

Chapter 16

The Economy and Work



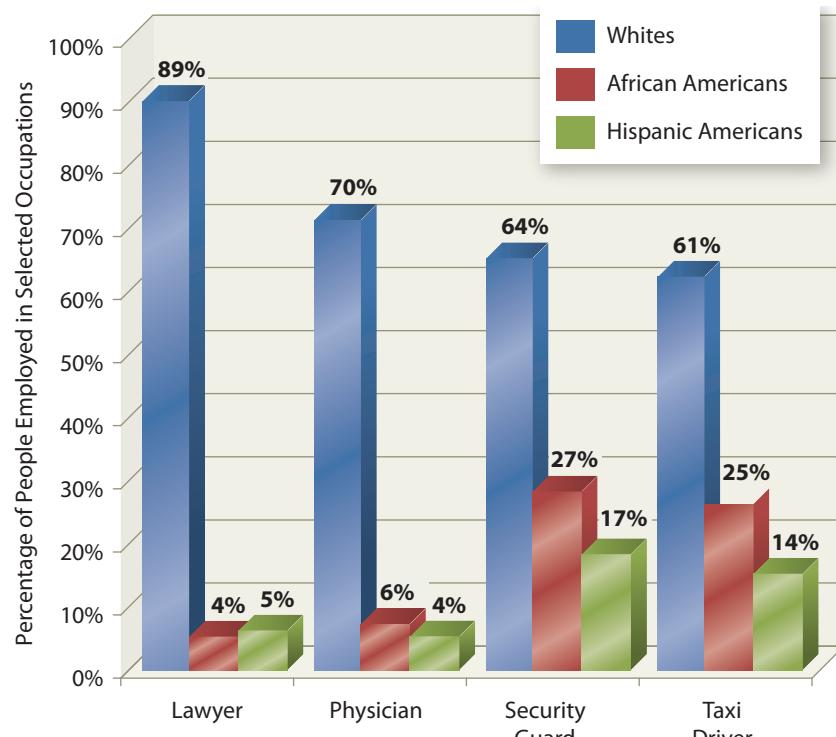
Learning Objectives

- 16.1** Summarize historical changes to the economy.
- 16.2** Assess the operation of capitalist and socialist economies.
- 16.3** Analyze patterns of employment and unemployment in the United States.
- 16.4** Discuss the importance of corporations to the U.S. economy.



The Power of Society

to shape our choices in jobs



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor (2014).

Will the jobs you take throughout your life reflect choices you make based on your personal abilities and interests? To some extent, yes. But the work we have has a lot to do with our position in a society that distributes opportunity unequally. Look at the “high-prestige” jobs such as lawyer and physician—notice how these jobs are overwhelmingly filled by people born with the relative advantages that go with being white. By contrast, “low-prestige” jobs are far more likely to be filled by people born into a disadvantaged racial or ethnic category. Society has a lot to say about the type of work we all do.

Chapter Overview

This chapter begins a survey of the major social institutions. We begin with the economy, which is the institution widely regarded as having the greatest impact on society as a whole. The chapter explores the operation of the economy and also explains how revolutionary changes in economic production have reshaped society.

Here's a quick quiz about the U.S. economy. (Hint: All six questions have the same correct answer.)

- Which U.S. business do more than 250 million people around the world visit each week?
- Which business sells products made by more than 100,000 companies?
- Which U.S. company opened 1,160 stores around the world in 2011?
- Which U.S. company buys more than \$18 billion worth of goods each year from China, making it a larger trading partner for China than the United Kingdom?
- Which U.S. company employs 2.2 million people around the world, including approximately 1.3 million in the United States?
- Which single company actually grew in size during the recent economic downturn?

You have probably guessed that the correct answer is Walmart, the global discount chain founded by Sam Walton, who opened his first store in Arkansas in 1962. In 2014, Walmart announced revenues of \$473 billion from more than 5,000 stores in the United States and 6,295 stores in 26 other countries from Brazil to China.

But not everyone is pleased with the expansion of Walmart. Across the United States, many people have joined a social movement to keep Walmart out of their local communities, fearing the loss of local businesses and, in some cases, local culture. Critics also claim that the merchandising giant pays low wages, keeps out labor unions, and sells many products made in sweatshops abroad. Since 2010, Walmart also has defended itself in the courts against claims of sex discrimination (Saporito, 2003; Walsh, 2007; Walmart, 2012). ■



This chapter examines the economy, widely considered the most influential of all social institutions. As the story of Walmart's expansion suggests, the economy of the United States—and the economic system of the entire world—is dominated by a number of giant corporations. Who benefits from these megabusinesses? Who loses? What is it like to work for one of these corporations? To answer these questions, sociologists study how the economy operates as well as the nature of work and what jobs mean to each of us.

The Economy: Historical Overview

16.1 Summarize historical changes to the economy.

The **economy** is the social institution that organizes a society's production, distribution, and consumption of goods and

services. As an institution, the economy operates, for better or worse, in a generally predictable manner. *Goods* are commodities ranging from necessities (food, clothing, shelter) to luxury items (cars, swimming pools, yachts). *Services* are activities that benefit others (for example, the work of priests, physicians, teachers, and computer software specialists).

We value goods and services because they ensure survival or because they make life easier or more interesting. Also, what people produce as workers and what they buy as consumers are important parts of social identity, as when we say, "He's a steelworker," or "She drives a Mercedes." How goods and services are distributed, too, shapes the lives of everyone by giving more resources to some and fewer to others.

The economies of modern high-income nations are the result of centuries of social change. We turn now to three technological revolutions that reorganized production and, in the process, transformed social life.

The Agricultural Revolution

The earliest human societies were made up of hunters and gatherers living off the land. In these technologically simple societies, there was no distinct economy. Rather, producing and consuming were part of family life.

As Chapter 4 ("Society") explained, when people harnessed animals to plows, beginning some 5,000 years ago, a new agricultural economy was created that was fifty times more productive than hunting and gathering. The resulting surplus meant that not everyone had to produce food, so many took on specialized work: making tools, raising animals, or building dwellings. Soon towns sprang up, linked by networks of traders dealing in food, animals, and other goods. These four factors—agricultural technology, job specialization, permanent settlements, and trade—made the economy a distinct social institution.



As societies industrialize, a smaller share of the labor force works in agriculture. In the United States, much of the agricultural work that remains is performed by immigrants from lower-income nations. These farm workers from Mexico travel throughout Florida during the tomato harvest.

The Industrial Revolution

By the mid-eighteenth century, a second technological revolution was under way, first in England and then in North America. The development of industry was even more powerful than the rise of agriculture in bringing change to the economy. Industrialization changed the economy in five fundamental ways:

- 1. New sources of energy.** Throughout history, "energy" had meant the muscle power of people or animals. But in 1765, the English inventor James Watt introduced the steam engine. One hundred times more powerful than animal muscles, early steam engines soon drove heavy machinery.
- 2. Centralization of work in factories.** Steam-powered machines soon moved work from homes to factories, the centralized and impersonal workplaces that housed the machines.
- 3. Manufacturing and mass production.** Before the Industrial Revolution, most people grew or gathered raw materials such as grain, wood, or wool. In an industrial economy, the focus shifts so that most people work to turn raw materials into a wide range of finished products such as processed foods, furniture, and clothing.
- 4. Specialization.** Centuries ago, people worked at home, making products from start to finish. In the factory, a worker repeats a single task over and over, making only a small contribution to the finished product.
- 5. Wage labor.** Instead of working for themselves, factory workers became wage laborers working for strangers, who often cared less for them than for the machines they operated.

The Industrial Revolution gradually raised the standard of living as countless new products and services fueled an expanding marketplace. Yet the benefits of industrial technology were shared very unequally, especially at the beginning. Some factory owners made vast fortunes, while the majority of industrial workers lived close to poverty. Children, too, worked in factories or in coal mines for pennies a day. Women working in factories were among the lowest paid, and their rigid supervision left them with little personal freedom.

The Information Revolution and Postindustrial Society

By about 1950, the nature of production was changing once again. The United States was creating a **postindustrial economy**, a productive system based on service work and high technology. Automated machinery (and later, robotics) reduced the role of human labor in factory production and expanded the ranks of clerical workers and managers. The postindustrial era is marked by a shift from industrial work to service work.

Driving this change is a third technological breakthrough: the computer. Just as the Industrial Revolution did two-and-a-half centuries ago, the Information Revolution has introduced new kinds of products and new forms of communication and has altered the character of work. In general, there have been three significant changes:

- 1. From tangible products to ideas.** The industrial era was defined by the production of goods; in the postindustrial era, people work with symbols. Computer programmers, writers, financial analysts, advertising executives, architects, editors, and all sorts of consultants make up more of the labor force in the information age.

Global Snapshot

- In high-income nations such as the United States, three out of four jobs are in the tertiary or service sector of the economy.

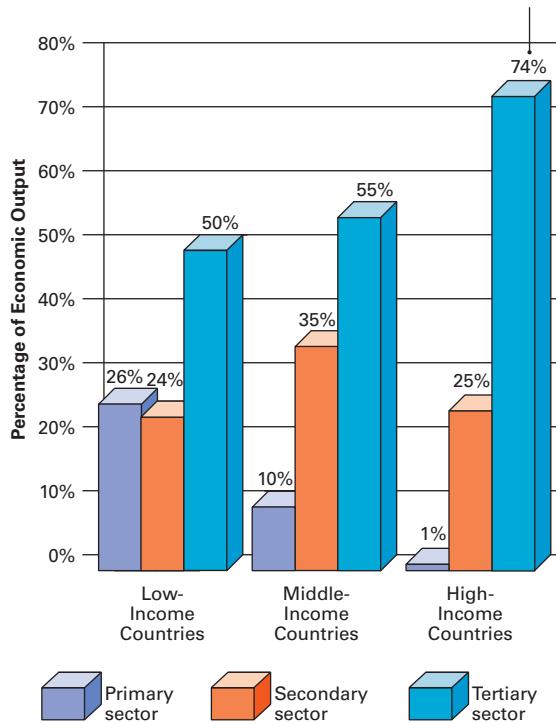


Figure 16–1 The Size of Economic Sectors, by Income Level of Country

As countries become richer, the primary sector becomes a smaller part of the economy and the tertiary or service sector becomes larger.

SOURCE: Estimates based on World Bank (2015).

- From mechanical skills to literacy skills.** The Industrial Revolution required that workers have mechanical skills, but the Information Revolution requires literacy skills: speaking and writing well and, of course, knowing how to use a computer. People able to communicate effectively are likely to do well; people without these skills face fewer opportunities in the job market.
- From factories to almost anywhere.** Industrial technology drew workers into factories located near power sources, but computer technology allows people to work almost anywhere. Laptop and wireless computers and cell phones now turn the home, a car, or even an airplane into a “virtual office.” What this means for

everyday life is that new information technology blurs the line between our lives at work and at home.

Sectors of the Economy

The three revolutions just described reflect a shifting balance among the three sectors of a society’s economy. The **primary sector** is *the part of the economy that draws raw materials from the natural environment*. The primary sector—agriculture, raising animals, fishing, forestry, and mining—is largest in low-income nations. Figure 16–1 shows that 26 percent of the economic output of low-income countries is from the primary sector, compared with 10 percent of economic activity in middle-income nations and just 1 percent in high-income countries such as the United States.

The **secondary sector** is *the part of the economy that transforms raw materials into manufactured goods*. This sector grows quickly as societies industrialize. It includes operations such as refining petroleum into gasoline and turning metals into tools and automobiles. The globalization of industry means that just about all the world’s countries have a significant share of their workers in the secondary sector. Figure 16–1 shows that the secondary sector now accounts for about the same share of economic output in low-income nations as it does in high-income countries.

The **tertiary sector** is *the part of the economy that involves services rather than goods*. The tertiary sector grows with industrialization, accounting for 50 percent of economic output in low-income countries, 55 percent in middle-income countries, and 74 percent in high-income nations. About 85 percent of the U.S. labor force is in service work, including secretarial and clerical work and positions in food service, sales, law, health care, law enforcement, advertising, and teaching (U.S. Department of Labor, 2014; World Bank, 2015).

The Global Economy

New information technology is drawing people around the world closer together and creating a **global economy**, *economic activity that crosses national borders*. The development of a global economy has five major consequences.

First, we see a global division of labor: Different regions of the world specialize in one sector of economic activity. As Global Map 16–1 shows, agriculture represents about

Sectors of the Economy

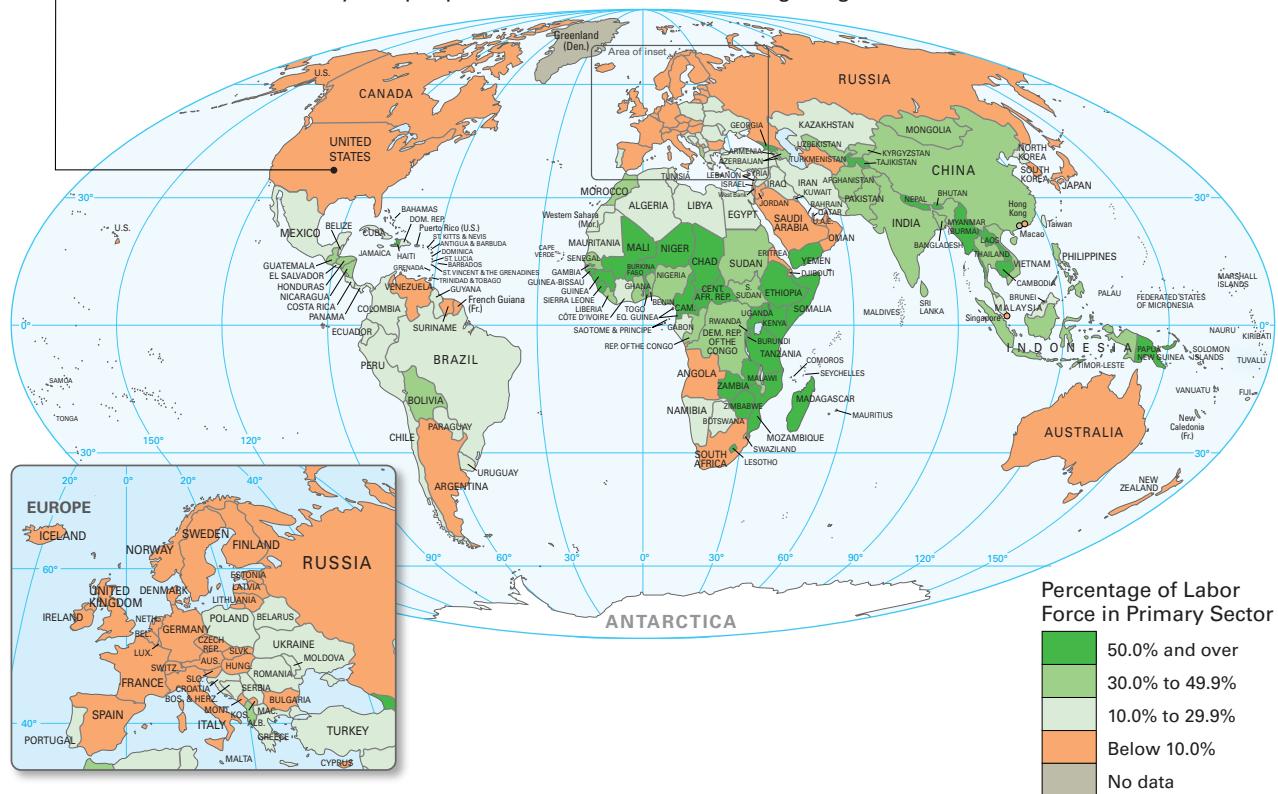
primary sector the part of the economy that draws raw materials from the natural environment

secondary sector the part of the economy that transforms raw materials into manufactured goods

tertiary sector the part of the economy that involves services rather than goods

Window on the World

- Sandra Johanson is a hygiene technician on a large corporate-owned farm in Kansas. She is one of the relatively few people in the United States working in agriculture.



Global Map 16-1 Agricultural Employment in Global Perspective

The primary sector of the economy is largest in the nations that are least developed. Thus in the poor countries of Africa and Asia, up to half of all workers are farmers. This picture is altogether different in the world's most economically developed countries—including the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia—which have only about 1 percent of their labor force in agriculture.

SOURCE: Data from International Labour Organization (2014).

half the total economic output of the world's poorest countries. Global Map 16-2 on page 436 shows that most of the economic output of high-income countries, including the United States, is in the service sector. In short, the world's poorest nations specialize in producing raw materials, and the richest nations specialize in the production of services.

Second, an increasing number of products pass through more than one nation. Look no further than your morning coffee: The beans may have been grown in Colombia and transported to New Orleans on a freighter registered in Liberia, made in a shipyard in Japan using steel from Korea, and fueled by oil from Venezuela.

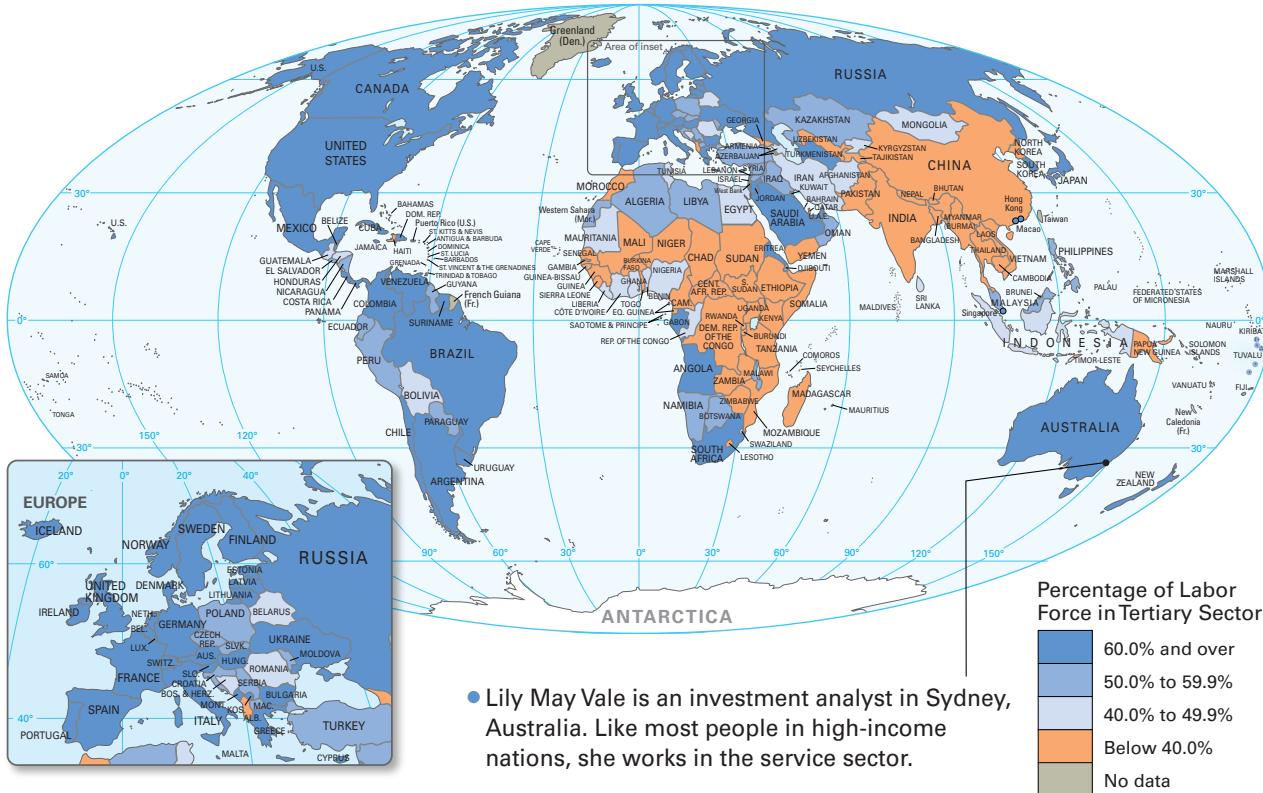
Third, national governments no longer control the economic activity that takes place within their borders. In fact, governments cannot even regulate the value of their national currencies because dollars, euros, pounds sterling, and yen are traded around the clock in the financial markets of New York, London, and Tokyo.

A fourth consequence of the global economy is that a small number of businesses, operating internationally, now control a vast share of the world's economic activity. Based on the latest available data, the 2,000 largest multinational companies (with sales of about \$38 trillion) account for half of the economic output of the entire world (*Forbes*, 2014; *World Bank*, 2015).

Fifth and finally, the globalization of the economy raises concerns about the rights and opportunities of workers. Critics of this trend claim that the United States is losing jobs—especially factory jobs—to low-income nations. This means that workers here face lower wages and higher unemployment; many workers abroad are paid extremely low wages. As a result, say critics, the global expansion of capitalism threatens the well-being of workers throughout the world.

The world is still divided into 194 politically distinct nations. But increasing international economic activity makes nationhood less significant than it was even a decade ago.

Window on the World



- Lily May Vale is an investment analyst in Sydney, Australia. Like most people in high-income nations, she works in the service sector.

Global Map 16-2 Service-Sector Employment in Global Perspective

The tertiary sector of the economy becomes ever larger as a nation's income level rises. In the United States, Canada, the countries of Western Europe, much of South America, Australia, and Japan, about three-quarters of the labor force performs service work.

SOURCE: Data from International Labour Organization (2014).

Economic Systems: Paths to Justice

16.2 Assess the operation of capitalist and socialist economies.

Every society's economic system makes a statement about *justice* by determining who is entitled to what. Two general economic models are capitalism and socialism. No nation anywhere in the world has an economy that is completely one or the other; capitalism and socialism represent two ends of a continuum along which all real-world economies can be located. We will look at each of these two models.

Capitalism

Capitalism is an economic system in which natural resources and the means of producing goods and services are privately owned. An ideal capitalist economy has three distinctive features:

- Private ownership of property.** In a capitalist economy, individuals can own almost anything. The more capitalist an economy is, the more private ownership there

is of wealth-producing property, such as factories, real estate, and natural resources.

- Pursuit of personal profit.** A capitalist society seeks to create profit and wealth. The profit motive is the reason people take new jobs, open new businesses, or try to improve products. Making money is considered the natural way of economic life. Just as important, the Scottish philosopher Adam Smith (1723–1790) claimed that as individuals pursue their self-interest, the entire society prospers (1937, orig. 1776).

- Competition and consumer choice.** A purely capitalist economy is a free-market system with no government interference (sometimes called a *laissez-faire economy*, from the French words meaning "leave it alone"). Adam Smith stated that a freely competitive economy regulates itself by the "invisible hand" of the law of supply and demand.

Consumers regulate a free-market economy, Smith explained, by selecting the goods and services offering the greatest value. As producers compete for the customer's business, they provide the highest-quality goods at the lowest possible prices. In Smith's time-honored phrase, from narrow self-interest comes the "greatest



Capitalism still thrives in Hong Kong (left), evident in streets choked with advertising and shoppers. Socialism is more the rule in China's capital, Beijing (right), a city dominated by government buildings rather than a downtown business district.



good for the greatest number of people.” Government control of an economy, on the other hand, distorts market forces by reducing the quantity and quality of goods, shortchanging consumers in the process.

Justice in a capitalist system amounts to freedom of the marketplace, where a person can produce, invest, and buy according to individual self-interest. The increasing popularity of Walmart, described in the opening to this chapter, reflects the fact that people think they get a lot for their money when shopping there.

The United States is considered a capitalist nation because most businesses are privately owned. However, it is not purely capitalist because government plays a large role in the economy. The government owns and operates a number of businesses, including almost all of this country’s schools, roads, parks and museums, the U.S. Postal Service, the Amtrak railroad system, and the entire U.S. military. The U.S. government also had a major hand in building the Internet. In addition, governments use taxation and other forms of regulation to influence what companies produce, control the quality and cost of merchandise, and motivate consumers to conserve natural resources.

The U.S. government also sets minimum wage levels, enforces workplace safety standards, regulates corporate mergers, provides farm price supports, and supplements the income of a majority of its people in the form of Social Security, public assistance, student loans, and veterans’ benefits. Local, state, and federal governments combined are the country’s biggest employer, with 16 percent of the nonfarm labor force on their payrolls (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

Socialism

Socialism is an economic system in which natural resources and the means of producing goods and services are collectively owned. In its ideal form, a socialist economy rejects each of

the three characteristics of capitalism just described in favor of three opposite features:

- 1. Collective ownership of property.** A socialist economy limits rights to private property, especially property used to generate income. Government controls such property and makes housing and other goods available to all, not just to the people with the most money.
- 2. Pursuit of collective goals.** The individualistic pursuit of profit goes against the collective orientation of socialism. What capitalism celebrates as the “entrepreneurial spirit,” socialism condemns as greed; individuals are expected to work for the common good of all.
- 3. Government control of the economy.** Socialism rejects capitalism’s laissez-faire approach in favor of a *centrally controlled or command economy* operated by the government. Commercial advertising thus plays little role in socialist economies.

Justice in a socialist context means not competing to gain wealth but meeting everyone’s basic needs in a roughly equal manner. From a socialist point of view, the common capitalist practice of giving workers as little in pay and benefits as possible to boost company earnings is unjust because it puts profits before people.

Venezuela, Cuba, North Korea, the People’s Republic of China, and more than two dozen other nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America model their economies on socialism, placing almost all wealth-generating property under state control (The Wall Street Journal/Heritage Foundation, 2015). The extent of world socialism declined during the 1990s as most of the countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union geared their economies toward a market system. More recently, however, voters in Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and other nations in South America have elected leaders who have moved the national economies in a socialist direction.

capitalism an economic system in which natural resources and the means of producing goods and services are privately owned

socialism an economic system in which natural resources and the means of producing goods and services are collectively owned

communism a hypothetical economic and political system in which all members of a society are socially equal

SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM Many people think of *socialism* and *communism* as the same thing, but they are not. **Communism** is a *hypothetical economic and political system in which all members of a society are socially equal*. Karl Marx viewed socialism as one important step on the path toward the ideal of a communist society that abolishes all class divisions. In many socialist societies today, the dominant political party describes itself as communist, but the communist goal has not been achieved in any country.

Why? For one thing, social stratification involves differences in power as well as wealth. Socialist societies have reduced economic differences by regulating people's range of choices. In the process, government did not "wither away," as Marx imagined it would. Rather, government has grown, giving socialist political elites enormous power and privilege.

Marx might have agreed that a communist society is a *utopia* (from Greek words meaning "no place"). Yet Marx considered communism a worthy goal and might well have objected to so-called Marxist societies such as North Korea, the People's Republic of China, and Cuba for falling short of the promise of communism.

Welfare Capitalism and State Capitalism

Some nations of Western Europe, including Sweden and Italy, have market-based economies but also offer broad social welfare programs. Analysts call this type of economic system **welfare capitalism**, *an economic and political system that combines a mostly market-based economy with extensive social welfare programs*.

Under welfare capitalism, the government owns some of the largest industries and services, such as transportation, the mass media, and health care. In Greece, France, and Sweden, almost half of economic production is "nationalized," or state-controlled. Most industry is left in private hands, although it is subject to extensive government regulation. High taxation (aimed especially at the rich) funds a wide range of social welfare programs, including universal health care and child care. In Sweden,

welfare capitalism an economic and political system that combines a mostly market-based economy with extensive social welfare programs

state capitalism an economic and political system in which companies are privately owned but cooperate closely with the government

for example, government-provided social services represent 29 percent of all economic output, much higher than the 20 percent share in the United States (OECD, 2013).

Another blend of capitalism and socialism is **state capitalism**, *an economic and political system in which companies are privately owned but cooperate closely with the government*. State capitalism is the rule among the nations along the Pacific Rim. Japan, South Korea, and Singapore are all capitalist countries, but their governments work in partnership with large companies, supplying financial assistance and controlling foreign imports to help their businesses compete in world markets (Gerlach, 1992).

Relative Advantages of Capitalism and Socialism

Which economic system works best? Comparing economic models is difficult because all countries mix capitalism and socialism to varying degrees. In addition, nations differ in cultural attitudes toward work, access to natural resources, levels of technological development, and patterns of trade. Despite such complicating factors, some crude comparisons are revealing.

ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY One key dimension of economic performance is productivity. A commonly used measure of economic output is gross domestic product (GDP), the total value of all goods and services produced annually. Per capita (per-person) GDP allows us to compare the economic performance of nations of different population sizes.

The output of mostly capitalist countries at the end of the 1980s—before the fall of the socialist systems in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—varied somewhat but averaged about \$13,500 per person. The comparable figure for the mostly socialist former Soviet Union and nations of Eastern Europe was about \$5,000. This means that the capitalist countries outproduced the socialist nations by a ratio of 2.7 to 1 (United Nations Development Programme, 1990). A recent comparison of socialist North Korea (estimated per capita GDP of \$1,800) and

capitalist South Korea (\$24,156) provides an even sharper contrast (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015; World Bank, 2015).

ECONOMIC EQUALITY The distribution of resources within a population is another important measure of how well an economic system works. A

comparative study of Europe in the mid-1970s, when that region was split between mostly capitalist and mostly socialist countries, compared the earnings of the richest 5 percent of the population and the poorest 5 percent (Wiles, 1977). Societies with capitalist economies had an income ratio of about 10 to 1; the ratio for socialist countries was about 5 to 1. In other words, capitalist economies support a higher overall standard of living, but with greater income inequality; socialist economies create more economic equality but with a lower overall living standard.



Directly comparing the economic performance of capitalism and socialism is difficult because nations differ in many ways. But a satellite image of socialist North Korea and capitalist South Korea at night shows the dramatically different electrical output of the two nations, one indication of economic activity.

PERSONAL FREEDOM One additional consideration in evaluating capitalism and socialism is the personal freedom each gives its people. Capitalism emphasizes the *freedom to pursue self-interest* and depends on the ability of producers and consumers to interact with little interference by the state. Socialism, by contrast, emphasizes *freedom from basic want*. The goal of equality requires the state to regulate the economy, which in turn limits personal choices and opportunities for citizens.

Can a single society offer both political freedom and economic equality? In the capitalist United States, our political system offers many personal freedoms, but the economy generates a lot of inequality, and freedom is not worth as much to a poor person as to a rich one. By contrast, North Korea or Cuba has considerable economic equality, but people cannot speak out or travel freely within or outside of the country. Perhaps the closest any country has come to “having it all” is Denmark, where welfare capitalism combines a market economy with broad government programs that provide for the welfare of all citizens.

Changes in Socialist and Capitalist Countries

In 1989 and 1990, the nations of Eastern Europe, which had been seized by the Soviet Union at the end of World War II, overthrew their socialist regimes. These nations—including the former German Democratic Republic (reunited with Germany), the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria—have been moving toward capitalist market systems after decades of state-controlled economies. In 1991, the Soviet Union itself formally dissolved, and many of its former republics introduced some free-market principles. Within a decade, three-fourths of former

Soviet government enterprises were partly or entirely in private hands (Montaigne, 2001).

There were many reasons for these sweeping changes. First, the capitalist economies far outproduced their socialist counterparts. The socialist economies were successful in achieving economic equality, but living standards were low compared to those of Western Europe. Second, Soviet socialism was heavy-handed, rigidly controlling the media and restricting individual freedoms. In short, socialism did away with *economic elites*, as Karl Marx predicted, but as Max Weber foresaw, socialism increased the power of *political elites*.

So far, the market reforms in Eastern Europe have proceeded unevenly. Some nations, such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, all with extensive reserves of oil and natural gas, did well even during the recent global recession. Other nations, including Lithuania, Latvia, and Azerbaijan, have seen their economies shrink and have faced rising unemployment. In just about every formerly socialist nation, the introduction of a market economy has brought with it an increase in economic inequality (Ignatius, 2007; Pew Research Center, 2011; World Bank, 2012).

A number of other countries have recently begun moving toward more socialist economies. In 2005, the people of Bolivia elected Evo Morales, a former farmer, union leader, and activist, as their new president. This election placed Bolivia in a group of nations—including Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay—that are moving toward more socialist economies. The reasons for this shift vary from country to country, but the common element is economic inequality. In Bolivia, for example, economic production has increased in recent decades, but most of the benefits have gone to a wealthy business elite. By contrast, more than half of the country’s people remain very poor (Howden, 2005).

Work in the Postindustrial U.S. Economy

16.3 Analyze patterns of employment and unemployment in the United States.

Economic change is occurring not just in the socialist world but in the United States as well. In 2015, a total of 147 million people in the United States—59 percent of those aged sixteen and over—were working for income. A larger share of men (65 percent) than women (54 percent) had jobs, a gap that has been holding steady over time. Among men, 59 percent of African Americans were employed, compared with 68 percent of whites and 76 percent of Hispanics. Among women, 56 percent of African Americans were employed, compared to 55 percent of whites, and 54 percent of Hispanics. For both sexes, 61 percent of Asian Americans were employed (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

The Decline of Agricultural Work

In 1900, roughly 40 percent of U.S. workers were farmers. In 2014, just 1.5 percent were in agriculture. Although recent years have seen a small resurgence of family farms—reflecting the growing popularity of organic and locally grown foods—the larger trend is that the family farm of a century ago has been replaced by *corporate agribusinesses*.

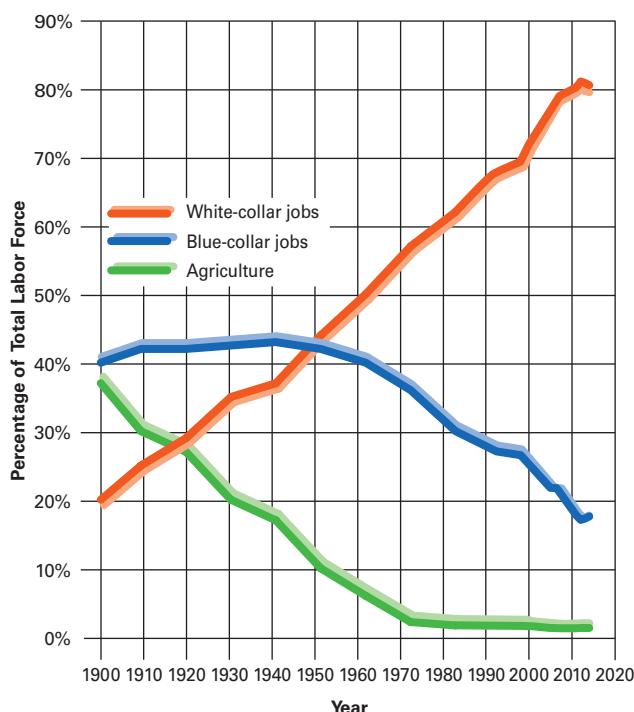


Figure 16–2 The Changing Pattern of Work in the United States, 1900–2014

Compared to a century ago, when the economy involved a larger share of factory and farm work, making a living in the United States now involves mostly white-collar service jobs.

SOURCE: Estimates based on U.S. Department of Labor (2015).

primary labor market jobs that provide extensive benefits to workers

secondary labor market jobs that provide minimal benefits to workers

Farmland is now more productive, but this change in output has caused painful adjustments across the country as a traditional way of life is lost (Dudley, 2000; Carlson, 2008). Figure 16–2 illustrates the shrinking role of the primary sector in the U.S. economy over the last century.

From Factory Work to Service Work

A century ago, industrialization swelled the ranks of blue-collar workers. By 1950, however, a white-collar revolution had moved a majority of workers into service occupations. By 2014, more than 80 percent of the labor force worked in the service sector, and almost all of this country's new jobs were being created in this sector (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

As Chapter 11 ("Social Class in the United States") explained, the expansion of service work is one reason many people call the United States a middle-class society. But much service work—including sales and clerical positions and jobs in hospitals and restaurants—pays much less than former factory jobs. This means that many of the jobs in today's postindustrial society provide only a modest standard of living. Women and other minorities, as well as many young people just starting their working careers, are the most likely to have jobs doing low-paying service work (Kalleberg, Reskin, & Hudson, 2000; Greenhouse, 2006).

The Dual Labor Market

Sociologists see the jobs in today's economy falling into two categories. The **primary labor market** offers *jobs that provide extensive benefits to workers*. This segment of the labor market includes the traditional white-collar professions such as medicine and law, as well as upper-management positions. These are jobs that people think of as *careers*, interesting work that provides high income, job security, and opportunity for advancement.

Few of these advantages apply to work in the **secondary labor market**, *jobs that provide minimal benefits to workers*. This segment of the labor force is employed in low-skilled, blue-collar assembly-line operations and low-level service-sector jobs, including clerical positions. Workers in the secondary labor market receive lower income, have less job security and fewer benefits, and find less satisfaction in their work. Women and other minorities are overly represented in the secondary labor market workforce (Nelson, 1994; Kalleberg, Reskin, & Hudson, 2000).

Labor Unions

The changing U.S. economy has seen a decline in **labor unions**, *organizations of workers that seek to improve wages and*

working conditions through various strategies, including negotiations and strikes. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, union membership increased rapidly; by 1950, it had reached more than one-third of nonfarm workers. Union rolls peaked at almost 25 million around 1970. Since then, membership has declined to about 11 percent of nonfarm workers, or some 14.6 million men and women. Looking more closely, 36 percent of government workers are members of unions, compared to just 7 percent of private-sector (nongovernment) workers. In terms of absolute numbers, by 2010, government workers had become a majority of all union members (Clawson & Clawson, 1999; Riley, 2011; U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

The pattern of union decline holds in other high-income countries, yet unions elsewhere claim a higher share of workers than they do in the United States. Union membership is around 18 percent in Japan, between 15 and 40 percent in much of Europe, 27 percent in Canada, and reaches a high of 69 percent in Finland (OECD, 2015).

