

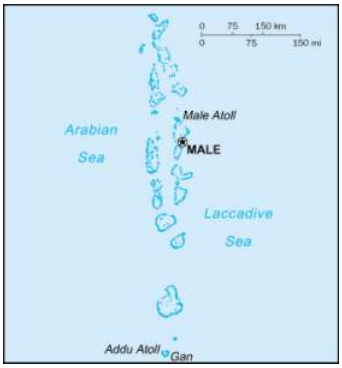


Figure 1. Maldives islands.

Consider the impact of climate change on Maldives. Maldives is a small island nation of 26 atolls, located southeast of India in the Indian Ocean, with a sea-level elevation—the highest elevation in Maldives is about seven feet! The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2007 report predicted the upper limit of the sea level rises will be 23 inches (59 centimeters) by 2100, which means that most of the republic's 200 inhabited islands may need to be abandoned. According to former Maldivian president Mohamed Nasheed, the Maldives are ranked the third most endangered nation due to flooding from climate change. In March and April 2012, Nasheed stated, "If carbon emissions were to stop today, the planet would not see a difference for 60 to 70 years. . .If carbon emissions continue at the rate they are climbing today, my country will be under water in seven years."[1] If the oceans were to rise even ten feet due to the melting polar ice caps, what will become of the nearly 400,000 people who live there? This is not just a concern for the Maldives, but the entire world. During the past decade, the Maldives had increased efforts to protect and preserve its islands, including reducing their dependency on fossil fuels, reclaiming and building up islands, building walls, and improving infrastructure.

The pressures placed on the planet in response to human activity include sustainability issues, global climate change, pollution, and growing global inequality. These are controversial topics that must be dealt with in the coming years.

---

1. Catoe, Linda (April 2012). Endangered island nations call for global action on climate change. The Guilifordian. Retrieved from https://www.guilfordian.com/worldnat...limate-change/. ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Revision, Modification, and Original Content. **Authored by**: Cathy Matresse and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Maldives photo. **Authored by**: Suissgirl. **Provided by**: Pixabay. **Located at**: https://pixabay.com/en/maldives-kuredu-indian-ocean-summer-1095107/. **License**: *CC0: No Rights Reserved*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Maldives description. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Maldives#Protected_areas_of_Maldives. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

Public domain content

- Maldives map. **Authored by**: CIA. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Outline_of_Maldives#/media/File:Maldives-CIA_WFB_Map.png. **License**: *Public Domain: No Known Copyright*

This page titled 20.12: Putting It Together- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.13: Discussion- Population and Urbanization

STEP 1: Search for a recent news article (within the past three weeks) related to population grown or decline, emigration, immigration, gentrification, or the brain drain.

STEP 2: Post the article you found, along with a summary and brief analysis of the article. Next, tie the article into concepts from this module by thinking about if using the sociological imagination. What are your thoughts on the topic? Post your response in at least 200 words.

STEP 3: Return to post on at least TWO responses from other classmates.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: Population and Urbanization . **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 20.13: Discussion- Population and Urbanization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

20.14: Assignment- Population and Urbanization

For this assignment, you will use census data to compare two American cities. You can pick any two cities, but they need to be at least 100 miles apart.

STEP 1: Go to the U.S. census website. Using the census website, dive into Quick Facts (https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fa...e/US/PST045217) and American Fact Finder (https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/...es/index.xhtml) to look up information about your two chosen cities.

Use the data to compare the overall population, the population by age, the population by ethnic group. Also look at all of the data on education, work, housing, income, and poverty. Pick the data you find to be most insightful and **create a chart** that shows a comparison of the 10-15 pieces of data that you find to be most interesting. It should something look like this, although you can pick the most interesting criteria for your first column:

Selected Criteria (this will vary)	**City A**	**City B**
Population		
Median age		
Median gross rent		
Persons per household		
Households with a computer		
Percentage of the population in the labor force		
Persons in poverty		
Women-owned firms		
Minority-owned firms		
Hispanic or Latino		

STEP 2: Write a 300-500 word letter to a friend who is considering moving to either one of these two places. The friend doesn't know much about the areas and your job is to write to him or her to explain the two cities, and provide a list of pros and cons of living in each one. Provide an argument as to why your friend may want to choose one city over the other. Your analysis should include any interesting things you notice in the data. Are these communities diverse, and in what ways? Do you notice any trends?

Rubric

Criteria	**Rating**			**Points**
Census Data	Census data is accurate and chart is completely filled with at least 10 data points to compare between two cities	Chart partially compares data between two cities	Chart is incomplete or does not accurately compare data between two cities	__/10
Letter to friend	Student writes a convincing letter to friend weighing the pros and cons of living in each of the two cities. The letter includes references to the data and trends gleaned from the data.	Student writes letter to friend but the letter only partially pulls from the data and does not reference pros and cons of each city.	Student does not include data in argument to the friend or does not weigh the pros and cons of each city.	__/10
			Total	__/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: Population and Urbanization . **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 20.14: Assignment- Population and Urbanization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

21: Module 18- Social Movements and Social Change

21.1: Why It Matters- Social Movements and Social Change
21.2: Introduction to Collective Behavior
21.3: Collective Behavior
21.4: Levels of Social Movements
21.5: Introduction to Social Movements
21.6: Types and Stages of Social Movements
21.7: Theoretical Perspectives on Social Movements
21.8: Introduction to Social Change
21.9: Causes of Social Change
21.10: Social Change, Technology, and Modernization
21.11: Putting It Together- Social Movements and Social Change
21.12: Assignment- Social Movements
21.13: Discussion- Social Movements

This page titled 21: Module 18- Social Movements and Social Change is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.1: Why It Matters- Social Movements and Social Change

Why summarize the nature and influence of collective behavior and social movements?

There are routine ways that we contribute to the functioning of our society. We follow the laws, we vote, we contact our members of Congress, and we try to get along with one another as best we can. Three hundred years ago, if people wanted something to change, they took matters into their own hands. If they were living in fear of Frankenstein's monster in the castle, they might take up their torches and pitchforks, march up to the castle and make demands until the matter of the monster was settled once and for all.

But sometimes the routine ways we previously shaped society no longer seem adequate to us, so we use other ways to try to change our society for the better, or to prevent changes we do not like. One example of this is Occupy Wall Street, a movement in 2011 that adopted the slogan of "We are the 99%." Protesters gathered first in New York, but then around the country (and globe!) to highlight the economic disparities between the wealthiest 1% and the rest of the population. This type of behavior is known as collective behavior.

In the event we do not like some aspect of our society, we can take action to try to facilitate some type of change. However, collective behavior takes more than just one person. A good example of this is how Cindy Lightner, a mother whose daughter had been killed by a drunk driver, founded the group MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) to encourage people to think about possible consequences before they drink and drive. She started with only a few people helping her draw attention to this issue, but the organization quickly expanded and has been responsible for changing laws related to drinking and driving in all 50 states.[1]

Today, social movements are typically less violent than they may have been hundreds of years ago when villagers took up torches and pitchforks, but now social movements can spread rapidly through social media and become global issues. Instead of small-scale, local activism, some social movements may be international in scope. All of this is made possible through technology and the increase in our global interconnectedness.

---

1. MADD founder's daughter killed by drunk driver (2009). History.com. Retrieved from https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/madd-founders-daughter-killed-by-drunk-driver↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Module introduction. **Authored by**: Cathy Matresse and Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 21.1: Why It Matters- Social Movements and Social Change is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.2: Introduction to Collective Behavior

What you'll learn to do: describe the causes and development of collective behavior



This section will examine collective behavior and differentiate between the three different forms of collective behavior: crowd, mass, and public. You will learn that the relationship between individuals and reasons for assembling are important to distinguishing between collective behavior and collective action. You will then learn the three main sociological theories on collective behavior, each of which provides an analysis of how and why crowd behavior can turn into collective behavior.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Collective Behavior. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Climate change image. **Authored by**: Edward Kimmel. **Provided by**: Wikimedia. **Located at**: https://upload.wikimedia.org/Wikipedia/commons/2/2a/Climate_March_1085_%2834368550705%29.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 21.2: Introduction to Collective Behavior is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.3: Collective Behavior

Learning Outcomes

- Describe different forms of collective behavior and differentiate between types of crowds
- Compare theoretical perspectives on collective behavior: the emergent-norm perspective, value-added theory, and assembling perspective



Figure 1. Is this a good time had by all? Some flash mobs may function as political protests, while others are for fun. This flash mob pillow fight's purpose was to entertain. (Photo courtesy of Mattwi1S0n:/flickr)

Have you ever seen or participated in a **flash mob**? These spontaneous gatherings are often captured on video and shared on the Internet; frequently they even go viral. Humans seek connections and shared experiences. Perhaps experiencing a flash mob event enhances this bond. It certainly interrupts our otherwise mundane routine with a reminder that we are social animals.

Forms of Collective Behavior

Flash mobs are examples of **collective behavior**, non-institutionalized activity in which several people voluntarily engage in behavior not governed by societal norms. Therefore a flash mob qualifies, but people who just happen to be walking though a town square on their way home do not. It is not necessarily structured, as a population of teens adopting a favorite singer's hairstyle is also an example of collective behavior. In short, collective behavior is any group behavior that is not mandated or regulated by an institution.

Collective behavior differs from group behavior in three ways:

- Collective behavior involves limited and short-lived social interactions, while groups tend to remain together longer.
- Collective behavior has no clear social boundaries; anyone can be a member of the collective, while group membership is usually more discriminating.
- Collective behavior generates weak and unconventional norms, while groups tend to have stronger and more conventional norms.

There are three primary forms of collective behavior: the crowd, the mass, and the public.

It takes a fairly large number of people in close proximity to form a **crowd** (Lofland 1993). Examples include a group of people attending an Ani DiFranco concert, tailgating at a Patriots game, or attending a worship service. Turner and Killian (1993) identified four types of crowds. **Casual crowds** consist of people who are in the same place at the same time but who aren't really interacting, such as people standing in line at the post office. **Conventional crowds** are those who come together for a scheduled event that occurs regularly, like a religious service. **Expressive crowds** are people who join together to express emotion, often at funerals, weddings, or the like. The final type, **acting crowds,** focuses on a specific goal or action, such as a protest movement or riot.

In addition to the different types of crowds, collective groups can also be identified in two other ways. A **mass** is a relatively large number of people with a common interest, though they may not be in close proximity (Lofland 1993), such as players of the game Fortnite. A **public**, on the other hand, is an unorganized, relatively diffused group of people who share ideas, such as the Libertarian political party. While these two types of crowds are similar, they are not the same. To distinguish between them, remember that members of a mass share interests, whereas members of a public share ideas.

Watch It

While there is debate over what should be included under the label of “collective behavior” among sociologists today, often included are additional behaviors like: riots, mass hysteria and fads. These are explained below and in the following video.

- A riot is a form of civil disorder characterized by disorganized groups lashing out in a sudden and intense rash of violence, vandalism, or other crime. While individuals may attempt to lead or control a riot, riots are typically chaotic and exhibit herd-like behavior. Riots often occur in reaction to a perceived grievance or out of dissent. Historically, riots have occurred due to poor working or living conditions, government oppression, taxation or conscription, conflicts between races or religions, the outcome of a sporting event, or frustration with legal channels through which to air grievances. Riots typically involve vandalism and the destruction of private and public property. Riots, while destructive, have often played a role in social change.
- “Mass hysteria” is a phrase used to describe a large group of people who share a mental state of fear or anxiety.
- A fad is a fashion that gains salience quickly in a culture or subculture, and remains popular for a brief period of time before losing its appeal dramatically.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=594

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14837

Theoretical Perspectives on Collective Behavior

Early collective behavior theories (LeBon 1895; Blumer 1969) focused on the irrationality of crowds. Eventually, those theorists who viewed crowds as uncontrolled groups of irrational people were supplanted by theorists who viewed the behavior some crowds engaged in as the rational behavior of logical beings.

Emergent-Norm Perspective



Figure 2. According to the emergent-norm perspective, Hurricane Katrina victims sought needed supplies for survival, but to outsiders their behavior would normally be seen as looting. (Photo courtesy of Infrogmation/Wikimedia Commons)

Sociologists Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian (1993) built on earlier sociological ideas and developed what is known as emergent norm theory. They believe that the norms experienced by people in a crowd may be disparate and fluctuating. They emphasize the importance of these norms in shaping crowd behavior, especially those norms that shift quickly in response to changing external factors. **Emergent norm theory** asserts that, in this circumstance, people perceive and respond to the crowd situation with their particular (individual) set of norms, which may change as the crowd experience evolves. This focus on the individual component of interaction reflects a symbolic interactionist perspective.

For Turner and Killian, the process begins when individuals suddenly find themselves in a new situation, or when an existing situation suddenly becomes strange or unfamiliar. For example, think about human behavior during Hurricane Katrina. New Orleans was decimated and people were trapped without supplies or a way to evacuate. In these extraordinary circumstances, what outsiders saw as “looting” was defined by those involved as seeking needed supplies for survival. Normally, individuals would not wade into a corner gas station and take canned goods without paying, but given that they were suddenly in a greatly changed situation, they established a norm that they felt was reasonable.

Once individuals find themselves in a situation ungoverned by previously established norms, they interact in small groups to develop new guidelines on how to behave. According to the emergent-norm perspective, crowds are not viewed as irrational, impulsive, uncontrolled groups. Instead, norms develop and are accepted as they fit the situation. While this theory offers insight into why norms develop, it leaves undefined the nature of norms, how they come to be accepted by the crowd, and how they spread through the crowd.

Value-Added Theory

Neil Smelser's (1962) meticulous categorization of crowd behavior, called **value-added theory,** is a perspective within the functionalist tradition based on the idea that several conditions must be in place for collective behavior to occur. Each condition adds to the likelihood that collective behavior will occur.

- The first condition is *structural conduciveness*, which occurs when people are aware of the problem and have the opportunity to gather, ideally in an open area.
- *Structural strain*, the second condition, refers to people's expectations about the situation at hand being unmet, causing tension and strain.
- The next condition is the *growth and spread of a generalized belief*, wherein a problem is clearly identified and attributed to a person or group.
- *Precipitating factors is the fourth condition which* spurs collective behavior; this is the emergence of a dramatic event.
- The fifth condition is *mobilization for action*, when leaders emerge to direct a crowd to action. The final condition *social control*, relates to action by the agents and is the only way to end the collective behavior episode (Smelser 1962).



Figure 3. Agents of social control bring collective behavior to an end. (Photo courtesy of hozinja/flickr)

A real-life example of these conditions occurred after the fatal police shooting of teenager Michael Brown, an unarmed eighteen-year-old African American, in Ferguson, MO on August 9, 2014. The shooting drew national attention almost immediately. A large group of mostly black, local residents assembled in protest—a classic example of structural conduciveness. When the community perceived that the police were not acting in the people's interest and were withholding the name of the officer, structural strain became evident. A growing generalized belief evolved as the crowd of protesters were met with heavily armed police in military-style protective uniforms accompanied by an armored vehicle. The precipitating factor of the arrival of the police spurred greater collective behavior as the residents mobilized by assembling a parade down the street. Ultimately they were met with tear gas, pepper spray, and rubber bullets used by the police acting as agents of social control. The element of social control escalated over the following days until August 18, when the governor called in the National Guard.

Assembling Perspective

Clark McPhail (1991), a symbolic interactionist, developed **assembling perspective,** another system for understanding collective behavior that credited individuals in crowds as rational beings. Unlike previous theories, this theory refocuses attention from collective behavior to collective action. Remember that **collective behavior** is a *noninstitutionalized gathering*, whereas **collective action** is *based on a shared interest*. McPhail's theory focused primarily on the processes associated with crowd behavior, plus the lifecycle of gatherings. He identified several instances of convergent or collective behavior, as shown on the chart below.

Clark McPhail identified various circumstances of convergent and collective behavior (McPhail 1991).

Type of crowd	Description	Example
Convergence clusters	Family and friends who travel together	Carpooling parents take several children to the movies
Convergent orientation	Group all facing the same direction	A semi-circle around a stage
Collective vocalization	Sounds or noises made collectively	Screams on a roller coaster
Collective verbalization	Collective and simultaneous participation in a speech or song	Pledge of Allegiance in the school classroom
Collective gesticulation	Body parts forming symbols	The YMCA dance
Collective manipulation	Objects collectively moved around	Holding signs at a protest rally
Collective locomotion	The direction and rate of movement to the event	Children running to an ice cream truck

As useful as this is for understanding the components of how crowds come together, many sociologists criticize its lack of attention on the large cultural context of the described behaviors, instead focusing on individual actions.

Think It Over

- Discuss the differences between a mass and a crowd. What is an example of each? What sets them apart? What do they share in common?
- Can you think of a time when your behavior in a crowd was dictated by the circumstances? Give an example of emergent-norm perspective, using your own experience.
- Discuss the differences between an acting crowd and a collective crowd. Give examples of each.
- Imagine you are at a rally protesting nuclear energy use. Walk us through the hypothetical rally using the value-added theory, imagining it meets all the stages.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14838

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14839

glossary

acting crowds:
crowds of people who are focused on a specific action or goal

assembling perspective:
a theory that credits individuals in crowds as behaving as rational thinkers and views crowds as engaging in purposeful behavior and collective action

casual crowds:
people who share close proximity without really interacting

collective behavior:
a noninstitutionalized activity in which several people voluntarily engage

conventional crowds:
people who come together for a regularly scheduled event

crowd:
a fairly large number of people who share close proximity

emergent norm theory:
a perspective that emphasizes the importance of social norms in crowd behavior

expressive crowds:
crowds who share opportunities to express emotions

flash mob:
a large group of people who gather together in a spontaneous activity that lasts a limited amount of time

mass:
a relatively large group with a common interest, even if they may not be in close proximity

public:
an unorganized, relatively diffuse group of people who share ideas

value-added theory:
a functionalist perspective theory that posits that several preconditions must be in place for collective behavior to occur

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Collective Behavior. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:IRJvnGsS@6/Collective-Behavior. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Section on collective behavior. **Provided by**: Boundless. **Located at**: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/chapter/social-change-and-collective-behavior/. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Aspects of Collective Behavior Fads, Mass Hysteria, and Riot. **Provided by**: Khan Academy. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKq1FgPAAVs. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 21.3: Collective Behavior is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.4: Levels of Social Movements

Learning Outcomes

- Describe social movements on a local, state, national, and global level

Social movements are purposeful, organized groups that strive to work toward a common social goal. While most of us learned about social movements in history classes, we may not be aware of the fundamental changes they caused —and we may be completely unfamiliar with the trend toward global social movements. But from the anti-tobacco movement that has worked to outlaw smoking in public buildings and raise the cost of cigarettes, to political uprisings throughout the Arab world, social movements have moved out of the local sphere and, thanks to media and technology, are creating social change on a global scale.

Levels of Social Movements

Movements happen in our towns, in our nation, and around the world. No doubt you can think of many social movements that have occurred on all of these levels, especially since modern technology has allowed us a near-constant stream of information about the quest for social change around the world. Let's take a look at examples of social movements, from local to global.

Local

Chicago is a city of highs and lows, from corrupt politicians and failing schools to innovative education programs and a thriving arts scene. Not surprisingly, it has been home to a number of social movements over time. Currently, AREA Chicago is a social movement focused on "building a socially just city" (AREA Chicago 2011). The organization seeks to "create relationships and sustain community through art, research, education, and activism" (AREA Chicago 2011). The movement offers online tools like the Radicalendar—a calendar for getting radical and connected—and events such as an alternative to the traditional Independence Day picnic. Through its offerings, AREA Chicago gives local residents a chance to engage in a movement to help work toward social justice and urban reform.

State



Figure 1. Texas Secede! is an organization which would like Texas to secede from the United States. (Photo courtesy of Tim Pearce/flickr)

At the other end of the political spectrum from AREA Chicago is the Texas Secede! social movement in Texas. This statewide organization promotes the idea that Texas can and should secede from the United States to become an independent republic. The organization, which as of 2014 has over 6,000 "likes" on Facebook, references both Texas and national history in promoting secession. The movement encourages Texans to return to their rugged and individualistic roots, and to stand up to what proponents believe is the theft of their rights and property by the U.S. government (Texas Secede! 2009).

National

A recent polarizing national issue that helped spawn many activist groups was gay marriage. While same-sex marriage has been legal nationwide since June 26, 2015, the issue was hotly contested on both sides.

The Human Rights Campaign, a nationwide organization that advocates for LGBTQ+ civil rights, has been active for over thirty years, and claims more than a million members. One focus of the organization was its Americans for Marriage Equality campaign. Using public celebrities such as athletes, musicians, and political figures, it sought to engage the public in the issue of equal rights under the law. The campaign raised awareness of the over 1,100 different rights, benefits, and protections provided on the basis of

marital status under federal law and sought to educate the public about why these protections should be available to all committed couples regardless of gender (Human Rights Campaign 2014).

A movement on the opposite end was the National Organization for Marriage, an organization that funds campaigns to stop same-sex marriage (National Organization for Marriage 2014). Both these organizations worked on the national stage and sought to engage people through grassroots efforts to push their message.

Global

Social organizations worldwide take stands on such general areas of concern as poverty, sex trafficking, and the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in food. **Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)** are sometimes formed to support such movements, such as the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (FOAM). Global efforts to reduce poverty are represented by the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM), among others. The Fair Trade movement exists to protect and support food producers in developing countries. Occupy Wall Street, although initially a local movement, also went global throughout Europe and, as the chapter's introductory photo shows, the Middle East.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14840

glossary

NGO:
nongovernmental organizations working globally for numerous humanitarian and environmental causes

social movement:
a purposeful organized group hoping to work toward a common social goal

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Social Movements. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:zqE5zZje@5/Social-Movements. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 21.4: Levels of Social Movements is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.5: Introduction to Social Movements

What you'll learn to do: explain types, stages, and theories of social movements



Figure 1. Elbert Howard, one of the founders of the Black Panther Party, lecturing in Amsterdam. The Black Panther Party was part of the greater Black Power movement, which advocated for black pride, empowerment, and equality. The group was founded in the Bay Area of California in 1966, and reached its peak influence later in the decade.

How do you distinguish one social movement from the other? How do social movements evolve and create substantial change in society? This section will help you distinguish between four types of social movements according to their collective goals. You'll also learn about the life cycle of a social movement—how they get started, gain momentum, and decline.

CC licensed content, Original

- Introduction to Types of Social Movements. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Elbert Howard at Black Panther Movement. **Provided by**: Wikimedia. **Located at**: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Albert_Howard_hield_lezing_over_Black_Panther_beweging_in_USA_in_Mozes_en_Aaro,_Bestanddeelnr_923-1651.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 21.5: Introduction to Social Movements is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.6: Types and Stages of Social Movements

Learning Outcomes

- Distinguish between different types of social movements
- Describe and apply the four stages of social movements

Types of Social Movements

We know that social movements can occur on the local, national, or even global stage. Are there other patterns or classifications that can help us understand them? Sociologist David Aberle (1966) addresses this question by developing categories that distinguish among social movements by considering 1) what it is the movement wants to change and 2) how much change they want. He described four types of social movements, including: alternative, redemptive, reformative, and revolutionary social movements.

- **Alternative movements** are typically focused on self-improvement and limited, specific changes to individual beliefs and behavior. These include things like Alcoholics Anonymous, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), and Planned Parenthood.
- **Redemptive movements** (sometimes called religions movements) are "meaning seeking," are focused on a specific segment of the population, and their goal is to provoke inner change or spiritual growth in individuals. Some sects fit in this category.
- **Reformative social movements**, se seek to change something specific about the social structure. They may seek a more limited change, but are targeted at the entire population. Environmental movements, the women's suffrage movement, or the more contemporary "Buy Nothing Day", which protests the rampant consumerism of Black Friday, are examples of reformative movements.
- **Revolutionary movements** seek to completely change every aspect of society—their goal is to change all of society in a dramatic way. Examples include the Civil Rights Movement or the political movements, such as a push for communism.