The widespread decline in union memberships reflects the shrinking industrial sector of the economy. Newer service jobs—such as sales jobs at retailers like Walmart, described in the chapter opening—generally have not become unionized. Citing low wages and numerous worker complaints, unions are trying to organize Walmart employees, so far without winning over a single store. In the end, long-term gains in membership probably depend on the ability

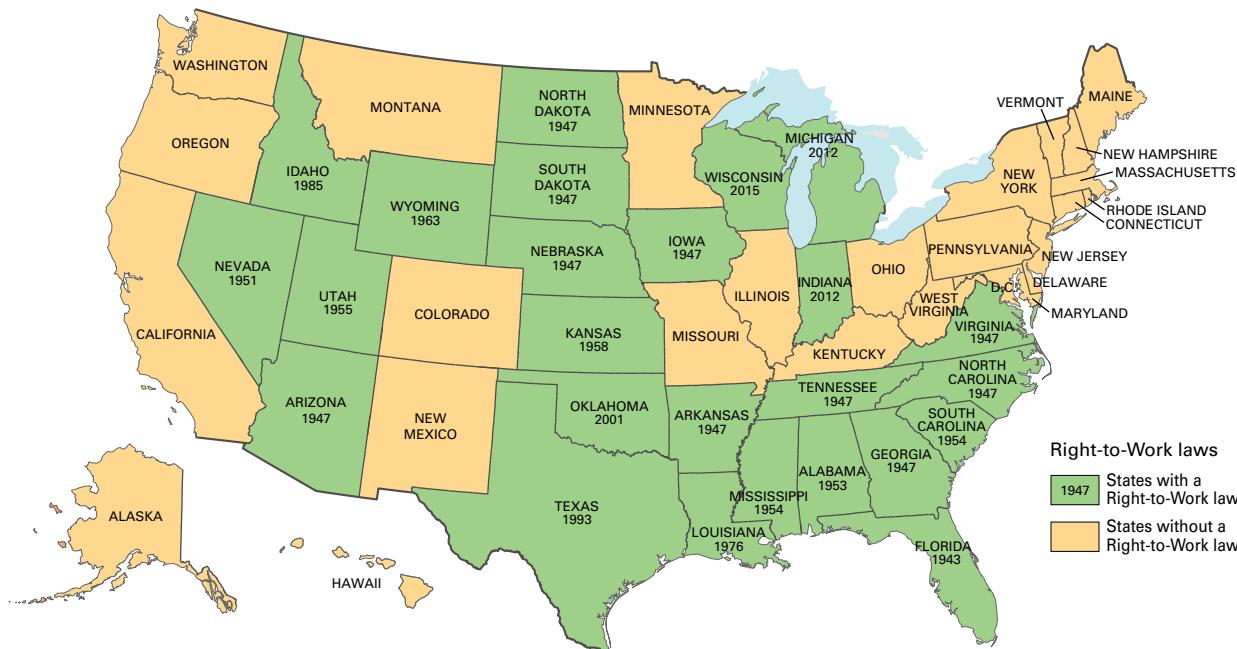
of unions to adapt to the new global economy. Union members in the United States, used to seeing foreign workers as “the enemy,” will have to build new international alliances (Rousseau, 2002; Dalmia, 2008; Allen, 2009).

The strength of unions in the economy depends in large part on the laws that regulate how unions are formed. Over the course of this country’s history, even when employees wanted to form a labor union, a company did not have to recognize the union as representing the workers. A common strategy used by unions to gain the right to represent workers was “majority sign-up,” which means that if a majority of workers at a particular company sign a card saying they wish to form a union then the company would have to recognize the union, all workers would pay union dues, and the union would represent all workers. Unions defend this policy as both democratic and preventing some workers from enjoying the benefits won by the union without paying their share of the union’s support.

Opponents of this strategy support a different policy, generally called a “right-to-work” law. Such a law allows a union to represent workers, but it prevents a union from requiring all workers to join and pay dues as a condition of working at the company. In other words, all people have a “right to work,” whether or not they wish to join a union.

National Map 16–1 shows which states across the country have and have not enacted “right-to-work” laws.

Seeing Ourselves



National Map 16–1 Right-to-Work Laws across the United States

Unions oppose “right-to-work” laws because these laws limit the power of unions to organize workers. In general, right-to-work laws have been enacted in the South and in many of the Plains States and western states. By contrast, states in the Northeast, in much of the Midwest, and on the West Coast have not enacted right-to-work laws. How do you think the two categories of states typically voted in the 2012 presidential election?

Controversy & Debate

The Great Union Battle of 2011: Balancing Budgets or Waging War on Working People?

"We're going to reform government," Ohio governor John Kasich told state legislators on March 8, 2011, as he gave his first "state of the state" speech. As he spoke, more than 1,000 firefighters—state employees—crowded the lobby outside the doors of the legislative chamber and chanted in unison, "Kill the bill! Kill the bill! Kill the bill!"

So what was going on? Ohio was facing a desperate economic situation—the state government was \$8 billion in debt. Governor Kasich believed one major cause of that enormous deficit was past agreements made between state officials and public employee unions, including firefighters, police, and teachers.

As Kasich saw it, the problem was a system that gives public employee unions too much power and threatens to bankrupt the state. Under that system, unions effectively require every public employee to be a union member and to pay hefty dues through payroll deductions. These dues give unions huge political power to elect Democratic leaders who, in the past, have signed off on labor contracts that not only exceed what workers in the private sector earn but also that the state simply cannot afford. The reforms Kasich and the Republican-controlled state government enacted in 2011 would have continued collective bargaining by public employee unions for salary but no longer allowed it as the means to set benefits. In addition, pay was to be linked to a performance-based merit system rather than seniority, and



Beginning in 2011, the nation's attention was drawn to efforts by several states to limit the power of government employee unions. On one side of the debate were people who claim that high wages and generous benefits for public employees threaten to bankrupt state treasuries. On the other side of the debate were people claiming that such benefits are deserved by people who do important and often dangerous work for modest pay. In addition, critics

public employee unions would not have been allowed to strike.

Harold Schaltberger, representing the International Association of Fire Fighters, saw the "reforms" as nothing less than a war on unions. The proposed measures, he claimed, "move us back decades to when there were no true workers' rights." As a result, unions organized a massive effort to overturn the new Ohio law. In the fall of 2011, they succeeded when a majority of voters supported the union position.

In 2010, Wisconsin voters elected Scott Walker as governor on a platform of reducing that state's budget deficit by cutting the power of public employee unions. On March 11, 2011, he signed a bill passed by the state's legislature limiting collective bargaining by public employees to wages (not benefits), limiting wage increases to the inflation rate, and decreasing the share the government contributes toward their health care and retirement pensions. The new law, which has already been challenged in the courts, also gives government workers the right to join or not to join a union. As they did in Ohio, unions organized in opposition to this new law by seeking to remove Scott Walker from office. But, in this case, the outcome was a defeat for the unions: Walker survived a recall election in 2012 and Wisconsin added a "right-to-work" law in 2015.

Because many states—as well as the federal government—are facing large budget deficits, the recent conflicts surrounding public employee unions are likely to be repeated across the country in the future.

What Do You Think?

1. Do you think all workers—including government employees—should have the right to form unions? Explain.
2. Should public service employees receive roughly the same pay and benefits earned by comparable workers in the private sector? What about firefighters and police who face danger in their daily work?
3. Do you support the position taken by Governors Kasich and Walker to reduce union power? Or do you side with these unions and want to see them remain strong? Explain.

SOURCES: Gray (2011), Murphy (2011), Rasmussen (2011), Ripley (2011), Sulzberger (2011), and Kelleher (2012).

charge that some political leaders are trying to destroy the union movement. The Controversy & Debate box provides details.

Professions

Many types of jobs today are called *professional*—we hear of professional tennis players, professional housecleaners,

even professional exterminators. As distinct from *amateur* (from the Latin for “lover,” meaning someone who does something just for the love of doing it), a professional performs some task to make a living. But does this term mean something more? What exactly is a profession?

A **profession** is a prestigious white-collar occupation that requires extensive formal education. People performing this kind of work make a *profession*, or public declaration, of their willingness to work according to certain ethical principles. Professions include the ministry, medicine, law, academia, architecture, accountancy, and social work. An occupation is considered a profession to the extent that it demonstrates the following four basic characteristics (Goode, 1960; Ritzer & Walczak, 1990):

- Theoretical knowledge.** Professionals have a theoretical understanding of their field rather than mere technical training. Anyone can master first-aid skills, for example, but physicians have a theoretical understanding of human health. This means that tennis players, housecleaners, and exterminators do not really qualify as professionals.
- Self-regulating practice.** The typical professional is self-employed, “in private practice,” rather than working for a company. Professionals oversee their own work guided by a code of ethics.
- Authority over clients.** Because of their expertise, professionals are sought out by clients, who value their advice and follow their directions.
- Community orientation rather than self-interest.** The traditional professed duty states an intention to serve others rather than merely to seek income.

In almost all cases, professional work requires not just a college degree but also a graduate degree. Not surprisingly, therefore, professions are well represented among the occupations beginning college students say they hope to enter after graduation, as shown in Figure 16–3.

Many occupations that do not qualify as true professions nonetheless may seek to *professionalize* their services. Claiming professional standing often begins by renaming the work to suggest special, theoretical knowledge, moving the field away from its original, lesser reputation. Stockroom workers become “inventory supply managers,” and exterminators are reborn as “insect control specialists.”

Interested parties may also form a professional association that certifies their skills and ethical conduct. This organization then licenses its members, writes a code of ethics, and emphasizes the work’s importance in the community. To win public acceptance, a professional association may also establish schools or other training facilities and publish a professional journal. Not all occupations

Student Snapshot

- In a society such as ours, with so many different types of work, no one career attracts the interest of more than a small share of today’s students.

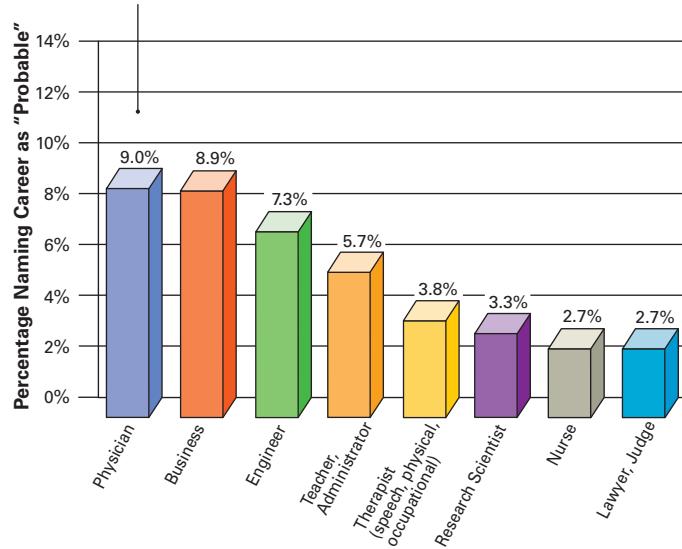


Figure 16–3 The Careers Most Commonly Named as “Probable” by First-Year College Students, 2014

Today’s college students expect to enter careers that pay well and carry high prestige.

SOURCE: Eagan et al. (2014).

try to claim professional status. Some *paraprofessionals*, including paralegals and medical technicians, possess specialized skills but lack the extensive theoretical education required of full professionals.

Self-Employment

Self-employment—earning a living without being on the payroll of a large organization—was once common in the United States. About 80 percent of the labor force was self-employed in 1800, compared to just 7 percent of workers today (8 percent of men and 5.5 percent of women) (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

Lawyers, physicians, and other professionals are well represented among the ranks of the self-employed. But most self-employed workers are small business owners, plumbers, carpenters, freelance writers, editors, artists, and long-distance truck drivers. In all, the self-employed are more likely to have blue-collar than white-collar jobs.

Women own 30 percent of this country’s businesses, and the share is rising. The 7.8 million firms owned by U.S. women employ 6.4 percent of the labor force and generate \$1.2 trillion in annual sales (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Diversity Snapshot

- The best strategy to reduce your risk of being without a job is to complete a college education.

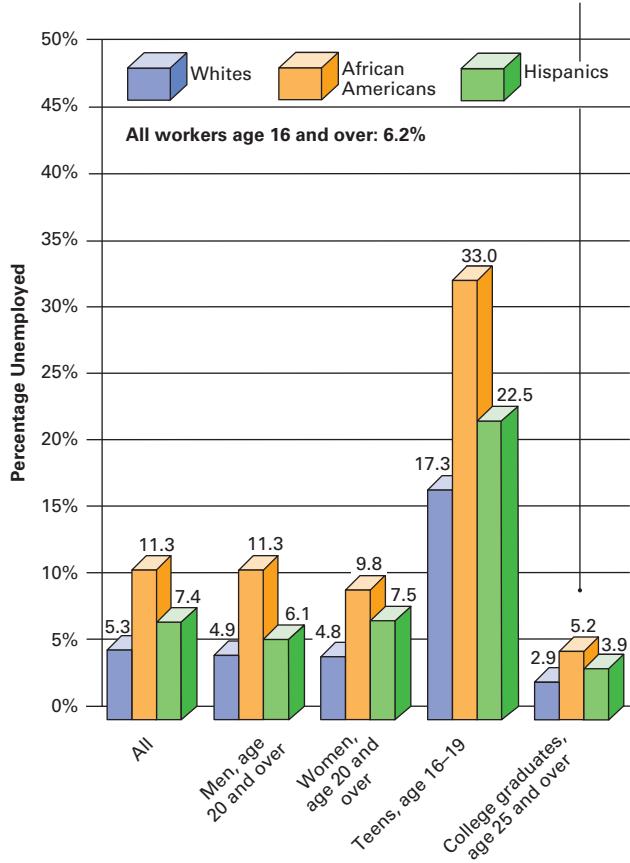


Figure 16–4 Official Unemployment Rates for Various Categories of the U.S. Population, 2014

Although college graduates have a low risk of unemployment, race is related to unemployment for all categories of people.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor (2015).

Unemployment and Underemployment

Every society has some unemployment. Few young people entering the labor force find a job right away; workers may leave their jobs to seek new work or stay at home raising children; others may be on strike or suffer from long-term illnesses; still others lack the skills to perform useful work.

But unemployment is not just an individual problem; it is also caused by the economy. Jobs disappear as occupations become obsolete and companies change the way they operate. Since 1980, the 500 largest U.S. businesses eliminated more than 5 million jobs while creating an even larger number of new ones.

Generally, companies downsize to become more competitive, or firms close in the face of foreign competition or economic recession. During the recent recession in the United States, several million jobs were lost with unemployment rising in just about every part of the economy.

Not only blue-collar workers but also white-collar workers who had typically weathered downturns in the past have lost jobs during this recession.

In 2008, just as the economy was falling into recession, 7 million people over the age of sixteen were unemployed, about 4.6 percent of the civilian labor force. During the recession, the unemployment rate pushed above 10 percent. But by early 2015, the unemployment rate had fallen to 5.5 percent, with almost 10 million people officially counted as unemployed. Even with this drop in the unemployment rate, however, the number of unemployed people was still well above the number in 2008 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

The unemployment rate is not the same everywhere in the country, of course. For example, the western states were particularly hard hit by the recession while the Plains States in the middle of the country fared somewhat better. In addition, counting the people without jobs who have given up looking for work (and, therefore, are not counted in the official unemployment statistics), the number of jobless people almost certainly exceeds 20 million making the actual unemployment rate about 13 percent.

Figure 16–4 shows that in 2014 unemployment among African Americans (11.3 percent) was more than twice the rate among white people (5.3 percent). Regardless of sex or age, unemployment is lower among whites than among African Americans; the gap between white and black teenagers was especially large. For all categories of people, one of the best ways to avoid unemployment is to earn a college degree: As the figure shows, the unemployment rate for college graduates is about half the national average (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

For those who experience unemployment, finding another job is more difficult than ever. The median length of unemployment is fourteen weeks, meaning that half of all unemployed people are out of work longer than this. But the *mean* length of unemployment is more than twice this long—thirty-four weeks—because many workers are out of work for a year or more. In short, our society now faces a problem of *extended unemployment*, with unemployment not only more widespread but also longer lasting than it has been in the recent past (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

Underemployment is also a problem for millions of workers. In an era of corporate bankruptcy, the failure of large banks, and downsizing by companies throughout the U.S. economy, millions of workers—the lucky ones who still have their jobs—have been left with lower salaries, fewer benefits such as health insurance, and disappearing pensions. Rising global competition, weaker worker organizations, and economic recession have combined to allow many people to keep their jobs only by agreeing to cutbacks in pay or to the loss of other benefits (Gutierrez, 2007; McGeehan, 2009).

In addition, the government reports that more than 27 million people work part time, defined as less than

thirty-five hours a week. Although most say they are satisfied with this arrangement, 25 percent of part-timers claim that they want more work but cannot find it (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015). In all, as the country struggles to climb out of the recent recession, it is likely that one in five workers is working fewer hours than desired, is out of work and looking for a job, or is a “discouraged worker” who has given up entirely.

The “Jobless Recovery”

The economy operates in cycles, with periods of prosperity followed by periods of recession—what we commonly call “boom and bust.” In the past, periods of high job loss during economic recession have typically been followed by a rapid increase in jobs as good times returned, bringing down the unemployment rate within a few years.

This time around, the recovery in jobs has not been as quick. Corporate profits have returned to their pre-recession levels, but U.S. corporations are operating with about 7 million fewer workers. This cut in the demand for labor puts upward pressure on the unemployment rate. One reason for this pattern—sometimes described as the “jobless recovery”—is that, even before the economy went into recession, companies were finding ways to operate with a smaller workforce. Computer technology allows fewer people to do more work; in many cases, too, a smaller number of workers have simply been given more to do. In addition, companies are making more use of temporary workers.

Second, more companies have opened factories and office hubs abroad—often in China, India, or Brazil, where wages and benefits will cost far less. In China, for example, workers earn about 10 percent as much as they do in the United States. For this reason, many global corporations are making record profits while adding almost no jobs here in the United States.

A third issue is that the U.S. economy is simply not growing fast enough—and hasn’t been for many years—to absorb all the people looking for jobs. That is why, according to government reports, for every new job that is available, there several people looking for work.

Fourth and finally, in global terms, U.S. workers are simply too expensive and do not have the high level of skills needed to fare well in today’s economy. Perhaps, as some analysts suggest, large investments will have to be made in education and job training in order to get the unemployment rate here in the United States back to pre-recession levels (Faroohar, 2011; Wessel, 2011; Zakaria, 2011).



Although the economy has been getting stronger, employment has not returned to pre-recession levels. The television show *Girls* follows the everyday lives of recent college graduates trying to make it in New York City working low-wage jobs while they chase their dreams.

The Underground Economy

The U.S. government requires individuals and businesses to report their economic activity, especially earnings. Unreported income makes a transaction part of the **underground economy**, *economic activity involving income not reported to the government as required by law*.

Most of us participate in the underground economy in small ways from time to time: A family makes extra money by holding a garage sale, or teenagers baby-sit for neighbors without reporting the income. Much more of the underground economy is due to criminal activity, such as prostitution, bribery, theft, illegal gambling, loan-sharking, and the sale of illegal drugs.

But the largest segment of contributors to the underground economy is people who fail to report some or all of

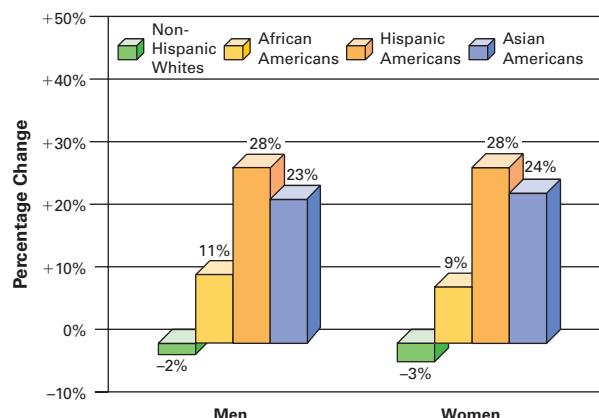
Thinking About Diversity: Race, Class, and Gender

Diversity 2022: Changes Coming to the Workplace

An upward trend in the U.S. minority population is changing the workplace. As the figure shows, the number of non-Hispanic white men in the U.S. labor force actually will decline by 2 percent by 2022. During the same period, the number of African American men will increase by 11 percent, the number of Hispanic men will rise by 28 percent, and the number of Asian American men will go up by 23 percent.

Among non-Hispanic white women, the projected change by 2022 is a decline of 3 percent; among African American women, an increase of 9 percent; and among Asian women, an increase of 24 percent. Hispanic women will show the greatest gains, estimated at 28 percent.

By 2022, non-Hispanic white men will represent just 33 percent of all workers, a figure that will continue to drop. As a result, companies that welcome social diversity will tap the



Projected Increase in the Number of People in the U.S. Labor Force, 2012–2022

Looking ahead, the share of minorities in the U.S. labor force will increase while the share of non-Hispanic whites will decline.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor (2014).

their legally earned income when it comes time to file income tax returns. Self-employed persons such as carpenters, physicians, and small business owners may underestimate their income on tax forms; food servers and other service workers may not report their earnings from tips. Individually, the amounts people do not report may be small, but taken together, U.S. taxpayers fail to pay as much as \$450 billion annually in federal taxes (Internal Revenue Service, 2012).

Workplace Diversity: Race and Gender

In the past, white men have been the mainstay of the U.S. labor force. However, the nation's proportion of minorities

largest pool of talent and enjoy a competitive advantage leading to higher profits (Harford, 2008; U.S. Department of Labor, 2014).

Welcoming social diversity means, first, recruiting talented workers of both sexes and all racial and cultural backgrounds. But developing the potential of all employees requires meeting the needs of women and other minorities, which may not be the same as those of white men. For example, child care at the workplace is a big issue for working mothers with small children.

Second, businesses must develop effective ways to deal with tensions that arise from social differences. They will have to work harder to ensure that workers are treated equally and respectfully, which means having zero tolerance for racial or sexual harassment.

Third, companies will have to rethink current promotion practices. The latest research shows that 68 percent of the directors of Fortune 100 companies are white men; 32 percent are women or other minorities. Of the 500 largest companies, 93 percent of the chairs of the boards of directors are white men (Alliance for Board Diversity, 2013). In a survey of U.S. companies, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2014) confirmed that non-Hispanic white men, who make up 38 percent of adults aged twenty to sixty-four, hold 63 percent of senior management jobs; the comparable figures are 38 and 25 percent, respectively, for non-Hispanic white women, 15 and 3 percent for non-Hispanic African Americans, and 19 and 4 percent for Hispanics.

What Do You Think?

1. What underlying factors are increasing the diversity of the U.S. workplace?
2. In what specific ways do you think businesses should support minority workers?
3. In what other settings (such as schools) is social diversity becoming more important?

is rising rapidly. The African American population is increasing faster than the population of non-Hispanic white people. The rate of increase in the Asian American and Hispanic populations is even greater.

Such dramatic changes are likely to affect U.S. society in countless ways. Not only will more and more workers be women and other minorities, but also the workplace will have to develop programs and policies that meet the needs of a socially diverse workforce while encouraging everyone to work together effectively and respectfully. The Thinking About Diversity box takes a closer look at some of the issues involved in our changing workplace.

New Information Technology and Work

July 2, Ticonderoga, New York. The manager of the local hardware store scans the bar codes of a bagful of items. "The computer doesn't just total the costs," she explains. "It also keeps track of inventory, placing orders from the warehouse and deciding which products to continue to sell and which to drop." "Sounds like what you used to do, Maureen," I respond with a smile. "Yep," she nods, with no smile at all.

Another workplace issue is the increasing role of computers and other information technology. The Information Revolution is changing what people do in a number of ways (Rule & Brantley, 1992; Vallas & Beck, 1996):

1. **Computers are deskilling labor.** Just as industrial machinery replaced the master craftworkers of an earlier era, computers now threaten the skills of managers. More business operations are based not on executive decisions but on computer modeling. In other words, a machine decides whether to place an order, stock a dress in a certain size and color, or approve a loan application.
2. **Computers are making work more abstract.** Most industrial workers have a hands-on relationship with their product. Postindustrial workers use symbols to perform abstract tasks, such as making a company more profitable, making software more user-friendly, or hiding risky assets inside financial "derivatives."
3. **Computers limit workplace interaction.** As workers spend more time at computer terminals, they become increasingly isolated from one another.
4. **Computers increase employers' control of workers.** Computers allow supervisors to monitor employees' output continuously, whether they work at computer terminals or on assembly lines.
5. **Computers allow companies to relocate work.** Because computer technology allows information to flow almost anywhere instantly, the symbolic work in today's economy may not take place where we might think. We have all had the experience of calling a business (say, a hotel or bookstore) located in our own town only to find that we are talking to a person at a computer workstation thousands of miles away. Computer technology provides the means to outsource many jobs—especially



In today's corporate world, computers are changing the nature of work just as factories did more than a century ago. In what ways is computer-based work different from factory work? In what ways do you think it is very much the same?

service work—to other places where wages may be lower.

Perhaps, in the wake of widespread failures on Wall Street, there will be a trend away from allowing computers to manage risk, putting responsibility for business decisions back in the hands of people (Kivant, 2008). Or perhaps both computers and people have flaws that will always prevent us from living in a perfect world. But the rapidly increasing reliance on computers in business reminds us that new technology is never socially neutral. It changes the relationships between people in the workplace, shapes the way we work, and often alters the balance of power between employers and employees. Understandably, then, people welcome some aspects of the Information Revolution and oppose others.

Corporations

16.4 Discuss the importance of corporations to the U.S. economy.

At the core of today's capitalist economy lies the **corporation**, *an organization with a legal existence, including rights and liabilities, separate from that of its members*. Incorporating makes an organization a legal entity, able to enter into contracts and own property. Of the 32 million businesses in the United States, 5.8 million are incorporated (Internal Revenue Service, 2015). Incorporating protects the wealth of owners from lawsuits that result from business debts or harm to consumers; it can also mean a lower tax rate on the company's profits.

corporation an organization with a legal existence, including rights and liabilities, separate from that of its members

conglomerate a giant corporation composed of many smaller corporations

Economic Concentration

Most U.S. corporations are small, with assets of less than \$500,000, so it is the largest corporations that dominate our nation's economy. In 2011, the government listed 2,831 corporations with assets exceeding \$2.5 billion, representing 81 percent of all corporate assets (Internal Revenue Service, 2015).

The largest U.S. corporation in terms of sales is Walmart. Its annual sales (\$473 billion in 2014) equal the combined tax revenues of forty-three of the fifty states.

Conglomerates and Corporate Linkages

Economic concentration has created the **conglomerate**, a giant corporation composed of many smaller corporations. Conglomerates form as corporations enter new markets, spin off new companies, or merge with other companies. For example, PepsiCo is a conglomerate that includes Pepsi-Cola, Frito-Lay, Gatorade, Tropicana, and Quaker.

Many conglomerates are linked because they own each other's stock, the result being worldwide corporate alliances of staggering size. In 2014, for example, General Motors owned not only Chevrolet, Buick, Cadillac, and GMC, but also Opel (Germany), Vauxhall (Great Britain), Holden (Australia), and a share of Daewoo (South Korea) and had partnerships with Suzuki and Toyota (Japan) and several new brands in China.

Corporations are also linked through *interlocking directorates*, networks of people who serve as directors of many corporations (Weidenbaum, 1995; Kono et al., 1998). These boardroom connections give corporations access to valuable information about other companies' products and marketing strategies. While perfectly legal, such linkages may encourage illegal activity, such as price fixing, as the companies share information about their pricing policies.

Corporations: Are They Competitive?

According to the capitalist model, businesses operate independently in a competitive market. But in light of the extensive linkages that exist between them, it is obvious that

large corporations do not operate independently. Also, a few large corporations dominate many markets, so they are not truly competitive.

Federal law forbids any company from establishing a **monopoly**, the domination of a market by a single producer, because with no competition, such a company could simply charge whatever it wanted for its products. But **oligopoly**, the domination of a market by a few producers, is both legal and common. Oligopoly arises because the huge investment needed to enter a major market, such as the auto industry, is beyond the reach of all but the biggest companies. In addition, competition means risk, which big business tries to avoid. Even so, we have recently seen that even the largest corporations are not immune to economic crisis, as shown by the 2009 bankruptcy of General Motors. They can also face rising competition, as the U.S. auto industry has seen from companies such as Kia and Hyundai.

The federal government seeks to regulate corporations in order to protect the public interest. Yet as recent corporate scandals have shown—most recently involving the housing mortgage business and the collapse of so many banks—regulation is often too little too late, resulting in companies harming millions of people. The U.S. government is the corporate world's single biggest customer, and in 2008 and 2009 it stepped in to support many struggling corporations with multibillion-dollar bailout programs. Especially during tough economic times, the public tends to support a greater role for the government in the economy (Sachs, 2009).

Corporations and the Global Economy

Corporations have grown so large that they now account for most of the world's economic output. The biggest corporations are based in the United States, Japan, and Western Europe, but their marketplace is the entire world. In fact, many large U.S. companies such as McDonald's and the chipmaker Intel earn most of their money outside the United States. In 2011, General Motors sold almost three-fourths of its cars outside of the United States, especially in the "emerging markets" of Brazil, Russia, India, and China (General Motors, 2012).

Global corporations know that lower-income countries contain most of the world's people and natural resources. In addition, labor costs are attractively low: A manufacturing worker in Mexico earns about \$6.82 an hour and labors for a week to earn what a worker in Japan (who averages about \$29 an hour) or the United States (\$36 per hour) earns in a single day (The Conference Board, 2014).

monopoly the domination of a market by a single producer

oligopoly the domination of a market by a few producers

As Chapter 12 (“Global Stratification”) explained, the impact of multinational corporations on poor countries is controversial. Modernization theorists claim that by unleashing the great productive power of capitalism, multinational corporations help to raise living standards in poor nations, offering them tax revenues, new jobs, and advanced technology that together accelerate economic growth (Berger, 1986; Firebaugh & Beck, 1994; Firebaugh & Sandu, 1998).

Dependency theorists respond that multinationals make global inequality worse by blocking the development of local industries and pushing poor countries to make goods for export rather than food and other products for local people. From this standpoint, multinationals make poor nations increasingly dependent on rich nations (Wallerstein, 1979; Dixon & Boswell, 1996; Kentor, 1998).

In short, modernization theory praises the market as the key to progress and affluence for all the world’s people, and dependency theory calls for replacing market systems with government-based economic policies.



Many large U.S. corporations have relocated production factories from the United States to other nations where costs are lower. For example, Ford operates this assembly plant in Cuautitlán Izcalli, Mexico. Industrial workers in Mexico earn about \$7 an hour compared to about \$36 an hour in the United States. In what ways do we benefit from this outsourcing of manufacturing jobs? In what ways do we lose out?

their own town. One century ago, communities were economically linked so that one town’s prosperity depended on producing goods demanded by people elsewhere in the country. Today, we have to look beyond the national economy because, for example, the historical rise in the cost of gasoline in our local communities has much to do with increasing demand for oil around the world, especially in China and India. As both producers and consumers, we are now responding to factors and forces that are both distant and unseen.

Finally, analysts around the world are rethinking conventional economic models. The global economy shows that socialism is less productive than capitalism, which is one important reason behind the collapse of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. But capitalism has its own problems, including high levels of inequality and a steady stream of corporate scandal—two important reasons that the economy now operates with significant government regulation.

What will be the long-term effects of all these changes? Two conclusions seem certain. First, the economic future of the United States and other nations will be played out in a global arena. The new postindustrial economy in the United States has emerged as more industrial production has moved to other nations. Second, it is imperative that we address the related issues of global inequality and population increase. Whether the world reduces or enlarges the gap between rich and poor societies may well steer our planet toward peace or war.

The Economy: Looking Ahead

Social institutions are a society’s way of meeting people’s needs. But as we have seen, the U.S. economy only partly succeeds in accomplishing this goal. Over the years, our national economy experiences periods of expansion and periods of recession. In addition, in both good times and bad, our economy provides for some people much better than for others.

One important trend that underlies change in the economy is the shift from industrial work to jobs created by the Information Revolution. First, the share of the U.S. labor force in industrial manufacturing is just one-third of what it was in 1960; service work, especially computer-related jobs, makes up the difference. For industrial workers, the postindustrial economy has brought rising unemployment and declining wages. Our society must face up to the challenge of providing millions of men and women with the language and computer skills they need to succeed in the new economy.

A second transformation of recent years is the expansion of the global economy. Two centuries ago, the ups and downs people experienced reflected events and trends in

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

CHAPTER 16 The Economy and Work

What are the challenges of today's economy?

This chapter explains that the economy is the social institution that organizes the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. It's no secret that we are living in tough economic times. Unemployment has been high, earning a living wage is harder than it used to be, and public confidence

in a secure future has taken a hit. As C. Wright Mills might have said, the problems we face as individuals are issues that are deeply rooted in the economy. Look at the three photos and ask yourself: What changes in today's economy create challenges for today's labor force?



Walk around a big-box store and examine products to see where they are made. It will not take long to see a pattern: What is it? As the share of manufactured goods made abroad rises, what happens to manufacturing jobs here in the United States?

Have you ever called an 800 support line and wondered where the person on the other end of the line was located? It is not only manufacturing jobs that have moved overseas.

Lower wages have led corporations to relocate many service jobs—including many skilled office jobs—to places such as India, where service employment is skyrocketing. In short, is anyone safe from the trend we call “outsourcing”?



Advancing technology makes our economy more productive, right? Generally, yes. But adopting new technology can make organizations more productive with fewer employees. Have you ever taken a “distance learning” class in which the professor was not in the classroom with you? How can computer technology enable colleges to teach more students using fewer faculty?



Hint Industrial production has been moving from the United States to countries where wages are lower. In China, for example, industrial workers earn roughly 10 percent of what a worker is paid in this country. Lower labor cost is the key reason that China produces 70 percent of all products sold in Walmart stores around the world. China's economy is still half as large as that of the United States, despite having a labor force five times larger. But since 2000, China's industrial production has increased, on average, about 10 percent a year. U.S. industrial production has actually declined in five years of the new century, and averages less than a 1 percent annual increase. Economic activity is also expanding in India, a country that has seen striking growth in service jobs, such as those shown in the photo of a call-center in the city of Kolkata. Back home in the United States, even highly skilled people such as college professors are facing challenges in today's economy. Computer technology is being used to allow professors to teach larger classes and also to allow a single faculty member to teach students in multiple classrooms in various places at the same time. In short, even when a corporation or organization becomes more productive, it does not always end up employing more people, which helps us to understand why some analysts have been talking about a “jobless recovery.”

Seeing Sociology in Your Everyday Life

1. Visit a discount store such as Walmart or Kmart and do a little “fieldwork” in an area of the store that interests you. Pick ten products, and see where each is made. Do the results support the existence of a global economy?
2. Based on what you have read in this chapter, make three predictions about the nature of work and jobs twenty years from now. That is, what trends have you noted that seem likely to continue?
3. Go to www.sociologyinfocus.com to access the Sociology in Focus blog, where you can read the latest posts by a team of young sociologists who apply the sociological perspective to topics of popular culture.

Making the Grade

CHAPTER 16 The Economy and Work

The Economy: Historical Overview

16.1 Summarize historical changes to the economy. (pages 432–36)

In technologically simple societies, economic activity is simply part of family life.

The **agricultural revolution** (5,000 years ago) made the economy a distinct social institution based on

- agricultural technology
- specialized work
- permanent settlements
- trade

The **Industrial Revolution** (beginning around 1750) expanded the economy based on

- new sources of energy
- centralization of work in factories
- specialization and mass production
- wage labor

The **postindustrial economy**, propelled by the **Information Revolution**, which began around 1950, is based on

- a shift from industrial work to service work
- computer technology

The **primary sector** of the economy

- draws raw materials from the natural environment
- is of greatest importance (26% of the economy) in low-income nations

Examples: agriculture, fishing, mining

The **secondary sector** of the economy

- transforms raw materials into manufactured goods
- is a significant share (24%–35%) of the economy in low-, middle-, and high-income nations

Examples: automobile and clothing manufacturing

The **tertiary sector** of the economy

- produces services rather than goods
- is the largest sector (50%–74%) in low-, middle-, and high-income countries

Examples: secretarial work, sales, teaching

economy the social institution that organizes a society's production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services

postindustrial economy a productive system based on service work and high technology

primary sector the part of the economy that draws raw materials from the natural environment

secondary sector the part of the economy that transforms raw materials into manufactured goods

tertiary sector the part of the economy that involves services rather than goods

global economy economic activity that crosses national borders

Economic Systems: Paths to Justice

16.2 Assess the operation of capitalist and socialist economies. (pages 436–39)

Capitalism is based on private ownership of property and the pursuit of profit in a competitive marketplace. Capitalism results in

- greater productivity
- higher overall standard of living
- greater income inequality
- freedom to act according to self-interest

Example: The United States has a mostly capitalist economy.

Socialism is grounded in collective ownership of productive property through government control of the economy. Socialism results in

- less productivity
- lower overall standard of living
- less income inequality
- freedom from basic want

Examples: The People's Republic of China and Venezuela have mostly socialist economies.

Under **welfare capitalism**,

- government may own some large industries such as transportation and the mass media
- most industry is privately owned but highly regulated by government
- high taxation of the rich helps pay for extensive government services for all

Examples: Sweden and Italy have welfare capitalist economies.

Under **state capitalism**, government works in partnership with large companies by

- supplying financial assistance
- controlling foreign imports

Examples: Japan and Singapore have state capitalist economies.

capitalism an economic system in which natural resources and the means of producing goods and services are privately owned

socialism an economic system in which natural resources and the means of producing goods and services are collectively owned

communism a hypothetical economic and political system in which all members of a society are socially equal

welfare capitalism an economic and political system that combines a mostly market-based economy with extensive social welfare programs

state capitalism an economic and political system in which companies are privately owned but cooperate closely with the government

profession a prestigious white-collar occupation that requires extensive formal education

underground economy economic activity involving income not reported to the government as required by law

Work in the Postindustrial U.S. Economy

16.3 Analyze patterns of employment and unemployment in the United States. (pages 440–47)

- Agricultural work represents only 1.5% of jobs.
- Blue-collar, industrial work has declined to 18% of jobs.
- White-collar, service work has increased to 81% of jobs.
- Jobs in the **primary labor market** involve interesting work that provides high income, benefits, and job security.
- Jobs in the **secondary labor market** have lower pay, less job security, and fewer benefits and provide less personal satisfaction.
- 6.8% of U.S. workers are **self-employed**.
- Many professionals fall into this category, but most self-employed people have blue-collar jobs.
- **Unemployment** has many causes, including the operation of the economy itself.
- In 2014, 6.2% of the country's labor force was unemployed.
- At highest risk for unemployment are young people and African Americans.