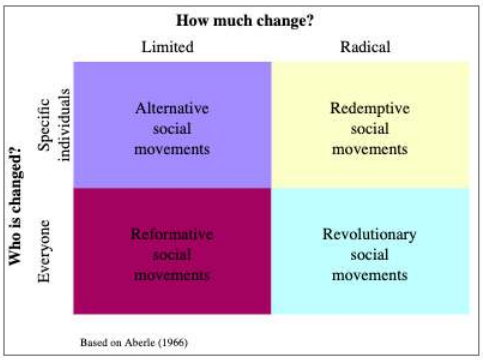


Figure 1. David Aberle identified these four types of social movements, with some types of movements targeting either specific individuals or everyone, while some want limited changes, and others are more radical.

Other helpful categories that are helpful for sociologists to describe and distinguish between types of social movements include:

- The next stage of the development of a social movement is *institutionalization*, when it becomes more organized. In the case of Black Lives Matter, the movement grew into a national network of over 30 local chapters between 2014 and 2016. The overall Black Lives Matter movement, however, is a decentralized network and has no formal hierarchy. The movement still has a strong presence and has even joined forces with other, more systematically organized groups, such as the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL). The is a coalition of groups across the United States which represent the interests of black communities. It was formed in 2014 as a response to sustained and increasingly visible violence against black communities, with the purpose of creating a united front and establishing a political platform. The collective, also known as a social movement sector, is made up of more than 150 organizations, with members such as the Black Lives Matter Network, the National Conference of Black Lawyers, and the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights.

Link to Learning: Black Lives Matter

Watch this video "BLM 5th Anniversary Trailer" as it explains the initial stages and goals of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14842

Occupy Wall Street

Perhaps the social movement that ran the most contrary to theory in recent history is Occupy Wall Street (OWS). Although it contains many of the classic developmental elements of a social movement described in this module, it is set apart by its lack of a single message, its leaderless organization, and its target—financial institutions instead of the government. OWS baffled much of the public, and certainly the mainstream media, leading many to ask, "Who are they, and what do they want?"

Watch It: Occupy Wall Street

On July 13, 2011, the 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 2010 political uprising that began in Tunisia and spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa, including Egypt's Tahrir Square in Cairo. Although OWS was a reaction to the continuing financial chaos that resulted from the 2008 market meltdown and not a political movement, the Arab Spring was its catalyst.

Manuel Castells (2012) notes that the years leading up to the Occupy movement had witnessed a dizzying increase in the disparity of wealth in the United States, stemming back to the 1980s. The top 1 percent in the nation had secured 58 percent of the economic growth in the 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 now 350 times that of the average worker, compared to less than 50 times in 1983 (AFL-CIO 2014). The country's leading financial institutions were, to many, clearly to blame for the crisis but dubbed "too big to fail." These big banks 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 over $700 billion of taxpayer money. According to many reports, that same year, top executives and traders received large bonuses.

On September 17, 2011, an anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution, the occupation began. One thousand outraged protestors 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 began spreading throughout the nation, and its members started calling themselves "the 99 percent." More than a thousand cities and towns had Occupy demonstrations.

This video gives an idea of the protest—what it looked like, and how it played out.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=600

In answer to the question "Who are they?" Castells noted ". . . by and large the movement was made up of a large majority of democratic voters, as well as of politically independent minded people who were in search of new forms of changing the world . . . " (Castells 2012). What do they want? Castells has dubbed OWS "A non-demand movement: The process is the message." Using Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and live-stream video, the protesters conveyed a multifold message with a long list of reforms and social change, including the need to address the rising disparity of wealth, the influence of money on election outcomes, the notion of "corporate personhood," a corporatized political system (to be replaced by "direct democracy"), political favoring of the rich, and rising student debt. Regardless, some in the media appeared confused about the protestors' intentions, and articles carried titles like, "The Wall Street Protesters: What the Hell Do They Want?" (Gell 2011) from *The New York Observer*, and person-in-the-street quotations like, "I think they're idiots. They have no agenda . . . " from the *Los Angeles Times* (Le Tellier 2012).

The late James C. Davies suggested in his 1962 paper, "Toward a Theory of Revolution" (from the *American Sociological Review*, Vol, 27 Issue 1) that revolution depends upon the mood of the people, and that it is extremely unlikely those in absolute poverty will be able to overturn a government, simply because the government has infinitely more power. Instead, a revolution

is more possible when expected need satisfaction and actual need satisfaction are out of sync. As actual need satisfaction trends downward and away from what a formerly prosperous people have come to expect—tracing a curve that looks somewhat like an upside-down J and is called the Davies-J curve—the gap between expectations and reality widens. Eventually an intolerable point is reached, and revolution occurs. Thus, change comes not from the very bottom of the social hierarchy, but from somewhere in the middle. Indeed, the Arab Spring was driven by mostly young people whose education had offered promise and expectations that were thwarted by corrupt autocratic governments. Occupy Wall Street too came not from the bottom but from people in the middle, who exploited the power of social media to enhance communication.

Think It Over

- Do you think social media is an important tool in creating social change? Why, or why not? Defend your opinion.
- Describe a social movement in the decline stage. What is its issue? Why has it reached this stage?

glossary

alternative movements:
social movements that limit themselves to self-improvement changes in individuals

reform movements:
movements that seek to change something specific about the social structure

religious/redemptive movements:
movements that work to promote inner change or spiritual growth in individuals

revolutionary movements:
movements that seek to completely change every aspect of society

social movement organization:
a single social movement group

social movement sector:
the multiple social movement industries in a society, even if they have widely varying constituents and goals

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Social Movements. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:zqE5zZje@5/Social-Movements. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- How much change? Image. **Provided by**: Boundless. **Located at**: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/chapter/social-change-and-collective-behavior/. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Categoies of Social Movements. **Provided by**: Boundless. **Located at**: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-sociology/chapter/social-movements/. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Types of Social Movement. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_movement. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Background information on Black Lives Matter. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Lives_Matter. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Movement for Black Lives description. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Movement_for_Black_Lives. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Social Media Fuel Wall Street Protest. **Provided by**: VOA News. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Cca6YViKFU. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

---

This page titled 21.6: Types and Stages of Social Movements is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.7: Theoretical Perspectives on Social Movements

Learning Objectives.

- Discuss theoretical perspectives on social movements, like resource mobilization, framing, and new social movement theory

Theoretical Perspectives on Social Movements

Most theories of social movements are called collective action theories, indicating the purposeful nature of this form of collective behavior. The following three theories are but a few of the many classic and modern theories developed by social scientists.



Figure 1. After a devastating earthquake in 2010, Twitter and the Red Cross raised millions for Haiti relief efforts through phone donations alone. (Photo courtesy of Cambodia4KidsOrg/flickr)

Resource Mobilization

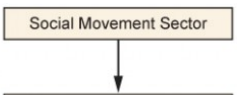
McCarthy and Zald (1977) conceptualize **resource mobilization theory** as a way to explain movement success in terms of the ability to acquire resources and mobilize individuals. Resources are primarily time and money, and the more of both, the greater the power of organized movements. Numbers of social movement organizations (SMOs), which are single social movement groups, with the same goals constitute a social movement industry (SMI). Together they create what McCarthy and Zald (1977) refer to as "the sum of all social movements in a society."

Resource Mobilization and the Civil Rights Movement

An example of resource mobilization theory is activity of the civil rights movement in the decade 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, thus constituting an **existing social movement sector**, which is the multiple social movement industries in a society, even if they have widely varying constituents and goals. The civil rights movement had also existed well before Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man. Less known is that Parks was a member of the NAACP and trained in leadership (A&E Television Networks, LLC. 2014). But her action that day was spontaneous and unplanned (Schmitz 2014). Her arrest triggered a public outcry that led to the famous Montgomery bus boycott, turning the movement into 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 car pools. 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**, which is the collection of the social movement organizations that are striving toward similar goals, was growing.

Martin Luther King Jr. emerged during these events to become the charismatic leader of the movement, gained respect from elites in the federal government, and aided by even more emerging SMOs such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), among others. Several still exist today. Although the movement in that period was an overall success, and laws were changed (even if not attitudes), the "movement" continues. So do struggles to keep the gains that were made, even as the U.S. Supreme Court has recently weakened the Voter Rights Act of 1965, once again making it more difficult for black Americans and other minorities to vote.



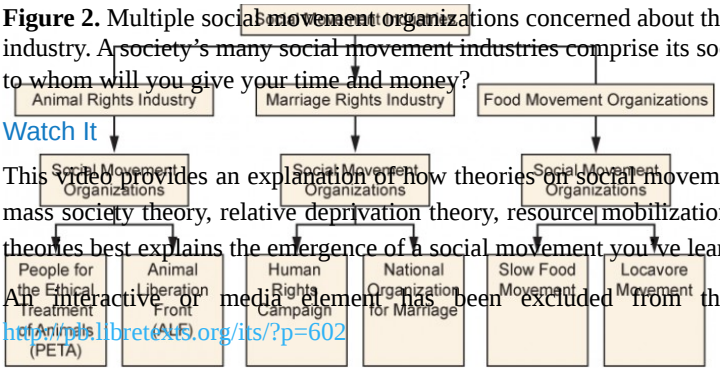


Figure 2. Multiple social movement organizations concerned about the same issue form a social movement industry. A society's many social movement industries comprise its social movement sector. With so many options, to whom will you give your time and money?

Watch It

This video provides an explanation of how theories on social movements have evolved over time. For example, you'll learn about mass society theory, relative deprivation theory, resource mobilization theory, and rational choice theory. Consider which of these theories best explains the emergence of a social movement you've learned about in this module.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=602

Framing/Frame Analysis

Over the past several decades, sociologists have developed the concept of frames to explain how individuals identify and understand social events and which norms they should follow in any given situation (Goffman 1974; Snow et al. 1986; Benford and Snow 2000). Imagine entering a restaurant. Your "frame" immediately provides you with a behavior template. It probably does not occur to you to wear pajamas to a fine-dining establishment, throw food at other patrons, or spit your drink onto the table. However, eating food at a sleepover pizza party provides you with an entirely different behavior template. It might be perfectly acceptable to eat in your pajamas and maybe even throw popcorn at others or guzzle drinks from cans.

Successful social movements use three kinds of frames (Snow and Benford 1988) to further their goals. The first type, **diagnostic framing**, states the problem in a clear, easily understood way. When applying diagnostic frames, there are no shades of gray: instead, there is the belief that what "they" do is wrong and this is how "we" will fix it. The anti-gay marriage movement is an example of diagnostic framing with its uncompromising insistence that marriage is only between a man and a woman. **Prognostic framing**, the second type, offers a solution and states how it will be implemented. Some examples of this frame, when looking at the issue of marriage equality as framed by the anti-gay marriage movement, include the plan to restrict marriage to "one man/one woman" or to allow only "civil unions" instead of marriages. As you can see, there may be many competing prognostic frames even within social movements adhering to similar diagnostic frames. Finally, **motivational framing** is the call to action: what should you do once you agree with the diagnostic frame and believe in the prognostic frame? These frames are action-oriented. In the gay marriage movement, a call to action might encourage you to vote "no" on Proposition 8 in California (a move to limit marriage to male-female couples), or conversely, to contact your local congressperson to express your viewpoint that marriage should be restricted to male-female couples.


(a)

(b)

(c)

Figure 3. Extension occurs when social movements have sympathetic causes. Women's rights, racial equality, and LGBT advocacy are all human rights issues. (Photos (a) and (b) courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; Photo (c) courtesy of Charlie Nguyen/flickr)

With so many similar diagnostic frames, some groups find it best to join together to maximize their impact. When social movements link their goals to the goals of other social movements and merge into a single group, a **frame alignment process** (Snow et al. 1986) occurs—an ongoing and intentional means of recruiting participants to the movement.

This frame alignment process has four aspects: bridging, amplification, extension, and transformation. *Bridging* describes a "bridge" that connects uninvolved individuals and unorganized or ineffective groups with social movements that, though structurally unconnected, nonetheless share similar interests or goals. These organizations join together to create a new, stronger social movement organization. Can you think of examples of different organizations with a similar goal that have banded together?

In the *amplification* model, organizations seek to expand their core ideas to gain a wider, more universal appeal. By expanding their ideas to include a broader range, they can mobilize more people for their cause. For example, the Slow Food movement extends its arguments in support of local food to encompass reduced energy consumption, pollution, obesity from eating more healthfully, and more.