Information technology is changing the workplace and how people work. Computers are

- deskilling labor
- making work more abstract
- limiting interaction among workers
- increasing employers' control over workers
- allowing companies to relocate work

primary labor market jobs that provide extensive benefits to workers

secondary labor market jobs that provide minimal benefits to workers

labor unions organizations of workers that seek to improve wages and working conditions through various strategies, including negotiations and strikes

Corporations

16.4 Discuss the importance of corporations to the U.S. economy. (pages 447–49)

Corporations form the core of the U.S. economy. Incorporation

- makes an organization a legal entity
 - shields owners' wealth from lawsuits brought against the company
 - can result in a lower tax rate on the company's profits
- The largest corporations, which are **conglomerates**, account for most corporate assets and profits (examples: PepsiCo, General Motors).
- Corporations are linked through interlocking directorates.
 - Recognizing that corporate linkages and the domination of certain markets by large corporations reduce competition, federal laws forbid **monopoly** and price fixing.

Many large corporations operate as **multinationals**, producing and distributing products in nations around the world.

- Modernization theorists claim that multinationals raise living standards in poor countries by offering them more jobs and advanced technology.
- Dependency theorists claim that multinationals make global inequality worse by pushing poor countries to produce goods for export and making them more dependent on rich nations.

corporation an organization with a legal existence, including rights and liabilities, separate from that of its members

conglomerate a giant corporation composed of many smaller corporations

monopoly the domination of a market by a single producer

oligopoly the domination of a market by a few producers

Chapter 17

Politics and Government



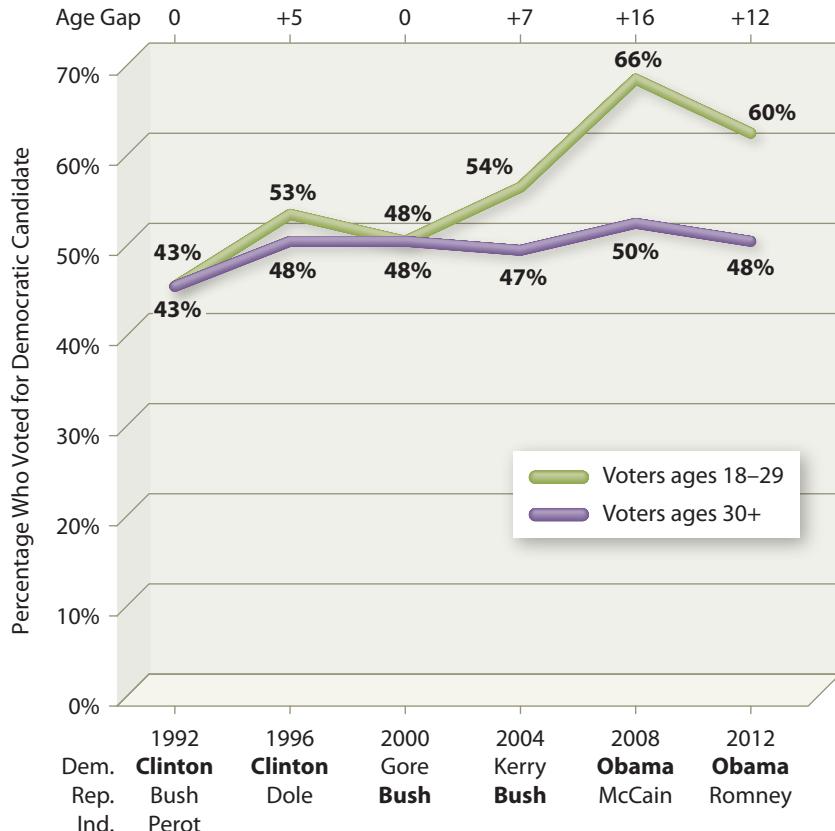
Learning Objectives

- 17.1** Distinguish traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic authority.
- 17.2** Compare monarchy and democracy as well as authoritarian and totalitarian political systems.
- 17.3** Analyze economic and social issues using the political spectrum.
- 17.4** Apply the pluralist, power-elite, and Marxist models to the U.S. political system.
- 17.5** Describe causes of both revolution and terrorism.
- 17.6** Identify factors encouraging war or peace.



The Power of Society

to shape voting patterns



SOURCE: Pew Research Center (2012).

Does a person's age affect political leanings? If the only voters in the 2012 presidential election had been people over the age of thirty, Republican Mitt Romney would have won. The support of young people was key to Democrat Barack Obama's reelection. Young people have not always voted differently than their elders: In 1992 and 2000, there was no overall difference between people above and below age thirty; in 1996, there was a small difference. But in 2004, 2008, and 2012, young people moved dramatically toward greater support for the Democratic candidate. If this trend holds, young people will continue to play a major role in our nation's elections.

Chapter Overview

Politics is the social institution through which a society distributes power, sets goals, and makes decisions. This chapter explores politics and explains the operation of government. In addition, the chapter analyzes the character and causes of war and terrorism.

There was more than a year before the 2016 presidential election. But the news was already heavy with stories about men and women who had declared their candidacy and many more who said they were “testing the waters.”

On the Democratic side, people were talking about a “coronation”—Hillary Clinton seemed to have the nomination all but wrapped up. But many Democrats were hoping someone more liberal—perhaps Massachusetts senator Elizabeth Warren and maybe even Vermont’s self-described “democratic socialist” Senator Bernie Sanders—would come forward to challenge her.

The Republicans had more than a dozen people in the running. Donald Trump, the real estate tycoon, surged ahead on a wave of anti-Washington sentiment. Carly Fiorina, the former CEO of Hewlett Packard, also gained support as an “outsider.” Jeb Bush (a former Florida governor, whose father and brother were elected president) was touted as the “establishment candidate.” Several current state governors, including Wisconsin’s Scott Walker, Ohio’s John Kasich, and New Jersey’s Chris Christie, were hoping that their political careers would “go national.” A young senator from Florida, Marco Rubio, set his sights on becoming the first Hispanic American to live in the White House. Rand Paul, a senator from Kentucky, added a libertarian voice to the debates.



Every four years, presidential elections command national attention and most people think who wins the presidency makes a difference in the direction of the entire nation. The president is the most powerful person in the country, and many would say the U.S. president is the most powerful person in the world. How power shapes society—which people have it, how they get it, and how they use it—is the focus of this chapter.

What we call **politics**—or more formally, the “polity”—is *the social institution that distributes power, sets a society's goals, and makes decisions*. We will examine the political system in the United States and, from various

politics the social institution that distributes power, sets a society's goals, and makes decisions

government a formal organization that directs the political life of a society

points of view, assess the extent to which our society can claim to be democratic. Then we will turn our attention to the world as a whole, including a focus on revolution, as well as the international use of power in the form of war and terrorism.

Power and Authority

17.1 Distinguish traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic authority.

The sociologist Max Weber (1978, orig. 1921) claimed that every society is based on **power**, which he defined as *the ability to achieve desired ends despite resistance from others*. The use of power is the business of **government**, *a formal organization that directs the political life of a society*. Governments demand compliance on the part of a population; yet Weber

noted that most governments do not openly threaten their people. Most of the time, people respect, or at least accept, their society's political system.

No government, Weber explained, is likely to keep its power for long if compliance comes *only* from the threat of brute force. Even the most brutal dictator must wonder if there can ever be enough police to watch everyone—and who would watch the police? Every government, therefore, tries to make itself seem legitimate in the eyes of the people. This fact brings us to Weber's concept of **authority**, *power that people perceive as legitimate rather than coercive*. How do governments transform raw power into more stable authority? Weber pointed to three ways: traditional authority, rational-legal authority, and charismatic authority.

Traditional Authority

Preindustrial societies, said Weber, rely on **traditional authority**, *power legitimized by respect for long-established cultural patterns*. Woven into a population's collective memory, traditional authority means that people accept a system, usually one of hereditary leadership, simply because it has always been that way. Chinese emperors in centuries past were legitimized by tradition, as were aristocratic rulers in medieval Europe. The power of tradition can be so strong that, for better or worse, people typically come to view traditional rulers as almost godlike.

Traditional authority declines as societies industrialize. Hannah Arendt (1963) pointed out that traditional authority remains strong only as long as everyone shares the same beliefs and way of life. Modern scientific thinking, the specialization demanded by industrial production, and the social changes and cultural diversity resulting from immigration all combine to weaken tradition. Therefore, a U.S. president would never claim to rule "by the grace of God," as many rulers in the ancient world did. Even so, some families from the past with names "Roosevelt" and "Kennedy" and some families today with names including "Clinton" and "Bush" contain rich and powerful people who are so well established in our country's political life that they may enter the political arena with some measure of traditional authority.

Around the world, there are still hereditary rulers who claim a traditional right to rule. But this claim is increasingly out of step with modern society. Some traditional rulers remain but have given up much of their power (as in the United Kingdom). At the other extreme, other traditional leaders hold on to power by keeping their people cut off from the world and in a state of total subjugation (as in North Korea).

Traditional authority is also a source of strength for *patriarchy*, the domination of women by men. This traditional form of power is still widespread, although it is increasingly challenged. Less controversial is the traditional authority parents have over their children. As

power the ability to achieve desired ends despite resistance from others

authority power that people perceive as legitimate rather than coercive

children, most of us can remember challenging a parent's demand by asking "Why?" only to hear the response "Because I said so!" Answering this way, the parent makes clear that the demand is not open to debate; to respond otherwise would ignore the parent's traditional authority over the child and put the two on an equal footing.

Rational-Legal Authority

Weber defined **rational-legal authority** (sometimes called *bureaucratic authority*) as *power legitimized by legally enacted rules and regulations*. Rational-legal authority is power legitimized in the operation of lawful government.

As Chapter 7 ("Groups and Organizations") explains, Weber viewed bureaucracy as the type of organization that dominates in rational-thinking, modern societies. The same rational worldview that promotes bureaucracy also erodes traditional customs and practices. Instead of looking to the past, members of today's high-income societies seek justice through the operation of a political system that follows formally enacted rules of law.

Rationally enacted rules also guide the use of power in everyday life. The authority of deans and classroom teachers, for example, rests on the offices they hold in bureaucratic colleges and universities. The police, too, depend on rational-legal authority. In contrast to traditional authority, rational-legal authority comes not from family background but from a position in government organization. A traditional monarch rules for life, but a modern president or prime minister first accepts and later on gives up power according to law, which shows that the authority resides not in the person but in the office.

Charismatic Authority

Finally, Weber claimed that power can turn into authority through charisma. **Charismatic authority** is *power legitimized by extraordinary personal abilities that inspire devotion and obedience*. Unlike traditional and rational-legal authority, charismatic authority depends less on a person's ancestry or office and more on personality.

Charismatic leaders have surfaced throughout history, using their personal skills to turn an audience into followers. Often they make their own rules and challenge the status quo. Examples of charismatic leaders can be as different as Jesus of Nazareth and Adolf Hitler. The fact that they and others, such as India's liberator, Mahatma Gandhi, and the U.S. civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., succeeded in transforming the society around them

Types of Authority

traditional authority power legitimized by respect for long-established cultural patterns

rational-legal authority power legitimized by legally enacted rules and regulations (also known as *bureaucratic authority*)

charismatic authority power legitimized by extraordinary personal abilities that inspire devotion and obedience

certainly shows the power of charisma. And it probably explains why charismatics are highly controversial and why few of them die of old age.

Because charismatic authority flows from a single individual, the leader's death creates a crisis because there is no obvious person to take over as a leader. Survival of a charismatic movement, Weber explained, requires the **routinization of charisma**, *the transformation of charismatic authority into some combination of traditional and bureaucratic authority*. After the death of Jesus, for example, followers institutionalized his teachings in a church, built on tradition and bureaucracy. Routinized in this way, the Roman Catholic Church has lasted for 2,000 years.

More complex technology brings about the larger-scale system of *nation-states*. Currently, the world has 194 independent nation-states, each with a somewhat distinctive political system. Generally, however, these political systems fall into four categories: monarchy, democracy, authoritarianism, and totalitarianism.

Monarchy

Monarchy (with Latin and Greek roots meaning "one ruler") is a *political system in which a single family rules from generation to generation*. Monarchy is commonly found in the ancient agrarian societies; the Bible, for example, tells of great kings such as David and Solomon. In the world today, twenty-six nations have royal families;¹ some trace their ancestry back for centuries. In Weber's terms, then, monarchy is legitimized by tradition.

During the Middle Ages, *absolute monarchs* in much of the world claimed a monopoly of power based on divine right. Today, claims of divine right are rare, although monarchs in a number of nations—including Saudi Arabia and Oman—still exercise almost absolute control over their people, although not necessarily with divine support. Worth noting is that the leaders who managed to survive the recent uprisings in the Middle East were all monarchs rather than nontraditional leaders (Yom & Gause, 2012).

With industrialization, however, the general trend is for monarchs to gradually pass from the scene in favor of elected officials. All the European nations with royal families today are *constitutional monarchies*, meaning that their monarchs are little more than symbolic heads of state; actual governing is the responsibility of elected officials, led by a prime minister and guided by a constitution. In these nations, nobility formally *reigns*, but elected officials actually *rule*.

Democracy

The historical trend in the modern world has been toward **democracy**, a *political system that gives power to the people as a whole*. More accurately, because it would be impossible

¹In Europe: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Belgium, Spain, and Monaco; in the Middle East: Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait; in Africa: Lesotho, Swaziland, and Morocco; in Asia: Brunei, Tonga, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, Bhutan, and Japan (U.S. Department of State, 2015).

Politics in Global Perspective

17.2 Compare monarchy and democracy as well as authoritarian and totalitarian political systems.

Political systems have changed over the course of history. Technologically simple hunting and gathering societies, once found all over the planet, operated like large families without formal governments. Leadership generally fell to a man with unusual strength, hunting skill, or personal charisma. But with few resources, such leaders might control their own people but could never rule a large area (Nolan & Lenski, 2010).

Agrarian societies are larger with specialized jobs and material surpluses. In these societies, a small elite gains control of most of the wealth and power, so that politics is not just a matter of powerful individuals but a more complex social institution in its own right. This is the point in history when power passed from generation to generation within a single family and leaders start to claim a divine right to rule, gaining some measure of Weber's traditional authority. Leaders may also benefit from rational-legal authority to the extent that their rule is supported by law.

As societies grow bigger, politics takes the form of a national government, or *political state*. But the effectiveness of a political state depends on the available technology. Centuries ago, armies moved slowly on foot, and communication over even short distances was uncertain. For this reason, the early political empires—such as Mesopotamia in the Middle East about 5,000 years ago—took the form of many small *city-states*.

for *all* citizens to act as leaders, we have devised a system of *representative democracy* that puts authority in the hands of leaders chosen by the people in elections.

In most high-income countries of the world, including those that still have royal families, political leaders claim their system is democratic. Industrialization and democratic government go together because both require a literate populace. Also, with industrialization, the legitimization of power in a tradition-based monarchy gives way to rational-legal authority. Thus, democracy and rational-legal authority go together, just like monarchy and traditional authority.

Of course, some high-income nations, such as Saudi Arabia, do not give the population much political voice. More broadly, even high-income countries such as the United States are not truly democratic, for two reasons. First, there is the problem of bureaucracy. The U.S. federal government has 2.7 million regular employees and several million more government workers paid for by special funding. Add to these workers 1.5 million uniformed military personnel and 63,000 legislative and judicial branch personnel, which add up to 4.2 million federal government workers in all. Another 19.1 million people work in almost 90,700 local governments across the country. Most people who run the government are never elected by anyone and do not have to answer directly to the people.

The second problem with our nation's claim to being democratic involves economic inequality, since rich people have far more political power than poor people. Many of the most politically influential people—from President Obama (who has made millions on book sales) and Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton (who have amassed more than \$100 million in wealth) to Jeb Bush (who has a net worth of about \$10 million not counting additional wealth in the extended Bush family)—are among the country's richest people. Of course, in the game of politics, "money talks." Given the even greater resources of billion-dollar corporations and their super-rich CEOs, how well does our "democratic" system hear the voices of "average people"?



Monarchy is typically found in societies that have yet to industrialize. The recent political unrest throughout the Middle East indicates growing resistance to this form of political system in today's world. Even so, King Abdullah and members of his royal family strengthen their control of Saudi Arabia through their support of Arabic heritage and culture.

Still, democratic nations do provide many rights and freedoms. Global Map 17–1 on page 460 shows one assessment of the extent of political freedom around the world. According to Freedom House, an organization that tracks political trends, eighty-eight of the world's nations (with 40 percent of the global population) were "free," respecting many civil liberties, in 2015. This represents a decline in political freedom in the world for the fourth straight year, but a gain in political freedom from thirty years ago when just fifty-three nations were considered free (Freedom House, 2015).

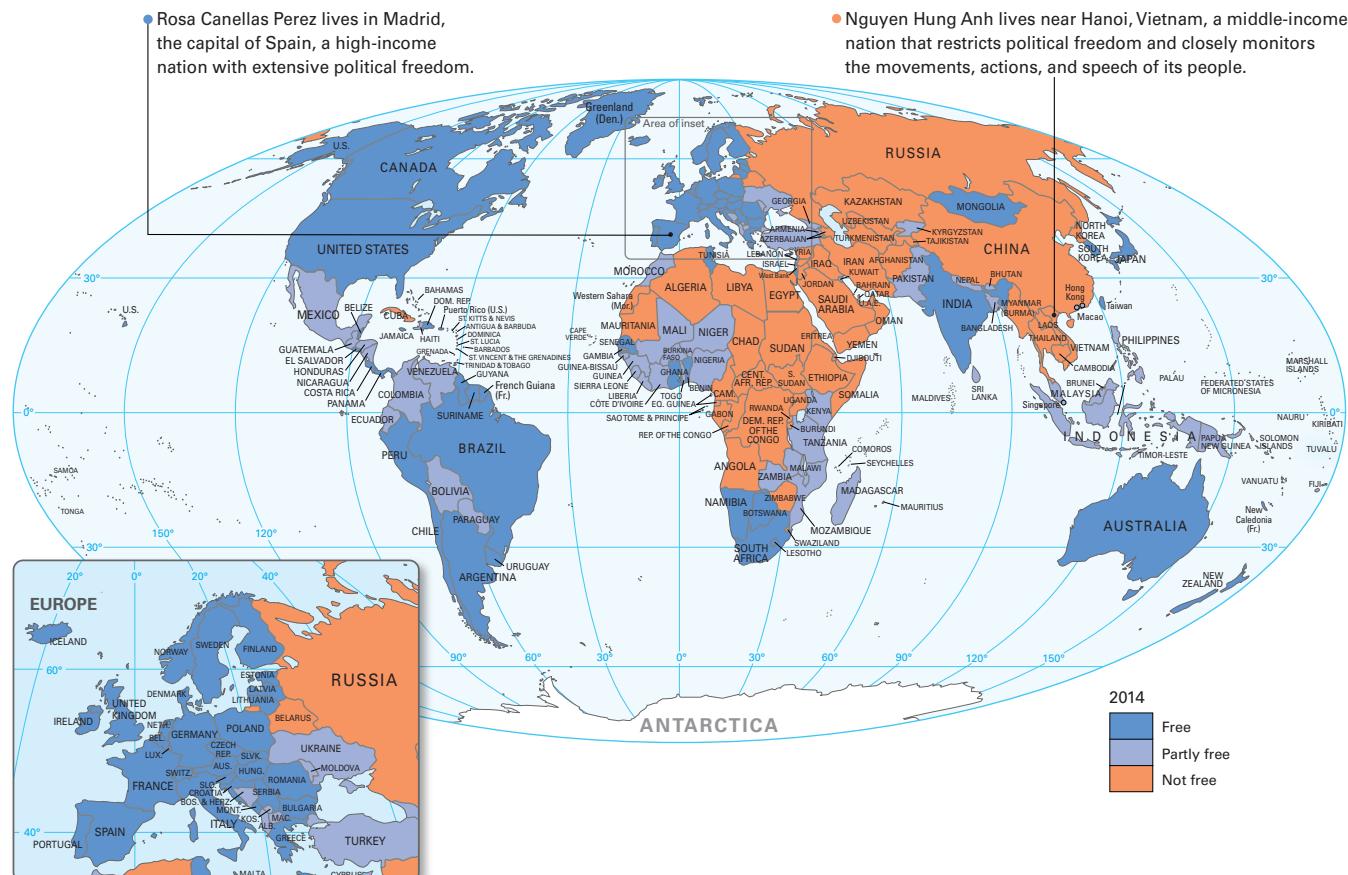
DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM: CAPITALIST AND SOCIALIST APPROACHES Despite the problems just described, rich capitalist nations such as the United States claim to operate as democracies. Of course, socialist countries such as Cuba and the People's Republic of China make the same claim. This curious fact suggests that perhaps we need to look more closely at *political economy*, the interplay of politics and economics.

The political life of the United States, Canada, and the nations of Europe is largely shaped by the economic principles of capitalism, described in Chapter 16 ("The Economy and Work"). The pursuit of profit in a market system requires that "freedom" be defined in terms of people's right to act in their own self-interest. Thus the capitalist approach to political freedom translates into personal liberty, the freedom to act in whatever ways maximize profit or other personal advantage. From this point of view, political "democracy" means that individuals have the right to select their leaders from among those running for office.

monarchy a political system in which a single family rules from generation to generation

democracy a political system that gives power to the people as a whole

Window on the World



Global Map 17-1 Political Freedom in Global Perspective

In 2014, a total of 88 of the world's 194 nations, containing 40 percent of all people, were politically "free"; that is, they offered their citizens extensive political rights and civil liberties. Another 55 countries, which included 24 percent of the world's people, were "partly free," with more limited rights and liberties. The remaining 51 nations, home to 36 percent of humanity, fall into the category of "not free." In these countries, government sharply restricts individual initiative. Between 1980 and 2014, democracy made significant gains, largely in Latin America.

SOURCE: Freedom House (2015).

However, capitalist societies are marked by a striking inequality of income and wealth. If everyone acts according to self-interest, the inevitable result is that some people have much more power to get their way than others. In practice, a market system creates unequal wealth and transforms wealth into power. Critics of capitalism claim that a wealthy elite dominates the economic and political life of the society.

By contrast, socialist systems claim they are democratic because their economies meet everyone's basic needs for housing, schooling, work, and medical care. Despite being a much poorer country than the United States, for example, Cuba provides basic medical care to all its people regardless of their ability to pay.

But critics of socialism counter that the extensive government regulation of social life in these countries is

oppressive. The socialist governments of China and Cuba, for example, do not allow their people to move freely across or even within their borders and tolerate no organized political opposition.

These contrasting approaches to democracy and freedom raise an important question: Can economic equality and political liberty go together? To foster economic equality, socialism limits the choices of individuals. Capitalism, on the other hand, provides broad political liberties, which in practice mean much more to the rich than to the poor.

Authoritarianism

Some nations prevent their people from having any voice at all in politics. **Authoritarianism** is a political system that denies the people participation in government. An authoritarian

government is indifferent to people's needs, offers them no voice in selecting leaders, and uses force in response to dissent or opposition. The absolute monarchies in Saudi Arabia and Oman are authoritarian, as is the military junta in Ethiopia. Sometimes, as the political movements in the Middle East in 2011 illustrate, people stand up and oppose heavy-handed government. But many of these same nations have cracked down on political opposition (Freedom House, 2015). Another political category is the largely peaceful system of "soft authoritarianism" that thrives in the small Asian nation of Singapore, where political freedom is limited but people are secure and prosperous and mostly support the government.



In totalitarian nations, government controls all aspects of people's lives. During the funeral of Kim Jong-il, absolute ruler of North Korea, people were told to line the route used for his public funeral and display appropriate anguish at his death. After the event, government officials examined photographs of the crowds and prosecuted those whose sorrow did not measure up to their demands.

Totalitarianism

October 30, Beijing, China. Several U.S. students are sitting around a computer in the lounge of a Chinese university dormitory. They are taking turns running Google searches on keywords such as "democracy" and "Amnesty International." They soon realize that China's government monitors the Internet, filtering the results of online searches so that only officially approved sites appear. One Chinese student who is watching points out that things could be worse—in North Korea, she explains, the typical person has no access to computers at all.

The most intensely controlled political form is **totalitarianism**, a highly centralized political system that extensively regulates people's lives. Totalitarianism emerged in the twentieth century as technological advances gave governments the ability to rigidly control their populations. The Vietnamese government closely monitors the activities of not just visitors but also all its citizens. Similarly, the government of North Korea, perhaps the most totalitarian in the world, keeps its people in poverty and uses not only police to control people but also surveillance equipment and powerful computers to collect and store information about them.

Although some totalitarian governments claim to represent the will of the people, most seek to bend people to the will of the government. As the term itself

implies, such governments have a *total* concentration of power, allowing no organized opposition. Denying the people the right to assemble and controlling access to information, these governments create an atmosphere of personal isolation and fear. In the final decades of the Soviet Union, for example, ordinary citizens had no access to telephone directories, copiers, fax machines, or even accurate city maps. Only in recent years has the Cuban government allowed ordinary citizens to own personal computers and cell phones.

Socialization in totalitarian societies is intensely political with the goal of obedience and commitment to the system. In North Korea, people are denied access to social media but they see pictures of leaders and political messages everywhere, reminding them that they owe total allegiance to the state. Government-controlled schools and mass media present only official versions of events. When that nation's leader, Kim Jong-il, died in 2011, the official government news agency reported the nation's people were in "utter despair" at the loss of the "Glorious Leader Who Descended from Heaven" but would find comfort in the "absolute surety that the leadership of [his son] Comrade Kim Jong-un will lead the great task of revolutionary enterprise." Since 1948, three generations of the same family have tightly controlled the lives of everyone in this impoverished nation (Chance & Kim, 2011; Rogers, 2011).

Totalitarian governments span the political spectrum from fascist (as in Nazi Germany during World War II) to communist (such as North Korea today). In all cases, however, a single political party claims total control of the society and permits no opposition.

authoritarianism a political system that denies the people participation in government

totalitarianism a highly centralized political system that extensively regulates people's lives

A Global Political System?

Chapter 16 (“The Economy and Work”) described the emergence of a global economy in which large corporations operate with little regard to national boundaries. Is globalization changing politics in the same way? On one level, the answer is no. Although most of the world’s economic activity is international, the planet remains divided into nation-states, just as it has been for centuries. The United Nations (founded in 1945) was a small step in the direction of global government, but to date its political role in the world has been limited.

On another level, however, politics has become a global process. For some analysts, multinational corporations have created a new political order because of their enormous power to shape events throughout the world. In other words, politics is dissolving into business as corporations grow larger than governments.

Also, the Information Revolution has moved national politics onto the world stage. Social media, including e-mail, text messaging, and Twitter networks, mean that few countries can conduct their political affairs in complete privacy. The power of electronic communication to transmit and receive information is no doubt the reason that oppressive political regimes are making greater efforts to control its use (Gellman, 2011; Freedom House, 2015).

In short, social media based on computer technology add a global dimension to even local politics. Most of the young people who participated in the political opposition that swept the Middle East in 2011 and 2012 were motivated by an awareness of the greater political voice available to most people elsewhere in the world. Using cell phone networks, they rapidly spread information and quickly organized political events. No wonder, as the Middle East drama unfolded, China clamped down on Internet use, creating what some analysts called the “Great Firewall of China” (Xia, 2011; Zakaria, 2011).

Finally, as part of the global political process, several thousand *nongovernmental organizations* (NGOs) seek to advance issues such as human rights (Amnesty International) or an ecologically sustainable world (Greenpeace). NGOs will continue to play a key part in expanding the global political culture.

To sum up, just as individual nations can no longer control much of their own economies, governments cannot fully manage the political events occurring within their borders.

Politics in the United States

17.3 Analyze economic and social issues using the political spectrum.

After fighting a war against Britain to gain political independence, the United States replaced the British monarchy

with a representative democracy. Our nation’s political development reflects a cultural history as well as its capitalist economy.

U.S. Culture and the Rise of the Welfare State

The political culture of the United States can be summed up in one word: individualism. This emphasis is found in the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees freedom from undue government interference. It was this individualism that the nineteenth-century poet and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson had in mind when he said, “The government that governs best is the government that governs least.”

But most people stop short of Emerson’s position, believing that government is necessary to defend the country, operate highway systems and schools, maintain law and order, and help people in need. To accomplish these things, the U.S. government has grown into a vast and complex **welfare state**, *a system of government agencies and programs that provides benefits to the population*. Government benefits begin even before birth (through prenatal nutrition programs), include adult benefits (such as medical care), and continue during old age (through Social Security and Medicare). Some programs are especially important to the poor, who are not well served by our capitalist economic system. But students, farmers, homeowners, small business operators, veterans, performing artists, and even executives of giant corporations all get various subsidies and supports. In fact, a majority of U.S. adults look to government for at least part of their income.

Today’s welfare state is the result of a gradual increase in the size and scope of government. In 1789, the presence of the federal government amounted to little more than a flag in most communities, and the entire federal budget was a mere \$4.5 million (\$1.50 for each person in the nation). Since then, it has risen steadily, reaching \$3.9 trillion in 2015 (\$12,278 per person) (U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 2015).

Similarly, when our nation was founded, one government employee served every 1,800 citizens. Today, about one in six workers in the United States is a government employee, which is a larger share of our workforce than is engaged in manufacturing (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014; U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

Despite this growth, the U.S. welfare state is still smaller than those of many other high-income nations. As Figure 17–1 shows, the scope of government is greater in most of Europe, especially in France and the Scandinavian countries including Denmark and Sweden.

The Political Spectrum

Who supports a bigger welfare state? Who wants to cut it back? Answers to these questions reveal attitudes that form

the *political spectrum*, beliefs that range from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. In a 2013 survey of U.S. adults, 27 percent said they were “liberal” (the political “left”), 32 percent described themselves as “conservative” (the political “right”), and 36 percent claimed to be political “moderates” (the political “middle”) (Smith et al., 2013:218).

The political spectrum helps us understand two types of issues: *Economic issues* focus on economic inequality; *social issues* involve moral questions about how people ought to live.

ECONOMIC ISSUES Economic liberals support both extensive government regulation of the economy and a larger welfare state in order to reduce income inequality. The government can reduce inequality by taxing the rich more heavily and providing more benefits to the poor. Economic conservatives want to limit the hand of government in the economy and allow market forces more freedom, claiming that this produces more jobs and makes the economy more productive.

SOCIAL ISSUES Social issues are moral questions about how people ought to live, ranging from abortion and the death penalty to gay rights and the treatment of minorities. Social liberals support equal rights and opportunities for all categories of people, view abortion as a matter of individual choice, and oppose the death penalty because it has been unfairly applied to minorities. The “family values” agenda of social conservatives supports traditional gender roles and opposes gay marriage, affirmative action, and other “special programs” for minorities. At the same time, social conservatives condemn abortion as morally wrong and support the death penalty.

Of the two major political parties in the United States, the Republican party is more conservative on both economic and social issues, and the Democratic party is more liberal. But both political parties favor big government when it advances their particular aims. During the 2012 presidential campaign, for example, Republican Mitt Romney supported bigger government in the form of a stronger military; Democrat Barack Obama favored enlarging government to expand the social “safety net” that would provide benefits to much of the population, including “investments” in education, transportation infrastructure, and new forms of energy. The fact that both political parties look to government to advance their goals is certainly one reason that, no matter which party controls the White House, government has increased in size along with the national debt.

CLASS, RACE, GENDER, AND AGE Most people hold a mix of conservative and liberal attitudes. Surveys taken during the 2012 election showed, for example, that a majority of people favored smaller government (a conservative position) but also supported legal abortion and a pathway

Global Snapshot

- In France, people look to government for a much greater share of goods and services than they do in the United States.

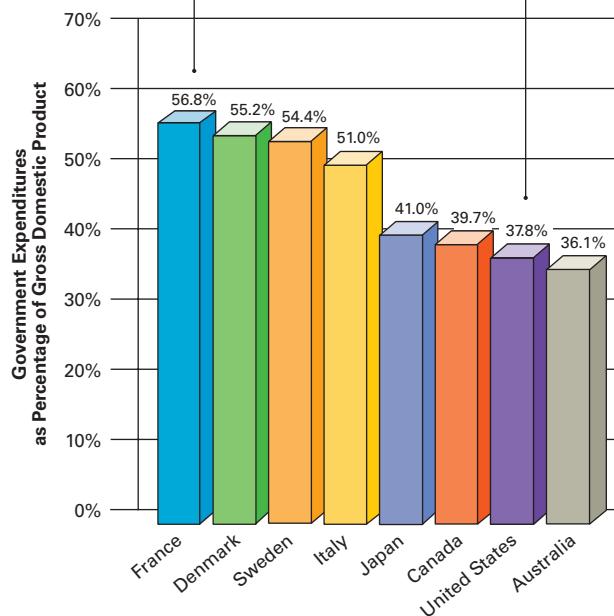


Figure 17–1 The Size of Government, 2015

Government activity accounts for a smaller share of economic output in the United States than in most other high-income countries.

SOURCE: OECD (2015).

to citizenship for immigrants who entered the country illegally (both liberal positions).

Class position helps explain political attitudes. With wealth to protect, well-to-do people tend to be conservative on economic issues, but their extensive schooling and secure social standing lead most to be social liberals. Low-income people display the opposite pattern with most being liberal on economic issues but leaning in a more conservative direction on social issues (Ohlemacher, 2008; Kohut, 2012).

African Americans, whether they are rich or poor, tend to be more liberal than whites, especially when it comes to economic issues. For half a century African Americans have voted overwhelmingly Democratic and, in 2012, 93 percent of African American voters cast ballots for the Democratic candidate, Barack Obama. Historically, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Jews have also supported the Democratic party. If none of these racial or ethnic categories of the population had voted in the 2012 presidential election, Republican Mitt Romney easily would have become president. Because the minority population of the country is increasing, minorities represent an ever more important force in U.S. politics (Pew Research Center, 2012).

Student Snapshot

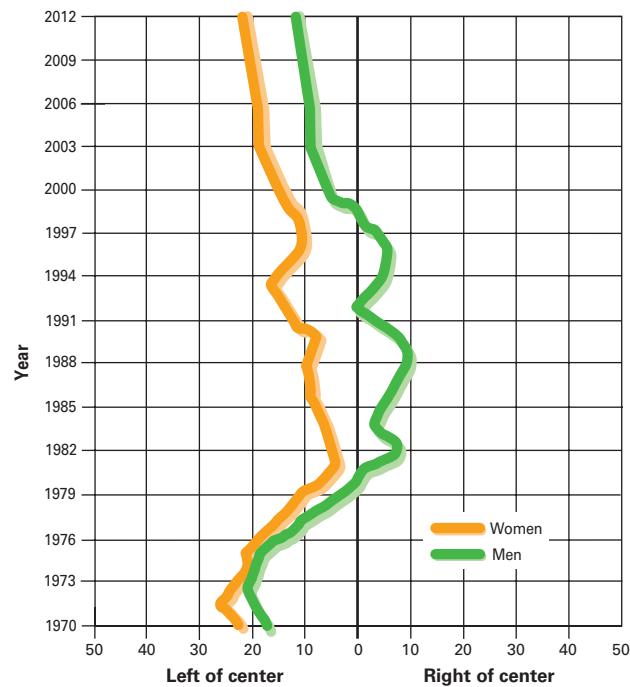


Figure 17–2 Left-Right Political Identification of College Students, 1970–2012

Student attitudes moved to the right after 1970 and shifted left in the late 1990s. College women tend to be more liberal than college men.

SOURCES: Astin et al. (2002), Sax et al. (2003), and Pryor et al. (2013).

Gender matters, too, because women tend to be somewhat more liberal than men. Among U.S. adults, more women lean toward the Democrats, and more men vote for Republican candidates. In 2012, for example, 55 percent of women but just 45 percent of men voted for Barack Obama.

Finally, as indicated by the Power of Society figure at the beginning of this chapter, younger voters have been moving in a liberal direction. Figure 17–2 shows the voting pattern over time among college students. During the 1970s, student attitudes moved to the right and then, by the mid-1990s, student attitudes shifted to the left. During this entire period, however, college women remained consistently more liberal than college men (Astin et al., 2002; Sax et al., 2003; Eagan et al., 2015).

PARTY IDENTIFICATION Surveys conducted in March 2015 show that about 47 percent of U.S. adults favor or lean toward the Democratic party, 40 percent favor or lean toward the Republican party, and about 13 percent say they are “independent” or favor some other party (Pew Research Center, 2015). But because many people hold mixed political attitudes, with liberal views on some issues and conservative stands on others, party identification in this country is not very strong. Relatively weak party identification is one reason that each of the two major parties gains or loses power from election to election. Democrats

held the White House in 1996 and gained ground in Congress in 1996, 1998, and 2000. In 2002 and 2004, the tide turned as Republicans made gains in Congress and kept control of the White House. In 2006, the tide turned again, with Democrats gaining control of Congress and winning the White House in 2008. By the 2010 elections, however, Republicans had picked up seats in Congress, gaining a majority in the House of Representatives. Then, in the 2012 elections, Democrats held the presidency and gained ground in Congress only to see the Republicans win more seats in the congressional elections in 2014 (Schouten, 2012; Wang, 2014).

There is also an urban-rural divide in U.S. politics: People in urban areas typically vote Democratic, and the bigger the urban area, the greater the share of Democratic voters. By contrast, people who live in rural areas generally vote Republican. The Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life box on page 466 takes a closer look at the national political scene, and National Map 17–1 on page 466 shows the county-by-county results for the 2012 presidential election.