In *extension*, social movements agree to mutually promote each other, even when the two social movement organization's goals don't necessarily relate to each other's immediate goals. This often occurs when organizations are sympathetic to each others' causes, even if they are not directly aligned, such as women's equal rights and the civil rights movement.

Transformation means a complete revision of goals. Once a movement has succeeded, it risks losing relevance. If it wants to remain active, the movement has to change with the transformation or risk becoming obsolete. For instance, when the women's suffrage movement gained women the right to vote, members turned their attention to advocating equal rights and campaigning to elect women to office. In short, transformation is an evolution in the existing diagnostic or prognostic frames that generally achieves a total conversion of the movement.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14846

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14843

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14845



Figure 4. In many ways, this mask, which perhaps became infamous due to its use by the "hacktivist" group Anonymous, has come to stand for revolution and social change around the world. (Photo courtesy of Coco Curranski/flickr)

New Social Movement Theory

New social movement theory, a term developed by European social scientists in the 1950s and 1960s, attempts to explain the proliferation of postindustrial and postmodern movements that are difficult to analyze using traditional social movement theories. Rather than being one specific theory, it is more of a perspective that revolves around understanding movements 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 wellbeing, but on issues related to human rights (such as gay rights or pacifism).

Some of these more complex interrelated movements include ecofeminism, which focuses on the patriarchal society as the source of environmental problems, and the transgender rights movement. 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

The movement to legalize marijuana can be an example of a New Social Movement theory as it focuses on changing the culture of the United States by assimilating a previous illegal substance into something people could legalize use in their everyday life thus creating a new norm for what is considered deviant in society. The early history of marijuana in the United States includes its use as an over-the-counter medicine as well as various industrial applications. Its recreational use eventually became a focus of regulatory concern. Public opinion, swayed by a powerful propaganda campaign by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics in the 1930s, remained firmly opposed to the use of marijuana for decades. In the 1936 church-financed propaganda film "Reefer Madness," marijuana was portrayed as a dangerous drug that caused insanity and violent behavior.

One reason for the recent shift in public attitudes about marijuana, and the social movement pushing for its decriminalization, is a more-informed understanding of its effects that largely contradict its earlier characterization. The public has also become aware that penalties for possession have been significantly disproportionate along racial lines. U.S. Census and FBI data reveal that blacks in the United States are between two to eight times more likely than whites to be arrested for possession of marijuana (Urbina 2013; Matthews 2013). Further, the resulting incarceration costs and prison overcrowding are causing states to look closely at decriminalization and legalization.

In 2012, marijuana was legalized for recreational purposes in Washington and Colorado through ballot initiatives approved by voters. While it remains a Schedule One controlled substance under federal law, the federal government has indicated that it will not intervene in state decisions to ease marijuana laws. Cannabis is now legal for recreational use in over 10 states, legal for medical use for other 33, and decriminalized in many others.[1]

Watch IT

Watch this Ted talk by Greg Satell to learn more about the things that make a successful social movement.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=602

Think It Over

- Think about a social movement industry dealing with a cause that is important to you. How do the different social movement organizations of this industry seek to engage you? Which techniques do you respond to? Why?
- Do you think social media is an important tool in creating social change? Why, or why not? Defend your opinion.
- Describe a social movement in the decline stage. What is its issue? Why has it reached this stage?

---

diagnostic framing:
a the social problem that is stated in a clear, easily understood manner

frame alignment process:
using bridging, amplification, extension, and transformation as an ongoing and intentional means of recruiting participants to a movement

motivational framing:
a call to action

new social movement theory:
a theory that attempts to explain the proliferation of postindustrial and postmodern movements that are difficult to understand using traditional social movement theories

prognostic framing:
social movements that state a clear solution and a means of implementation

resource mobilization theory:
a theory that explains social movements' success in terms of their ability to acquire resources and mobilize individuals

social movement industry:
the collection of the social movement organizations that are striving toward similar goals

social movement organization:
a single social movement group

social movement sector:
the multiple social movement industries in a society, even if they have widely varying constituents and goals

1. Berke, Jeremy and Skye Gould (March 2016). New Jersey lawmakers postponed a critical vote to legalize marijuana — here are all the states where pot is legal. Business Insider. Retrieved from https://www.businessinsider.com/legal-marijuana-states-2018-1↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Social Movements. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:zqE5zZje@5/Social-Movements. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.
- Explanatory sentence on goals of new social movements. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/New_social_movements. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

All rights reserved content

- Social movements | Society and Culture | MCAT . **Provided by**: Khan Academy. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7YPTD7QwR4. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*
- Why do some movements succeed, while others fail?. **Authored by**: Greg Satell. **Provided by**: TEDx. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOt1dLVyHjQ. **License**: *Other*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

This page titled 21.7: Theoretical Perspectives on Social Movements is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.8: Introduction to Social Change

What you'll learn to do: examine factors leading to social change, especially technology



Figure 1. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are just a few examples of social media that increasingly shape how we interact with the world. (Photo courtesy of Khalid Albaih/flickr)

Technology has changed how we interact with each other. It has turned "friend" into a verb and has made it possible to share mundane news ("My dog just threw up under the bed! Ugh!") with hundreds or even thousands of people who might know you only slightly, if at all. You might be glued to your cell phone, even when you should be focused on driving your car, or you might text in class instead of listening to the professor's lecture. When we have the ability to stay constantly connected to a data stream, it is easy to lose focus on the here and now.

At the same time that technology is expanding the boundaries of our social circles, various media are also changing how we perceive and interact with each other. We don't only use social media to keep in touch with friends; we also use it to "like" certain television shows, products, or celebrities. Even television is no longer a one-way medium; it is an interactive one. We are encouraged to tweet, text, or call in to vote for contestants in everything from singing competitions to matchmaking endeavors—bridging the gap between our entertainment and our own lives.

How does technology change our lives for the better? Or does it? When you tweet a social cause, share a video on YouTube, or cut and paste a status update about cancer awareness on Facebook, are you promoting social change? Does the immediate and constant flow of information mean we are more aware and engaged than any society before us? Or are reality t.v. shows today's version of ancient Rome's "bread and circuses"–distractions and entertainment to keep the working classes complacent about the inequities of their society?

Throughout this section, we will use our sociological imagination to explore how media and technology impact society, as well as look at other causes of social change.

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Social Change. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:vi4eB2eh@5/Social-Change. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 21.8: Introduction to Social Change is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.9: Causes of Social Change

Learning Outcomes

- Explain how technology, social institutions, population, and the environment can bring about social change

Collective behavior and social movements are just two of the forces driving social change, which is the change in society created through social movements as well as external factors like environmental shifts or technological innovations. Essentially, any disruptive shift in the status quo, be it intentional or random, human-caused or natural, can lead to social change. Below are some of the likely causes.

Causes of Social Change

Changes to technology, social institutions, population, and the environment, alone or in some combination, create change. Below, we will discuss how these act as agents of social change, and we'll examine real-world examples. We will focus on four agents of change that social scientists recognize: technology, social institutions, population, and the environment.

Technology

Some would say that improving technology has made our lives easier. Imagine what your day would be like without the Internet, the automobile, or electricity. In *The World Is Flat*, Thomas Friedman (2005) argues that technology is a driving force behind globalization, while the other forces of social change (social institutions, population, environment) play comparatively minor roles. He suggests that we can view globalization as occurring in three distinct periods. First, globalization was driven by military expansion, powered by horsepower and wind power. The countries best able to take advantage of these power sources expanded the most, and exert control over the politics of the globe from the late fifteenth century to around the year 1800. The second shorter period from approximately 1800 C.E. to 2000 C.E. consisted of a globalizing economy. Steam and rail power were the guiding forces of social change and globalization in this period. Finally, Friedman brings us to the post-millennial era. In this period of globalization, change is driven by technology, particularly the Internet (Friedman 2005).

But also consider that technology can create change in the other three forces social scientists link to social change. Advances in medical technology allow otherwise infertile women to bear children, which indirectly leads to an increase in population. Advances in agricultural technology have allowed us to genetically alter and patent food products, which changes our environment in innumerable ways. From the way we educate children in the classroom to the way we grow the food we eat, technology has impacted all aspects of modern life.

Of course there are drawbacks. The increasing gap between the technological haves and have-nots—sometimes called the digital divide—occurs both locally and globally. Further, there are added security risks: the loss of privacy, the risk of total system failure (like the Y2K panic at the turn of the millennium), and the added vulnerability created by technological dependence. Think about the technology that goes into keeping nuclear power plants running safely and securely. What happens if an earthquake or other disaster, like in the case of Japan's Fukushima plant, causes the technology to malfunction, not to mention the possibility of a systematic attack to our nation's relatively vulnerable technological infrastructure?

Technology and Crowdsourcing

Millions of people today walk around with their heads tilted toward a small device held in their hands. Perhaps you are reading this textbook on a phone or tablet. People in developed societies now take communication technology for granted. How has this technology affected social change in our society and others? One very positive way is crowdsourcing.

Thanks to the web, digital **crowdsourcing** is the process of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people, and especially from an online community rather than from traditional employees or suppliers. Web-based companies such as Kickstarter have been created precisely for the purposes of raising large amounts of money in a short period of time, notably by sidestepping the traditional financing process. This book, or virtual book, is the product of a kind of crowdsourcing effort. It has been written and reviewed by several authors in a variety of fields to give you free access to a large amount of data produced at a low cost. The largest example of crowdsourced data is Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia which is the result of thousands of volunteers adding and correcting material.

Perhaps the most striking use of crowdsourcing is disaster relief. By tracking tweets and e-mails and organizing the data in order of urgency and quantity, relief agencies can address the most urgent calls for help, such as for medical aid, food, shelter, or rescue. On January 12, 2010 a devastating earthquake hit the nation of Haiti. By January 25, a crisis map had been created from more than 2,500 incident reports, and more reports were added every day. The same technology was used to assist victims of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami in 2011, and many more times in disasters since then.

The Darker Side of Technology: Electronic Aggression in the Information Age

One dark side of technology is known as "electronic aggression". The U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) uses the term to describe "any type of harassment or bullying that occurs through e-mail, a chat room, instant messaging, a website (including blogs), or text messaging" (CDC, n.d.). We generally think of this as cyberbullying. Cyberbullying represents a powerful change in modern society. A 2011 study by the U.S. Department of Education found that 27.8 percent of students aged twelve through eighteen reported experiencing bullying. From the same sample 9 percent specifically reported having been a victim of cyberbullying (Robers et al. 2013). A more recent study conducted in 2016 on 5700 high school and middle school students between the ages of 12 and 17 found that 34% of students reported being cyber-bullied in their lifetime ([1]

Cyberbullying is a special feature of the Internet. Something unique to electronic aggression is that it can happen twenty-four hours a day, every day—it can reach a child (or an adult) even though she or he might otherwise feel safe in a locked house. The messages and images may be posted anonymously and to a very wide audience, and they might even be impossible to trace. Finally, once posted, the texts and images are very hard to delete. Its effects range from the use of alcohol and drugs to lower self-esteem, health problems, and even suicide (CDC, n.d.).

The Story of Megan Meier

According to the Megan Meier Foundation web site (2014a), Megan Meier had a lifelong struggle with weight, attention deficit disorder, and depression. But then a sixteen-year-old boy named Josh Evans asked Megan, who was thirteen years old, to be friends on the social networking web site MySpace. The two began communicating online regularly, though they never met in person or spoke on the phone. Now Megan finally knew a boy who, she believed, really thought she was pretty.

But things changed, according to the Megan Meier Foundation web site (2014b). Josh began saying he didn't want to be friends anymore, and the messages became cruel on October 16, 2006, when Josh concluded by telling Megan, "The world would be a better place without you." The cyberbullying escalated when additional classmates and friends on MySpace began writing disturbing messages and bulletins. That night Megan hanged herself in her bedroom closet, three weeks before what would have been her fourteenth birthday.

According to an ABC News article titled, "Parents: Cyber Bullying Led to Teen's Death" (2007), it was only later that a neighbor informed Megan's parents that Josh was not a real person. Instead, "Josh's" account was created by the mother of a girl who used to be friends with Megan.

You can find out more of Megan's story at her mother's web site.

or through her Ted Talk, "What Kids Have To Say About Bullying And How To End It".

Social Institutions

Each change in a single social institution leads to changes in all social institutions. For example, the industrialization of society meant that there was no longer a 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 shrunk significantly.