Special-Interest Groups and Campaign Spending

Especially since the 2012 shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, there has been a raging debate across the United States about the private ownership of firearms. Organizations such as the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence support stricter gun laws; other organizations, including the National Rifle Association, strongly oppose such measures. Each of these organizations is an example of a **special-interest group**, *people organized to address some economic or social issue*. Special-interest groups, which include associations of older adults, fireworks producers, environmentalists, and even sociologists, are strong in nations where political parties are relatively weak. Special-interest groups employ *lobbyists* to work on their behalf, trying to get members of Congress to support their goals. The most recent tally indicates that Washington, D.C., is home to 12,279 lobbyists (Center for Responsive Politics, 2014).

A **political action committee (PAC)** is *an organization formed by a special-interest group, independent of political*

special-interest group *people organized to address some economic or social issue*

political action committee (PAC) *an organization formed by a special-interest group, independent of political parties, to raise and spend money in support of political goals*



Lower-income people have more pressing financial needs, and so they tend to focus on economic issues, such as job wages and benefits. Higher-income people, by contrast, provide support for many social issues, such as animal rights.

parties, to raise and spend money in support of political goals. Political action committees channel most of their funds directly to candidates likely to support their interests. Since they were created in the 1970s, the number of PACs has grown rapidly to more than 5,600 (Federal Election Commission, 2014).

Because of the rising costs of political campaigns, most candidates eagerly accept support from PACs. In 2012, members of the House of Representatives seeking reelection spent an average of \$1.5 million on their campaigns, with most of the money coming from outside organizations, including PACs. Senators seeking reelection spent an average of \$11 million on their races.

In presidential elections, contributions run much higher. In 2012, Barack Obama and Mitt Romney together received and spent \$2.6 billion on their presidential campaigns, including more than \$500 million from PACs and other organizations (Center for Responsive Politics, 2012). Supporters of this pattern of large contributions and great spending defend PACs, claiming that they represent the interests of a vast assortment of businesses, unions, and church groups, thereby increasing political participation. Critics counter that organizations supplying cash to politicians expect to be treated favorably in return, so in effect, PACs are attempting to buy political influence ("Abramoff Effect," 2006; Federal Election Commission, 2012).

Does raising the most money matter? The answer is yes—in the 2012 elections, in 94 percent of the House races and 79 percent of the Senate races, the candidate

who spent the most money ended up winning the election. Concerns about the power of money have led to much discussion of campaign financing. In 2002, Congress passed a modest campaign finance reform, limiting the amount of unregulated money that candidates are allowed to collect. Despite this change, all presidential races since then have set new records for campaign spending. In addition, in 2010 "super PACs" emerged as political action committees that raise money—without limits—to engage in political activity for or against any candidate for public office. It seems unlikely that this pattern will change any time soon. The courts seem to agree. In 2010, the Supreme Court rejected limits on the election spending of corporations, unions, and other large organizations (Liptak, 2010; Gorenstein, 2011; Center for Responsive Politics, 2012).

Voter Apathy

A disturbing fact of U.S. political life is that many people in this country do not vote. In fact, U.S. citizens are less likely to vote today than they were a century ago. In the 2000 presidential election, which was decided by a few hundred votes, only half the people eligible to vote went to the polls. In 2008, participation rose to 63 percent, which was the highest turnout since 1960 but still lower than in almost all other high-income countries. In the 2012 presidential election, partly due to Hurricane Sandy hitting shortly before the election, turnout fell to 57.5 percent of eligible voters (Bipartisan Policy Center, 2012).

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

Election 2012: The Rural-Urban Divide

Jorge: Just about everyone I know in L.A. voted Democratic. I mean, *nobody* voted for Romney!

Harry: If you lived in my county in rural Ohio, you'd see the exact opposite. Obama did not do well there at all.

As this conversation suggests, the reality of everyday politics in the United States depends on where you live. Political attitudes and voting patterns in rural and urban places are quite different. Sociologists have long debated why these differences exist.

Take a look at National Map 17–1, which shows the county-by-county results for the 2012 presidential election. The first thing that stands out is that the Republican candidate, Mitt Romney, won 78 percent of U.S. counties—2,259 out of 2,908 (“Romney” counties appear in red on the map). Democrat Barack Obama won in 649 counties (“Obama” counties appear in blue).

How did Obama win the election when Romney won so many more counties? Obama won 51 percent of the popular vote, doing well in counties with large populations. Democrats do very well in large cities, for example, where Obama won 70 percent of the popular vote in 2008 and 69 percent in 2012. Rural counties, with relatively small populations, tend to lean Republican. John McCain received 53 percent of the rural vote in 2008 and Mitt Romney received 59 percent in 2012. In many states, it is easy to see the rural-urban divide.

In Ohio, for example, Obama won enough votes in and around Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati to carry the entire state even though most of the state's counties went for Romney.

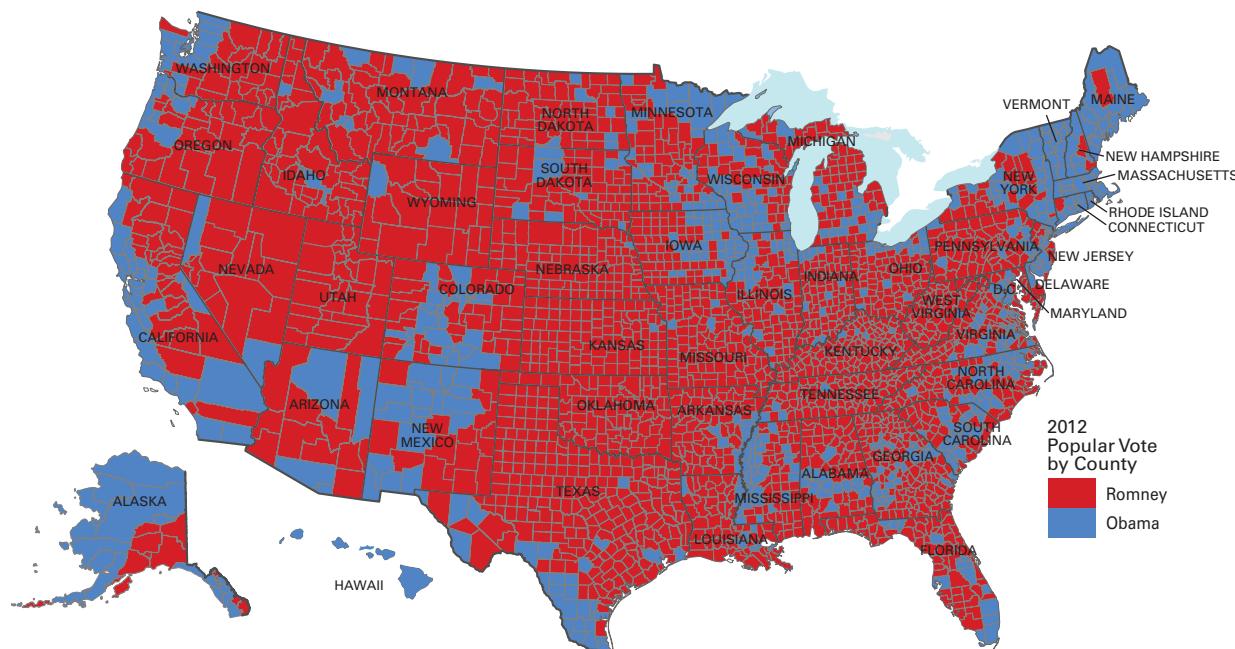
The national pattern has led many political analysts to distinguish urban “blue states” that vote Democratic and rural “red states” that vote Republican. Looking more closely, at the county level, there appears to be a political divide between “liberal, urban America” and “conservative, rural America.”

What accounts for this difference? Typically, rural counties are home to people who have lived in one place for a long time, are more traditional and family-oriented in their values, and are more likely to be religious. Such people tend to vote Republican. By contrast, urban areas are home to more minorities, young and single people, college students, and lower-income people, all of whom are more likely to vote Democratic.

What Do You Think?

1. Can you find your county on the map? Which way did most people vote? Can you explain why?
2. In most elections, more Republicans than Democrats claim they are concerned about “moral values”; more Democrats than Republicans say they care about “the economy and jobs.” Can you explain why?
3. How might Democratic candidates do better in rural areas? How might Republican candidates do better in urban areas?

Seeing Ourselves



National Map 17–1 The Presidential Election, 2012: Popular Vote by County

Barack Obama won the 2012 presidential election with 51 percent of the total popular vote, but he received a majority of the vote in only about one-fourth of the nation's counties. Obama and other Democrats did well in more densely populated urban areas, while Mitt Romney and other Republicans did well in less populated rural areas. Can you explain why urban areas are mostly Democratic and rural areas are mostly Republican? What other social characteristics do you think distinguish the people who vote Democratic from those who vote Republican?

SOURCE: *The Guardian* (2012).

Who is and is not likely to vote? Research shows that women are slightly more likely than men to cast a ballot. People over sixty-five are much more likely to vote than college-age adults (almost half of whom have not even registered). Non-Hispanic white people are just slightly more likely to vote (66 percent voted in 2008 and 2012) than African Americans (65 percent in 2008 and 2012), and Hispanics (50 percent, also in both 2008 and 2012) are the least likely of all to vote (Bipartisan Policy Center, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).

Generally speaking, people with a bigger stake in U.S. society—homeowners, parents with young children, people with more schooling and good jobs—are more likely to vote. Income matters, too: People earning more than \$100,000 are much more likely to vote (78 percent in 2012) than people earning less than \$20,000 (47 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).

Of course, we should expect some nonvoting because, at any given time, millions of people are sick or away from home or have recently moved to a new neighborhood and have forgotten to reregister. In addition, registering and voting depend on the ability to read and write, which discourages tens of millions of U.S. adults with limited literacy skills. Finally, people with physical disabilities that limit mobility have a lower turnout than the general population (Schur & Kruse, 2000; Brians & Grofman, 2001).

But the political system itself may cause voter apathy. Under our nation's Electoral College system, in forty-eight states (all but Nebraska and Maine) the presidential candidate who wins a majority of votes takes all the state's electoral votes. Most of these states vote predictably Democratic or Republican, so that people who favor either party may reasonably conclude that their individual votes will not matter. By contrast, in a small number of "swing states" or "battleground states," candidates spend much of their money on saturation media advertising and voter mobilization in an effort to win a majority of the state's votes. In these states, voter turnout was about 63 percent, compared to 55 percent in the rest of the states (Bipartisan Policy Center, 2012).

There is also a political debate over the cause of voter apathy. Conservatives suggest that apathy is really *indifference to politics* among people who are, by and large, content with their lives. Liberals and especially radicals on the far left of the political spectrum counter that apathy reflects *alienation from politics* among people who are so deeply dissatisfied with society that they doubt that elections make any real difference. Because disadvantaged and powerless people are least likely to vote, and because the candidacy of Barack Obama has raised the level of participation among minorities, the liberal explanation for apathy is probably closer to the truth.

Should Convicted Criminals Vote?

Although the right to vote is at the very foundation of our country's claim to being democratic, all states except Vermont and Maine have laws that bar people in prison from voting. Thirty-one states do not allow people on probation after committing a felony to vote; thirty-five states do the same for people on parole. Four states ban voting even after people have completed their sentences, and eight others do the same but offer people a process to appeal for restoration of their voting rights. Overall, 5.85 million people in the United States do not have the right to vote. These include 2.2 million African Americans, a fact that led researchers in one recent study to conclude that as many as 40 percent of black men may lose their voting rights in certain states as a result of such laws (Sentencing Project, 2014).

Should government take away political rights as a type of punishment? The legislatures of most of our fifty states have said yes. But critics point out that this practice may be politically motivated, because preventing convicted criminals from voting makes a difference in the way elections in this country turn out. Convicted felons (who tend to be lower-income people) show better than a two-to-one preference for Democratic over Republican candidates. If these laws had not been in effect back in 2000, Democrat Al Gore would have defeated George W. Bush for the presidency (Uggen & Manza, 2002). In 2011, such political considerations led Democrats in Congress to propose legislation called the Democracy Restoration Act, which would establish a process to restore voting rights for convicted criminals who have completed their sentences.

Theories of Power in Society

17.4 Apply the pluralist, power-elite, and Marxist models to the U.S. political system.

Sociologists have long debated how power is spread throughout the U.S. population. Power is a very difficult topic to study because decision making is complex and often takes place behind closed doors. Despite this difficulty, researchers have developed three competing models of power in the United States.

The Pluralist Model: The People Rule

The **pluralist model**, closely linked to structural-functional theory, is *an analysis of politics that sees power as spread among many competing interest groups*. Pluralists claim, first, that politics is an arena of negotiation. With limited resources, no organization can expect to achieve all its goals. Organizations therefore operate as *veto groups*, realizing some success but



Who runs the country? Pluralist theory points out that voting gives a voice to most people and every organization has some say about at least some issues. Power-elite theory claims that a small number of powerful people control the political process. The Marxist model points to bias in our society's institutions—especially the economy—that concentrates wealth and power. Bernie Sanders, who describes himself as a “democratic socialist,” drew large crowds during the 2016 presidential campaign. Which of the three theories do you think comes closest to describing the views held by Bernie Sanders? What about Hillary Clinton? What about the Republican candidates?

mostly keeping opponents from achieving all their ends. The political process relies heavily on creating alliances and compromises among numerous interest groups so that policies gain wide support. In short, pluralists see power as spread widely throughout society, with all people having at least some voice in the political system (Dahl, 1961, 1982; Rothman & Black, 1998).

The Power-Elite Model: A Few People Rule

The **power-elite model**, based on social-conflict theory, is *an analysis of politics that sees power as concentrated among the rich*. The term *power elite* was coined by C. Wright Mills (1956), who argued that a small upper class holds most of society's wealth, prestige, and power.

Mills claimed that members of the power elite head up the three major sectors of U.S. society: the economy, the government, and the military. The power elite is made up of the “super-rich” (corporate executives and major stockholders); top officials in Washington, D.C., and state capitals around the country; and the highest-ranking officers in the U.S. military.

Further, Mills explained, these elites move from one sector to another, building power as they go. Former Vice President Dick Cheney, for example, has moved back and forth between powerful positions in the corporate world and the federal government. Colin Powell moved from a top position in the U.S. military to become secretary of state. More broadly, when presidents pick cabinet officials, most of these powerful public officials are millionaires. This was true in the Bush administration as it is in the Obama administration. Power-elite theorists say that the United States is not a democracy because the influence of a few people with great wealth and power is so strong that the average person's voice cannot be heard. They reject the pluralist idea that various centers of power serve as checks and balances on one another. According to the power-elite model, those at

the top are so powerful that they face no real opposition (Bartlett & Steele, 2000; Moore et al., 2002).

The Marxist Model: The System Is Biased

A third approach to understanding U.S. politics is the **Marxist political-economy model**, *an analysis that explains politics in terms of the operation of a society's economic system*. Like the power-elite model, the Marxist model rejects the idea that the United States operates as a political democracy. But whereas the power-elite model focuses on just the enormous wealth and power of certain individuals, the Marxist model goes further and sees bias rooted in the nation's institutions, especially its economy. As noted in Chapter 4 (“Society”), Karl Marx claimed that a society's economic system (capitalist or socialist) shapes its political system. Therefore, the power elites do not simply appear out of nowhere; they are creations of the capitalist economy.

From this point of view, reforming the political system—say, by limiting the amount of money that rich people can contribute to political candidates—is unlikely to bring about true democracy. The problem does not lie

pluralist model an analysis of politics that sees power as spread among many competing interest groups

power-elite model an analysis of politics that sees power as concentrated among the rich

Marxist political-economy model an analysis that explains politics in terms of the operation of a society's economic system

APPLYING THEORY

Politics

	Pluralist Model	Power-Elite Model	Marxist Political-Economy Model
Which theoretical approach is applied?	Structural-functional approach	Social-conflict approach	Social-conflict approach
How is power spread throughout society?	Power is spread widely so that all groups have some voice.	Power is concentrated in the hands of top business, political, and military leaders.	Power is directed by the operation of the capitalist economy.
Is the United States a democracy?	Yes. Power is spread widely enough to make the country a democracy.	No. Power is too concentrated for the country to be a democracy.	No. The capitalist economy sets political decision making, so the country is not a democracy.

in the people who exercise great power or the people who do not vote; the problem is rooted in the system itself, or what Marxists call the “political economy of capitalism.” In other words, as long as the United States has a mostly capitalist economy, the majority of people will be shut out of politics, just as they are exploited in the workplace.

EVALUATE

The Applying Theory table provides a summary of the pluralist, power-elite, and Marxist models of power. Which one of the three models is most accurate? Over the years, research has shown support for each one. In the end, how you think our political system ought to work is as much a matter of political values as of scientific fact.

Classic research by Nelson Polsby (1959) supports the pluralist model. Polsby studied the political scene in New Haven, Connecticut, and concluded that key decisions on various issues—including education, urban renewal, and the electoral nominating process—were made by different groups. Polsby concluded that in New Haven, no one group—not even the upper class—ruled all the others.

Robert Lynd and Helen Lynd (1937) studied Muncie, Indiana (which they called “Middletown,” to suggest that it was a typical city), and documented the fortune amassed by a single family, the Balls, from their business manufacturing glass canning jars. Their findings support the power-elite position. The Lynds showed how the Ball family dominated the city’s life, pointing to that family’s name on a local bank, a university, a hospital, and a department store. In Muncie, according to the Lynds, the power elite boiled down, more or less, to a single family.

From the Marxist perspective, the point is not to look at which individuals make decisions. Rather, as Alexander Liazos (1982:13) explains in his analysis of the United States, “The basic tenets of capitalist society shape everyone’s life: the inequalities of social classes and the importance of profits over people.” As long as the basic institutions of society are organized to meet the needs of the few rather than the many, Liazos concludes, a democratic society is impossible.

Clearly, the U.S. political system gives almost everyone the right to participate in the political process through elections. But the power-elite and Marxist models point out that, at the very least, the U.S. political system is far less democratic than most people think. Most citizens may have the right to vote, but the major political parties and their candidates typically support only positions that are acceptable to the most powerful segments of society and consistent with the operation of our capitalist economy.

Whatever the reasons, unhappiness with government in the United States is not limited to a small number of people in the Tea

Party (a movement that seeks a smaller government). Less than half of U.S. adults report having “some” or “a great deal” of confidence that members of Congress and other government officials will do what is best for the country (Smith et al., 2013:343–46).

CHECK YOUR LEARNING What is the main argument of the pluralist model of power? What about the power-elite model? The Marxist political-economy model?

Power beyond the Rules

17.5 Describe causes of both revolution and terrorism.

In politics, there is always disagreement over a society’s goals and the best means to achieve them. A political system tries to resolve these controversies within a system of rules. But political activity sometimes breaks the rules or tries to do away with the entire system.

Revolution

Political revolution is *the overthrow of one political system in order to establish another*. Reform involves change *within* a system, either through modification of the law or, in the extreme case, through a *coup d'état* (in French, literally, “blow to the state”), in which one leader topples another. Revolution involves change in the type of system itself.

No political system is immune to revolution, nor does revolution produce any one kind of government. Our country’s Revolutionary War (1775–1783) replaced colonial rule by the British monarchy with a representative democracy. French revolutionaries in 1789 also overthrew a monarch, only to set the stage for the return of monarchy in the person of Napoleon. In 1917, the Russian Revolution replaced monarchy with a socialist government built on the ideas of Karl Marx. In 1979, an uprising in Iran overthrew an unpopular dictator but led to the rule of unpopular religious clerics. In 1991, a second Russian revolution dismantled the socialist Soviet Union, and the nation was reborn as fifteen independent republics, the largest of which—known as the Russian Federation—initially moved closer to a market system and a government offering greater



In 2011, as part of the popular movement that swept across northern Africa and the Middle East, Egyptians forced President Hosni Mubarak from office. In 2012, Mohamed Morsi was elected president. A year later, following numerous anti-government demonstrations, the military forced Morsi from office. In 2014, Egyptian voters approved a new constitution and elected Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as president. Do you think the recent political changes in Egypt have been *revolutionary* or are they examples of *reform*? Why?

political rights but has more recently become more tightly controlled by a central government. As a final example, the 2011 political uprising in Egypt forced that country's leader from office and led to a government dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamic movement; in 2013, that nation's military forced the new president from office.

Despite their striking variety, revolutions share a number of traits (Tocqueville, 1955, orig. 1856; Skocpol, 1979; Tilly, 1986):

- 1. Rising expectations.** Common sense suggests that revolution would be more likely when people are severely deprived, but history shows that most revolutions occur when people's lives are improving. Rising expectations, rather than bitterness and despair, make revolution more likely. Driving the recent uprisings across the Middle East are people who may be living better than their families did generations ago but not as well as they see people living in other parts of the world.
- 2. Unresponsive government.** Revolutions become more likely when a government is unwilling to reform itself, especially when demands for reform by powerful segments of society are ignored. In Egypt, for example, the government led by Hosni Mubarak had done little to benefit the people or reform its own corruption over many decades.
- 3. Radical leadership by intellectuals.** The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) claimed that intellectuals provide the justification for revolution, and universities are often the center of political change. Students played a critical role in China's prodemocracy

movement in the 1990s, the uprisings in Eastern Europe, and the recent uprisings across the Middle East.

4. Establishing a new legitimacy. Overthrowing a political system is not easy, but ensuring a revolution's long-term success is harder still. Some revolutionary movements are held together mostly by hatred of the past regime and fall apart once new leaders are installed. This fact is one reason that it is difficult to predict the long-term outcome of recent political changes in the Middle East. Revolutionaries must also guard against counterrevolutionary drives led by overthrown leaders. This explains the speed and ruthlessness with which victorious revolutionaries typically dispose of former leaders.

Scientific analysis cannot declare that a revolution is good or bad. The full consequences of such an upheaval depend on the personal values of the observer and, in any case,

typically become evident only after many years. For example, nearly two decades after the revolutions that toppled their governments in the early 1990s, the future of many of the former Soviet states remains uncertain.

Similarly, it is far from clear that the "prodemocracy" movement that swept across parts of the Middle East in 2010 and 2011 resulted in any long-term trend toward democracy. For one thing, polls show that just 60 percent of Egyptians, for example, claim that democracy is the best form of government. In addition, in the vacuum created by deposing an authoritarian ruler, many organizations—some more democratic than others—quickly compete for power. By 2015, after the spread of the Islamic State (ISIS) movement, many analysts considered the Middle East less stable than ever (Bell, 2011; Botelho, 2015).

Terrorism

The terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, involving four commercial airliners, killed nearly 3,000 innocent people, injured many thousands more, completely destroyed the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, and seriously damaged the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Not since the attack on Pearl Harbor at the outbreak of World War II had the United States suffered such a blow. Indeed, this event was the most serious terrorist act ever recorded.

Terrorism refers to *acts of violence or the threat of violence used as a political strategy by an individual or a group*. Like revolution, terrorism is a political act beyond the

rules of established political systems. According to Paul Johnson (1981), terrorism has four distinguishing characteristics.

First, terrorists try to paint violence as a legitimate political tactic, even though such acts are condemned by virtually every nation. Terrorists also bypass (or are excluded from) established channels of political negotiation. Therefore, terrorism is a strategy used by a weaker organization against a stronger enemy. Terrorism can also be carried out by a single individual in support of some larger cause or movement as illustrated by the 2009 killing of thirteen people at the Fort Hood army base in Texas by a U.S. Army major (Gibbs, 2009).

In recent decades, terrorism has become commonplace in international politics. In 2013, there were 9,700 acts of terrorism worldwide, which claimed 17,891 lives and injured more than 32,000 people. More than half of the dead were civilians and hundreds of victims were children. More than half of all attacks in 2013 took place in just three nations: Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq (U.S. Department of State, 2014).

Second, terrorism is used not just by groups but also by governments against their own people. *State terrorism* is the use of violence, generally without support of law, by government officials as a way to control the population. State terrorism is lawful in some authoritarian and totalitarian states, which survive by creating widespread fear and intimidation among the population. The dictator Saddam Hussein, for example, relied on secret police and state terror to protect his power in Iraq. More recently, Syrian president Bashar al-Assad has attempted to remain in power by using that country's military against a popular uprising that has turned into a bloody civil war.

Third, democratic societies reject terrorism in principle, but they are especially vulnerable to terrorists because they give broad civil liberties to people and have less extensive police networks. In contrast, totalitarian regimes make widespread use of state terrorism, but their extensive police power gives individuals few opportunities to commit acts of terror against the government.

Fourth and finally, terrorism is always a matter of definition. Governments claim the right to maintain order, even by force, and may label opposition groups that use violence as "terrorists." Political differences may explain why one person's "terrorist" is another's "freedom fighter" (Jenkins, 2003).



Terrorism is a complex political process typically involving parties with differing levels of global power. The television series *Homeland* illustrates that terrorism is also a matter of defining some parties as "good" and others as "evil" and sometimes never being sure which is which. How accurately do you think the mass media in the United States portray the global conflicts we call "terrorism"?

Although hostage taking and outright killing provoke popular anger, taking action against terrorists is difficult. Because most terrorist groups are shadowy organizations with no formal connection to any established state, identifying the parties responsible may be difficult. In addition, a military response may risk confrontation with other governments—recall the heightened tensions with Pakistan in 2011 after U.S. soldiers entered the country in a mission to kill Osama bin Laden. Yet as the terrorism expert Brian Jenkins warns, the failure to respond "encourages other terrorist groups, who begin to realize that this can be a pretty cheap way to wage war" (quoted in Whitaker, 1985:29).

War and Peace

17.6 Identify factors encouraging war or peace.

Perhaps the most critical political issue is **war**, *organized, armed conflict among the people of two or more nations, directed by their governments*. War is as old as humanity, but understanding it is crucial today because humanity now has weapons that can destroy the entire planet.

terrorism refers to acts of violence or the threat of violence used as a political strategy by an individual or a group

war organized, armed conflict among the people of two or more nations, directed by their governments

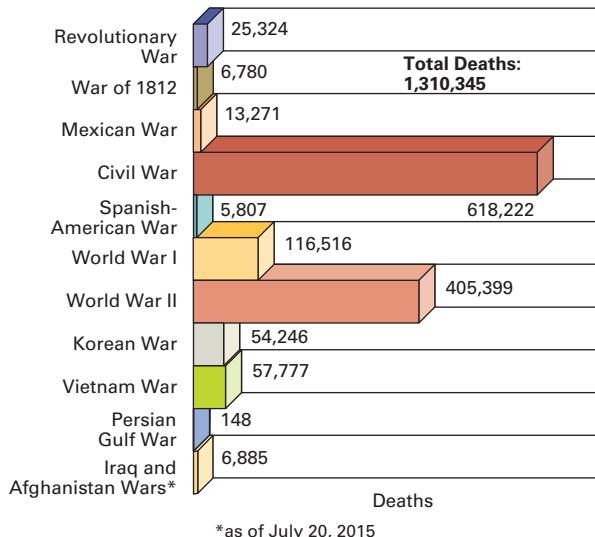


Figure 17–3 Deaths of Americans in Eleven U.S. Wars

Almost half of all U.S. deaths in war occurred during the Civil War (1861–65).

SOURCES: Compiled from various sources by Maris A. Vinovskis (1989) and the author.

At almost any moment during the twentieth century, nations somewhere in the world were engaged in violent conflict. In its short history, the United States has participated in eleven large-scale wars. From the Revolutionary War to the Iraq War, more than 1.3 million U.S. men and women have been killed in armed conflicts, as shown in Figure 17–3, and many times that number have been injured. Thousands more died in “undeclared wars” and limited military actions in the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Haiti, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.

The Causes of War

Wars occur so often that we might think that there is something natural about armed confrontation. But there is no evidence that human beings must wage war under any particular circumstances. On the contrary, governments around the world usually have to force their people to go to war.

Like all forms of social behavior, warfare is a product of society that is more common in some places than in others. The Semai of Malaysia, among the most peace-loving of the world’s peoples, rarely resort to violence. In contrast, the Yanomamö of South America (see the box in Chapter 3, “Culture”) are quick to wage war.

If society holds the key to war or peace, under what circumstances do humans go to battle? Quincy Wright (1987) cites five factors that promote war:

1. **Perceived threats.** Nations mobilize in response to a perceived threat to their people, territory, or culture.

Leaders justified the U.S.-led military campaign to disarm Iraq, for example, by stressing the threat that Saddam Hussein posed to the United States.

2. **Social problems.** When internal problems generate widespread frustration at home, a nation’s leaders may divert public attention by attacking an external “enemy” as a form of scapegoating. Although U.S. leaders claimed that the war in Iraq was a matter of national security, there is little doubt that the onset of the war diverted attention from the struggling national economy and boosted the popularity of President George W. Bush.
3. **Political objectives.** Poor nations, such as Vietnam, have used wars to end foreign domination. Powerful countries, such as the United States, may benefit from a periodic show of force (recall the deployments of troops in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Afghanistan) to increase global political standing.
4. **Moral objectives.** Nations rarely claim that they are going to war to gain wealth and power. Instead, their leaders infuse military campaigns with moral urgency. By calling the 2003 invasion of Iraq “Operation Iraqi Freedom,” U.S. leaders portrayed the mission as a morally justified war of liberation from an evil tyrant.
5. **The absence of alternatives.** A fifth factor promoting war is the absence of alternatives. Although the goal of the United Nations is to maintain international peace by finding alternatives to war, the UN has had limited success in preventing conflict between nations.

Social Class, Gender, and the Military

In World War II, three-fourths of the men in the United States in their late teens and twenties served in the military, either voluntarily or by being *drafted*—called to service. Only those who had some physical or mental impairment were freed from the obligation to serve. Today, by contrast, there is no draft, and fighting is done by a volunteer military. But not every member of our society is equally likely to volunteer.

One study revealed that the military has few young people who are rich and also few who are very poor. Rather, it is primarily working-class people who look to the military for a job, to earn some money to go to college, or simply to get out of the small town they grew up in. In addition, the largest number of young enlistees comes from the South, where local culture is more supportive of the military and where most military bases are located. As two analysts put it, “America’s military seems to resemble the makeup of a two-year commuter or trade school outside Birmingham or Biloxi far more than that of a ghetto or barrio or four-year university in Boston” (Halbfinger & Holmes, 2003:1). The Controversy & Debate box asks whether this nation’s dependence on a volunteer army is creating a “warrior caste.”

Controversy & Debate

The Volunteer Army: Have We Created a Warrior Caste?

In 2008, having completed three combat tours in Iraq, Marine Sergeant Alex Lemons returned to the United States. But his arrival did not feel like a homecoming. “I felt as alien here as I felt in Iraq,” Lemons remarked, sitting on the front deck of his house in Utah. After getting back, Lemons explained, he saw no signs that this country was engaged in a war. Most people didn’t want to think about the war in Iraq. And perhaps that’s the problem—the vast majority of our population is no longer linked to the military.

It was not always that way. During World War II, about 9 percent of the U.S. population served in the military. Almost everyone else was involved in the war effort by working in a defense plant, participating in programs that rationed vital materials, or buying bonds to finance the war effort. Today, by contrast, less than half of 1 percent of our nation’s population is in the military, and most families have no member who has worn a military uniform. Over more than a decade since the September 2001 attacks, just 1 percent of the population over the age of eighteen has served in the military. That leaves 99 percent of adults with no direct involvement in military service.

There are many reasons that military service now involves a small slice of the U.S. population. The most important factor is that, in 1973 as the Vietnam War was winding down, Congress ended the draft; as a result, today’s military is an all-volunteer force. A second factor is gender, because despite more opportunities being opened for women in recent years, 85 percent of today’s military personnel are still males. Third, members of the military

are overwhelmingly from certain regions of the country, with the South most heavily represented. In fact, about 44 percent of new recruits are from the South and half of all active-duty military personnel are stationed in just five states: Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Texas, and California. Surprisingly, perhaps, most adults in the United States would be ineligible to enlist in the military even if they wanted to, due to having criminal records or being overweight.

When all things are considered, today’s military personnel are, for the most part, physically fit men from rural areas and small towns in more traditional regions of the country, where military values such as honor, discipline, and patriotism are more pronounced. These people are not poor but generally are from working-class families. Typically, they see in military service a way to gain economic security and work experience.

The fact that the burden of military service falls on a thin slice of U.S. society is also evident in the country’s leadership. In the years immediately after the Vietnam War, almost 80 percent of members of Congress were veterans; today, that share has fallen to 18 percent. Beyond the world of politics, almost no one who works in the mass media—including newspapers, television, and films—has engaged in military service. With that fact in mind, it is easy to understand the frustration of one military wife, who lives in Washington State and has a husband fighting in Afghanistan. The Taliban, she recounts, blew up “a bus last week and killed 17 people, and I didn’t know anything about it because it wasn’t on the news. It makes me think nobody cares. They’re putting on things like Kardashians getting divorced—it’s on the news constantly—but we have soldiers over there dying, and you just don’t hear about it.”



What Do You Think?

1. Should the responsibility for military service be shouldered by just 1 percent of the country’s adult population?
2. Would you support restoring the draft as a means of spreading this responsibility throughout the class structure?
3. Do veterans deserve more than they now receive from our society? Explain.

SOURCES: Thompson (2011), U.S. Department of Defense (2014), Manning (2015), and U.S. House Committee on Veterans Affairs (2015).

Throughout our nation’s history, women have been a part of the U.S. military. In recent decades, women have taken on greater importance in the armed forces. For one thing, the share of women is on the rise, now

standing at 15.2 percent of all military personnel. Just as important, although regulations continue to keep many military women out of harm’s way, more women are now engaging in combat. Battle experience is significant



In 2013, the U.S. armed forces announced plans to integrate women into military combat operations by 2016. Do you see this as a step forward for women? Why or why not?

because it is widely regarded as necessary for soldiers to reach the highest levels of leadership (Military Diversity Leadership Commission, 2015; U.S. Department of Defense, 2015).

Is Terrorism a New Kind of War?

In recent years, we have heard government officials speak of terrorism as a new kind of war. War has historically followed certain patterns: It is played out according to basic rules, the warring parties are known to each other, and the objectives of the warring parties—which generally involve control of territory—are clearly stated.

Terrorism breaks from these patterns. The identity of terrorist individuals and organizations may not be known, those involved may deny their responsibility, and their goals may be unclear. The 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States were not attempts to defeat the nation militarily or to secure territory. Carried out by people representing not a country but a cause, the terrorist acts were not well understood in the United States. In short, these attacks were expressions of anger and hate, an effort to destabilize the country and create widespread fear.

Conventional warfare is symmetrical with two nations sending their armies into battle. By contrast, terrorism is an unconventional form of warfare, an asymmetrical conflict in which a small number of attackers uses terror and their own willingness to die to level the playing field against a much more powerful enemy. Although the terrorists may be ruthless, the nation under attack must exercise restraint in its response to terrorism because little may be known about the identity and location of the parties responsible.

The Costs and Causes of Militarism

The cost of armed conflict extends far beyond battlefield casualties. Together, the world's nations spend nearly \$1.8 trillion annually for military purposes (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2015). Spending this much diverts resources from the desperate struggle for survival by hundreds of millions of poor people.

After Social Security, defense is the U.S. government's single largest expenditure, accounting for 16 percent of all federal spending and amounting to more than \$635 billion in the 2015 budget. Military spending has trended down along with the size of the armed forces. One reason for this trend is that more military operations are directed against terrorist targets and involve not armies but small teams of highly trained soldiers (Thompson, 2013).

In recent years, the United States has emerged as the world's only superpower, accounting for about 34 percent of the world's military spending. Put another way, the United States spends more on the military than China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, France, Great Britain, India, Germany, and Japan combined (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2015; U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 2015).

For decades, military spending went up as a result of the *arms race* between the United States and the Soviet Union, which ended with the collapse of the USSR in 1991. But some analysts (those who support power-elite theory) link high military spending to the domination of U.S. society by a **military-industrial complex**, *the close association of the federal government, the military, and defense industries*. The roots of militarism, then, lie not just in external threats to our security but also in the institutional structures here at home (Marullo, 1987; Barnes, 2002b).

A final reason for continuing militarism is regional conflict. During the 1990s, for example, localized wars broke out in Bosnia, Chechnya, and Zambia, and tensions today run high between Israel and Palestine and between India and Pakistan. Even limited wars have the potential to grow and draw in other countries, including the United States. India and Pakistan—both nuclear powers—moved to the brink of war in 2002 and then pulled back. In 2003, the announcement by North Korea that it, too, had nuclear weapons raised tensions in Asia. In 2015, the United States and the European Union negotiated with Iran in a still unresolved effort to prevent that country from developing nuclear weapons (Einhorn, 2015).

Nuclear Weapons

Despite the easing of superpower tensions, the world still contains approximately 4,000 operational nuclear warheads, representing a destructive power of several tons of TNT for every person on the planet. If even a small fraction of this stockpile is used in war, life as we know it would end. Albert Einstein, whose genius contributed to the development of nuclear weapons, reflected, “The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything *save our modes of thinking*, and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.” In short, nuclear weapons make unrestrained war unthinkable in a world not yet capable of peace.

The United States, the Russian Federation, Great Britain, France, the People’s Republic of China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea all have nuclear weapons. The danger of catastrophic war increases with **nuclear proliferation**, *the acquisition of nuclear weapons technology by more and more nations*. A few nations stopped the development of nuclear weapons—Argentina and Brazil halted work in 1990, and South Africa dismantled its arsenal in 1991. But, as recent events in Iran suggest, the years ahead could see many more nations joining the “nuclear club.” As more nations gain nuclear weapons, even the smallest regional conflict can easily threaten the entire planet.

Mass Media and War

The Iraq War (2003–2010) was the first war in which television crews traveled with U.S. troops, reporting to the world as the campaign unfolded. The mass media provided ongoing and detailed reports of events; cable television made available live coverage of the war twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Media outlets critical of the war—especially the Arab news channel Al-Jazeera—tended to report the slow pace of the conflict, the casualties to the U.S. and allied forces, and the deaths and injuries suffered by Iraqi civilians, information that would increase pressure to end the war. Media outlets supportive of the war—including most news organizations in the United States—tended to report the rapid pace of the war and the casualties to Saddam Hussein’s forces and to downplay harm to Iraqi civilians as minimal and unintended. In short, the power of the mass media to provide selective information to a worldwide audience means that



One reason to pursue peace is the rising toll of death and mutilation caused by millions of land mines placed in the ground during wartime and left there afterward. Civilians—many of them children—maimed by land mines receive treatment in this clinic in Kabul, Afghanistan.

television and other media are almost as important to the outcome of a conflict as the military forces that are doing the actual fighting.

Pursuing Peace

How can the world reduce the dangers of war? Here are the most recent approaches to peace:

DETERRENCE The logic of the arms race linked security to a “balance of terror” between the superpowers. The principle of *mutual assured destruction* (MAD) means that the side launching a first-strike nuclear attack against the other will face greater retaliation. This deterrence policy kept the peace during more than fifty years of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. But this strategy fueled an enormously expensive arms race and had little effect on nuclear proliferation, which represents a growing threat to peace. Deterrence also does little to stop terrorism, the internal military conflict that recently divided Libya, or to prevent war started by a powerful nation (such as the United States) against a weaker foe (such as the Taliban regime in Afghanistan or Saddam Hussein’s Iraq).

HIGH-TECHNOLOGY DEFENSE If technology created the weapons, perhaps it can also protect us from them. Such is the claim made by supporters of the *strategic defense initiative* (SDI). Under SDI, which emerged in the 1980s under the Reagan administration, satellites and ground installations would destroy enemy missiles soon after they were launched (Thompson & Waller, 2001).

In a survey shortly after the 2001 terrorist attacks, two-thirds of U.S. adults supported SDI (Thompson & Waller, 2001; “Female Opinion,” 2002). However, critics



War, terrorism, and poverty are driving tens of thousands of people from the Middle East and northern Africa. Many are seeking a new home in Europe, where there is relative peace and prosperity. High levels of immigration are nothing new to the United States. But to most European nations, the recent increase of immigrants has caused considerable controversy. To block waves of refugees from entering Hungary, the government erected a fence. What obligation do European nations have to displaced people from other lands? What obligation does the United States have to address this crisis?

claim that the system, which they refer to as "Star Wars," would be, at best, a leaky umbrella. Others worry that building such a system will spark another massive arms race. In recent years, the Obama administration has turned away from further development of SDI in favor of more focused defense against short-range missiles that might be launched from Iran.

DIPLOMACY AND DISARMAMENT Some analysts believe that the best path to peace is diplomacy rather than technology (Dedrick & Yinger, 1990). Teams of diplomats working together can increase security by reducing, rather than building, weapons stockpiles.

But disarmament has limitations. No nation wants to be weakened by letting down its defenses. Successful diplomacy depends on everyone involved making efforts to resolve a common problem (Fisher & Ury, 1988). The United States and Russia continue to negotiate arms reduction agreements. In 2010, the New Start treaty required each country to reduce nuclear stockpiles to 1,550 warheads within seven years; it also provided for a new system of monitoring compliance with this limitation. Even so, each nation will still have more than enough weapons to destroy the entire planet. In addition, the world now faces increasing threats from other nations including North Korea and Iran (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2014).

RESOLVING UNDERLYING CONFLICT In the end, reducing the dangers of war may depend on resolving underlying conflicts by promoting a more just world.

Poverty, hunger, and illiteracy are all root causes of war. Perhaps the world needs to reconsider the wisdom of spending thousands of times as much money on militarism as we do on efforts to find peaceful solutions (Sivard, 1988; Kaplan & Schaffer, 2001).

Politics: Looking Ahead

Change in political systems is ongoing. Several problems and trends are likely to be important in the decades to come.

One troublesome problem in the United States is the inconsistency between our democratic ideals and our low turnout at the polls. Perhaps, as conservative pluralist theorists say, many people do not bother to vote because they are content with their lives. On the other hand, liberal power-elite theorists may be right in their view that people withdraw from a system that concentrates wealth and power in the hands of so few people. Or perhaps, as radical Marxist critics claim, people find that our political system gives little real

choice, limiting options and policies to those that support our capitalist economy. In any case, the current high level of apathy certainly undermines our nation's claim that our political system operates according to the will of all the people.

A second issue is the global rethinking of political models. The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union encouraged people to think of politics in terms of the two opposing models, capitalism and socialism. Today, however, people are more likely to consider a broader range of political systems that links government to the economy in various ways. "Welfare capitalism," as found in Sweden, and "state capitalism," as found in Japan and South Korea, are just two possibilities. In all cases, promoting the broadest democratic participation is an important goal. The Thinking Globally box helps us understand the current political transformation in the Middle East by looking at the recent political history of the world's Islamic countries.

Third, we still face the danger of war in many parts of the world. Even as the United States and the Russian Federation dismantle some warheads, vast stockpiles of nuclear weapons remain, and nuclear technology continues to spread around the world. In addition, new superpowers are likely to arise (the People's Republic of China and India are likely candidates), regional conflicts are likely to continue, and there is no end in sight to global terrorism. We can only hope for—and vote for—leaders who will find nonviolent solutions to the age-old problems that provoke war and put us on the road to world peace.

Thinking Globally

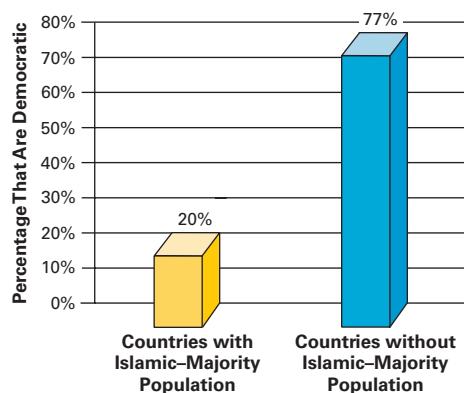
Uprisings Across the Middle East: An End to the Islamic “Democracy Gap”?

The wave of popular political protest that swept across the Middle East in 2011 is the largest global political movement in the two decades since change swept through the former Soviet Union and the nations of Eastern Europe. What's going on? Why are so many nations in this part of the world erupting with political opposition?

Is there a “democracy gap” in the Middle East? Is there a lack of democracy in Islamic nations? Making any assessment of global democracy is more difficult than it may appear. For one thing, in a world marked by striking cultural diversity, can we assume that democracy and the related ideas about political freedoms are the same everywhere? The answer cannot be a simple “yes,” because with their various political histories, concepts such as “democracy” and “freedom” mean different things in different cultural settings.

What have researchers found? Freedom House is an organization that monitors political freedom by tracking people's right to vote, to express ideas, and to move about without undue interference from government in nations around the world. Freedom House classifies nations in one of three categories: “not free,” “partly free,” and “free.”

Freedom House reports that many of the nations that are classified as “not free” have populations that are largely Islamic. Around the world, 46 of 194 nations had an Islamic-majority population in 2015. Just 9 (20 percent) of these 46 countries had democratic governments, and Freedom House rated only two (4 percent)—Senegal and Tunisia—as “free.” Of the remainder, 18 (39 percent) were rated “partly free” and 26 (57 percent) were “not free.” Of the 148 nations without an Islamic majority, 114 (77 percent) had democratic governments, and 86 (58.1 percent) were rated as “free.” When you put these facts together, countries without Islamic majorities were four times more likely than those with Islamic majorities



Democracy and Islam

Today, democratic government is much less common in countries with Islamic-majority populations. Fifty years ago, the same was true of countries with Catholic-majority populations.

to have democratic governments. Based on this finding, Freedom House concluded that countries with an Islamic majority display a “democracy gap.”

This relative lack of democracy was found in all world regions that contain Islamic-majority nations, including Africa, central Europe, and Asia. But the pattern was especially strong among the sixteen Islamic-majority states in the Middle East and North Africa that are ethnically Arabic—as of early 2015, only Tunisia is an electoral democracy.

What explains this “democracy gap”? Freedom House points to four factors. First, countries with Islamic-majority populations are typically less developed economically, with limited schooling and widespread poverty. Second, cultural traditions rigidly control the lives of women, limiting their economic, educational, and political opportunities. Third, although most other countries restrict the power of religious elites in government, and some (including the United States) even recognize a “separation of church and state,” Islamic-majority nations support a political role for Islamic leaders. In two recent cases—Iran and Afghanistan under the Taliban—Islamic leaders have actually taken formal control of the government. Fourth, the enormous wealth that comes from Middle Eastern oil plays a part in preventing democratic government. In Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and other nations, this natural resource has provided astounding riches to a small number of families, money that they can use to shore up their political control.

For all these reasons, Freedom House concludes that the road to democracy for Islamic-majority nations is likely to be long. But it is worthwhile remembering that, looking back to 1950, very few Catholic-majority countries (mostly in Europe and Latin America) had democratic governments. Today, however, most of these nations are democratic.

What is the future for democracy in Islamic-majority nations? Keep in mind that 29 percent of the world's Muslims live in Turkey, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Germany, France, and the United States, where they already live under democratic governments. But perhaps the best indicator that change is under way is the widespread demand for a political voice now rising from people throughout the Middle East. The pace of political change is increasing.

What Do You Think?

- How do you think the political conflict in the Middle East will turn out? Will the cause of democracy be advanced? Explain your view.
- Over the coming decades, do you think the Islamic “democracy gap” will disappear? Why or why not?
- What role should the United States play in this process? Do you think the United States is a force that advances democracy? Why or why not?

SOURCES: Karatnycky (2002), Freedom House (2015), and Pew Research Center (2015).

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

CHAPTER 17 Politics and Government

How important are you to the political process?

Historically, as this chapter explains, younger people have been less likely than older people to take part in politics. But, as the results of the 2008 and 2012

elections suggest, that trend may be changing as evidence builds that young people intend to have their voices heard.

Thousands of young people volunteered to assist the 2012 presidential candidates in their campaigns. In what ways can young people help their candidates simply by using the telephone?



You don't need to be a campaign worker to make a difference. What is the easiest—and in the end, the most important—way to be a part of the political process?



In 2014, *Harry Potter* film star Emma Watson, who serves as United Nations Women Goodwill Ambassador, spoke at a UN event in support of gender equality around the world. Can you name other celebrities who have tried to influence the political process?

Hint In the 2012 presidential campaign, thousands of young people served as volunteers for the candidates of both major political parties, telephoning voters or walking door-to-door in an effort to increase public interest, raise money, and get people to the polls on Election Day. Many celebrities—including musicians and members of the Hollywood entertainment scene—also spoke out in favor of a candidate and, as has been the case in recent years, most of them favored the Democratic party. But voting is most important of all, and your vote counts as much as that of any celebrity. Are you registered to vote? Will you turn out next Election Day?

Seeing Sociology in Your Everyday Life

1. Identify one charismatic leader from your country and give an account of his or her life and work. In what ways is a charismatic leader different from other forms of authority and leadership?
2. How has the Information Revolution impacted your country? What is your place in it?
3. Society holds the key to peace, yet people are continually in conflict and do go to war. Make a list of major factors that cause war. How can the world reduce the possibility and dangers of war?
4. Go to www.sociologyinfofocus.com to access the Sociology in Focus blog, where you can read the latest posts by a team of young sociologists who apply the sociological perspective to topics of popular culture.

Making the Grade

CHAPTER 17 Politics and Government

Power and Authority

17.1 Distinguish traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic authority. (pages 456–58)

Politics is the major social institution by which a society distributes power and organizes decision making. Max Weber claimed that raw power is transformed into *legitimate authority* in three ways:

- Preindustrial societies rely on tradition to transform power into authority. **Traditional authority** is closely linked to kinship.
- As societies industrialize, tradition gives way to rationality. **Rational-legal authority** underlies the operation of bureaucratic offices as well as the law.
- At any time, however, some individuals transform power into authority through charisma. **Charismatic authority** is based on extraordinary personal qualities (as found in Jesus of Nazareth, Adolf Hitler, and Mahatma Gandhi).

politics the social institution that distributes power, sets a society's goals, and makes decisions

power the ability to achieve desired ends despite resistance from others

government a formal organization that directs the political life of a society

authority power that people perceive as legitimate rather than coercive

traditional authority power legitimized by respect for long-established cultural patterns

rational-legal authority power legitimized by legally enacted rules and regulations; also known as *bureaucratic authority*

charismatic authority power legitimized by extraordinary personal abilities that inspire devotion and obedience

routinization of charisma the transformation of charismatic authority into some combination of traditional and bureaucratic authority

Politics in Global Perspective

17.2 Compare monarchy and democracy as well as authoritarian and totalitarian political systems. (pages 458–62)

Monarchy is common in agrarian societies.

- Leadership is based on kinship.
- During the Middle Ages, absolute monarchs claimed to rule by divine right.

Democracy is common in modern societies.

- Leadership is linked to elective office.
- Bureaucracy and economic inequality limit true democracy in high-income countries today.

Authoritarianism is any political system that denies the people participation in government.

- Absolute monarchies and military juntas are examples of authoritarian regimes.

Totalitarianism concentrates all political power in one centralized leadership.

- Totalitarian governments allow no organized opposition, and they rule by fear.
- The world is divided into 194 independent nation-states, 88 of which were politically "free" in 2014. Another 55 countries were "partly free," and the remaining 51 countries were "not free."
- Multinational corporations have created a new political order because their enormous wealth gives them power to shape world events.
- In an age of computers and other new information technology, governments can no longer control the flow of information across their borders.

monarchy a political system in which a single family rules from generation to generation

democracy political system that gives power to the people as a whole

authoritarianism a political system that denies the people participation in government

totalitarianism a highly centralized political system that extensively regulates people's lives

Politics in the United States

17.3 Analyze economic and social issues using the political spectrum. (pages 462–67)

- U.S. government has expanded over the past two centuries, although the **welfare state** in the United States is smaller than in most other high-income nations.
- The **political spectrum**, from the liberal left to the conservative right, involves attitudes on both economic issues and social issues.
- Affluent people tend to be conservative on economic issues and liberal on social issues.
- Party identification in the United States is weak.
- **Special-interest groups** advance the political aims of specific segments of the population.
- **Political action committees** play a powerful role in electoral politics.
- Campaign spending in the 2012 presidential campaigns totaled some \$2.6 billion.

- **Voter apathy** runs high in the United States.
- Only 57.5% of eligible voters went to the polls in the 2012 presidential election.

welfare state a system of government agencies and programs that provides benefits to the population

special-interest group people organized to address some economic or social issue

political action committee (PAC) an organization formed by a special-interest group, independent of political parties, to raise and spend money in support of political goals

used by a group against a much more powerful enemy. Who or what is defined as terrorist depends on one's political perspective.

- **State terrorism** is the use of violence by government officials as a way to control the population.

political revolution the overthrow of one political system in order to establish another

terrorism acts of violence or the threat of violence used as a political strategy by an individual or a group

Theories of Power in Society

17.4 Apply the pluralist, power-elite, and Marxist models to the U.S. political system. (pages 467–69)

- The **pluralist model** claims that political power is spread widely in the United States. It is linked to structural-functional theory.
- The **power-elite model** claims that power is concentrated in a small, wealthy segment of the population. It is based on the ideas of C. Wright Mills and is linked to social-conflict theory.
- The **Marxist political-economy model** claims that our political agenda is determined by a capitalist economy, so true democracy is impossible. It is based on the ideas of Karl Marx and is linked to social-conflict theory.

pluralist model an analysis of politics that sees power as spread among many competing interest groups

power-elite model an analysis of politics that sees power as concentrated among the rich

Marxist political-economy model an analysis that explains politics in terms of the operation of a society's economic system

Power beyond the Rules

17.5 Describe causes of both revolution and terrorism. (pages 469–71)

- **Revolution** radically transforms a political system. Revolutions occur during periods of rising expectations and when governments are unwilling to reform themselves. They are usually led by intellectuals.
- **Terrorism** is an unconventional form of warfare that employs violence in the pursuit of political goals and is

War and Peace

17.6 Identify factors encouraging war or peace. (pages 471–77)

Like all forms of social behavior, **war** is a product of society.

- Societies go to war when
 - people perceive a threat to their way of life
 - governments want to divert public attention from social problems at home
 - governments want to achieve a specific political or moral objective
 - governments can find no alternatives to resolving conflicts
- The U.S. military is composed mainly of members of the working class.
- Military spending rose dramatically in the second half of the twentieth century because of the *arms race* between the United States and the former Soviet Union.
- Some analysts point to the domination of U.S. society by a **military-industrial complex**.
- The development and spread of nuclear weapons have increased the threat of global catastrophe.
- The most recent approaches to peace include deterrence, high-technology defense, diplomacy and disarmament, and resolution of underlying conflict.
- In the end, pursuing peace means ending poverty, hunger, and illiteracy and promoting social justice for all people.

war organized, armed conflict among the people of two or more nations, directed by their governments

military-industrial complex the close association of the federal government, the military, and defense industries

nuclear proliferation the acquisition of nuclear weapons technology by more and more nations

Chapter 18

Families



Learning Objectives

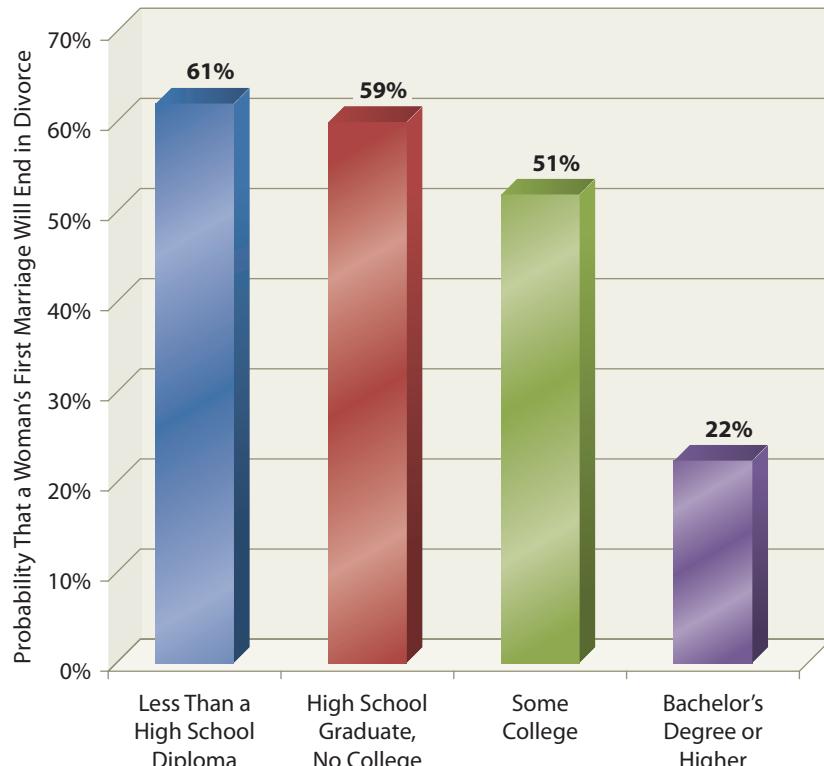
- 18.1** Describe families and how they differ around the world.
- 18.2** Apply sociology's major theories to family life.
- 18.3** Analyze changes in the family over the life course.

- 18.4** Explain how class, race, and gender shape family life.
- 18.5** Analyze the effects of divorce, remarriage, and violence on family life.
- 18.6** Describe the diversity of family life in the United States.



The Power of Society

to affect the odds that a marriage will end in divorce



SOURCE: Copen et al. (2012).

Why do some marriages last longer than others? At some point in their lives, about 95 percent of people in the United States marry. But not all marriages have the same odds of lasting. In general, more socially privileged people who tie the knot have the best chances of staying married. For women who have at least a bachelor's degree, just 22 percent of first marriages end in divorce. By contrast, for women who have less than a high school diploma, divorce is almost three times more likely, with 61 percent of first marriages ending in divorce. Just as society guides people in their selection of a marriage partner, it also shapes the chances that the marriage will last.

Chapter Overview

This chapter explores the family, a major social institution. Families are important for many reasons, which helps explain why they are found in every society. The chapter identifies various forms of family life and tracks changes in families over time. We begin by introducing a number of important concepts that sociologists use to describe and analyze families.

Rosa Yniguez is one of seven children who grew up together in Jalisco, Mexico, in a world in which families worked hard, went to church regularly, and were proud of having many children. Rosa remembers visiting the home of friends of her parents who had a clock in their living room with a picture of each of their twelve children where the numbers on the clock face would be.

Now thirty-two years old, Rosa is living in San Francisco and working as a cashier in a department store. In some respects, she has carried on her parents' traditions—but not in every way. Recalling her childhood, she says, “In Mexico, many of the families I knew had six, eight, ten children. Sometimes more. But I came to this country to get ahead. That is simply impossible with too many kids.” As a result of her desire to keep her job and make a better life for her family, Yniguez has decided to have no more than the three children she has now.

A tradition of having large families has helped make Hispanics the largest racial or ethnic minority in the United States. The birth rate for immigrant women remains higher than for native-born women. But today more and more Latinas are making the same decision as Rosa Yniguez and opting to have fewer children (Navarro, 2004; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).



Families have been with us for a very long time. But as this story indicates, U.S. families are changing in response to a number of factors, including the desire of women to have more career options and to provide better lives for their children. It is probably true that the family is changing faster than any other social institution (Bianchi & Spain, 1996).

Families: Basic Concepts and Global Variations

18.1 Describe families and how they differ around the world.

The **family** is a social institution found in all societies that unites people in cooperative groups to care for one another, including any children. Family ties are also called **kinship**, a social bond based on common ancestry, marriage, or adoption. All societies contain families, but exactly who people call their kin has varied through history and varies today

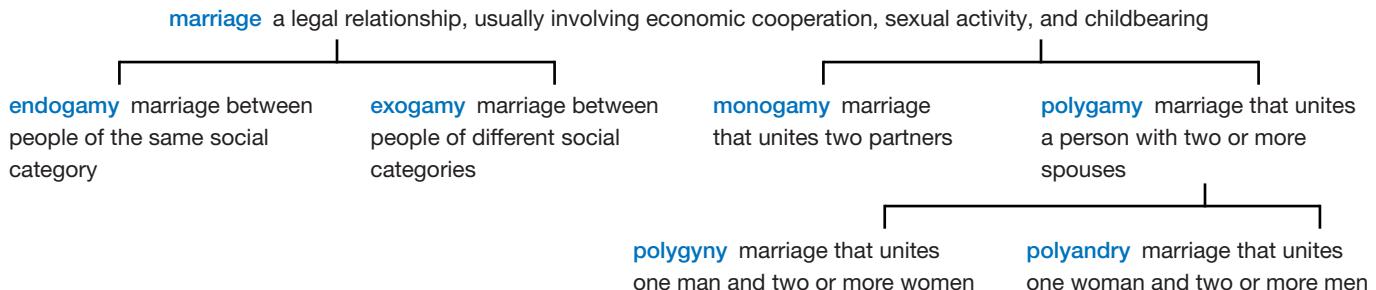
from one culture to another. From the point of view of any individual, families change as we grow up, leaving the family into which we were born to form a family of our own.

Here as in other countries, families form around **marriage**, a legal relationship, usually involving economic cooperation, sexual activity, and childbearing. The traditional belief in the United States is that people should marry before having children; this expectation is found in the word *matrimony*, which in Latin means “the condition of motherhood.” Today, 59 percent of children are born to married

family a social institution found in all societies that unites people in cooperative groups to care for one another, including any children

extended family a family composed of parents and children as well as other kin; also known as a *consanguine family*

nuclear family a family composed of one or two parents and their children; also known as a *conjugal family*



couples, but 41 percent are born to single women who may or may not live with a partner.

Families, then, have become more diverse. Which relationships are and are not considered a family can have important consequences because employers typically extend benefits such as health care only to family members. The U.S. Census Bureau, which collects data used by sociologists, counts as families only people living together who are linked by “birth, marriage, or adoption.”¹ All Census Bureau data on families in this chapter are based on that definition. However, the trend in the United States is toward a broader definition of families to include both homosexual and heterosexual partners whether they are married or unmarried. These *families of affinity* are made up of people who think of themselves as a family and wish others to see them that way.

How closely related do people have to be to consider themselves a “family”? In preindustrial societies, people commonly recognize the **extended family**, *a family consisting of parents and children as well as other kin*. This group is sometimes called the *consanguine family* because it includes everyone with “shared blood.” With industrialization, however, increased social mobility and geographic migration give rise to the **nuclear family**, *a family composed of one or two parents and their children*. The nuclear family is also called the *conjugal family* (*conjugal* means “based on marriage”). Although many people in our society think of kinship in terms of extended families, most people carry out their everyday routines within a nuclear family.

The family is changing most quickly in nations that have a large welfare state (see Chapter 17, “Politics and Government”). In the Thinking Globally box on page 486, the sociologist David Popenoe takes a look at Sweden, which, he claims, is home to the weakest families in the world.

Marriage Patterns

Cultural norms, and often laws, identify people as suitable or unsuitable marriage partners. Some marital norms promote **endogamy**, *marriage between people of the same social category*. Endogamy limits potential partners to people of the same age, race, religion, or social class. By contrast, **exogamy** is *marriage between people of different social categories*. In rural areas of India, for example, people are expected to marry someone of the same caste (endogamy) but from a different village (exogamy). The reason for endogamy is that people of similar position pass along their



What does the modern family look like? If we look to the mass media, this is a difficult question to answer. In the television series *Modern Family*, Jay Pritchett's family includes his much younger wife and their infant son, Jay's stepson Manny, his daughter Claire (who is married with three children), and his son Mitchell (who, with his gay partner, has an adopted Vietnamese daughter). How would you define “the family”?

¹ According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 123.2 million U.S. households in 2014. Of these, 81.4 million (66 percent) met the bureau's definition of “family.” The remaining living units contained single people or unrelated individuals living together. In 1950, fully 90 percent of all households were families.

Thinking Globally

The Weakest Families on Earth? A Report from Sweden

Inge: In Sweden, we have a government that takes care of every person!

Sam: In the United States, we have families to do that. . . .

We in the United States can envy the Swedes for avoiding many of our worst social problems, including violent crime, drug abuse, and savage poverty. Instead, this Scandinavian nation seems to fulfill the promise of the modern welfare state with a large and professional government bureaucracy that sees to virtually every human need.

But according to David Popenoe (1991), one drawback of such a large welfare state is that big government weakens families. In simple terms, this is because people look to the government, not spouses or other family members, for economic assistance. For the same reason, Sweden also has a high share of adults living alone (40 percent, compared to 28 percent in the United States). In addition, a large proportion of couples live together outside marriage (11 percent, versus 6 percent in the United States), and 55 percent of all Swedish children (compared to 41 percent in the United States) are born to unmarried parents. Average household size in Sweden is almost the smallest in the world (2.1 persons, versus 2.5 in the United States). So families appear to play a less central role in Swedish society than they do in the United States.

Popenoe claims that, back in the 1960s, a growing culture of individualism and self-fulfillment, along with the declining influence of religion, began eroding Swedish families. The movement of women into the labor force also played a part. Today, Sweden has the lowest proportion of women who are home-makers (10 percent, versus 22 percent in the United States) and one of the highest percentages of women in the labor force (80 percent, versus 57 percent in the United States).



But most important, according to Popenoe, is the expansion of the welfare state. The Swedish government offers its citizens a lifetime of services. Swedes can count on the government to deliver and school their children, provide comprehensive health care, support them when they are out of work, and pay for their funerals.

Many Swedes supported this welfare state, thinking it would strengthen families. Some claim that is exactly what has happened. But as Popenoe sees it, government is really weakening families. Take the case of child care: The Swedish government provides parents with 480 days of parental leave for child care, with the first 390 days paid at 80 percent of salary. Sweden also operates child care centers that are staffed by professionals and available regardless of parents' income. As some see it, the government now has broad responsibility for managing family life rather than expecting people to do that for themselves. This is one reason fewer and fewer Swedes see the need to marry.

But if Sweden's system has solved so many social problems, why should anyone care about a declining rate of marriage? For two reasons, says Popenoe. First, it is very expensive for government to provide so much for family members; this is the main reason that Sweden has one of the highest rates of taxation in the world. Second, at any price, Popenoe says that government employees, whether they are in large child care centers or in offices that provide benefits, do not provide children and their parents with the same love and emotional security that members of a family can provide. When it comes to taking care of people—especially young children—small, intimate groups do the job better than large, impersonal organizations.

What Do You Think?

1. Do you agree or disagree with Popenoe's concern that we should not get on the path to government replacing families? Explain your answer.
2. In the United States, we have a much smaller welfare state than Sweden and no comprehensive child care policy. Should our government do more for its people? Why or why not?
3. With regard to children, list two specific things that you think government can do better than parents and two things that parents can do better than government. Explain your list.

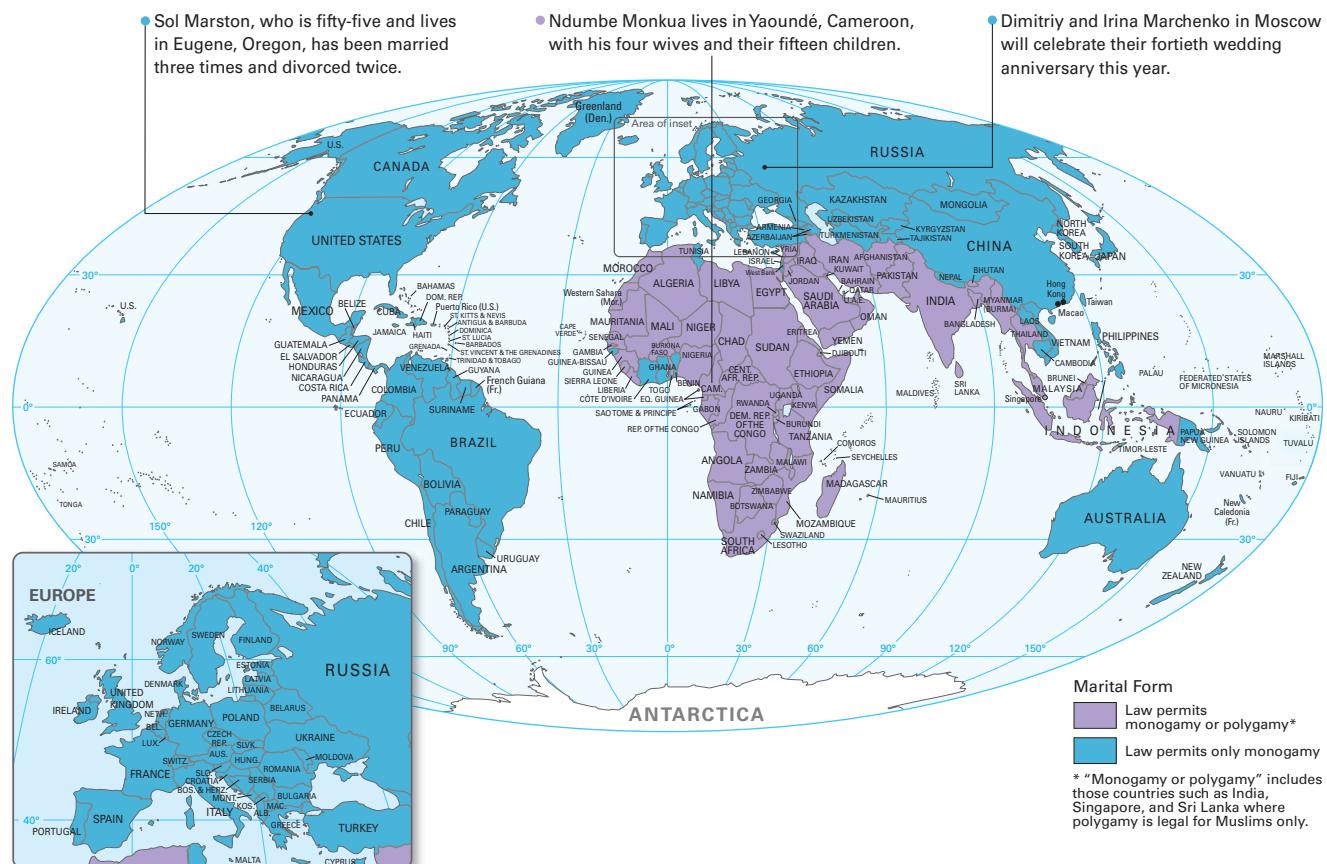
SOURCES: Palley and Shdaimah (2014), U.S. Census Bureau (2014), European Union Statistical Division (2015), Martin et al. (2015), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2015), and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015).

standing to their offspring, maintaining the traditional social hierarchy. Exogamy, on the other hand, links communities and encourages the spread of culture.

In high-income nations, laws permit only **monogamy** (from the Greek, meaning "one union"), *marriage that unites*

two partners. As Global Map 18–1 shows, monogamy is the rule throughout North and South America as well as Europe, although many countries in Africa and southern Asia permit **polygamy** (from the Greek, meaning "many unions"), *marriage that unites a person with two or more*

Window on the World



Global Map 18-1 Marital Form in Global Perspective

Monogamy is the only legal form of marriage throughout the Western Hemisphere and in much of the rest of the world. In most African nations and in southern Asia, however, polygamy is permitted by law. In many cases, this practice reflects the influence of Islam, a religion that allows a man to have up to four wives. Even so, most marriages in these countries are monogamous, primarily for financial reasons.

SOURCE: Peters Atlas of the World (1990) with updates by the author.

spouses. Polygamy has two forms. By far the more common form is **polygyny** (from the Greek, meaning “many women”), *marriage that unites one man and two or more women*. For example, Islamic nations in the Middle East and Africa permit men up to four wives. Even so, most Islamic families are monogamous because few men can afford to support several wives and even more children.

Polyandry (from the Greek, meaning “many men” or “many husbands”) is *marriage that unites one woman and two or more men*. This extremely rare pattern exists in Tibet, a mountainous land where agriculture is difficult. There, polyandry discourages the division of land into parcels too small to support a family and divides the hard work of farming among many men.

Most of the world’s societies have at some time permitted more than one marital pattern. Even so, most marriages have been monogamous (Murdock, 1965, orig. 1949). This historical preference

for monogamy reflects two facts of life: Supporting several spouses is very expensive, and the number of men and women in most societies is roughly equal.

Residential Patterns

Just as societies regulate mate selection, they also designate where a couple lives. In preindustrial societies, most newlyweds live with one set of parents who offer them protection, support, and assistance. Most common is the norm of **patrilocality** (Greek for “place of the father”), *a residential pattern in which a married couple lives with or near the husband’s family*. But some societies (such as the North

patrilocality a residential pattern in which a married couple lives with or near the husband’s family

matrilocal a residential pattern in which a married couple lives with or near the wife’s family

neolocal a residential pattern in which a married couple lives apart from both sets of parents



American Iroquois) favor **matrilocality** (meaning “place of the mother”), *a residential pattern in which a married couple lives with or near the wife’s family*. Societies that engage in frequent local warfare tend toward patrilocality, so sons are close to home to offer protection. On the other hand, societies that engage only in distant warfare may be either patrilocal or matrilocal, depending on whether its sons or daughters have greater economic value (Ember & Ember, 1971, 1991).

Industrial societies show yet another pattern. Finances permitting, they favor **neolocality** (from the Greek, meaning “new place”), *a residential pattern in which a married couple lives apart from both sets of parents*.

Patterns of Descent

Descent refers to *the system by which members of a society trace kinship over generations*. Most preindustrial societies trace kinship through either the father’s side or the mother’s side of the family. **Patrilineal descent**, the more common pattern, is *a system tracing kinship through men*. In this pattern, children are related to others only through their fathers. Tracing kinship through patrilineal descent ensures that fathers pass property on to their sons. Patrilineal descent characterizes most pastoral and agrarian societies, in which men produce the most valued resources. A less common pattern is **matrilineal descent**, a system tracing kinship through women. Matrilineal descent, in which mothers pass property to their daughters, is found more frequently in horticultural societies, where women are the main food producers.

Industrial societies with greater gender equality recognize **bilateral descent** (“two-sided descent”), *a system tracing kinship through both men and women*. In this pattern,

children include people on both the father’s side and the mother’s side among their relatives.

Patterns of Authority

Worldwide, polygyny, patrilocality, and patrilineal descent are dominant and reflect the common global pattern of patriarchy. In industrial societies like the United States, men are still typically heads of households, and most U.S. parents give children their father’s last name. However, more egalitarian family patterns are evolving, especially as the share of women in the labor force goes up.

Theories of the Family

18.2 Apply sociology’s major theories to family life.

As in earlier chapters, applying sociology’s major theoretical approaches offers a range of insights about the family. The Applying Theory table summarizes what we can learn from each approach.

Structural-Functional Theory: Functions of the Family

According to the structural-functional approach, the family performs many vital tasks. For this reason, the family is often called the “backbone of society.”

- Socialization.** As explained in Chapter 5 (“Socialization”), the family is the first and most important setting for child rearing. Ideally, parents help children become well-integrated, contributing members of society. Of course, family socialization continues throughout the life cycle. Adults change within marriage and, as any parent knows, mothers and fathers learn as much from their children as their children learn from them.
- Regulation of sexual activity.** Every culture regulates sexual activity in the interest of maintaining kinship

APPLYING THEORY

Family

	Structural-Functional Theory	Social-Conflict and Feminist Theories	Symbolic-Interaction and Social-Exchange Theories
What is the level of analysis?	Macro-level	Macro-level	Micro-level
What is the importance of family for society?	The family performs vital tasks, including socializing the young and providing emotional and financial support for members.	The family perpetuates social inequality by handing down wealth from one generation to the next.	Symbolic-interaction theory explains that the reality of family life is constructed by members in their interaction.
	The family helps regulate sexual activity.	The family supports patriarchy as well as racial and ethnic inequality.	Social-exchange theory shows that courtship typically brings together people who offer the same level of advantages.

organization and property rights. The **incest taboo** is a norm forbidding sexual relations or marriage between certain relatives. Although the incest taboo exists in every society, exactly which relatives cannot marry varies from one culture to another. The matrilineal Navajo, for example, forbid marrying any relative of one's mother. Our bilateral society applies the incest taboo to both sides of the family but limits it to close relatives, including parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, and uncles (National Map 8–1 in Chapter 8 shows which states allow or forbid first-cousin marriages). But even brother-sister (but not parent-child) marriages were accepted among the ancient Egyptian, Incan, and Hawaiian nobility (Murdock, 1965, orig. 1949).