This same shift toward industrial corporate entities also changed the way we view government involvement in the private sector, created the global economy, provided new political platforms, and even spurred new religions and new forms of religious worship like Scientology. It has also informed the way we educate our children: originally schools were set up to accommodate an agricultural calendar so children could be home to work the fields in the summer, and even today, teaching models are largely based on preparing students for industrial jobs, despite that being an outdated need. A shift in one area, such as industrialization, means an interconnected impact across social institutions.

Population

Population composition is 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, as described above. But regardless of why and how it happens, population trends have a tremendous interrelated impact on all other aspects of society. For example, because we are experiencing an increase in our senior population as baby boomers begin to retire, this will in turn change the way many of our social institutions are organized. For instance, there is an increased demand for housing in warmer climates, a massive shift in the need for elder care and assisted living facilities, and growing awareness of elder abuse. There is concern about labor shortages as boomers retire, not to mention the knowledge gap as the most senior and accomplished leaders in different sectors start to leave. Further, as this large generation leaves the workforce, the loss of tax income and pressure on pension and retirement plans means that the financial stability of the country is threatened.

Globally, often the countries with the highest fertility rates are least able to absorb and attend to the needs of a growing population. Family planning is a large step in ensuring that families are not burdened with more children than they can care for. On a macro level, the increased population, particularly in the poorest parts of the globe, also leads to increased stress on the planet's resources.

The Environment

Turning to human ecology, we know that individuals and the environment affect each other. As human populations move into more vulnerable areas, we see an increase in the number of people affected by natural disasters, and we see that human interaction with the environment increases the impact of those disasters. Part of this is simply the numbers: the more people there are on the planet, the more likely it is that some will be affected by a natural disaster.

But it goes beyond that. Movements like 350.org describe how we have already seen five extinctions of massive amounts of life on the planet, and the crisis of global change has put us on the verge of yet another. According to their website, "The number 350 means climate safety: to preserve a livable planet, scientists tell us we must reduce the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere from its current level of 400 parts per million to below 350 ppm" (350.org).

The environment is best described as an ecosystem, one that exists as the interplay of multiple parts including 8.7 million species of life. However dozens of species are going extinct every day, a number 1,000 times to 10,000 times the normal "background rate" and the highest rate since the dinosaurs disappeared 65 million years ago. The Center for Biological Diversity states that this extinction crisis, unlike previous ones caused by natural disasters, is "caused almost entirely by us" (Center for Biological Diversity, n.d.). The growth of the human population, currently over seven billion and expected to rise to nine or ten billion by 2050, perfectly correlates with the rising extinction rate of life on earth.

Hurricane Katrina: When It All Comes Together

We've mentioned that four key elements that affect social change are the *environment*, *technology*, *social institutions*, and *population*. In 2005, New Orleans was struck by a devastating hurricane. But it was not just the hurricane that was disastrous. It was the converging of all four of these elements, and the text below will connect the elements by putting the words in parentheses.

Before Hurricane Katrina (environment) hit, poorly coordinated evacuation efforts had left about 25 percent of the population, almost entirely African Americans who lacked private transportation, to suffer the consequences of the coming storm (demographics). Then "after the storm, when the levees broke, thousands more [refugees] came. And the city buses, meant to take them to proper shelters, were underwater" (Sullivan 2005). No public transportation was provided, drinking water and communications were delayed, and FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (institutions), was headed by an appointee with no real experience in emergency management. Those who were eventually evacuated did not know where they were being sent or how to contact family members. African Americans were sent the farthest from their homes. When the displaced began to return, public housing had not been reestablished, yet the Superdome stadium, which had served as a temporary disaster shelter, had been rebuilt. Homeowners received financial support, but renters did not.

As it turns out, it was not entirely the hurricane that cost the lives of 1,500 people, but the fact that the city's storm levees (technology), which had been built too low and which failed to meet numerous other safety specifications, gave way, flooding the lower portions of the city, occupied almost entirely by African Americans.

Journalist Naomi Klein, in her book The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism, presents a theory of a “triple shock,” consisting of an initial disaster, an economic shock that replaces public services with private (for-profit) ones, and a third shock consisting of the intense policing of the remaining public. Klein supports her claim by quoting then-Congressman Richard Baker as saying, “We finally cleaned up public housing in New Orleans. We couldn’t do it, but God did.” She quotes developer Joseph Canizaro as stating, “I think we have a clean sheet to start again. And with that clean sheet we have some very big opportunities.”

One clean sheet opportunity was that New Orleans began to replace public schools with charters, breaking the teachers’ union and firing all public school teachers (Mullins 2014). Public housing was seriously reduced and the poor were forced out altogether or into the suburbs far from medical and other facilities (The Advocate 2013). Finally, by relocating African Americans and changing the ratio of African Americans to whites, New Orleans changed its entire demographic makeup.

Think It Over

- Consider one of the major social movements of the twentieth century, from civil rights in the United States to Gandhi’s nonviolent protests in India. How would technology have changed it? Would change have come more quickly or more slowly? Defend your opinion.
- Discuss the digital divide in the context of modernization. Is there a real concern that poorer communities are lacking in technology? Why, or why not?
- Which theory do you think better explains the global economy: dependency theory (global inequity is due to the exploitation of peripheral and semi-peripheral nations by core nations) or modernization theory? Remember to justify your answer and provide specific examples.
- Do you think that modernization is beneficial or detrimental to societies? Explain, using examples.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14847

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14848

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14849

glossary

crowdsourcing:
the process of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people

social change:
the change in a society created through social movements as well as through external factors like environmental shifts or technological innovations

1. https://cyberbullying.org/2016-cyberbullying-data ↵

CC licensed content, Original

- Modification, adaptation, and original content. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Social Change. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:vi4eB2eh@5/Social-Change. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49

This page titled 21.9: Causes of Social Change is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.10: Social Change, Technology, and Modernization

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the influence of media and technology on social change and modernization

We know that technology is one of the major factors that leads to social change. Let's take a deeper look at how technology and the media play a major role in the accelerated rate of globalization, which in turn, affects social change.

Social Movements and Technology

So what is the real impact of this technology on the world? Did Twitter bring down Mubarak in Egypt? Author Malcolm Gladwell (2010) doesn't think so. In an article in *The New Yorker*, Gladwell tackles what he considers the myth that social media gets people more engaged. He points out that most of the tweets relating to the Iran protests were in English and sent from Western accounts (instead of people on the ground). Rather than increasing engagement, he contends that social media only increases participation; after all, the cost of participation is so much lower than the cost of engagement. Instead of risking being arrested, shot with rubber bullets, or sprayed with fire hoses, social media activists can click "like" or retweet a message from the comfort and safety of their desk (Gladwell 2010).

There are, though, good cases to be made for the power of social media in propelling social movements. In the article, "Parrhesia and Democracy: Truth-telling, WikiLeaks and the Arab Spring," Theresa Sauter and Gavin Kendall (2011) described the importance of social media in the Arab Spring uprisings. Parrhesia means "the practice of truth-telling," which describes the protestors' use of social media to make up for the lack of coverage and even misrepresentation of events by state-controlled media. The Tunisian blogger Lina Ben Mhenni posted photographs and videos on Facebook and Twitter of events exposing the violence committed by the government. In Egypt, the journalist Asmaa Mahfouz used Facebook to gather large numbers of people in Tahrir Square in the capital city of Cairo. Sauter and Kendall maintain that it was the use of Web 2.0 technologies that allowed activists not only to share events with the world but also to organize the actions.

When the Egyptian government shut down the Internet to stop the use of social media, the group Anonymous, a hacking organization noted for online acts of civil disobedience initiated "Operation Egypt" and sent thousands of faxes to keep the public informed of their government's activities (CBS Interactive Inc. 2014) as well as attacking the government's web site (Wagensiel 2011). In its Facebook press release the group stated the following: "Anonymous wants you to offer free access to uncensored media in your entire country. When you ignore this message, not only will we attack your government websites, Anonymous will also make sure that the international media sees the horrid reality you impose upon your people."

Sociologists have identified high-risk activism, such as the civil rights movement, as a "strong-tie" phenomenon, meaning that people are far more likely to stay engaged and not run home to safety if they have close friends who are also engaged. The people who dropped out of the movement—who went home after the danger got too great—did not display any less ideological commitment. But they lacked the strong-tie connection to other people who were staying. Social media, by its very makeup, is "weak-tie" (McAdam and Paulsen 1993). People follow or friend people they have never met. But while these online acquaintances are a source of information and inspiration, the lack of engaged personal contact limits the level of risk we'll take on their behalf.

These weak-tie connections can still affect change, especially as online activism becomes the norm. For example, look at this Wikipedia page explaining Hashtag Activism, to learn more about movements that gained popularity through Twitter hashtags.

Use of Technology and Social Media in Society by Individuals

Research conducted in 2018 showed that 95% of Americans own a cell phone, and 77% of Americans own a smartphone.[1] Access to the internet is often within arm's reach—26% of people surveyed in 2018 said they were online almost constantly, while 43% said they got online several times a day.[2]

While people report that cell phones make it easier to stay in touch, simplify planning and scheduling their daily activities, and increase their productivity, that's not the only impact of increased cell phone ownership in the United States. Smith also reports that "roughly one in five cell owners say that their phone has made it at least somewhat harder to forget about work at home or on the weekends; to give people their undivided attention; or to focus on a single task without being distracted" (Smith 2012).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14850

Planned Obsolescence: Technology That's Built to Crash



Figure 1. People have trouble keeping up with technological innovation. But people may not be to blame, as manufacturers intentionally develop products with short life spans. (Photo courtesy of Mathias F. Svendsen/flickr)

Chances are your mobile phone company, as well as the makers of your laptop and your household appliances, are all counting on their products to fail. Not too quickly, of course, or consumers wouldn't stand for it—but frequently enough that you might find that it costs far more to fix a device than to replace it with a newer model. Or you find the phone company e-mails you saying that you're eligible for a free new phone, because yours is a whopping two years old. And appliance repair people say that while they might be fixing some machines that are twenty years old, they generally aren't fixing those that are seven years old; newer models are built to be thrown out. This strategy is called **planned obsolescence**, and it is the business practice of planning for a product to be obsolete or unusable from the time it is created.

To some extent, planned obsolescence is a natural extension of new and emerging technologies. After all, who is going to cling to an enormous and slow desktop computer from 2000 when a few hundred dollars can buy one that is significantly faster and better? But the practice is not always so benign. The classic example of planned obsolescence is the nylon stocking. Women's stockings—once an everyday staple of women's lives—get "runs" or "ladders" after only a few wearings. This requires the stockings to be discarded and new ones purchased. Not surprisingly, the garment industry did not invest heavily in finding a rip-proof fabric; it was in manufacturers' best interest that their product be regularly replaced.

Those who use Microsoft Windows might feel that like the women who purchased endless pairs of stockings, they are victims of planned obsolescence. Every time Windows releases a new operating system, there are typically not many innovations in it that consumers feel they must have. However, the software programs are upwardly compatible only. This means that while the new versions can read older files, the old version cannot read the newer ones. In short order, those who have not upgraded right away find themselves unable to open files sent by colleagues or friends, and they usually wind up upgrading as well.

Ultimately, whether you are getting rid of your old product because you are being offered a shiny new free one (like the latest smartphone model), or because it costs more to fix than to replace (like the iPod model), or because not doing so leaves you out of the loop (like the Windows model), the result is the same. It might just make you nostalgic for your old Sony Discman and simple DVD player.



Figure 2. In the coming future, there is no doubt that robots are going to play a large role in all aspects of

our lives. (Photo courtesy of shay sowden/flickr)

With so many people using social media both in the United States and abroad, it is no surprise that social media is a powerful force for social change. Spreading democracy, as evidenced in the Arab Spring example, is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to using social media to incite change. For example, McKenna Pope, a thirteen-year-old girl, used the Internet to successfully petition Hasbro to fight gender stereotypes by creating a gender-neutral Easy-Bake Oven instead of using only the traditional pink color (Kumar 2014).