Why does some form of the incest taboo exist in every society? Part of the reason is rooted in biology: Reproduction between close relatives of any species raises the odds of producing offspring with mental or physical damage. But why of all living species do just human beings observe an incest taboo? The answer is that controlling reproduction among close relatives is necessary for social organization. For one thing, the incest taboo limits sexual competition in families by restricting sex to spouses. Second, because kinship defines people's rights and obligations toward one another, reproduction among close relatives would hopelessly confuse kinship ties and threaten social order. Third, by requiring people to marry beyond their immediate families, the incest taboo serves to tie together the larger society as various kinship groups are linked in marriage.

3. **Social placement.** Families are not needed for people to reproduce, but they do help maintain social organization. Parents pass on their own social identity—in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, and social class—to their children at birth.
4. **Material and emotional security.** Many people view the family as a “haven in a heartless world,” offering physical protection, emotional support, and financial assistance. Perhaps this is why people living in families tend to be happier, healthier, and wealthier than people living alone (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).



Often, we experience modern society as cold and impersonal. In this context, the family can be a haven in a heartless world. Not every family lives up to this promise, of course, but people in families do live happier and longer than those who live alone.

EVALUATE

Structural-functional theory explains why society, at least as we know it, is built on families. But this approach glosses over the diversity of U.S. family life and ignores how other social institutions (such as government) could meet some of the same human needs. Finally, structural-functionalism overlooks negative aspects of family life, including patriarchy and family violence.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING What four important functions does the family provide for the operation of society?

Social-Conflict and Feminist Theories: Inequality and the Family

Like the structural-functional approach, the social-conflict approach, including feminist theory, considers the family central to our way of life. But rather than focusing on ways that kinship benefits society, this approach points out how the family perpetuates social inequality.

1. **Property and inheritance.** Friedrich Engels (1902, orig. 1884) traced the origin of the family to men's need (especially in the higher classes) to identify heirs so that they could hand down property to their sons. Families thus concentrate wealth and reproduce the class structure in each new generation.
2. **Patriarchy.** Feminists link the family to patriarchy. To know their heirs, men must control the sexuality of women. Families therefore transform women into the sexual and economic property of men. A century ago in the United States, most wives' earnings belonged to their husbands. Today, women still bear most of

the responsibility for child rearing and housework (England, 2001; U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

- 3. Race and ethnicity.** Racial and ethnic categories persist over generations because most people marry others like themselves. Endogamous marriage supports racial and ethnic inequality.

EVALUATE

Social-conflict and feminist theories show another side of family life: its role in social stratification. Engels criticized the family as part and parcel of capitalism. But noncapitalist societies also have families (and family problems). The family may be linked to social inequality, as Engels argued, and to gender inequality, as feminist theory claims. But it carries out societal functions not easily accomplished by other means.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING Point to three ways in which families support social inequality.

Micro-Level Theories: Constructing Family Life

Both the structural-functional and social-conflict approaches view the family as a structural system. By



According to social exchange theory, people form relationships based on what each offers to the other. Generally partners see the exchange as fair or "about even." What do you think is the exchange involved in this marriage between actor Doug Hutchinson (who was fifty-one at the time of their marriage) and aspiring actress Courtney Stodden (who was sixteen)?

contrast, micro-level analysis explores how individuals shape and experience family life.

SYMBOLIC-INTERACTION THEORY Ideally, family living offers an opportunity for *intimacy*, a word with Latin roots meaning "sharing fear." As family members share many activities over time, they identify with each other and build emotional bonds. Of course, the fact that parents act as authority figures often limits their closeness with younger children. But as children approach adulthood, kinship ties typically open up to include sharing confidences with greater intimacy (Macionis, 1978).

SOCIAL-EXCHANGE THEORY Social-exchange theory, another micro-level approach, describes courtship and marriage as forms of negotiation (Blau, 1964). Dating allows each person to assess the advantages and disadvantages of a potential spouse. In essence, exchange theory suggests, people "shop around" for partners to make the best "deal" they can.

In patriarchal societies, gender roles dictate the elements of exchange: Traditionally, men bring wealth and power to the marriage marketplace, and women bring beauty. The importance of beauty explains women's historical concern with their appearance and sensitivity about revealing their age. But as women have joined the labor force, they are less dependent on men to support them, and so the terms of exchange are converging for men and women.

EVALUATE

Micro-level analysis provides a counterpart to structural-functional and social-conflict visions of the family as an institutional system. Both symbolic-interaction and social-exchange theories focus on the individual experience of family life. However useful micro-level analysis may be, it misses the bigger picture: The experience of family life is similar for people in the same social and economic categories.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING How does a micro-level approach to understanding family differ from a macro-level approach? State the main ideas of symbolic-interaction theory and social-exchange theory.

Stages of Family Life

18.3 Analyze changes in the family over the life course.

The family is a dynamic institution. Not only does the family itself change over time, but the way any of us *experiences* family changes as well as we move through the life course. A new family begins with the couple engaged in courtship and evolves as the new partners settle into the realities of married life. Next, for most couples at least, come the years spent developing careers and raising children, leading to the later years of marriage, after the children have left home to form families of their own. We will look briefly at each of these four stages.

Courtship

November 2, Kandy, Sri Lanka. Winding through the rain forest of this beautiful island, our van driver, Harry, recounts how he met his wife. Actually, he explains, it was more of an arrangement: The two families were both Buddhist and of the same caste. "We got along well, right from the start," recalls Harry. "We had the same background. I suppose she or I could have said no. But 'love marriages' happen in the city, not in the village where I grew up."

In rural Sri Lanka, as in rural areas of low- and middle-income countries throughout the world, most people consider courtship too important to be left to the young (Stone, 1977). *Arranged marriages* are alliances between two extended families of similar social standing and usually involve an exchange not just of children but also of wealth and favors. Romantic love has little to do with marriage, and parents may make such arrangements when their children are very young. A century ago in Sri Lanka and India, for example, half of all girls married before they reached age fifteen. Today, perhaps one in nine young women in low-income nations is married before the age of fifteen; about one in three is married before the age of eighteen (Mayo, 1927; Mace & Mace, 1960; UNICEF, 2015).

Because traditional societies are more culturally homogeneous, almost all young men and women have been well socialized to be good spouses. Therefore, parents can arrange marriages without having to worry about whether or not the two individuals involved are *personally* compatible because they know that the partners are being raised to be *culturally* compatible.

Industrialization both erodes the importance of extended families and weakens tradition. As young people begin the process of choosing their own mate, dating sharpens courtship skills and allows sexual experimentation. Marriage is delayed until young people complete their schooling, build the financial security needed to live apart from their parents, and gain the experience needed to select a suitable partner.

ROMANTIC LOVE Our culture celebrates *romantic love*—affection and sexual passion for another person—as the basis for marriage. We find it hard to imagine marriage without love, and popular culture—from fairy tales like “Cinderella” to today’s television sitcoms and dramas—portrays love as the key to a successful marriage.

Our society’s emphasis on romance motivates young people to “leave the nest” to form new families of their own, and sexual passion can help a new couple through the often difficult adjustments of living together (Goode, 1959). On the other hand, because feelings change over time, romantic love is a less stable foundation for marriage than social and economic considerations, which is one reason that the divorce rate is much higher in the United States than it is in nations in which culture is a stronger guide in the choice of a marriage partner.

But even in our country, sociologists point out, society aims Cupid’s arrow more than we like to think. Most people fall in love with others of the same race, of comparable age, and of similar social class (see the Power of Society figure at the beginning of Chapter 1). Our society “arranges” marriages by encouraging **homogamy** (literally, “like marrying like”), *marriage between people with the same social characteristics*. The extent of homogamy is greater for some categories of our population (such as older people and immigrants from traditional societies) than for others (younger people and those who live with less concern for cultural traditions).

Settling In: Ideal and Real Marriage

Our culture gives the young an idealized, “happily ever after” picture of marriage. Such optimism can lead to disappointment, especially for women, who are taught to view marriage as the key to personal happiness. Also, romantic love involves a good deal of fantasy: We fall in love with others not always as they are but as we want them to be.

Sexuality, too, can be a source of disappointment. In the romantic haze of falling in love, people may see marriage as an endless sexual honeymoon, only to face the sobering realization that sex becomes a less-than-all-consuming passion. Although the frequency of marital sex does decline over time, about two in three married people report that they are satisfied with the sexual dimension of their relationship. In general, couples with the best sexual relationships experience the most satisfaction in their marriages. Sex may not be the key to marital bliss, but more often than not, good sex and good relationships go together (Laumann et al., 1994; Smith, 2006).

Infidelity—sexual activity outside one’s marriage—is another area where the reality of marriage does not match our cultural ideal. In a recent survey, 78 percent of adults in the United States said sex outside of marriage is “always wrong” or “almost always wrong.” Even so, 19 percent of married men and 12 percent of married women indicated (in a private, written questionnaire) that they had been sexually unfaithful to their spouses at least once (Smith et al., 2013).

Child Rearing

Despite the demands children make on us, adults in this country overwhelmingly identify raising children as one of life’s greatest joys (Wang & Taylor, 2011; Smith et al., 2013:2262). Today, about half of U.S. adults say that two children is the ideal number, and few people say they want more than three (Smith et al., 2013:405). This is a change from two centuries ago, when eight children was the average.

Big families pay off in preindustrial societies because children supply needed labor. People therefore regard having children as a wife’s duty, and without effective methods of birth control, childbearing is a regular event. Of course, a high death rate in preindustrial societies prevents many children from reaching adulthood; as late as



"Son, you're all grown up now. You owe me two hundred and fourteen thousand dollars."

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1900, one-third of all children born in the United States died by age ten.

Economically speaking, industrialization transforms children from an asset to a liability. It now costs low-income parents about \$220,000 to raise one child, including college tuition; middle-class parents commonly spend about \$305,000; and high-income families spend more than \$500,000 (Lino, 2015). No wonder the average size of the U.S. family dropped steadily during the twentieth century to one child per family!¹²

The trend toward smaller families is most evident in high-income nations. The picture differs in low-income countries in Latin America, Asia, and especially Africa, where many women have few alternatives to bearing children. In such societies, as a glance back at Global Map 1–1 in Chapter 1 shows, four or five children is still the norm.

Parenting is a very expensive, lifelong commitment. As our society has given people greater choices about family life, more U.S. adults have decided to delay childbirth or to remain childless. In 1960, almost 90 percent of women between twenty-five and twenty-nine who had ever married had at least one child; today, this proportion has declined to just 69 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

¹² According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the mean number of children per family was 0.89 in 2013. Among all families, the means were 0.76 for whites, 1.10 for African Americans, and 1.32 for Hispanics.

About half of parents in the United States claim that they would like to devote more time to child rearing (Cohn, 2007). But unless we accept a lower standard of living, economic realities demand that most parents pursue careers outside the home, even if that means devoting less time to their children. For many families, including the Yniguez family described in the opening to this chapter, having fewer children is an important step toward resolving the tension between work and parenting (Gilbert, 2005).

Children of working parents spend most of the day at school. But after school, some 4.5 million children (11 percent of five- to fourteen-year-olds) are latchkey kids who are left to fend for themselves (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Traditionalists in the “family values” debate charge that many mothers work at the expense of their children, who receive less parenting. Progressives counter that such criticism targets women for wanting the same opportunities men have long enjoyed.

Congress took a step toward easing the conflict between family and job responsibilities by passing the Family and Medical Leave Act in 1993. This law allows up to ninety days of unpaid leave from work to care for a new child or to deal with a serious family emergency. Still, most adults in this country have to juggle parental and job responsibilities.

The Family in Later Life

Increasing life expectancy in the United States means that couples who remain married will stay together for a long time. By about age sixty, most have finished the task of raising children. At this point, marriage brings a return to living with only a spouse.

Like the birth of children, their departure requires adjustments, although an “empty nest” marriage often becomes closer and more satisfying. Years of living together may have lessened a couple’s sexual passion, but understanding and commitment often increase.

Personal contact with children usually continues because most older adults live a short distance from at least one of their children. Grandchildren can bring the generations together. More than one-quarter of all U.S. adults (about 65 million) are grandparents, and a majority of them provide at least some grandchild care. This help is especially important to working mothers, one-third of whom rely on the child’s grandparents for child care during working hours. Sometimes grandparents do even more, serving as surrogate parents. About 7.2 million of our nation’s grandparents have grandchildren under the age of eighteen living with them at home. For some categories of the population, grandparents play an especially central role in child rearing. Among African Americans, who have a high rate of single parenting, grandmothers have a central position in family life (Francese, 2011; Luo et al., 2012; Meyer, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013, 2014).

Caregiving links the generations in other ways as well. Today, an increasing share of adults in midlife will provide care for aging parents. Only in rare cases does a parent come to live in the adult son's or daughter's home, but many adults find that caring for parents who have reached eighty, ninety, and beyond can be as taxing as raising young children. About 26 percent of U.S. women and 21 percent of U.S. men between the ages of forty-five and fifty-four reported providing elder care in 2013. The oldest of the baby boomers—who are now past the age of sixty-five—are called the "sandwich generation" because many (especially women) will spend as many years caring for their aging parents as they did caring for their children (Lund, 1993; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).

The final and surely the most difficult transition in married life comes with the death of a spouse. Wives typically outlive their husbands because of their greater life expectancy and the fact that women usually marry men several years older than themselves. Wives can thus expect to spend some years as widows. The challenge of living alone following the death of a spouse is especially great for men, who usually have fewer friends than widows and may lack housekeeping skills.

Keep in mind that loneliness is not the same as being alone. One recent study of loneliness among older people found that more than half of those who said they felt lonely were married. Loneliness can result from being alone, but it also results from physical or emotional issues that isolate people from those around them (Cornwell & Waite, 2009; Holwerda et al., 2012).



The experience of family life changes as we move through the life course. One important responsibility for many people as they move through middle age is caring for aging parents. In what ways does the process of aging change the relationship between parents and their sons and daughters?

women, Lillian Rubin (1976) found that wives thought a good husband was one who held a steady job, did not drink too much, and was not violent. Rubin's middle-class respondents, by contrast, almost never mentioned such things; these women simply *assumed* that a husband would provide a safe and secure home. Their ideal husband was someone they could talk to easily, sharing feelings and experiences.

Clearly, what women (and men) think they can hope for in marriage—and what they end up with—is linked to their social class. Much the same holds for children; those lucky enough to be born into affluent families enjoy better mental and physical health, develop more self-confidence, and go on to greater achievement than children born to poor parents (McLeod & Shanahan, 1993; Duncan et al., 1998).

When economic bad times bring economic challenges to the United States, we can expect to see changes in family patterns. In the wake of the recent recession, one notable trend was a rise in the number of people moving in with relatives. Just before the recession began in 2007, 46 million adults were living in households with a parent, adult child, or adult sibling. By 2009, at the bottom of the recession, this number had swelled to 52 million. By sharing household expenses, relatives who live together boost their standard of living and cut their risk of poverty. Among unemployed adults, for example, the poverty rate for people who had moved in with relatives was about 18 percent—well below the level of 30 percent for those who had not done so (Pew Research Center, 2011).

Finally, there is growing evidence that, while marriage remains popular among people who are well educated and relatively affluent, people who have less schooling and income are considerably less likely to marry. One recent study found that 64 percent of college-educated adults in the United States were married compared to only 48 percent of people who were not college graduates (Cohn et al., 2011; Yarrow, 2015).

U.S. Families: Class, Race, and Gender

18.4 Explain how class, race, and gender shape family life.

Dimensions of inequality—social class, ethnicity and race, and gender—are powerful forces that shape marriage and family life. This discussion addresses each factor in turn, but bear in mind that they overlap in our lives.

Social Class

Social class determines both a family's financial security and its range of opportunities. Interviewing working-class

Ethnicity and Race

As Chapter 14 (“Race and Ethnicity”) discusses, ethnicity and race are powerful social forces that can affect family life. Keep in mind, however, that American Indian, Latino, and African American families (like all families) are diverse and do not fit any single generalization or stereotype (Allen, 1995).

AMERICAN INDIAN FAMILIES American Indians display a wide variety of family types. Some patterns emerge, however, among people who migrate from tribal reservations to cities. Women and men who arrive in cities often seek out others—especially kin and members of the same tribe—for help getting settled. One study, for example, tells the story of two women migrants to the San Francisco area who met at a meeting of an Indian organization and realized that they were of the same tribe. The women and their children decided to share an apartment, and soon after, the children began to refer to one another as brothers, sisters, and cousins. As the months passed, the two mothers came to think of themselves as sisters (Lobo, 2002).

Migration also creates many “fluid households” with changing membership. In another case from the same research, a large apartment in San Francisco was rented by a woman, her aunt, and their children. Over the course of the next month, however, they welcomed into their home more than thirty other urban migrants, who stayed for a short time until they found housing of their own. Such patterns of mutual assistance, often involving real and fictional kinship, are common among all low-income people.

American Indians who leave tribal reservations for the cities are typically better off than those who stay behind. Because people on reservations have a hard time finding work, they cannot easily form stable marriages, and problems such as alcoholism and drug abuse can shatter the ties between parent and child.

LATINO FAMILIES Many Latinos enjoy the loyalty and support of extended families. Traditionally, too, Latino

parents exercise considerable control over children’s courtship, considering marriage an alliance of families, not just a union based on romantic love. Some Latino families also follow conventional gender roles, encouraging *machismo*—strength, daring, and sexual conquest—among men and treating women with respect but also subjecting them to close supervision.

However, assimilation into the larger society is changing these traditional patterns. As the story opening this chapter explained, many women who come to California from Mexico favor smaller families. Similarly, many Puerto Ricans who migrate to New York do not maintain the strong extended family ties they knew in Puerto Rico. Traditional male authority over women has also lessened, especially among affluent Latino families, whose number has more than tripled in the past twenty-five years (Raley, Durden, & Wildsmith, 2004; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Overall, however, the typical Hispanic family had an income of \$42,269 in 2013, or 66 percent of the national average (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Many Hispanic families suffer the stress of unemployment and other poverty-related problems.

AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES African American families face economic disadvantages: The typical African American family earned \$41,588 in 2013, which was 65 percent of the national average. People of African ancestry are almost three times as likely as non-Hispanic whites to be poor, and poverty means that both parents and children are likely to experience unemployment, substandard housing, and poor health.

Under these circumstances, maintaining a stable marriage is difficult. Consider that 31 percent of African American women in their forties have never married, compared to about 10 percent of white women of the same age. This means that African American women—often with children—are more likely to be single heads of households. Figure 18–1 shows that women headed

Diversity Snapshot

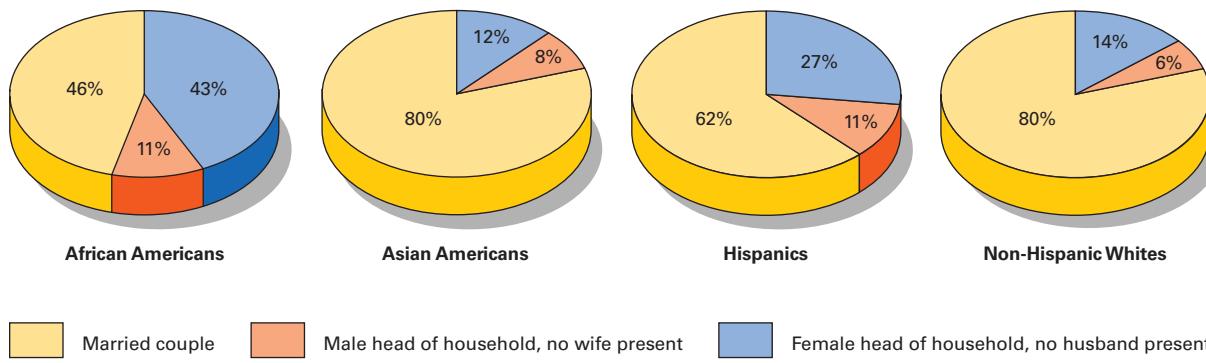


Figure 18–1 Family Form in the United States, 2014

All racial and ethnic categories show variations in family form.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (2014).

43 percent of all African American families in 2014, compared to 27 percent of Hispanic families, 14 percent of non-Hispanic white families, and 12 percent of Asian or Pacific Islander families (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Regardless of race, single-mother families are always at high risk of poverty. Thirty-two percent of single families with children headed by non-Hispanic white women are poor. Higher yet, the poverty rate among families with children headed by African American women (46 percent) and Hispanic women (47 percent) is strong evidence of how the intersection of class, race, and gender can put women at a disadvantage. African American families with both wife and husband in the home, which represent 47 percent of the total, are much stronger economically, earning 80 percent as much as comparable non-Hispanic white families. But 72 percent of African American children are born to single women, and 38 percent of African American boys and girls are growing up poor today, meaning that these families carry much of the burden of child poverty in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014; Martin et al., 2015).

ETHNICALLY AND RACIALLY MIXED MARRIAGES

Marriage involves homogamy: Most spouses have similar social backgrounds with regard to factors such as class and race. But over the course of the twentieth century, when it came to choosing a marriage partner, ethnicity came to matter less and less. Even fifty years ago, for example, a woman of German and French ancestry might readily marry a man of Irish and English background without inviting any particular reaction from their families or from society in general.

Race has been a more powerful factor in mate selection. Before a 1967 Supreme Court decision (*Loving v. Virginia*), interracial marriage was actually illegal in sixteen states. Today, African, Asian, and Native Americans represent 19.3 percent of the U.S. population; if people ignored race in choosing spouses, we would expect about the same share of marriages to be mixed. The actual proportion of racially mixed marriages is 4.9 percent, showing that race remains important in social relations.

But this pattern, too, is changing. For one thing, the age at first marriage has been rising and the most recent data show an average age of 29.3 for men and 27.0 for women. Young people who marry when they are older are likely to make choices about partners with less input from parents. One consequence of this increasing freedom of choice is that the share of ethnically and racially mixed marriages is increasing (Rosenfeld & Kim, 2005; Kent, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

The most common type of interracial married couple is a white husband and an Asian wife, accounting



For most of our nation's history, interracial marriage was illegal. The last of these laws was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1956. Although race and ethnicity continue to guide the process of courtship and marriage, interracial relationships are becoming more and more common.

for about 24 percent of all interracial married couples. When ethnicity is considered, the most common type of "mixed" couple, representing 52 percent of all cases, includes one partner who is Hispanic (the largest racial or ethnic minority category) and one who is not.

But today's couples include just about every imaginable combination. In about 44 percent of all "mixed" marriages, one or both partners claim to have a multiracial or multiethnic identity. "Mixed" marriage couples are likely to live in the West; in seven states—Hawaii, Oklahoma, Alaska, Nevada, California, New Mexico, and Washington, plus the District of Columbia—more than 10 percent of all married couples are interracial (Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012, 2014). The Thinking About Diversity box on page 496 demonstrates how acceptance of "mixed" relationships varies according to age.

Gender

The sociologist Jessie Bernard (1982) claimed that every marriage is actually two different relationships: the woman's marriage and the man's marriage. The reason is that few marriages have two equal partners. Although patriarchy has weakened, most people still expect husbands to be older and taller than their wives and to have more important, better-paid jobs.

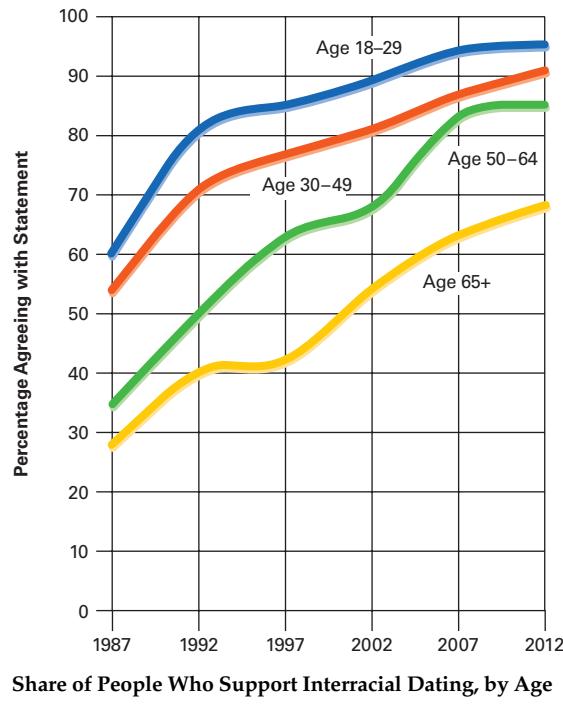
Thinking About Diversity: Race, Class, and Gender

Dating and Marriage: The Declining Importance of Race

In 1961, a young anthropology student from Kansas named Ann Dunham married a foreign student from Kenya named Barack Obama. This marriage was quite unusual at that time for the simple reason that Dunham was white and Obama was black.

Fifty years ago, barely two of every one hundred marriages involved partners of different racial categories. There were strong cultural forces opposing such unions. Survey data from the 1960s show that 42 percent of adults living in the northern United States said they wanted the law to ban marriage between people of different racial classifications. In the South, almost three-fourths of adults held the same

"I think it's all right for blacks and whites to date each other."



Why, then, do many people think that marriage benefits women more than men? The positive stereotype of the carefree bachelor contrasts sharply with the negative image of the lonely spinster, suggesting that women are fulfilled only through being wives and mothers.

However, Bernard claimed, married women actually have poorer mental health, less happiness, and more passive attitudes toward life than single women. Married men, on the other hand, generally live longer, are mentally

opinion. And, in fact, until 1967 when the Supreme Court declared such laws to be unconstitutional, sixteen states actually did outlaw interracial marriage.

Today, their son, Barack Obama, Jr., has been elected to his second term as president. Today, as well, interracial romantic relationships have become much more common. As the figure shows, almost all young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine claim that they accept interracial dating. Most young people also accept interracial marriage. Among people who are older, however, a more traditional norm of racial homogamy is still in play and they show somewhat lower support for interracial dating. But, since 2000, majorities of people in all age categories support this practice.

Even among people who say that they accept interracial marriage, however, most actual marriages still join people of the same racial category. Considering both race and ethnicity, 85 percent of U.S. marriages join people of the same category. Asians are the mostly likely to "marry out," and about 28 percent do. Hispanics are next, with about 26 percent marrying non-Hispanics. About 17 percent of African Americans marry non-African Americans. Finally, about 9 percent of non-Hispanic whites marry people of other categories.

Even in the "Age of Obama," race and ethnicity continue to guide the selection of a marriage partner, but not as much as they once did. And, in terms of marriage, racial homogamy is certainly no longer the law.

What Do You Think?

1. What are your views on interracial dating and marriage? What are your personal experiences?
2. What patterns involving dating and race do you see on your campus?
3. Do you think you will live to see the day when race no longer guides people's choices of marriage partners? Why or why not?

SOURCES: Based on Kent (2010), Pew Research Center (2012), U.S. Census Bureau (2012), and Wang (2012).

better off, and report being happier overall than single men (Fustos, 2010). These differences suggest why, after divorce, men are more eager than women to find a new partner.

Bernard concluded that there is no better assurance of long life, health, and happiness for a man than a woman well socialized to devote her life to taking care of him and providing the security of a well-ordered home. She is quick to add that marriage *could* be healthful for women if husbands did not dominate wives and

expect them to do almost all the housework. Survey responses confirm that couples rank “sharing household chores” as among the most important factors that contribute to a successful marriage (Pew Research Center, 2010).

Transitions and Problems in Family Life

18.5 Analyze the effects of divorce, remarriage, and violence on family life.

The newspaper columnist Ann Landers once remarked that one marriage in twenty is wonderful, five in twenty are good, ten in twenty are tolerable, and the remaining four are “pure hell.” Families can be a source of joy, but for some, the reality falls far short of the ideal.

Divorce

U.S. society strongly supports marriage, and 90 percent of people who have reached the age of forty have at some point “tied the knot.” But many of today’s marriages unravel. Figure 18–2 shows that the U.S. divorce rate has more than tripled over the past century. Today, about 20 percent of marriages end in separation or divorce within five years, and about half eventually do so (for African Americans, the share is above 60 percent). From another angle, of all people over the age of fifteen, 21 percent of men and 22 percent of women have been divorced at some point. Our divorce rate is among the highest in the world—almost twice as high as in Canada and Japan and about four times higher than in Italy and Ireland (Fustos, 2010; European Union, 2015; United Nations, 2015). National Map 18–1 on page 498 shows where in the United States divorce rates are especially high and low.

The high U.S. divorce rate has many causes (Furstenberg & Cherlin, 1991; Etzioni, 1993; Popenoe, 1999; Greenspan, 2001):

- 1. Individualism is on the rise.** Today’s family members spend less time together. We have become more individualistic and more concerned about personal happiness and earning income than about the well-being of our partners and children.
- 2. Romantic love fades.** Because our culture bases marriage on romantic love, relationships may fail as sexual passion fades. Many people end a marriage in favor of a new relationship that promises renewed excitement and romance.
- 3. Women are less dependent on men.** Women’s increasing participation in the labor force has reduced wives’ financial dependence on husbands. Therefore, women find it easier to leave unhappy marriages.

- A century ago, many people regarded divorce as a mark of personal failure.
- The divorce rate rose during World War II, when many couples were separated for long periods of time.

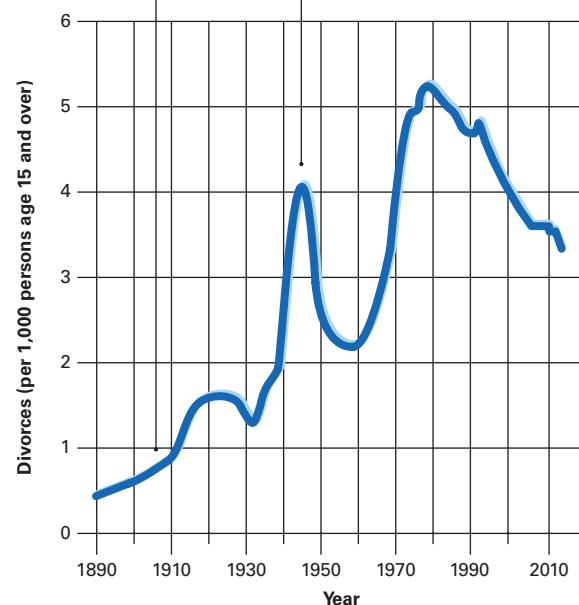


Figure 18–2 Divorce Rate for the United States, 1890–2012

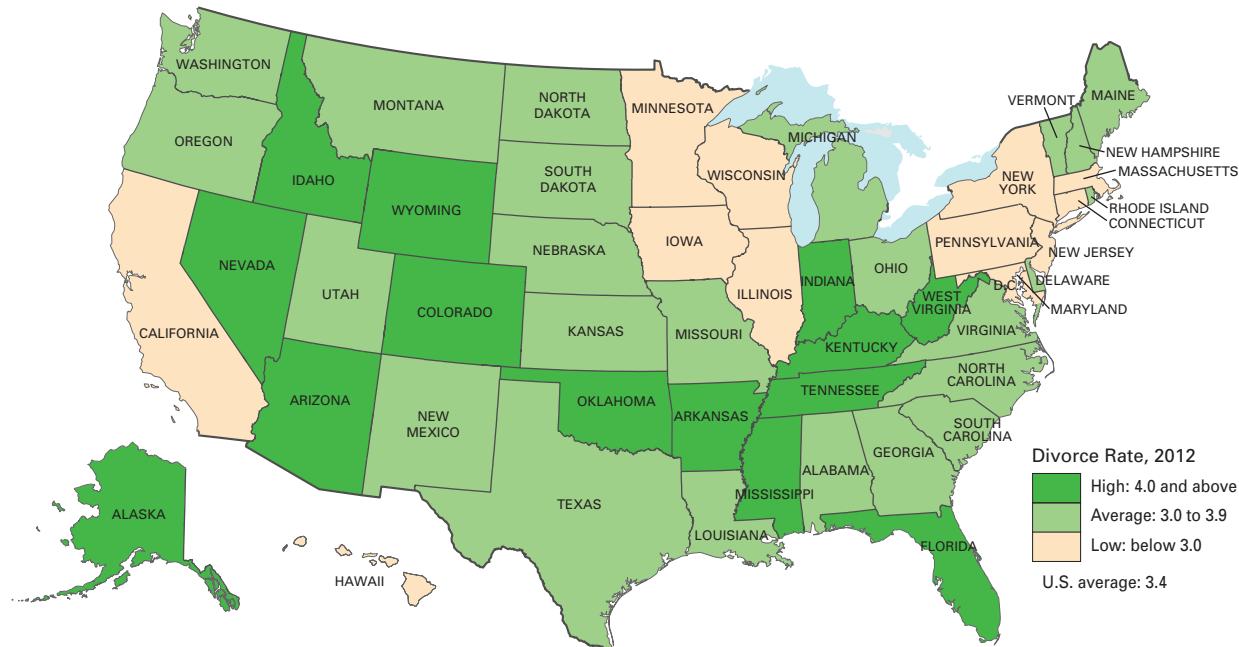
Over the long term, the U.S. divorce rate has gone up. Since about 1980, however, the trend has been downward.

SOURCES: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014) and U.S. Census Bureau (2014).

- 4. Many of today’s marriages are stressful.** With both partners working outside the home in most cases, jobs leave less time and energy for family life. This makes raising children harder than ever. Children do stabilize some marriages, but divorce is most common during the early years of marriage, when many couples have young children.
- 5. Divorce has become socially acceptable.** Divorce no longer carries the powerful stigma it did several generations ago. Family and friends are now less likely to discourage couples in conflict from divorcing.
- 6. Legally, a divorce is easier to get.** In the past, courts required divorcing couples to show that one or both were guilty of behavior such as adultery or physical abuse. Today, all states allow divorce if a couple simply declares that the marriage has failed. Concern about easy divorces, shared by more than one-third of U.S. adults, has led a few states to consider rewriting their marriage laws (Phillips, 2001; Smith et al., 2013:418).

WHO DIVORCES? At greatest risk of divorce are young spouses—especially those who marry after a brief courtship—who lack money and emotional maturity. The

Seeing Ourselves



National Map 18–1 Divorce across the United States

The divorce rate (the number of divorces for every 1,000 people regardless of age) is higher in some states than it is in others. In general, divorce rates are higher in the West (and especially in Nevada, a state with very liberal divorce laws), less common in the East, and much less common in the middle of the country. Research points out some patterns: Divorce is more likely among people who are younger, have weaker religious ties, and who move away from their parents' hometown. Can you apply these facts to make sense of this map?

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014) and U.S. Census Bureau (2014).

chance of divorce also rises if the couple marries after an unexpected pregnancy or if one or both partners have substance abuse problems. Research also shows that people who are not religious are more likely to divorce than those who have strong religious beliefs. In addition, people whose parents divorced also have a higher divorce rate themselves. Researchers suggest that a role-modeling effect is at work: Children who see parents go through divorce are more likely to consider divorce themselves. People who live in rural areas of the country are less likely to divorce than people who live in large cities, although this difference is smaller than it used to be (Amato, 2001; Pew Research Center, 2008; Tavernise & Gebeloff, 2011; Copen et al., 2012).

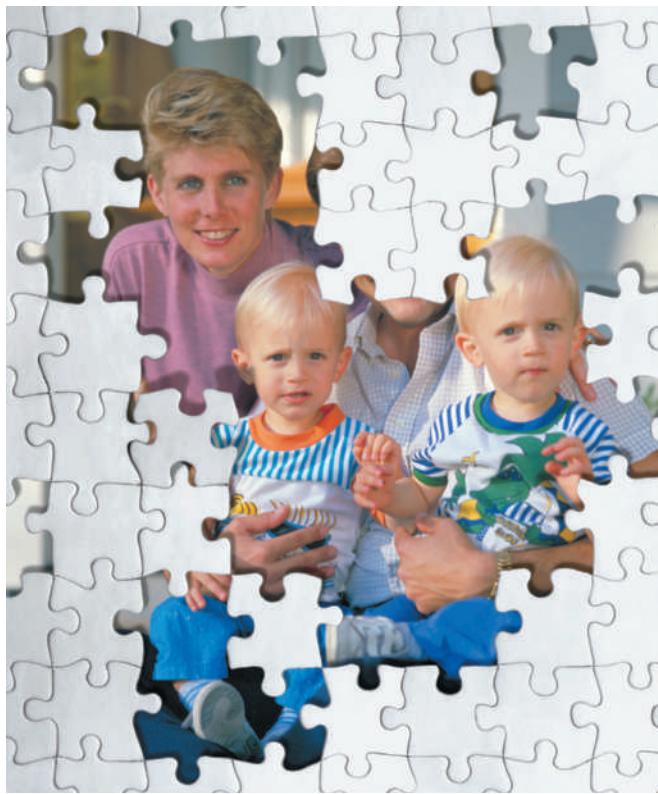
Rates of divorce (and marriage) have remained about the same among people with a college education and those with high-paying jobs. At the same time, as suggested by the Power of Society figure at the beginning of this chapter, divorce rates are much higher (and marriage rates are lower) among those who do not attend college and among people with low-paying work. Some researchers suggest that more disadvantaged

members of our society appear to be turning away from marriage, not so much because they do not wish to be married but because they lack the economic security needed for a stable family life (Kent, 2011). This trend shows how the recent recession and increasing economic inequality in the United States are affecting marriage and family life.

Finally, men and women who have already divorced once are more likely to divorce than people who have married for the first time. Government data show that, among U.S. women between the ages of fifteen and forty-four, 32 percent of first marriages ended in divorce within ten years; for second marriages, the share rose to 46 percent (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, 2013). Why? For many people the factors raising the odds of divorce follow them from one marriage to the next. Perhaps, too, having decided once to leave a marriage makes people more likely to reach the same conclusion again. This fact helps to explain why the divorce rate has been increasing among older people (Glenn & Shelton, 1985; Moeller, 2012).

DIVORCE AND CHILDREN Because mothers usually gain custody of children but fathers typically earn more income, the well-being of children often depends on fathers making court-ordered child support payments. As Figure 18–3 indicates, courts award child support in 49 percent of all divorces involving children. Yet in any given year, more than half the children legally entitled to support receive only partial payments or no payments at all. Some 3.5 million “deadbeat dads” fail to support their youngsters. In response, federal legislation now mandates that employers withhold money from the earnings of fathers or mothers who fail to pay up; it is a serious crime to refuse to make child support payments or to move to another state to avoid making them (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

The effects of divorce on children go beyond financial support. Divorce can tear young people from familiar surroundings, entangle them in bitter feuding, and distance them from a parent they love. Most serious of all, many children blame themselves for their parents’ breakup. Divorce changes the course of many children’s lives, causing emotional and behavioral problems and



Divorce may be a solution for a couple in an unhappy marriage, but it can be a problem for children who experience the withdrawal of a parent from their social world. In what ways can divorce be harmful to children? Is there a positive side to divorce? How might separating parents better prepare their children for the transition of parental divorce?

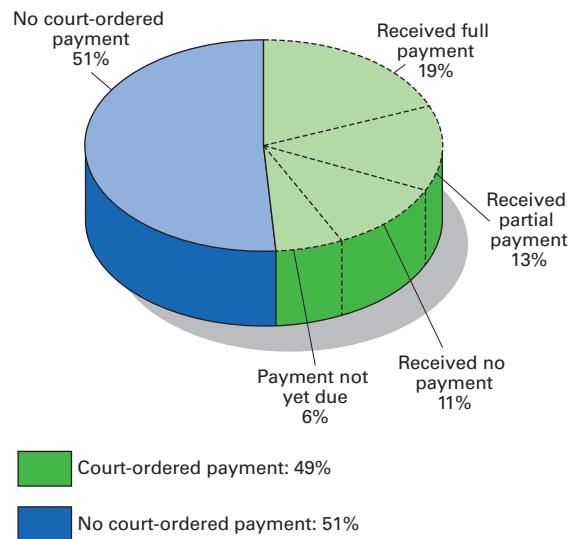


Figure 18–3 Payment of Child Support after Divorce

In almost half of all cases of court-ordered child support, the full payment is never received.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (2013).

raising the risk of dropping out of school and getting into trouble with the law. Many experts counter that divorce is better for children than staying in a family torn by tension and violence. In any case, parents should remember that if they consider divorce, more than their own well-being is at stake (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Amato & Sobolewski, 2001).

Remarriage and Blended Families

More than half of all people who divorce remarry, most within four years. Nationwide, about 40 percent of all new marriages are now remarriages for at least one partner. Men, who benefit more from wedlock, are more likely than women to remarry (Kreider & Ellis, 2011; Livingston, 2014).

Remarriage often creates *blended families*, composed of children and some combination of biological parents and stepparents. With brothers, sisters, half-siblings, a stepparent—not to mention a biological parent who may live elsewhere and be married to someone else with other children—young people in blended families face the challenge of defining many new relationships and deciding just who is part of the nuclear family. Parents often have trouble defining responsibilities for household work among people unsure of their relationships to each other. When the custody of children is an issue, ex-spouses can be an unwelcome presence for people in a new marriage. Although blended families require that members adjust to their new circumstances, they offer

both young and old the chance to relax rigid family roles (Furstenberg & Cherlin, 2001; McLanahan, 2002).

Family Violence

The ideal family is a source of pleasure and support. However, the disturbing reality of many homes is **family violence**, *emotional, physical, or sexual abuse of one family member by another*. With the exception of the police and the military, says the sociologist Richard J. Gelles, the family is “the most violent group in society” (quoted in Roesch, 1984:75).

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN Family brutality often goes unreported to police. Even so, the U.S. Department of Justice (2014) estimates that, each year, about 900,000 adults are victims of domestic violence involving simple assault and 500,000 are victims of more serious criminal violence. Family violence harms both sexes, but not equally—women are three times more likely than men to be victims. Government statistics show us that 37 percent of female victims of homicide—but just 3 percent of male victims—are killed by spouses, partners, or ex-partners. Nationwide, the most recent annual death toll from family violence was 1,298 women. Overall, women are more likely to be injured by a family member than to be mugged or raped by a stranger or hurt in an automobile accident (Shupe, Stacey, & Hazlewood, 1987; Blankenhorn, 1995; U.S. Department of Justice, 2014).

Historically, the law defined wives as the property of their husbands, so no man could be charged with raping his wife. Today, however, all states have enacted *marital rape laws*. The law no longer regards domestic violence as a private family matter; it gives victims more options. Now, even without a formal separation or divorce, a woman can obtain court protection from an abusive spouse, and all states have “stalking laws” that forbid one ex-partner from following or otherwise threatening the other. Communities across the United States have established shelters to provide counseling and temporary housing for women and children driven from their homes by domestic violence.

Finally, the harm caused by domestic violence goes beyond the physical injuries. Victims often lose their ability to trust others. One study found that women who had been physically or sexually abused were much less likely than nonvictims to form stable relationships later on (Cherlin et al., 2004).

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN Family violence also victimizes children. In 2013, there were almost 4 million reports alleging child abuse or neglect. Of these

reports, 678,000 were confirmed to be valid and records indicate that 1,520 children died from abuse or neglect. Child abuse entails more than physical injury; abusive adults misuse power and trust to damage a child’s emotional well-being in ways that may last a lifetime. Child abuse and neglect are most common among the youngest and most vulnerable children (Besharov & Laumann, 1996; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015).

Although child abusers conform to no simple stereotype, they are slightly more likely to be women (54 percent) than men (46 percent). But almost all abusers share one trait—having been abused themselves as children. Research shows that violent behavior in close relationships is learned; in families, violence begets violence (Levine, 2001; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015).

Alternative Family Forms

18.6 Describe the diversity of family life in the United States.

Most families in the United States are composed of married couples that raise children. But in recent decades, our society has displayed increasing diversity in family life.

One-Parent Families

Thirty-two percent of U.S. families with children under eighteen have only one parent in the household, a proportion that more than doubled during the last generation. Put another way, 31 percent of all U.S. children now live with only one parent or no natural parent, and almost half of all U.S. children will do so at some point before reaching eighteen. One-parent families, 84 percent of which are headed by a single mother, result from divorce, death, or an unmarried woman’s decision to have a child (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Single parenthood increases a woman’s risk of poverty because it limits her ability to work and to further her education. The opposite is also true: Poverty raises the odds that a young woman will become a single mother. But single parenthood goes well beyond the poor: There are about 1.6 million births to unmarried women each year, and this number represents about 40 percent of all births in this country. In recent decades, the rate of childbirth to younger single women has declined. In an opposite trend, the rate of childbirth to unmarried women in their thirties has increased (Martin et al., 2015).

Looking back at Figure 18–1, note that 54 percent of African American families are headed by a single

parent. Single parenting is less common among Hispanics (38 percent), Asian Americans (21 percent), and non-Hispanic whites (20 percent). In many single-parent families, mothers turn to their own mothers for support. In the United States, then, the rise in single parenting is tied to a declining role for fathers and the growing importance of grandparenting (Luo et al., 2012).

Research shows that growing up in a one-parent family usually puts children at a disadvantage. Some studies claim that because a father and a mother each make distinctive contributions to a child's social development, one parent has a hard time doing as good a job alone. But the most serious problem for one-parent families, especially if that parent is a woman, is poverty. On average, children growing up in a single-parent family start out poorer, get less schooling, and end up with lower incomes as adults. In addition, 32 percent of adults whose parents never married are single parents themselves compared to 5 percent of adults in the general population (Kantrowitz & Wingert, 2001; McLanahan, 2002; Pew Research Center, 2007; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Cohabitation

Cohabitation is the sharing of a household by an unmarried couple. As a long-term form of family life, with or without children, cohabitation is especially common in the Scandinavian countries and is gaining popularity in other European nations. In the United States, the number of cohabiting couples has increased from about 500,000 in 1970 to more than 7 million in 2014 (6.6 million heterosexual couples and 475,000 same-sex couples). Cohabiting partners represent about 6 percent of all households. About half of all people (56 percent of women and 48 percent of men) between fifteen and forty-four years of age have cohabited at some point (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

Cohabiting tends to appeal to more independent-minded individuals as well as those who favor gender equality. At the same time, cohabiting is also somewhat more common among people with less education (Brines & Joyner, 1999; Copen et al., 2013). Most couples cohabit for no more than a few years. After three years, three in ten couples continue to cohabit, four in ten have decided to marry, and three in ten have split up. Mounting evidence suggests that living together may actually discourage marriage because partners become used to low-commitment relationships. For this reason, cohabiting couples who have children—currently representing about one in eight births in the United States—may not always be long-term active parents. Figure 18-4

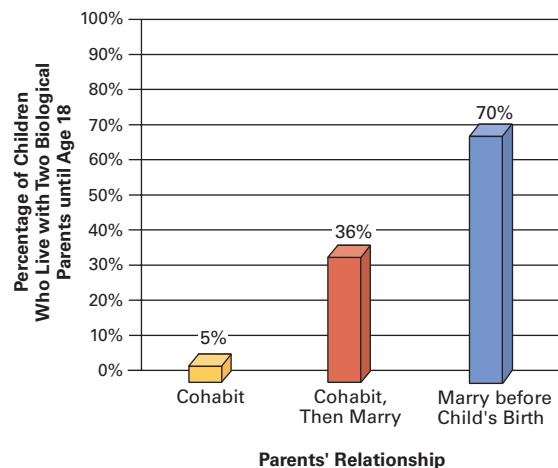


Figure 18-4 Parental Involvement in Children's Lives: Cohabiting and Married Parents

Marriage increases the odds that children will remain in the same household with both biological parents as they grow up.

SOURCE: Phillips (2001).

shows that just 5 percent of children born to cohabiting couples will live until age eighteen with both biological parents if the parents remain unmarried. The share rises to 36 percent among children whose parents marry at some point, but even this is half of the 70 percent figure among children whose parents married before they were born. When cohabiting couples with children separate, their parental involvement, including financial support, is highly uncertain (Popenoe & Whitehead, 1999; Booth & Crouter, 2002; Fustos, 2010; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Gay and Lesbian Couples

In 1989, Denmark became the first country to permit registered partnerships with the benefits of marriage for same-sex couples. This change extended social legitimacy to gay and lesbian couples and equalized advantages in inheritance, taxation, and joint property ownership. Since then, more than twenty countries have followed suit.

Twenty-two nations (including some that recognize registered partnerships) have extended marriage—not only in practice but also in name—to same-sex couples. As of 2015, these countries are the Netherlands (2001), Belgium (2003), Canada (2005), Spain (2005), South Africa (2006), Norway (2008), Sweden (2009), Portugal (2010), Iceland (2010), Argentina (2010), Denmark (2012), France (2013), Uruguay (2013), New Zealand (2013), England and Wales (2013), Brazil (2013), Luxembourg (2014), Scotland (2014), Finland (2015), Greenland (2015), Ireland (2015), and the United States (2015).



In June, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling that states must extend legal marriage to same-sex couples. Many people across the country reacted with street celebrations.

In the United States, sweeping changes have taken place in just a few years. In 2004, Massachusetts became the first state to legalize same-sex marriage. In the decade after that, Iowa, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Maine, Maryland, Washington, Delaware, Rhode Island, Minnesota, California, and the District of Columbia also changed their laws to allow same-sex marriage. A number of additional states enacted laws to permit same-sex unions with all the rights of marriage (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2013).

There also has been opposition to same-sex marriage. Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in 1996, which defined marriage as joining one man and one woman. Soon after that, thirty-five states amended their constitutions to permit marriage only between one man and one woman. In 2013, however, the Supreme Court struck down this law and extended federal benefits to same-sex couples married in states that permitted such unions.

In June, 2015, the debate was effectively settled when the Supreme Court ruled that states cannot pass laws making same-sex marriage illegal. This landmark decision requires all states throughout the country to extend the right to marry to both same-sex and opposite-sex couples (Newport, 2005; Pew Research Center, 2014; de Vogue & Diamond, 2015).

Singlehood

Because nine out of ten people in the United States marry, we tend to view singlehood as a temporary stage of life. However, increasing numbers of people are choosing

to live alone. Such decisions are pushing up the number of single-person households dramatically. In 1950, only one household in ten contained a single person. By 2014, this share had risen to 28 percent, a total of 34.2 million single adults (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Most striking is the rising number of single young women. In 1960, 28 percent of U.S. women aged twenty to twenty-four were single; by 2014, the proportion had soared to 83 percent. Underlying this trend is the increasing number of women going to college, which has pushed back the age at first marriage.

Women who complete college do marry later in life,

but they are actually more likely to marry than women who do not attend college. The reason is simply that the more education people have, the more they will earn and the more attractive they are as marriage partners (Kent, 2011).

By midlife, many unmarried women sense a lack of available men. Because we expect a woman to marry a man older than she is, and because women tend to be healthier and live longer than men do, the older a woman becomes the more difficulty she has finding a suitable husband.

Extended Family Households

A popular idea in U.S. culture is that individual family members should try to establish their own residence. In large part, this idea has gained public favor because living on one's own is a symbol of financial independence.

But, of course, many people—especially people facing economic challenges—have always recognized the economic advantages of sharing a household. Countless immigrants have come to the United States and lived with extended family members, if only until they have been able to “make it on their own.” Similarly, American Indians moving from reservations to large cities often join together with kin (or tribal members they come to define as kin) as a way of caring for one another and also as a strategy to save money. More recently, an increasing share of young people who have completed college but who have not yet found a job have returned “home” to live with parents, a pattern that has earned them the label of “boomerang kids.” In addition, more young people

who might have expected to strike out on their own have remained at home. Overall, researchers report, almost half of young people between the ages of eighteen and thirty have lived at home with parents for at least some period of time (Parker, 2012).

For people of all ages, as noted earlier in this chapter, the recent recession has sparked an increase in extended family households as people move in with relatives and in-laws. More than 50 million people in the United States live in a household with a parent, adult child, or adult sibling. Sharing a household with other family members carries both joys and challenges. But research shows that it is an effective strategy to save money and cut the odds of falling below the poverty line (Pew Research Center, 2011; Green, 2012).

New Reproductive Technologies and Families

Medical advances involving reproductive technologies are also changing families. In 1978, England's Louise Brown became the world's first "test-tube baby"; since then, tens of thousands of children have been conceived outside the womb.

Test-tube babies are the product of *in vitro fertilization*, in which doctors unite a woman's egg and a man's sperm "in glass" (usually not a test tube but a shallow dish) rather than in a woman's body. Doctors then either implant the resulting embryo in the womb of the woman who is to bear the child or freeze it for implantation at a later time.

Modern reproductive technologies allow some couples who cannot conceive by conventional means to have children. These techniques may also eventually help reduce the incidence of birth defects. Genetic screening of sperm and eggs allows medical specialists to increase the odds of having a healthy baby. But new reproductive technologies also raise difficult and troubling questions: When one woman carries an embryo developed from the egg of another, who is the mother? When a couple divorces, which spouse is entitled to use, or destroy, their frozen embryos? Should parents use genetic screening to select the traits of their child such as sex or hair color? Such questions remind us that technology changes faster than our ability to understand all the consequences of its use.

Families: Looking Ahead

Family life in the United States will continue to change in the years ahead, and with change comes controversy. Advocates of "traditional family values" line up against those who support greater personal choice; the Controversy & Debate box on page 504 outlines some of the issues.

Sociologists cannot predict the outcome of this debate, but we can suggest five likely future trends.

First, the divorce rate is likely to remain high, even in the face of evidence that marital breakups harm children. In truth, today's marriages are about as durable as they were a century ago, when many were cut short by death. The difference is that now more couples *choose* to end marriages that fail to live up to their expectations. So even though the divorce rate has declined since 1980, it is unlikely to return to the low rates that marked the early decades of the twentieth century.

Second, family life in the twenty-first century will be more diverse. Cohabiting couples, one-parent families, gay and lesbian families, blended families, and multigenerational households are all on the rise. The 2015 Supreme Court ruling permitting same-sex marriage throughout the United States is a major step in the direction of diverse family life. Most families still include people who are married, and most married couples still have children. But the diversity of family forms reflects a trend toward more personal choice as well as people responding to economic challenges.

Third, men continue to play a limited role in child rearing. In the 1950s, a decade that many people view as the "golden age" of families, men began to withdraw from active parenting (Snell, 1990; Stacey, 1990). In recent years, a countertrend has become evident with some older, highly educated men staying at home with young children, many using computer technology to continue their work. But the stay-at-home dad represents no more than 1 percent of fathers with young children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). The bigger picture is that the high U.S. divorce rate and the increase in single motherhood are weakening children's ties to fathers and increasing children's risk of poverty.

Fourth, families will continue to feel the effects of economic changes. In many homes today, both household partners work, reducing marriage and family life to the interaction of weary men and women who must try to fit a little "quality time" with their children into an already full schedule. The long-term effects of the two-career couple on families as we have known them are likely to be mixed.

Fifth and finally, the importance of new reproductive technologies will increase. Ethical concerns about whether what *can* be done *should* be done will slow these developments, but new approaches to reproduction will continue to alter the traditional experience of parenthood.

Despite the changes and controversies that have shaken the family in the United States, most people still report being happy as partners and parents (Smith et al., 2013:2296). Marriage and family life are likely to remain foundations of our society for generations to come.

Controversy & Debate

Should We Save the Traditional Family?

What are “traditional families”? Are they vital to our way of life or a barrier to progress? People use the term *traditional family* to mean a married man and woman who at some point in their lives raise children. Statistically speaking, traditional families are less common than they used to be. In 1950, 90 percent of U.S. households were families—using the Census Bureau’s definition of two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption. By 2014, just 66 percent of households were families, due to rising levels of divorce, cohabitation, and singlehood.

“Traditional family” is more than just a handy expression; it is also a moral statement. Belief in the traditional family implies giving high value to becoming and staying married, putting children ahead of careers, and favoring two-parent families over various alternatives.

“Traditional Families Are the Solution”

On one side of the debate, David Popenoe (1993a) has warned of a serious erosion of the traditional family since 1960. At that time, married couples with young children accounted for almost half of all households; today, the figure is 19 percent. Singlehood is up, from 10 percent of households in 1960 to 28 percent today. And the divorce rate has risen by 55 percent since 1960, so that almost half of today’s marriages end in permanent separation. Because of both divorce and the increasing number of children born to single women, the share of youngsters who live with just one parent has tripled since 1960 to 28 percent. Put another way, just one in four of today’s children will grow up with two parents in the home and go on to maintain a stable marriage as an adult (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

In light of such data, Popenoe suggests that it may not be an exaggeration to say that the family is falling apart. He sees a fundamental shift from a “culture of marriage” to a “culture of divorce,” where traditional vows of marital commitment—“till death do us part”—now amount to little more than “as long as I am happy.” Negative consequences of this cultural trend are obvious: As we pay less and less



Whether the traditional family is a positive force in U.S. society or a negative one depends on your point of view.

attention to children, the crime rate among young people goes up, along with other problem behaviors including underage smoking and drinking, premarital sex, and teen suicide.

As Popenoe sees it, we must act quickly to reverse current trends. Government cannot be the solution and may even be part of the problem: Since 1960, as families have weakened, government spending on social programs has soared. To save the traditional family, says Popenoe, we need a cultural turnaround. We must replace our “me first” attitudes with commitment to our spouse and children and publicly endorse the two-parent family as best for the well-being of children.

“Traditional Families Are the Problem”

Judith Stacey (1993) provides an opposing, feminist viewpoint. In her view, the traditional family is more problem than solution: “The family is not here to stay. Nor should we wish it were. On the contrary, I believe that all democratic people, whatever their kinship preferences, should work to hasten its demise” (Stacey, 1990:269).

The main reason for rejecting the traditional family, Stacey explains, is that it perpetuates social inequality. Families play a key role in maintaining the class hierarchy by transferring wealth as well as “cultural capital” from one generation to another. Feminists criticize the traditional family’s patriarchal form, which subjects women to their husbands’ authority and gives them most of the responsibility for housework and child care. From a gay rights perspective, she adds, a society that values traditional families also denies homosexual men and women equal participation in social life.

Stacey thus applauds the breakdown of the family as social progress. She does not view the family as a necessary social institution but as a political construction that elevates one category of people—affluent white males—above others, including women, homosexuals, and poor people.

Stacey also claims that the concept of the “traditional family” is increasingly irrelevant as both men and women work for income. What our society needs, Stacey concludes, is not a return to some golden age of the family but political and economic change, including income parity for women, universal health care and child care, programs to reduce unemployment, and expanded sex education in the schools. Such measures ensure that people in diverse family forms receive the respect and dignity they deserve.

What Do You Think?

1. To strengthen families, David Popenoe suggests that parents put children ahead of their own careers by limiting their joint workweek to sixty hours. Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. Judith Stacey thinks that marriage is weaker today because women are rejecting patriarchal relationships. What do you think about this argument?
3. Do we need to change family patterns for the well-being of our children? What specific changes are called for?

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

CHAPTER 18 Families

How do the mass media portray the family?

Many are familiar with the traditional families portrayed in popular television shows of the 1950s such as *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* and *Leave It to Beaver*. Both of these shows

had a working father, homemaker mother, and two (wonderful) sons. But, as these images suggest, today's television shows present a far wider range of family types.



While television shows fifty years ago presented the family as a cultural ideal, today's shows are far more likely to present the reality of family life. This means not only a variety of family types but, as shown in the popular television show *Breaking Bad*, the struggles and conflicts within families as well.

In the sitcom *New Girl*, Jess Day is a twenty-something teacher who needs a place to live after ending a relationship. Responding to an ad seeking a roommate, she moves in with three young men. In what ways does this group resemble a family?



The recent television show *Shameless* follows the dysfunctional family life of Frank Gallagher, a single father suffering from alcoholism, and his six children who try their best to cope without much parenting.

Hint The general pattern found in the mass media today is certainly different from that common in the 1950s, the so-called “golden age of families.” Today’s television shows portray careers that leave little time for families, provide fewer examples of stable marriages, and show the many ways in which people create family-like groups. Some people might say that Hollywood has an anti-family bias. Perhaps, but scriptwriters find that nonconventional family forms make for more interesting stories. To what extent do you agree with the view that most people today are capable of finding satisfying relationships, whether or not these relationships correspond to a traditional family form?

Seeing Sociology in Your Everyday Life

- After reading through the photo essay, list your own favorite television shows and, in each case, evaluate the importance of family life in the show. Is family life included in the show? If so, what family forms are presented? Are families a source of happiness for people or not?
- This chapter explains that family life in today’s society is more and more about making choices. What are the underlying reasons that family life is more varied today than it was, say, a century ago?
- Go to www.sociologyinfocus.com to access the Sociology in Focus blog, where you can read the latest posts by a team of young sociologists who apply the sociological perspective to topics of popular culture.

Making the Grade

CHAPTER 18 Families

Families: Basic Concepts and Global Variations

18.1 Describe families and how they differ around the world. (pages 484–88)

All societies are built on *kinship*. The **family** varies across cultures and over time:

- In industrialized societies, such as the United States, *marriage* is monogamous.
- Preindustrial societies recognize the *extended family*; industrialization gives rise to the *nuclear family*.
- Many preindustrial societies permit *polygamy*, of which there are two types: *polygyny* and *polyandry*.
- In global perspective, *patrilocality* is most common, but industrial societies favor *neolocality* and a few societies have *matrilocality*.
- Industrial societies use *bilateral descent*; preindustrial societies are either *patrilineal* or *matrilineal*.
- *Monogamy* is the most common global pattern. In most of Africa and in much of South Asia, the law also permits polygamy.

family a social institution found in all societies that unites people in cooperative groups to care for one another, including any children

kinship a social bond based on common ancestry, marriage, or adoption

marriage a legal relationship, usually involving economic cooperation, sexual activity, and childbearing

extended family a family consisting of parents and children as well as other kin; also known as a *consanguine family*

nuclear family a family composed of one or two parents and their children; also known as a *conjugal family*

endogamy marriage between people of the same social category

exogamy marriage between people of different social categories

monogamy marriage that unites two partners

polygamy marriage that unites a person with two or more spouses

polygyny marriage that unites one man and two or more women

polyandry marriage that unites one woman and two or more men

patrilocality a residential pattern in which a married couple lives with or near the husband's family

matrilocality a residential pattern in which a married couple lives with or near the wife's family

neolocality a residential pattern in which a married couple lives apart from both sets of parents

descent the system by which members of a society trace kinship over generations

patrilineal descent a system tracing kinship through men

matrilineal descent a system tracing kinship through women

bilateral descent a system tracing kinship through both men and women

Theories of the Family

18.2 Apply sociology's major theories to family life. (pages 488–90)

Structural-functional theory identifies major family functions that help society operate smoothly:

- socialization of children to help them become well-integrated members of society
- regulation of sexual activity to maintain kinship organization and property rights
- giving children a social identity in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, and social class
- providing material and emotional support to family members

Social-conflict theory and **feminist theory** point to ways in which families perpetuate social inequality.

- Families ensure the continuation of the class structure by passing on wealth to their children.
- Families perpetuate gender roles by establishing men as the heads of the household and by assigning the responsibility for child rearing and housework to women.
- The tendency of people to marry others like themselves supports racial and ethnic hierarchies.

Symbolic-interaction theory explores how family members build emotional bonds in the course of everyday family life.

Social-exchange theory sees courtship and marriage as a process of negotiation in which each person weighs the advantages and disadvantages of a potential partner.

incest taboo a norm forbidding sexual relations or marriage between certain relatives

Stages of Family Life

18.3 Analyze changes in the family over the life course. (pages 490–93)

- Arranged marriages are common in preindustrial societies; courtship based on romantic love is central to mate selection in the United States.
- Large families are necessary in preindustrial societies because children are a source of needed labor.
- Family size has decreased over time as industrialization increases the costs of raising children.
- As more women choose to go to school or join the labor force, fewer children are born.
- The “family values” debate revolves around who cares for children when both parents work outside the home.

- The departure of children, known as the “empty nest,” requires adjustments to family life.
- Many middle-aged couples care for aging parents.
- The final transition in marriage begins with the death of a spouse.

homogamy marriage between people with the same social characteristics

infidelity sexual activity outside one's marriage

U.S. Families: Class, Race, and Gender

18.4 Explain how class, race, and gender shape family life. (pages 493–97)

- Social class** determines a family's financial security and opportunities available to family members.
- Children born into rich families typically have better mental and physical health and go on to achieve more in life than children born into poor families.
- Economic challenges linked to the recent recession have resulted in more people joining households with other relatives.
- Ethnicity and race** can affect a person's experience of family life, although no single generalization fits all families within a particular category.
- Migration of American Indians from reservations to cities creates “fluid households” with changing membership.
- The traditional pattern of extended Latino families is changing as Latinos assimilate into the larger U.S. society.
- African American families face severe economic disadvantages; more than one-third of African American children are growing up poor.
- Gender** affects family dynamics because husbands dominate in most marriages.
- Research suggests that marriage provides more benefits for men than for women.
- After divorce, men are more likely than women to remarry.

Transitions and Problems in Family Life

18.5 Analyze the effects of divorce, remarriage, and violence on family life. (pages 497–500)

- The **divorce** rate is more than three times what it was a century ago; almost half of today's marriages will end in divorce. Researchers point to six causes:

Individualism is on the rise; romantic love fades; women are less dependent on men; many of today's marriages are stressful; divorce is socially acceptable; legally, a divorce is easier to get.

- More than half of all people who divorce eventually remarry; **remarriage** creates blended families that include children from previous marriages.
- Family violence**, which victimizes mostly women and children, is far more common than official records indicate; most adults who abuse family members were themselves abused as children.

family violence emotional, physical, or sexual abuse of one family member by another

Alternative Family Forms

18.6 Describe the diversity of family life in the United States. (pages 500–4)

- The proportion of one-parent families—now 32% of all U.S. families—more than doubled during the last generation; single parenthood increases a woman's risk of poverty, which puts children at a disadvantage.
- About half of all people 25 to 44 years of age have cohabited at some point; research shows that children born to cohabiting couples are less likely to live with both biological parents until age 18 than children born to married parents.
- In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that states cannot withhold marriage from same-sex couples. In the wake of this ruling, an increasing number of gay men and lesbians will form long-lasting relationships.
- Today, 28% of households—up from one in ten in 1950—contain a single person. The number of young women who are single is rising dramatically, a result of women's greater participation in the workforce and lessened dependence on men for material support.
- Almost 50 million people live in extended family households; almost half of young adults under age 30 have lived at home with parents for some period of time, typically because they have not been able to find a job that allows them to live on their own.

cohabitation the sharing of a household by an unmarried couple

Chapter 19

Religion



Learning Objectives

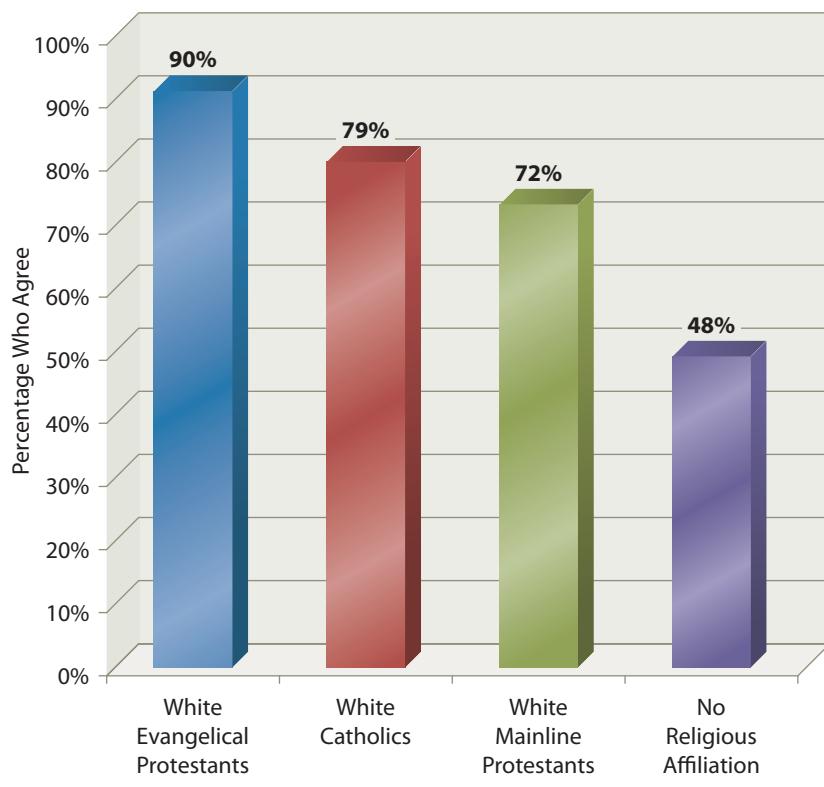
- 19.1** Apply sociology's major theories to religion.
- 19.2** Discuss the links between religion and social change.
- 19.3** Distinguish among church, sect, and cult.
- 19.4** Contrast religious patterns around the world.
- 19.5** Analyze patterns of religiosity in the United States.



The Power of Society

to shape our values and beliefs

Survey Statement: "I have old-fashioned values about family and marriage."



SOURCE: Pew Research Center (2012).

Can a person's religious affiliation (or lack of it) give us any clues about that person's attitudes on family life? In a recent survey of U.S. adults (a survey that was limited to white people, to control for race), 90 percent of those who described themselves as evangelical Protestants also said they had "old-fashioned" values about family and marriage. The share of self-described Catholics or mainline Protestants who said the same was lower. And less than half of those who claimed to have no religious affiliation shared these traditional values. Clearly, people's values—whether "old-fashioned" or progressive—are not just a matter of personal choice; they also reflect people's social background, including their religious affiliation.

Chapter Overview

This chapter explores the meaning and importance of religion, a major social institution. Although religion varies around the world, it is always based on the concept of the sacred.

With its many churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques (a recent study put the figure at one house of worship for every 900 people), one country stands out as among the most religious nations on Earth.

- For its entire history, its leaders have asked for God's help in pursuit of victory, prosperity, and liberty.
- Today, four out of five of this nation's people say they "never doubt the existence of God."
- Together, its people give about \$100 billion each year to religious organizations—more than the total economic output of most low-income countries.
- Written on its money is the official national motto, "In God We Trust."
- And in schools, children stand before the national flag and pledge their allegiance to "one nation under God" (Sheler, 2002; Aprill, 2004).



You have already guessed that the country described is the United States. But although the United States is a religious nation, it is also a country of immigrants, and as a result, its people have many different images of God. In countless places of worship—from soaring Gothic cathedrals in New York City to small storefront tabernacles in sprawling Los Angeles—Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Zoroastrians, and followers of dozens of other religions can be found (Yang & Ebaugh, 2001; Sheler, 2002). One scholar described the United States as the world's most religiously diverse nation, a country in which Hindu and Jewish children go to school together and Muslims and Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains work in the same factories and offices as Protestants and Catholics (Eck, 2001). And as you will see, many people in the United States today are deeply spiritual without being part of any organized religion.

This chapter begins by explaining what religion is from a sociological point of view. We then explore the changing face of religious belief throughout history as well as around the world and examine the vital and sometimes controversial place of religion in today's society.

Religion: Concepts and Theories

19.1 Apply sociology's major theories to religion.

The French sociologist Emile Durkheim stated that religion involves "things that surpass the limits of our knowledge" (1965:62, orig. 1915). We define most objects, events, or experiences as **profane** (from Latin,

meaning "outside the temple"), *included as an ordinary element of everyday life*. But we also consider some things **sacred**, *set apart as extraordinary, inspiring awe and reverence*. Setting the sacred apart from the profane is the essence of all religious belief. **Religion**, then, is *a social institution involving beliefs and practices based on recognizing the sacred*.

There is great diversity in matters of faith, and nothing is sacred to everyone on Earth. Although people regard most books as profane, Jews believe that the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament) is sacred, in the same way that Christians revere the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and Muslims exalt the Qur'an (Koran).

But no matter how a community of believers draws religious lines, Durkheim explained, people understand profane things in terms of their everyday usefulness: We log on to the Internet with our laptop or turn a key to start our car. What is sacred we reverently set apart from daily life, giving it a "forbidden" or "holy" aura. Marking the boundary between the sacred and the profane, for example, Muslims remove their shoes before entering a mosque to avoid defiling a sacred place with soles that have touched the profane ground outside.

The sacred is embodied in **ritual**, or *formal, ceremonial behavior*. Holy Communion is the central ritual of Christianity; to the Christian faithful, the wafer and wine consumed

profane included as an ordinary element of everyday life

sacred set apart as extraordinary, inspiring awe and reverence



Although rituals take countless forms, all religion deals with what surpasses ordinary or everyday understanding. In Mexico, costumed dancers take part in the annual Day of the Dead parade and festival.

during Communion are never treated in a profane way as food but as the sacred symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Religion and Sociology

Because religion deals with ideas that transcend everyday experience, neither common sense nor sociology can prove or disprove religious doctrine. Religion is a matter of **faith**, *belief based on personal conviction rather than on scientific evidence*. The New Testament of the Bible defines faith as “the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1) and urges Christians to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Some people with strong faith may be disturbed by the thought of sociologists turning a scientific eye on what they hold sacred. However, a sociological study of religion is no threat to anyone’s faith. Sociologists study religion just as they study the family, to understand religious experiences around the world and how religion is tied to other social institutions. They make no judgments that a specific religion is right or wrong in terms of ultimate truth. Rather, scientific sociology takes a more worldly approach, asking why religions take a particular form in one society or another and how religious activity affects society as a whole.

Sociologists apply the major theoretical approaches to the study of religion just as they do to any other topic. Each approach provides distinctive insights into the way religion shapes social life.

Structural-Functional Theory: Functions of Religion

According to Durkheim (1965, orig. 1915), society has a life and power of its own beyond the life of any individual. In other words, society itself is godlike, shaping the lives of its members and living on beyond them. Practicing religion, people celebrate the awesome power of their society.

No wonder people around the world transform certain everyday objects into sacred symbols of their collective life. Members of technologically simple societies do this with a **totem**, *an object in the natural world collectively defined as sacred*. The totem—perhaps an animal or an elaborate work of art—becomes the centerpiece of ritual, symbolizing the power of society over the individual. In our society, the flag is treated with respect and is not used in a profane way (say, as clothing) or allowed to touch the ground.

Similarly, putting the words “In God We Trust” on U.S. currency (a practice started in the 1860s at the time of the Civil War) or adding the words “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance (in 1954) symbolizes some widespread beliefs that tie society together. Across the United States, local communities also gain a sense of unity by linking totems to sports teams, from the New England Patriots to the Iowa State University Cyclones to the San Francisco 49ers. Durkheim identified three major functions of religion that contribute to the operation of society:

- 1. Establishing social cohesion.** Religion unites people through shared symbolism, values, and norms. Religious thought and ritual establish rules of fair play, organizing our social life.
- 2. Promoting social control.** Every society uses religious ideas to promote conformity. By defining God as a “judge,” many religions encourage people to obey cultural norms. Religion can also be used to back up the power of political systems. In medieval Europe, for example, monarchs claimed to rule by “divine right,” so that obedience was seen as doing God’s will. Even today, our leaders ask for God’s blessing, implying that their efforts are right and just.
- 3. Providing meaning and purpose.** Religious belief offers the comforting sense that our brief lives serve some greater purpose. Strengthened by such beliefs, people are less likely to despair in the face of change or even tragedy. For this reason, we mark major life course transitions—including birth, marriage, and death—with religious observances.

EVALUATE

In Durkheim's structural-functional analysis, religion represents the collective life of society. The major weakness of this approach is that it downplays religion's dysfunctions, especially the fact that strongly held beliefs can generate social conflict. Terrorists have claimed that God supports their actions, and many nations march to war under the banner of their God. A study of conflict in the world would probably show that religious beliefs have provoked more violence than differences of social class.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING What are Durkheim's three functions of religion for society?

Symbolic-Interaction Theory: Constructing the Sacred

From a symbolic-interaction point of view, religion (like all of society) is socially constructed (although perhaps with divine inspiration). Through various rituals—from daily prayers to annual religious observances such as Easter, Passover, or Ramadan—people sharpen the distinction between the sacred and the profane. Peter Berger (1967:35–36) claims that placing our small, brief lives within some “cosmic frame of reference” gives us the appearance of “ultimate security and permanence.”