Product Advertising

Companies use advertising to sell to us, but the way they reach us is changing. Naomi Klein identified the destructive impact of corporate branding her 1999 text, *No Logo*, an anti-globalization treatise that focused on sweatshops, corporate power, and anti-consumerist social movements. In the post-millennial society, synergistic advertising practices ensure you are receiving the same message from a variety of sources and on a variety of platforms. For example, you may see billboards for Miller beer on your way to a stadium, sit down to watch a game preceded by a Miller commercial on the big screen, and watch a halftime ad in which people are shown holding up the trademark bottles. Chances are you can guess which brand of beer is for sale at the concession stand.

Advertising has changed, as technology and media have allowed consumers to bypass traditional advertising venues. From the invention of the remote control, which allows us to skip television advertising without leaving our seats, to recording devices that let us watch programs but skip the ads, conventional television advertising is on the wane. And print media is no different. Advertising revenue in newspapers and on television fell significantly in 2009, which shows that companies need new ways of getting their messages to consumers.

One model companies are considering to address this advertising downturn uses the same philosophy as celebrity endorsements, just on a different scale. Companies are hiring college students to be their on-campus representatives, and they are looking for popular students engaged in high-profile activities like sports, fraternities, and music. The marketing team is betting that if we buy perfume because Beyoncé tells us to, we'll also choose our cell phone or smoothie brand if a popular student encourages that choice. According to an article in the *New York Times*, fall semester 2011 saw an estimated 10,000 U.S. college students working on campus as brand ambassadors for products from Red Bull energy drinks to Hewlett-Packard computers (Singer 2011). As the companies figure it, college students will trust one source of information above all: other students.

Technological Concerns

With all of the **new media** (social networking sites, blogs, podcasts, wikis, and virtual worlds, etc.) available to us, there are also some new concerns regarding privacy, security, equality, and polarization. Additionally, there is no guarantee that the information offered by new media is accurate. In fact, the immediacy of new media coupled with the lack of oversight means we must be more careful than ever to ensure our news is coming from accurate sources.

Online Privacy and Security

As we increase our footprints on the web by going online more often to connect socially, share material, conduct business, and store information, we also increase our vulnerability to those with criminal intent. The Pew Research Center recently published a report that indicated the number of Internet users who express concern over the extent of personal information about them available online jumped 17 percent between 2009 and 2013. In that same survey, 12 percent of respondents indicated they had been harassed online, and 11 percent indicated that personal information, such as their Social Security number, had been stolen (Rainie, Kiesler, Kang, and Madden 2013).

Online privacy and security is a key organizational concern as well. Recent large-scale data breaches at retailers such as Target, financial powerhouses such as JP Morgan, the government health insurance site Healthcare.gov, and cell phone providers such as Verizon, exposed millions of people to the threat of identity theft when hackers got access to personal information by compromising website security.

For example, in late August 2014, hackers breached the iCloud data storage site and promptly leaked wave after wave of nude photos from the private accounts of actors such as Jennifer Lawrence and Kirsten Dunst (Lewis 2014). While large-scale data

breaches that affect corporations and celebrities are more likely to make the news, individuals may put their personal information at risk simply by clicking a suspect link in an official sounding e-mail.

How can individuals protect their data? Numerous facts sheets available through the government, nonprofits, and the private sector outline common safety measures, including the following: become familiar with privacy rights; read privacy policies when making a purchase (rather than simply clicking “accept”); give out only the minimum information requested by any source; ask why information is being collected, how it is going to be used, and who will have access it; and monitor your credit history for red flags that indicate your identity has been compromised.

Net Neutrality

The issue of **net neutrality**, the principle that all Internet data should be treated equally by Internet service providers, is part of the national debate about Internet access and the digital divide. On one side of this debate is the belief that those who provide Internet service, like those who provide electricity and water, should be treated as common carriers, legally prohibited from discriminating based on the customer or nature of the goods. Supporters of net neutrality suggest that without such legal protections, the Internet could be divided into “fast” and “slow” lanes. A conflict perspective theorist might suggest that this discrimination would allow bigger corporations, such as Amazon, to pay Internet providers a premium for faster service, which could lead to gaining an advantage that would drive small, local competitors out of business.

The other side of the debate holds the belief that designating Internet service providers as common carriers would constitute an unreasonable regulatory burden and limit the ability of telecommunication companies to operate profitably. A functional perspective theorist might point out that, without profits, companies would not invest in making improvements to their Internet service or expanding those services to underserved areas. The final decision rests with the Federal Communications Commission and the federal government, which must decide how to fairly regulate broadband providers without dividing the Internet into haves and have-nots.

Violence in Media and Video Games: Does It Matter?



Figure 3. One of the most popular video games, Grand Theft Auto, has frequently been at the center of debate about gratuitous violence in the gaming world. (Photo courtesy of Meddy Garnet/flickr)

A glance through popular video game and movie titles geared toward children and teens shows the vast spectrum of violence that is displayed, condoned, and acted out.

As a way to guide parents in their programming choices, the motion picture industry put a rating system in place in the 1960s. But new media—video games in particular—proved to be uncharted territory. In 1994, the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ERSB) set a ratings system for games that addressed issues of violence, sexuality, drug use, and the like. California took it a step further by making it illegal to sell video games to underage buyers. The case led to a heated debate about personal freedoms and child protection, and in 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against the California law, stating it violated freedom of speech (ProCon 2012).

Children’s play has often involved games of aggression—from cowboys and Indians, to cops and robbers, to fake sword fights. Many articles report on the controversy surrounding the suggested link between violent video games and violent behavior. Is the

link real? Psychologists Anderson and Bushman (2001) reviewed forty-plus years of research on the subject and, in 2003, determined that there are causal linkages between violent video game use and aggression. They found that children who had just played a violent video game demonstrated an immediate increase in hostile or aggressive thoughts, an increase in aggressive emotions, and physiological arousal that increased the chances of acting out aggressive behavior (Anderson 2003).

Ultimately, repeated exposure to this kind of violence leads to increased expectations that violence is a solution, increased violent behavioral scripts, and an increased cognitive accessibility to violent behavior (Anderson 2003). In short, people who play a lot of these games find it easier to imagine and access violent solutions than nonviolent ones, and they are less socialized to see violence as a negative. While these facts do not mean there is no role for video games, it should give players pause. In 2013, The American Psychological Association began an expansive meta-analysis of peer-reviewed research analyzing the effect of media violence. Results are expected in 2014.

Homogenization and Fragmentation

Despite the variety of media at hand, the mainstream news and entertainment you enjoy are increasingly homogenized. Research by McManus (1995) suggests that different news outlets all tell the same stories, using the same sources, resulting in the same message, presented with only slight variations. So whether you are reading the *New York Times* or the CNN's web site, the coverage of national events like a major court case or political issue will likely be the same.

Simultaneously with this homogenization among the major news outlets, the opposite process is occurring in the newer media streams. With so many choices, people increasingly customize their news experience, minimizing their opportunity to encounter information that does not jive with their worldview (Prior 2005). For instance, those who are staunchly Republican can avoid centrist or liberal-leaning cable news shows and web sites that would show Democrats in a favorable light. They know to seek out Fox News over MSNBC, just as Democrats know to do the opposite. Further, people who want to avoid politics completely can choose to visit web sites that deal only with entertainment or that will keep them up to date on sports scores. They have an easy way to avoid information they do not wish to hear.

Further Research

- To learn more about new media, visit newmedia.org.
- To understand how independent media coverage differs from major corporate affiliated news outlets, review material from the Democracy Now! website.
- Watch this RSA Animate video "The Internet in Society: Empowering or Censoring Citizens?" to learn more about the power of the internet and its role in global politics.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/its/?p=608

Modernization

Modernization describes the processes that increase the amount of specialization and differentiation of structure in societies resulting in the move from an undeveloped society to a developed, technologically driven society (Irwin 1975). By this definition, the level of modernity within a society is judged by the sophistication of its technology, particularly as it relates to infrastructure, industry, and the like. However, it is important to note the inherent ethnocentric bias of such assessment. Why do we assume that those living in semi-peripheral and peripheral nations would find it so wonderful to become more like the core nations? Is modernization always positive?

One contradiction of all kinds of technology is that they often promise time-saving benefits, but somehow fail to deliver. How many times have you ground your teeth in frustration at an Internet site that refused to load or at a dropped call on your cell phone? Despite time-saving devices such as dishwashers, washing machines, and, now, remote control vacuum cleaners, the average amount of time spent on housework is the same today as it was fifty years ago. And the dubious benefits of 24/7 e-mail and immediate information have simply increased the amount of time employees are expected to be responsive and available. While once businesses had to travel at the speed of the U.S. postal system, sending something off and waiting until it was received before the next stage, today the immediacy of information transfer means there are no such breaks.

Further, the Internet bought us information, but at a cost. The morass of information means that there is as much poor information available as trustworthy sources. There is a delicate line to walk when core nations seek to bring the assumed benefits of modernization to more traditional cultures. For one, there are obvious pro-capitalist biases that go into such attempts, and it is short-sighted for western governments and social scientists to assume all other countries aspire to follow in their footsteps. Additionally, there can be a kind of neo-liberal defense of rural cultures, ignoring the often crushing poverty and diseases that exist in peripheral nations and focusing only on a nostalgic mythology of the happy peasant. It takes a very careful hand to understand both the need for cultural identity and preservation as well as the hopes for future growth.

Think It Over

- Where and how do you get your news? Do you watch network television? Read the newspaper? Go online? How about your parents or grandparents? Do you think it matters where you seek out information? Why, or why not?
- Document your screen time usage for one 24-hour period. Some phones have built in trackers and there are a variety of free apps to track cell phone screen time. Challenge yourself by documenting how many times you *touch* your phone and/or *look* at your phone. Does it also serve as your timepiece? Do you "check" your phone just to see what is there? Do you fiddle with your phone (in a pocket or bag) even when you are not actively using it? How often do you check social media? How many different types of alerts do you receive? Share your responses with your classmates. Were you surprised by the results? Did your habits change because you knew they would be tracked?
- If you are up for another challenge, go for a 24-hour period with essential phone use only. Since most of us use our cell phones as our only means of communication, it might be unreasonable to shut your phone down for the day, especially if you have family or work matters that might require your immediate attention. Other than "emergency-type" situations (you could set a special ring tone), try to *not touch or look at* your phone for 24 hours. Instead of documenting usage, document each time you *thought about* "checking something" on your phone. Share your responses with your classmates. Were you surprised by the results? Did your habits change because you knew they would be tracked?

glossary

new media:
all interactive forms of information exchange

net neutrality:
the principle that all Internet data should be treated equally by internet service providers

planned obsolescence:
the act of a technology company planning for a product to be obsolete or unable from the time it's created

Think It Over

- Can you think of people in your own life who support or defy the premise that access to technology leads to greater opportunities? How have you noticed technology use and opportunity to be linked, or does your experience contradict this idea?
- Should the U.S. government be responsible for providing all citizens with access to the Internet? Or is gaining Internet access an individual responsibility?
- How have digital media changed social interactions? Do you believe it has deepened or weakened human connections? Defend your answer.
- Conduct sociological research. Google yourself. How much information about you is available to the public? How many and what types of companies offer private information about you for a fee? Compile the data and statistics you find. Write a paragraph or two about the social issues and behaviors you notice.

---

1. Mobile Fact Sheet (February 2018). Pew Research Center. Retrieved from https://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/mobile/↵
2. Perrin, Andrew and Jiang JingJing (March 2018). Pew Research Center. About a quarter of U.S. adults say they are 'almost constantly' online. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/07/25/americans-going-online-almost-constantly/. ↵

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Social Change. **Authored by**: OpenStax CNX. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@10.1:vi4eB2eh@5/Social-Change. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@3.49
- Modernization. **Provided by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.5:vi4eB2eh@9/21-3-Social-Change. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.
- Technology Today. **Provided by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.5:_5jASD-H@12/8-1-Technology-Today. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.
- Media and Technology in Society. **Provided by**: OpenStax College. **Located at**: https://cnx.org/contents/AgQDEnLI@12.5:_U5AN6pQ@11/8-2-Media-and-Technology-in-Society. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*. **License Terms**: Download for free at http://cnx.org/contents/02040312-72c...9333f3e1d@10.1.

All rights reserved content

- RSA ANIMATE: The Internet in Society: Empowering or Censoring Citizens?. **Authored by**: The RSA. **Located at**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uk8x3V-sUgU. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*

This page titled 21.10: Social Change, Technology, and Modernization is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.11: Putting It Together- Social Movements and Social Change



Figure 1. Black Lives Matter protestors.

As you learned in this module, people come together for a variety of reasons. Sometimes a crowd is just an aggregate of people who happen to be doing the same thing, like waiting for a bus or shopping at the mall. Although these people may be in the same place at the same time, they are not pursuing any collective agenda. Some people are brought together for certain events like concerts, weddings or funerals. Some crowds come together to further an agenda and may attempt to create or resist social change.

As you saw in the examples in this module, the type of collective action can vary but they often come about because the people involved do not feel that they will be listened to without taking some action for their cause. They may believe that appropriate change cannot come through any other venue than their collective action.

Several hundred years ago, social movements were short lived and often violent. If the townspeople gathered their torches and pitchforks to go and kill the Frankenstein monster, once that task had been completed, the social movement was over. Present-day social movements are less violent and can become national or even international movements, simply through the creation of a website. Many of the movements discussed in this text, such Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, LGBTQ+ movements, or Black Lives Matter, serve as prime examples of the way that technology plays a key role in uniting people in a common goal and increasing participation in social movements.

CC licensed content, Original

- Putting It Together: Social Movements and Social Change. **Authored by**: Rebecca Vonderhaar for Lumen Learning. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Black Lives Matter protestors. **Authored by**: All-Nite Images. **Provided by**: Wikipedia. **Located at**: https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Lives_Matter#/media/File:Black_Lives_Matter_protest.jpg. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

This page titled 21.11: Putting It Together- Social Movements and Social Change is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.12: Assignment- Social Movements

STEP 1: Select a current social movement and complete research about its lifecycle. Research information about the movement's origin, its purpose, goals, etc.

STEP 2: Create a diagram/infographic of the social movement. Include information about its roots, purpose, and goals, and note how these fit into and evolve with the movement's lifecycle. Either in the poster, or included in a separate explanatory paragraph, describe each stage of all the lifecycles discussed in the module, even if the social movement has not completed the entire lifecycle. Make predictions for the future of your chosen movement. Include proper APA citations (with at least two sources) either in the infographic or on a separate page.

Helpful links for making infographics or posters:

- Easelly
- Canva

Share your creation with the world so that others can benefit from your work! Using either Flickr or Wikimedia Commons, upload your finished product and publish it so that other sociology instructors and students can use your work. Although not required, we strongly recommend uploading and releasing your work with a Creative Commons license.

Rubric

Criteria	Ratings			Points
Social Movement Research	Researches and accurately describes the lifecycle of an appropriate social movement and provides detail about its origin, purpose, goals, etc.	Researches a social movement and provides information about its lifecycle and origin, but in insufficient depth or detail	Researches a social movement but provides little or inaccurate information about its lifecycle and origin, in insufficient depth or detail	__/9
Infographic	Creates an interesting and visually pleasing infographic depicting information about the lifecyle of the selected social movement.	Creates an infographic with some information about the lifecyle of a social movement.	Creates an infographic that is incomplete, unappealing, or inaccurate.	__/9
Citations	Includes at least two correctly cited APA citations, either in the infographic or as an attachement.	Includes at least one correctly cited APA citation.	Does not include correctly cited references.	__/3
			Total:	__/20

CC licensed content, Original

- Assignment: The Environment and Social Change. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 21.12: Assignment- Social Movements is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

21.13: Discussion- Social Movements

This should be completed AFTER completing your social movement poster. You should already know about a social movement, it's lifecycle, purpose, goals, etc.

Initial posts should be at least 250 words long. Reply to at least two other students' posts. All discussion posts must be courteous and professional.

STEP 1: Upload your infographic to the discussion.

STEP 2: After learning about the purpose, goals, lifecycle, etc., of the social movement you chose, and uploading your infographic so other students can view it, pick one of the theoretical perspectives covered in this module: (emergent-norm, value-added, or assembling) and use it to analyze your chosen social movement.

STEP 3: Discuss your opinion on the movement and its progress, addressing the role technology might play in the process. Initial posts should be at least 250 words long and include proper APA citations. Reply to at least two other students' posts. All discussion posts must be courteous and professional.

Rubric

Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
Student answers each part of the question, addressing a current social movement through a theoretical lens, and how technology may affect the movement. Student properly uses APA format, and reply substantively to others (adding more to the conversation than simply, "I agree," or "Good job," etc.)	Student might address only one facet of the question, or not fully answer all aspects thereof, but still demonstrates understanding of what (s)he has answered. Length requirement may not have been met. Replies might also be lacking in substance, or the student may not have met the required number of replies. Significant errors in or lack of citations may also apply.	Student shows little understanding of the question or fails to identify a relevant social movement, does not meet length requirement, or lacks substance in original posts and/or replies. Citations may be absent.

CC licensed content, Original

- Discussion: The Environment and Social Change. **Provided by**: Lumen Learning. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

This page titled 21.13: Discussion- Social Movements is shared under a not declared license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Lumen Learning.

Index

D

dire

Glossary

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

Detailed Licensing

Overview

Title: Introduction to Sociology (Lumen)

Webpages: 309

All licenses found:

- Undeclared: 100% (309 pages)

By Page

- Introduction to Sociology (Lumen) - *Undeclared*
  - Front Matter - *Undeclared*
    - TitlePage - *Undeclared*
    - InfoPage - *Undeclared*
    - Table of Contents - *Undeclared*
    - Licensing - *Undeclared*
  - 2: Course Contents - *Undeclared*
    - 2.1: About This Course - *Undeclared*
    - 2.2: Course Contents at a Glance - *Undeclared*
    - 2.3: Learning Outcomes - *Undeclared*
  - 3: Faculty Resources - *Undeclared*
    - 3.1: Faculty Resources Overview - *Undeclared*
    - 3.2: Pacing - *Undeclared*
    - 3.3: PDF - *Undeclared*
    - 3.4: PowerPoints - *Undeclared*
    - 3.5: Assignments and Discussions - *Undeclared*
    - 3.6: Question Banks - *Undeclared*
    - 3.7: In-Class Activities - *Undeclared*
    - 3.8: Additional Resources - *Undeclared*
    - 3.9: I Need Help - *Undeclared*
  - 4: Module 1- Foundations of Sociology - *Undeclared*
    - 4.1: Why It Matters- Foundations of Sociology - *Undeclared*
    - 4.2: Introduction to Sociology - *Undeclared*
    - 4.3: What Is Sociology? - *Undeclared*
    - 4.4: The Development of Sociology - *Undeclared*
    - 4.5: Why Study Sociology? - *Undeclared*
    - 4.6: Introduction to the Sociological Imagination - *Undeclared*
    - 4.7: The Sociological Imagination - *Undeclared*
    - 4.8: Introduction to Sociological Perspectives - *Undeclared*
    - 4.9: The Main Sociological Theories - *Undeclared*
    - 4.10: Structural-Functional Theory - *Undeclared*
    - 4.11: Conflict Theory - *Undeclared*
    - 4.12: Symbolic Interactionist Theory - *Undeclared*
    - 4.13: Reviewing Sociological Theories - *Undeclared*
    - 4.14: Putting It Together- Sociological Foundations - *Undeclared*
    - 4.15: Discussion- Introduce Yourself - *Undeclared*
    - 4.16: Assignment- Sociologist Player Trading Cards - *Undeclared*
  - 5: Module 2- Sociological Research - *Undeclared*
    - 5.1: Why It Matters- Sociological Research - *Undeclared*
    - 5.2: Introduction to Sociological Research - *Undeclared*
    - 5.3: Sociological Research - *Undeclared*
    - 5.4: The Scientific Method - *Undeclared*
    - 5.5: Ethics - *Undeclared*
    - 5.6: Introduction to Research Methods - *Undeclared*
    - 5.7: Surveys - *Undeclared*
    - 5.8: Experiments - *Undeclared*
    - 5.9: Field Research - *Undeclared*
    - 5.10: Secondary Data Analysis - *Undeclared*
    - 5.11: Summary of Research Methods - *Undeclared*
    - 5.12: Putting It Together- Sociological Research - *Undeclared*
    - 5.13: Discussion- Sociology Research - *Undeclared*
    - 5.14: Assignment- Utilizing Secondary Research - *Undeclared*
  - 6: Module 3- Culture - *Undeclared*
    - 6.1: Why It Matters- Culture - *Undeclared*
    - 6.2: Introduction to Culture - *Undeclared*
    - 6.3: Culture, Values, and Beliefs - *Undeclared*
    - 6.4: Social Norms - *Undeclared*
    - 6.5: Symbols and Language - *Undeclared*
    - 6.6: Introduction to Cultural Similarities and Differences - *Undeclared*
    - 6.7: Cultural Universals - *Undeclared*
    - 6.8: Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism - *Undeclared*
    - 6.9: Introduction to Pop Culture, Subculture, and Cultural Change - *Undeclared*
    - 6.10: Pop Culture and Subculture - *Undeclared*

- 6.11: Cultural Change - *Undeclared*
- 6.12: Globalization and Technology - *Undeclared*
- 6.13: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Culture and Technology - *Undeclared*
- 6.14: Functionalism on Culture and Technology - *Undeclared*
- 6.15: Conflict Theory on Culture and Technology - *Undeclared*
- 6.16: Symbolic Interactionism on Media and Technology - *Undeclared*
- 6.17: Putting It Together- Culture - *Undeclared*
- 6.18: Assignment- Tattoos and Culture - *Undeclared*
- 6.19: Discussion- Tattoos in Culture - *Undeclared*
- 6.20: Discussion- Media and Technology - *Undeclared*
- 6.21: Discussion- Media and Culture - *Undeclared*

7: Module 4- Socialization - *Undeclared*

- 7.1: Why It Matters- Socialization - *Undeclared*
- 7.2: Introduction to Socialization - *Undeclared*
- 7.3: The Importance of Socialization - *Undeclared*
- 7.4: Theories of Socialization - *Undeclared*
- 7.5: Introduction to Reality as a Social Construct - *Undeclared*
- 7.6: The Social Construction of Reality - *Undeclared*
- 7.7: Roles and the Presentation of Self - *Undeclared*
- 7.8: Introduction to Agents of Socialization - *Undeclared*
- 7.9: Agents of Socialization - *Undeclared*
- 7.10: Socialization Across the Lifespan - *Undeclared*
- 7.11: Resocialization - *Undeclared*
- 7.12: Putting It Together- Socialization - *Undeclared*
- 7.13: Discussion- Socialization - *Undeclared*
- 7.14: Assignment- Agents of Socialization - *Undeclared*

8: Module 5- Society and Groups - *Undeclared*

- 8.1: Why It Matters- Society and Groups - *Undeclared*
- 8.2: Introduction to the Fundamentals of Society - *Undeclared*
- 8.3: Society, Culture, and Social Institutions - *Undeclared*
- 8.4: Types of Societies - *Undeclared*
- 8.5: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Society - *Undeclared*
- 8.6: Functionalism and Society - *Undeclared*
- 8.7: Conflict Theory and Society - *Undeclared*
- 8.8: Symbolic Interactionism and the McDonaldization of Society - *Undeclared*
- 8.9: Introduction to Organizations and Groups - *Undeclared*
- 8.10: Types of Formal Organizations - *Undeclared*
- 8.11: Types of Groups - *Undeclared*
- 8.12: Group Dynamics - *Undeclared*
- 8.13: Leadership Styles - *Undeclared*
- 8.14: Putting It Together- Society and Groups - *Undeclared*
- 8.15: Discussion- Society and Formal Organizations - *Undeclared*
- 8.16: Assignment- Society and Groups - *Undeclared*

9: Module 6- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control - *Undeclared*

- 9.1: Why It Matters- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control - *Undeclared*
- 9.2: Introduction to Deviance - *Undeclared*
- 9.3: Deviance and Control - *Undeclared*
- 9.4: Introduction to Theories of Social Deviance - *Undeclared*
- 9.5: Functionalism and Deviance - *Undeclared*
- 9.6: Conflict Theory and Deviance - *Undeclared*
- 9.7: Symbolic Interactionism and Deviance - *Undeclared*
- 9.8: Reviewing Theories on Deviance - *Undeclared*
- 9.9: Introduction to Crime and The Law - *Undeclared*
- 9.10: The Criminal Justice System - *Undeclared*
- 9.11: Criminal Activity - *Undeclared*
- 9.12: Putting It Together- Deviance, Crime, and Social Control - *Undeclared*
- 9.13: Discussion- Deviance - *Undeclared*
- 9.14: Assignment- Deviance in the News - *Undeclared*

10: Module 7- Stratification and Inequality - *Undeclared*

- 10.1: Why It Matters- Stratification and Inequality - *Undeclared*
- 10.2: Introduction to Stratification and Systems of Stratification - *Undeclared*
- 10.3: Social Stratification, Social Inequality, and Global Stratification - *Undeclared*
- 10.4: Systems of Global Classification - *Undeclared*
- 10.5: Systems of Social Stratification - *Undeclared*
- 10.6: Class in the United States - *Undeclared*
- 10.7: Introduction to Social Mobility and Poverty - *Undeclared*
- 10.8: Social Mobility - *Undeclared*
- 10.9: Global Poverty - *Undeclared*
- 10.10: Poverty in the U.S. - *Undeclared*
- 10.11: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Stratification - *Undeclared*

- 10.12: Theoretical Perspectives on Social Stratification - *Undeclared*
- 10.13: Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification - *Undeclared*
- 10.14: Putting It Together- Social Stratification and Inequality - *Undeclared*
- 10.15: Discussion- Stratification - *Undeclared*
- 10.16: Assignment- Stratification - *Undeclared*

- 11: Module 8- Race and Ethnicity - *Undeclared*
  - 11.1: Why It Matters- Race and Ethnicity - *Undeclared*
  - 11.2: Introduction to Race, Ethnicity, and Discrimination - *Undeclared*
  - 11.3: Racial, Ethnic, and Minority Groups - *Undeclared*
  - 11.4: Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination - *Undeclared*
  - 11.5: Intergroup Relationships - *Undeclared*
  - 11.6: Introduction to Race and Ethnicity in the United States - *Undeclared*
  - 11.7: Native Americans - *Undeclared*
  - 11.8: African Americans - *Undeclared*
  - 11.9: Asian Americans - *Undeclared*
  - 11.10: Hispanic - *Undeclared*
    - 11.10.1: Hispanic/Latino Americans - *Undeclared*
  - 11.11: Arab Americans - *Undeclared*
  - 11.12: White Americans - *Undeclared*
  - 11.13: Introduction to Theories of Racial Inequality - *Undeclared*
  - 11.14: Theoretical Perspectives of Race and Ethnicity - *Undeclared*
  - 11.15: Putting It Together- Race and Ethnicity - *Undeclared*
  - 11.16: Discussion- The Race Card Project - *Undeclared*
  - 11.17: Assignment- Race and Ethnicity - *Undeclared*
- 12: Module 9- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality - *Undeclared*
  - 12.1: Why It Matters- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality - *Undeclared*
  - 12.2: Introduction to Gender - *Undeclared*
  - 12.3: Sex and Gender - *Undeclared*
  - 12.4: Gender and Socialization - *Undeclared*
  - 12.5: Introduction to Sex and Sexuality - *Undeclared*
  - 12.6: Sex and Sexuality - *Undeclared*
  - 12.7: Sexual Orientation - *Undeclared*
  - 12.8: Introduction to Theories of Gender and Sex - *Undeclared*
  - 12.9: Feminist Movements and Feminist Theory - *Undeclared*
  - 12.10: Theoretical Perspectives on Gender - *Undeclared*
  - 12.11: Theoretical Perspectives on Sex - *Undeclared*
  - 12.12: Putting It Together- Gender, Sex, and Sexuality - *Undeclared*
  - 12.13: Discussion- Gender - *Undeclared*
  - 12.14: Assignment- Gender and Advertising - *Undeclared*
- 13: Module 10- Marriage and Family - *Undeclared*
  - 13.1: Why It Matters- Marriage and Family - *Undeclared*
  - 13.2: Introduction to Marriage and Family - *Undeclared*
  - 13.3: Defining Family - *Undeclared*
  - 13.4: Marriage and Courtship Patterns - *Undeclared*
  - 13.5: Lines of Descent and Family Stages - *Undeclared*
  - 13.6: Introduction to Family Life - *Undeclared*
  - 13.7: Variations in Family Life - *Undeclared*
  - 13.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Marriage and Family - *Undeclared*
  - 13.9: Introduction to Challenges Families Face - *Undeclared*
  - 13.10: Divorce and Remarriage - *Undeclared*
  - 13.11: Violence and Abuse - *Undeclared*
  - 13.12: Putting It Together- Marriage and Family - *Undeclared*
  - 13.13: Discussion- Marriage and Family - *Undeclared*
  - 13.14: Assignment- Families in Media - *Undeclared*
- 14: Module 11- Religion - *Undeclared*
  - 14.1: Why It Matters- Religion - *Undeclared*
  - 14.2: Introduction to Sociological Views on Religion - *Undeclared*
  - 14.3: The History of Religion - *Undeclared*
  - 14.4: Theoretical Perspectives on Religion - *Undeclared*
  - 14.5: Introduction to World Religions - *Undeclared*
  - 14.6: Types of Religion - *Undeclared*
  - 14.7: Hinduism - *Undeclared*
  - 14.8: Buddhism - *Undeclared*
  - 14.9: Taoism and Confucianism - *Undeclared*
  - 14.10: Judaism - *Undeclared*
  - 14.11: Islam - *Undeclared*
  - 14.12: Christianity - *Undeclared*
  - 14.13: Introduction to Religion in the United States - *Undeclared*
  - 14.14: U.S. Trends in Religion - *Undeclared*
  - 14.15: Religion and Social Change - *Undeclared*

- 14.16: Putting It Together- Religion - *Undeclared*
- 14.17: Discussion- Religion - *Undeclared*
- 14.18: Assignment- World Religions - *Undeclared*

15: Module 12- Education - *Undeclared*

- 15.1: Why It Matters- Education - *Undeclared*
- 15.2: Introduction to Global Education - *Undeclared*
- 15.3: Education Around the World - *Undeclared*
- 15.4: Universal Access to Education - *Undeclared*
- 15.5: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Education - *Undeclared*
- 15.6: Functionalist Theory on Education - *Undeclared*
- 15.7: Conflict Theory on Education - *Undeclared*
- 15.8: Symbolic Interactionist Theory on Education - *Undeclared*
- 15.9: Introduction to Issues in Education - *Undeclared*
- 15.10: Hot Topics in Education - *Undeclared*
- 15.11: Charter Schools and Homeschooling - *Undeclared*
- 15.12: Contemporary Issues in Education - *Undeclared*
- 15.13: Putting It Together- Education - *Undeclared*
- 15.14: Discussion- Education - *Undeclared*
- 15.15: Assignment- Education Infographic - *Undeclared*

16: Module 13- Health and Medicine - *Undeclared*

- 16.1: Why It Matters- Health and Medicine - *Undeclared*
- 16.2: Introduction to The Social Construction of Health - *Undeclared*
- 16.3: The Cultural Significance of Health - *Undeclared*
- 16.4: Theoretical Perspectives on Health and Medicine - *Undeclared*
- 16.5: Introduction to Health in the United States and Abroad - *Undeclared*
- 16.6: Global Health and Epidemiology - *Undeclared*
- 16.7: Health and Inequality in the United States - *Undeclared*
- 16.8: Mental Health and Disabilities - *Undeclared*
- 16.9: Healthcare Systems - *Undeclared*
- 16.10: Putting It Together- Health and Medicine - *Undeclared*
- 16.11: Discussion- Health and Medicine - *Undeclared*
- 16.12: Assignment- The Evolution of Health Issues - *Undeclared*

17: Module 14- Aging and the Elderly - *Undeclared*

- 17.1: Why It Matters- Aging and the Elderly - *Undeclared*
- 17.2: Introduction to Aging - *Undeclared*
- 17.3: Aging in Society - *Undeclared*
- 17.4: The Graying of the United States and the World - *Undeclared*
- 17.5: Introduction to the Aging Process - *Undeclared*
- 17.6: Growing Old - *Undeclared*
- 17.7: Death and Dying - *Undeclared*
- 17.8: Introduction to Sociology and Aging - *Undeclared*
- 17.9: Retirement and Poverty - *Undeclared*
- 17.10: Ageism and Abuse - *Undeclared*
- 17.11: Theoretical Perspectives on Aging - *Undeclared*
- 17.12: Putting It Together- Aging and the Elderly - *Undeclared*
- 17.13: Discussion- Health and Aging Assignment - *Undeclared*
- 17.14: Assignment- Aging and the Elderly - *Undeclared*

18: Module 15- Government and Politics - *Undeclared*

- 18.1: Why It Matters- Government and Politics - *Undeclared*
- 18.2: Introduction to Power and Authority - *Undeclared*
- 18.3: Types of Authority - *Undeclared*
- 18.4: Introduction to Types of Government - *Undeclared*
- 18.5: Forms of Government - *Undeclared*
- 18.6: Politics in the United States - *Undeclared*
- 18.7: Introduction to Theoretical Perspectives on Government and Power - *Undeclared*
- 18.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Government - *Undeclared*
- 18.9: Putting It Together- Government and Politics - *Undeclared*
- 18.10: Discussion- Government and Politics - *Undeclared*
- 18.11: Assignment- Politics and Sociology - *Undeclared*

19: Module 16- Work and the Economy - *Undeclared*

- 19.1: Why It Matters- Work and the Economy - *Undeclared*
- 19.2: Introduction to Economic Systems - *Undeclared*
- 19.3: The Development of Economic Systems - *Undeclared*
- 19.4: Capitalism and Socialism - *Undeclared*

- 19.5: Theoretical Perspectives on Economics - *Undeclared*
- 19.6: Introduction to Globalization and the Economy - *Undeclared*
- 19.7: Globalization - *Undeclared*
- 19.8: Introduction to Work in the United States - *Undeclared*
- 19.9: Work in the United States - *Undeclared*
- 19.10: Poverty and Unemployment in the United States - *Undeclared*
- 19.11: Putting It Together- Work and the Economy - *Undeclared*
- 19.12: Discussion- Work and the Economy - *Undeclared*
- 19.13: Assignment- Living in Poverty - *Undeclared*

o 20: Module 17- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment - *Undeclared*

- 20.1: Why It Matters- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment - *Undeclared*
- 20.2: Introduction to Demography and Population Growth - *Undeclared*
- 20.3: Demography and Population Growth - *Undeclared*
- 20.4: Demographic Theories - *Undeclared*
- 20.5: Immigration in the United States - *Undeclared*
- 20.6: Introduction to Urbanization - *Undeclared*
- 20.7: Urbanization on the Rise - *Undeclared*
- 20.8: Theoretical Perspectives on Urbanization - *Undeclared*
- 20.9: Introduction to the Environment and Society - *Undeclared*
- 20.10: Environmental Sociology - *Undeclared*
- 20.11: Environmental Racism - *Undeclared*
- 20.12: Putting It Together- Population, Urbanization, and the Environment - *Undeclared*
- 20.13: Discussion- Population and Urbanization - *Undeclared*
- 20.14: Assignment- Population and Urbanization - *Undeclared*

o 21: Module 18- Social Movements and Social Change - *Undeclared*

- 21.1: Why It Matters- Social Movements and Social Change - *Undeclared*
- 21.2: Introduction to Collective Behavior - *Undeclared*
- 21.3: Collective Behavior - *Undeclared*
- 21.4: Levels of Social Movements - *Undeclared*
- 21.5: Introduction to Social Movements - *Undeclared*
- 21.6: Types and Stages of Social Movements - *Undeclared*
- 21.7: Theoretical Perspectives on Social Movements - *Undeclared*
- 21.8: Introduction to Social Change - *Undeclared*
- 21.9: Causes of Social Change - *Undeclared*
- 21.10: Social Change, Technology, and Modernization - *Undeclared*
- 21.11: Putting It Together- Social Movements and Social Change - *Undeclared*
- 21.12: Assignment- Social Movements - *Undeclared*
- 21.13: Discussion- Social Movements - *Undeclared*

o Back Matter - *Undeclared*

- Index - *Undeclared*
- Glossary - *Undeclared*
- Detailed Licensing - *Undeclared*