Marriage is a good example. If two people look on marriage as merely a contract, they can agree to split up whenever they want. Their bond makes far stronger claims on them when it is defined as holy matrimony, which is surely one reason that the divorce rate is lower among people with strong religious beliefs. More generally, whenever human beings face uncertainty or life-threatening situations—such as illness, natural disaster, terrorist attack, or war—we turn to our sacred symbols.

EVALUATE

Using the symbolic-interaction approach, we see how people turn to religion to give everyday life sacred meaning. Berger notes that the sacred's ability to give special meaning to society requires that we ignore the fact that it is socially constructed. After all, how much strength could we gain from beliefs if we saw them merely as strategies for coping with tragedy? Also, this micro-level view ignores religion's link to social inequality, to which we turn next.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING How would Peter Berger explain the fact that deeply religious people have a low divorce rate?

Social-Conflict Theory: Inequality and Religion

The social-conflict approach highlights religion's support of social inequality. Religion, proclaimed Karl Marx, serves



Religion is founded on the concept of the sacred—aspects of our existence that are set apart as extraordinary and demand our submission. Bowing, kneeling, or prostrating oneself are all ways of symbolically surrendering to a higher power. These Filipino Christians seek atonement for their sins in an annual Lenten ritual.

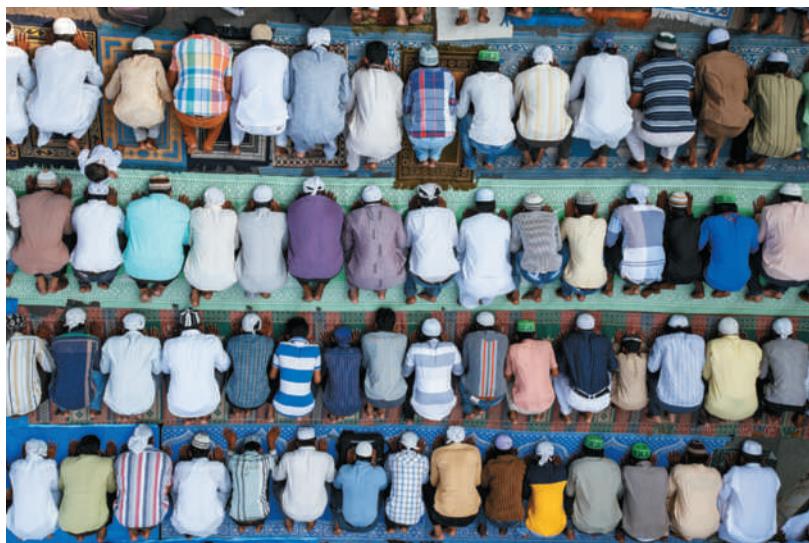
ruling elites by legitimizing the status quo and diverting people's attention from social inequities.

Today, the British monarch is the formal head of the Church of England, illustrating the close ties between religious and political elites. In practical terms, linking the church and the state means that opposing the government amounts to opposing the church and, by implication, opposing God as well. Religion also encourages people to accept the social problems of this world while they look hopefully to a “better world to come.” In a well-known statement, Marx dismissed religion as preventing revolutionary change; religion is, in his words, “the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people” (1964:27, orig. 1848).

Feminist Theory: Gender and Religion

Feminist theory explains that religion and social inequality are also linked through gender because virtually all the world's major religions are patriarchal. For example, the Qur'an (Koran), the sacred text of Islam, gives men social dominance over women by defining gender roles: “Men are in charge of women. . . . Hence good women are obedient. . . . As for those whose rebelliousness you fear, admonish them, banish them from your bed, and scourge them” (Qur'an 4:34, quoted in Kaufman, 1976:163).

Christianity, the major religion of the Western world, also supports patriarchy. Many Christians revere Mary,



Patriarchy is a characteristic of all the world's major religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Male dominance can be seen in restrictions that limit religious leadership to men and also in regulations that prohibit women from worshiping alongside men.

the mother of Jesus, but the New Testament also includes the following passages:

A man . . . is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. (1 Corinthians 11:7–9)

As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. (1 Corinthians 14:33–35)

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. . . . As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. (Ephesians 5:22–24)

APPLYING THEORY

Religion

	Structural-Functional Theory	Symbolic-Interaction Theory	Social-Conflict and Feminist Theories
What is the level of analysis?	Macro-level	Micro-level	Macro-level
What is the importance of religion for society?	Religion performs vital tasks, including uniting people and controlling behavior. Religion gives life meaning and purpose.	Religion strengthens marriage by giving it (and family life) sacred meaning. People often turn to sacred symbols for comfort when facing danger and uncertainty.	Religion supports social inequality by claiming that the social order is just. Organized religion supports the domination of women by men. Religion turns attention from problems in this world to a “better world to come.”

Judaism has also traditionally supported patriarchy. Male Orthodox Jews say the following words in daily prayer:

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, that I was not born a gentile.
Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, that I was not born a slave.
Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, that I was not born a woman.

Today, Islam and the Roman Catholic Church ban women from the priesthood, as do about half of Protestant denominations. But a growing number of Protestant religious organizations do ordain women, who now represent about 19 percent of U.S. clergy. Orthodox Judaism upholds the traditional prohibition against women serving as rabbis, but the Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist branches of Judaism look to both men and women as spiritual leaders. Across the United

States, the proportion of women in seminaries has increased in recent decades (now roughly one-third), which is more evidence of a trend toward greater equality (Association of Theological Schools, 2015; U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

EVALUATE

Social-conflict and feminist theories emphasize the power of religion to support social inequality. Yet religion also promotes change toward equality. For example, nineteenth-century religious groups in the United States played an important part in the movement to abolish slavery. In the 1950s and 1960s, religious organizations and their leaders formed the core of the civil rights movement. In the 1960s and 1970s, many clergy opposed the Vietnam War, and today many support any number of progressive causes such as feminism and gay rights.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING How does religion help maintain class inequality and gender stratification?

The Applying Theory table summarizes the major theoretical approaches to understanding religion.

Religion and Social Change

19.2 Discuss the links between religion and social change.

Religion can be the conservative force portrayed by Karl Marx. But at some points in history, as Max Weber (1958, orig. 1904–05) explained, religion has promoted dramatic social change.

Max Weber: Protestantism and Capitalism

Weber argued that particular religious ideas set into motion a wave of change that brought about the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe. The rise of industrial capitalism was encouraged by Calvinism, a movement within the Protestant Reformation.

As Chapter 4 (“Society”) explains in detail, John Calvin (1509–1564) was a leader in the Reformation who preached the doctrine of *predestination*. According to Calvin, an all-powerful and all-knowing God had selected some people for salvation but condemned most to eternal damnation. Each individual’s fate, sealed before birth and known only to God, was either eternal glory or endless hellfire.

Driven by anxiety over their fate, Calvinists understandably looked for signs of God’s favor in this world and came to see prosperity as a sign of divine blessing. Religious conviction and a rigid devotion to duty led Calvinists to work hard, and many amassed great wealth. But money was not for selfish spending or even for sharing with the poor, whose plight they saw as a mark of God’s rejection. As agents of God’s work on Earth, Calvinists believed that they best fulfilled their “calling” by reinvesting profits and achieving ever-greater success in the process.

All the while, Calvinists practiced self-denial by living thrifty lives. In addition, they eagerly adopted technological advances that promised to increase their workplace effectiveness. Together, these traits laid the groundwork for the rise of industrial capitalism. In time, the religious fervor that motivated early Calvinists weakened, leaving a profane “Protestant work ethic.” To Max Weber, industrial capitalism itself amounted to a “disenchanted” religion, further showing the power of religion to alter the shape of society (Berger, 2009).

Liberation Theology

Historically, Christianity has reached out to oppressed people, urging all to a stronger faith in a better life to come. In recent decades, however, some church leaders and theologians have taken a decidedly political approach and endorsed **liberation theology**, the combining

of Christian principles with political activism, often Marxist in character.

This social movement started in the 1960s in Latin America’s Roman Catholic Church. Today, Christian activists continue to help people in poor nations liberate themselves from abysmal poverty. Their message is simple: Social oppression runs counter to Christian morality, so as a matter of faith and justice, Christians must promote greater social equality.

Pope Francis has expressed support for the world’s poor and also criticized the global economic system for not doing enough to assist people in need. Perhaps the current pope will steer a different course than Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II, who condemned liberation theology for distorting traditional church doctrine with left-wing politics. In any case, the liberation theology movement has gained strength in the poorest countries of Latin America, where many people’s Christian faith drives them to improve conditions for the poor and oppressed (Neuhouser, 1989; J. E. Williams, 2002).

Types of Religious Organizations

19.3 Distinguish among church, sect, and cult.

Sociologists categorize the hundreds of different religious organizations found in the United States along a continuum, with *churches* at one end and *sects* at the other, as shown in Figure 19–1 on page 516. We can describe any actual religious organization in relation to these two ideal types by locating it on the church–sect continuum.

Church

Drawing on the ideas of his teacher Max Weber, Ernst Troeltsch (1931) defined a **church** as *a type of religious organization that is well integrated into the larger society*. Church-like organizations usually persist for centuries and include generations of the same families. Churches have well-established rules and regulations and expect leaders to be formally trained and ordained.

Though concerned with the sacred, a church accepts the ways of the profane world. Church members think of God in intellectual terms (say, as a force for good) and favor abstract moral standards (“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”) over specific rules for day-to-day living. By teaching morality in safely abstract terms, church leaders avoid social controversy. For example, many congregations celebrate the unity of all peoples but say little about their own lack of racial diversity. By downplaying this type of conflict, a church makes peace with the status quo (Troeltsch, 1931).

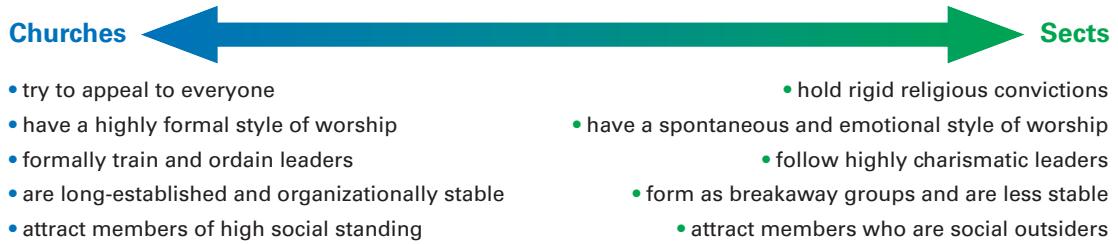


Figure 19–1 Church—Sect Continuum

Churches and sects are two opposing ideal types of religious organization. Any real-life religious organization will fall somewhere on the continuum between these two concepts.

A church may operate with or apart from the state. As its name implies, a **state church** is *a church formally allied with the state*. State churches have existed throughout human history. For centuries, Roman Catholicism was the official religion of the Roman Empire, and Confucianism was the official religion of China until early in the twentieth century. Today, the Anglican Church is the official church of England, and Islam is the official religion of Pakistan and Iran. State churches count everyone in the society as a member, which sharply limits tolerance of religious differences.

A **denomination**, by contrast, is *a church, independent of the state, that recognizes religious pluralism*. Denominations exist in nations, including the United States, that formally separate church and state. This country has dozens of Christian denominations—including Catholics, Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Lutherans—as well as various categories of Judaism, Islam, and other traditions. Although members of any denomination hold to their own

doctrine, they recognize the right of others to have different beliefs.

Sect

The second general religious form is the **sect**, *a type of religious organization that stands apart from the larger society*. Sect members have rigid religious convictions and deny the beliefs of others. Compared to churches, which try to appeal to everyone (the term *catholic* also means “universal”), a sect forms an exclusive group. To members of a sect, religion is not so much one aspect of life as it is a firm plan for living. In extreme cases, members of a sect withdraw completely from society in order to practice their religion without interference. The Amish community is one example of a North American sect that isolates itself. Because our culture generally considers religious tolerance a virtue, members of sects are sometimes accused of being narrow-minded in insisting that they alone follow the true religion (Kraybill, 1994; P. W. Williams, 2002).

In organizational terms, sects are less formal than churches. Sect members may be highly spontaneous and emotional in worship, compared to members of churches, who tend to listen passively to their leaders. Sects also reject the intellectualized religion of churches, stressing instead the personal experience of divine power. Rodney Stark (1985:314) contrasts a church’s vision of a distant God (“Our Father, who art in Heaven”) with a sect’s more immediate God (“Lord, bless this poor sinner kneeling before you now”).

Churches and sects also have different patterns of leadership—the more churchlike an organization, the more likely that its leaders are formally trained and ordained. Sectlike organizations, which celebrate the personal presence of God, expect their leaders to exhibit divine inspiration in the form of **charisma** (from Greek, meaning “divine favor”), *extraordinary personal qualities that can infuse people with emotion and turn them into followers*.



In global perspective, the range of religious activity is truly astonishing. This woman in Ghana, celebrating the Kokuzahn voodoo festival, throws sand into her open eyes and is not harmed. What religious practices common in the United States might seem astonishing to people living in other countries?

Sects generally form as breakaway groups from established religious organizations (Stark & Bainbridge, 1979). Their psychic intensity and informal structure make them less stable than churches, and many sects blossom only to disappear soon after. The sects that do endure typically become more like churches, with declining emphasis on charismatic leadership as they become more bureaucratic.

To sustain their membership, many sects actively recruit, or *proselytize*, new members. Sects highly value the experience of *conversion*, a personal transformation or religious rebirth. For example, members of Jehovah's Witnesses go door-to-door to share their faith with others with the goal of attracting new members.

Finally, churches and sects differ in their social composition. Because they are more closely tied to the world, well-established churches tend to include people of high social standing. Sects attract more disadvantaged people. A sect's openness to new members and its promise of salvation and personal fulfillment appeal to people who feel they are social outsiders.

Cult

A **cult** is a *religious organization that is largely outside a society's cultural traditions*. Most sects spin off from conventional religious organizations. However, a cult typically forms around a highly charismatic leader who offers a compelling message about a new and very different way of life. As many as 5,000 cults exist in the United States (Lottick, 2005).

Because some cult principles or practices are unconventional, the popular view is that they are deviant or even evil. The suicides of thirty-nine members of California's Heaven's Gate cult in 1997—people who claimed that dying was a doorway to a higher existence, perhaps in the company of aliens from outer space—confirmed the negative image the public holds of most cults. In short, calling any religious community a "cult" amounts to dismissing its members as crazy (Shupe, 1995; Gleick, 1997).

This charge is unfair because there is nothing basically wrong with this kind of religious organization. Many longstanding religions—Christianity, Islam, and Judaism included—began as cults. Of course, few cults exist for very long. One reason is that they are even more at odds with the larger society than sects. Many cults demand that members not only accept their doctrine but also adopt a radically new lifestyle. This is why people sometimes accuse cults of brainwashing their members, although research suggests that most people who join cults experience no psychological harm (Kilbourne, 1983; P. W. Williams, 2002).

church a religious organization that is well integrated into the larger society

sect a religious organization that stands apart from the larger society

cult a religious organization that is largely outside a society's cultural traditions

Religion in History and Around the World

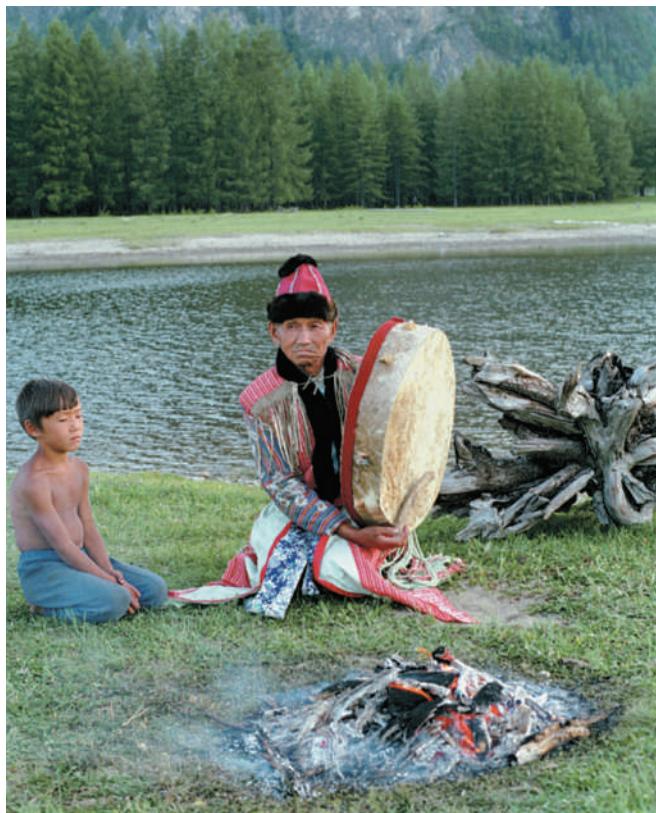
19.4 Contrast religious patterns around the world.

Like other social institutions, religion shows marked variation according to time and place. Let us look at several ways in which religion has changed over the course of history.

Religion in Preindustrial Societies

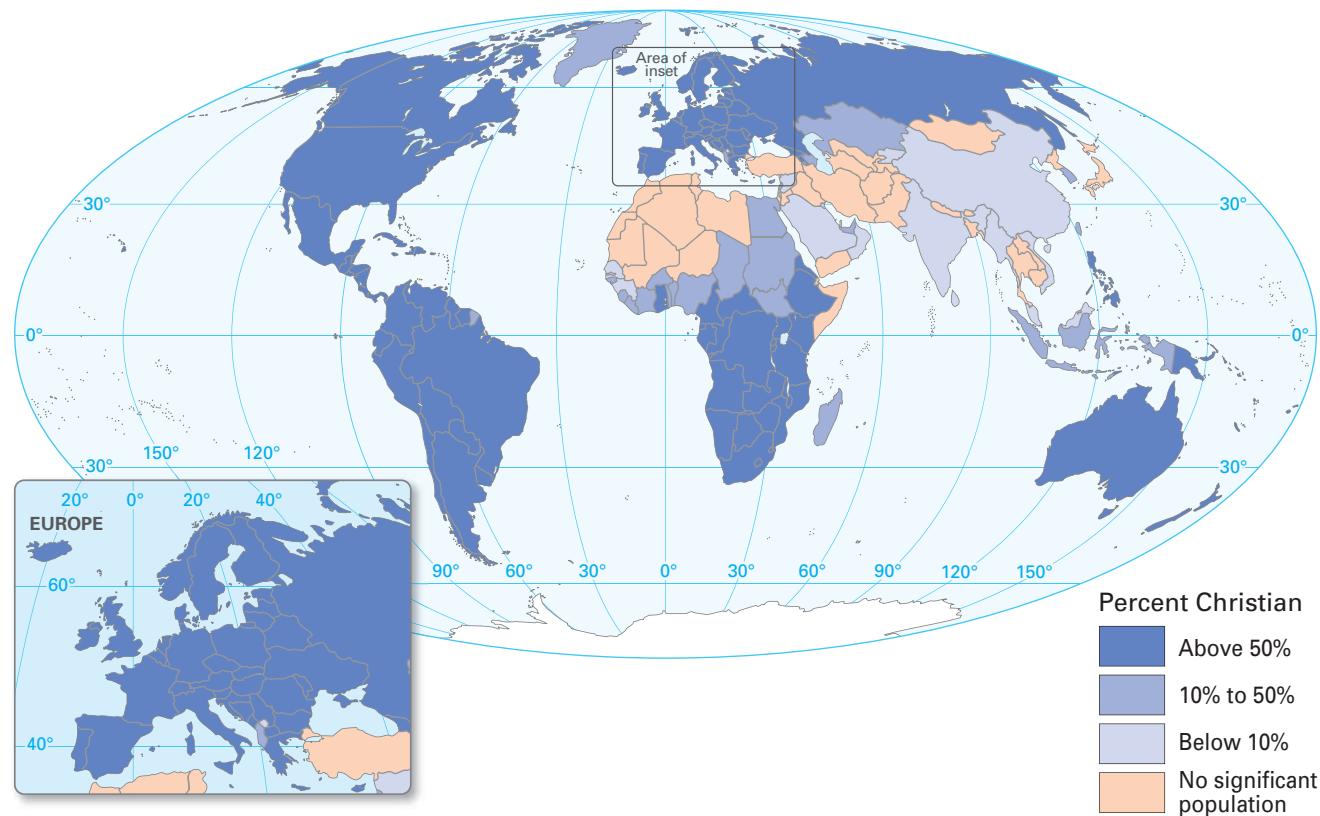
Early hunters and gatherers practiced **animism** (from a Latin word meaning "breath of life"), *the belief that elements of the natural world are conscious life forms that affect humanity*. Animists view forests, oceans, mountains, and even the wind as spiritual forces. Many Native American societies are animistic, which explains their reverence for the natural environment.

Belief in a single divine power responsible for creating the world began with pastoral and horticultural societies,



Animism is widespread in traditional societies, whose members live respectfully within the natural world on which they depend for their survival. Animists see a divine presence not just in themselves but also in everything around them. Their example has inspired "New Age" spirituality, described later in this chapter.

Window on the World



Global Map 19-1 Christianity in Global Perspective

Christianity is the dominant religion of Western Europe and became the dominant religion of the Americas and much of southern Africa and Oceania. Can you explain this pattern?

SOURCE: Association of Religion Data Archives (2012).

which first appeared 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. The conception of God as a “shepherd” arose because Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all began among pastoral peoples.

Religion becomes more important in agrarian societies, which develop a specialized priesthood in charge of religious rituals and organizations. The huge cathedrals that dominated the towns of medieval Europe—many of which remain standing today—are evidence of the central role of religion in the social life of medieval agrarian society.

Religion in Industrial Societies

The Industrial Revolution introduced a growing emphasis on science. More and more, people looked to doctors and scientists for the knowledge and comfort they used to get from priests. But as Durkheim (1965, orig. 1915) predicted almost a century ago, religion persists in industrial societies because science is powerless to address issues of ultimate meaning in human life. In other words, learning *how* the world works is a matter for scientists, but *why* we and the rest of the universe exist at all is a question of faith. In addition, as already noted, the United States stands out as a modern society in which religion has remained especially strong (McClay, 2007; Greeley, 2008).

World Religions

The diversity of religions in the world is almost as wide-ranging as the diversity of culture itself. Many of the thousands of different religions are found in just one place and have few followers. But there are a number of *world religions*, with millions of adherents. We shall briefly examine six world religions, which together claim more than 5 billion believers—just about three-fourths of humanity.

Christianity

Christianity is the most widespread religion with 2.3 billion followers, almost one-third of the world’s people. Most Christians live in Europe or the Americas; more than 75 percent of the people in the United States and Canada identify with Christianity. As shown in Global Map 19-1, people who think of themselves as Christian represent a large share of the population in many world regions, with the notable exceptions of northern Africa and Asia. European colonization spread Christianity throughout much of the world over the past 500 years. Its dominance in the West is shown by the fact that our calendar numbers years from the birth of Jesus Christ.

As noted earlier, Christianity began as a cult, drawing elements from Judaism, a much older religion. Like many

cults, Christianity was built on the personal charisma of a leader, Jesus of Nazareth, who preached a message of personal salvation. Jesus did not directly challenge the political power of his day, the Roman Empire, telling his followers to “render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s” (Matthew 22:21). But his message was a revolutionary one all the same, promising that faith and love would triumph over sin and death.

Christianity is one example of **monotheism**, *belief in a single divine power*. This new religion was quite different from the Roman Empire’s traditional **polytheism**, *belief in many gods*. Yet Christianity views the Supreme Being as a sacred Trinity: God the Creator; Jesus Christ, Son of God and Redeemer; and the Holy Spirit, a Christian’s personal experience of God’s presence.

The claim that Jesus was divine rests on accounts of his final days on Earth.

Brought to trial as a threat to established political leaders, Jesus was tried in Jerusalem and sentenced to death by crucifixion, a common means of execution at the time. This explains why the cross became a sacred Christian symbol. According to Christian belief, three days after his execution, Jesus rose from the dead, revealing that he was the Son of God.

Jesus’ followers, especially his twelve closest associates, known as the apostles, spread Christianity throughout the Mediterranean region. At first, the Roman Empire persecuted Christians. But by the fourth century, the empire had adopted Christianity as a state church, the official religion of what became known as the Holy Roman Empire.

Christianity took various forms, including the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, based in Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey). Toward the end of the Middle Ages, the Protestant Reformation in Europe gave rise to hundreds of new denominations. In the United States, dozens of these denominations—the Baptists and Methodists are the two largest—command sizable followings (Kaufman, 1976; Jacquet & Jones, 1991; Hartford Institute for Religious Research, 2015).

Islam

Islam has about 1.6 billion followers, which is almost one-fourth of humanity. Followers of Islam are called Muslims. A majority of people in the Middle East are Muslims, so we tend to associate Islam with Arabs in that region of the world.



Although it began as a cult, Christianity’s 2.3 billion followers make it now the most widespread of the world’s religions. By about 2050, however, projections indicate that the world’s Muslims will outnumber Christians.

But most of the world’s Muslims live elsewhere: Global Map 19–2 on page 520 shows that most people in northern Africa and Indonesia are Muslims. In addition, large concentrations of Muslims are found in western Asia in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and the southern republics of the former Soviet Union. Because Muslims have a birthrate that is twice the rate for non-Muslims, projections are that there will be as many Muslims as Christians by about 2050 and Islam will soon after become the world’s dominant religion.

Most estimates put the Muslim population of the United States at about 2.7 million, although a few sources place the number a bit higher. In any case, Islam is clearly an important part of our country’s religious life. The Muslim population is not only large but also quite diverse. It includes Arab Americans and others with Middle Eastern ancestry, Asian Americans, and African Americans (Eck, 2001; Association of Religion Data Archives, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2015).

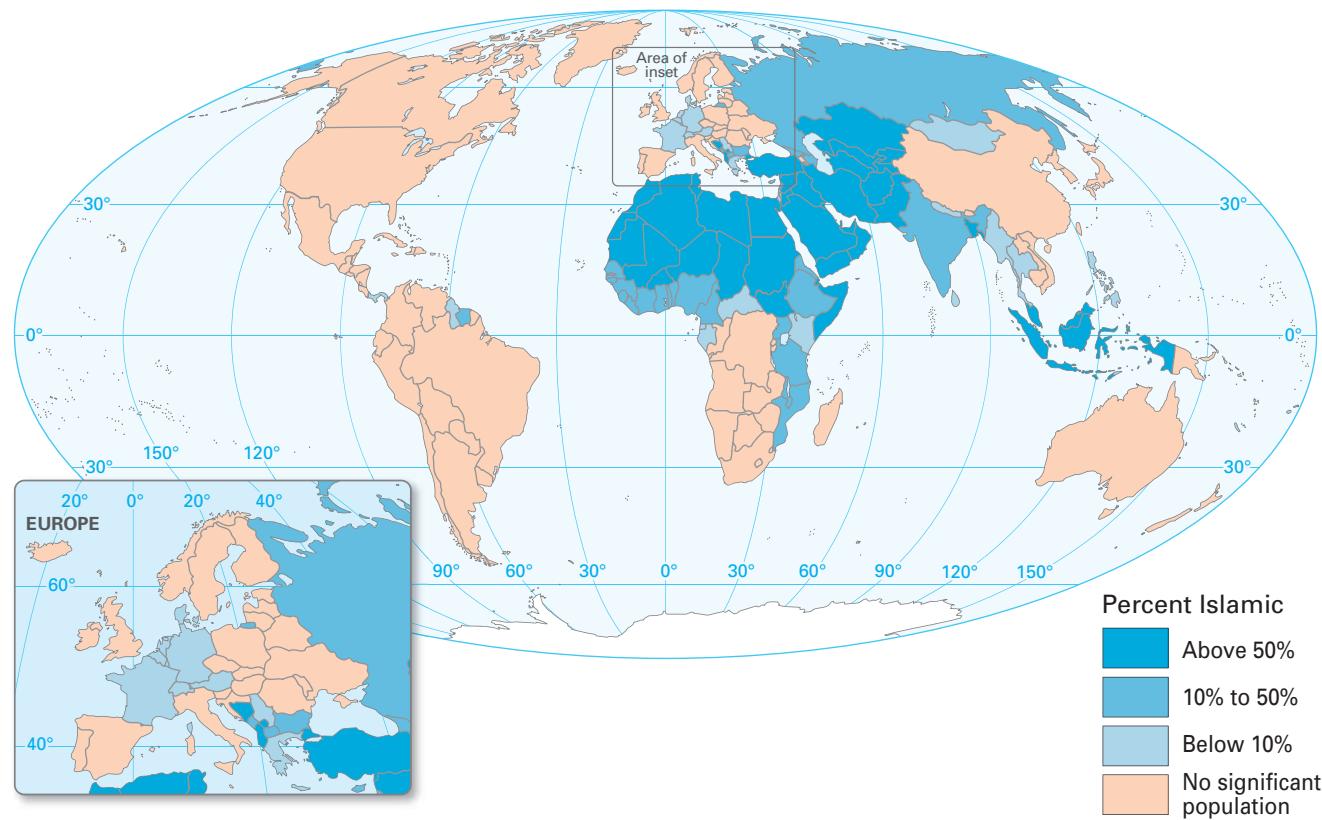
Islam is the word of God as revealed to Muhammad, who was born in the city of Mecca (in what is now Saudi Arabia) about the year 570. To Muslims, Muhammad is a prophet, not a divine being as Jesus is to Christians. The text of the Qur'an (Koran), which is sacred to Muslims, is the word of Allah (Arabic for “God”) as transmitted through Muhammad, Allah’s messenger. In Arabic, the word *islam* means both “submission” and “peace,” and the Qur'an urges submission to Allah as the path to inner peace. Muslims express this personal devotion in a ritual of prayers five times each day.

After the death of Muhammad, Islam spread rapidly. Although divisions arose among Muslims, all accept the Five Pillars of Islam: (1) recognizing Allah as the one, true God and Muhammad as God’s messenger; (2) ritual prayer; (3) giving alms to the poor; (4) fasting during the month

monotheism belief in a single divine power

polytheism belief in many gods

Window on the World



Global Map 19-2 Islam in Global Perspective

Islam is the dominant religion of the Middle East, but most of the world's Muslims live in North Africa and Southeast Asia.

of Ramadan; and (5) making a pilgrimage at least once in one's life to the Sacred House of Allah in Mecca (Weeks, 1988; El-Attar, 1991). Like Christianity, Islam holds people accountable to God for their deeds on Earth. Those who live obediently will be rewarded in heaven, and evildoers will suffer unending punishment.

Muslims are also required to defend their faith, which has led to calls for holy wars against unbelievers (in roughly the same way that medieval Christians fought in the Crusades). Recent decades have witnessed a rise in militancy and anti-Western feeling in much of the Muslim world, where many people see the United States as both militarily threatening and representing a way of life that they view as materialistic and immoral. Many Westerners—who typically know little about Islam and often stereotype all Muslims on the basis of the terrorist actions of a few—respond with confusion and sometimes hostility (Eck, 2001; Ryan, 2001).

Many people in the United States also view Muslim women as socially oppressed. There are differences among Muslim nations in terms of rights given to women: Tunisia allows women far more opportunities than, say, Saudi Arabia, which does not allow women to vote or even drive a car. It is true that many Muslim women lack some of the personal freedoms enjoyed by Muslim men. Yet many—perhaps even most—accept the mandates of their religion and find security in

a system that guides the behavior of both women and men (Peterson, 1996). Defenders of Islam also point out that patriarchy was well established in the Middle East long before the birth of Muhammad and that Islam actually improved the social position of women by requiring husbands to deal justly with their wives. For example, Islam permits a man to have up to four wives, but it requires men to have only one wife if having more would cause him to treat any woman unjustly (*Qur'an*, "The Women," v. 3).

Judaism

In terms of numbers, Judaism's 14 million followers worldwide make it something less than a world religion. Jews make up a majority of the population in only one country—Israel. But Judaism has special importance to the United States because the second largest concentration of Jews (5.1 million) is found in this country (with an estimated 363,000 Jewish people in Canada).

Jews look to the past as a source of guidance in the present and for the future. Judaism has deep historical roots that extend 4,000 years before the birth of Christ to the ancient societies of Mesopotamia. At this time, Jews were animistic, but this belief changed after Jacob—grandson of Abraham, the earliest great ancestor—led his people to Egypt.

Jews survived centuries of slavery in Egypt. In the thirteenth century B.C.E., Moses, the adopted son of an Egyptian princess, was called by God to lead the Jews from bondage. This exodus (a word with Latin and Greek roots mean “marching out”) from Egypt is remembered by Jews today in the annual ritual of Passover. After their liberation, the Jews became monotheistic, recognizing a single, all-powerful God.

A distinctive concept of Judaism is the *covenant*, a special relationship with God by which the Jews became God’s “chosen people.” The covenant implies a duty to observe God’s law, especially the Ten Commandments as revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai. Jews regard the Old Testament of the Bible as both a record of their history and a statement of the obligations of Jewish life. Of special importance are the Bible’s first five books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), called the *Torah* (a word meaning “teaching” and “law”). In contrast to Christianity’s central concern with personal salvation, Judaism emphasizes moral behavior in this world.

The Jewish people share a cultural history of oppression as a result of prejudice and discrimination. A collective memory of centuries of slavery in Egypt, conquest by Rome, and persecution in Europe has shaped the Jewish identity. It was Jews in Italy who first lived in an urban ghetto (this word comes from the Italian *borghetto*, meaning “settlement outside the city walls”), and this residential segregation soon spread to other parts of Europe.

Jewish immigration to the United States began in the mid-1600s. The early immigrants who prospered were assimilated into largely Christian communities. But as great numbers entered the country at the end of the nineteenth century, prejudice and discrimination against Jews—commonly termed *anti-Semitism*—increased. Before and during World War II, anti-Semitism reached a vicious peak as the Nazi regime in Germany systematically annihilated 6 million Jews.

Today, in the United States, Judaism has four main denominations: Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist. In estimating the size of each denomination, keep in mind that not all people who were born to Jewish parents identify with a specific Jewish denomination, and some do not self-identify as being Jewish at all. Orthodox Jews, who number at least 500,000 people in the United States, strictly observe traditional beliefs and practices, wear traditional dress, physically separate men and women at religious services, and eat only kosher



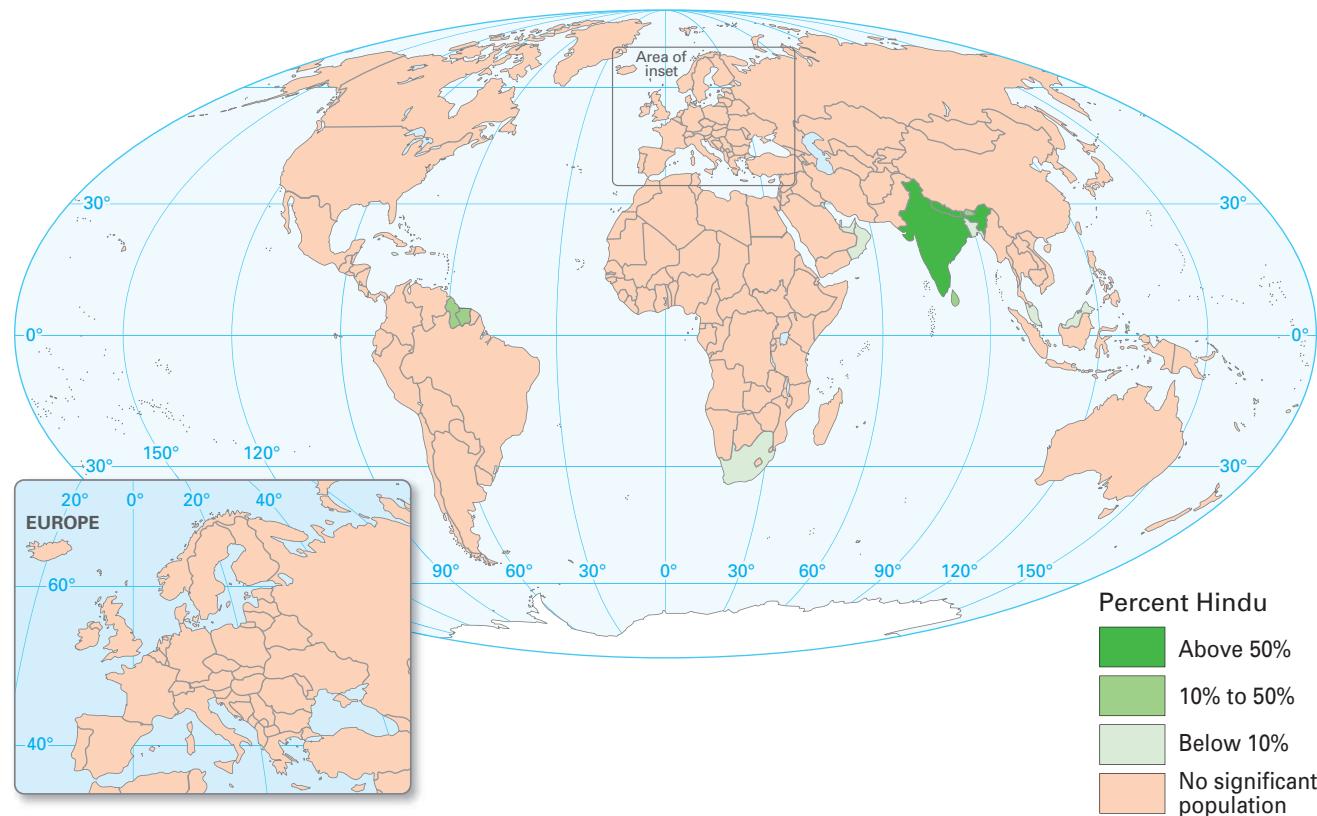
Many religions promote literacy because they demand that followers study sacred texts. As part of their upbringing, most Muslim parents teach their children lessons from the Qur'an; later, the children will do the same for a new generation of believers.

foods (that is, food prepared precisely as prescribed in the Torah). Such traditional practices set off Orthodox Jews in the United States from the larger society, making them the most sectlike denomination.

In the mid-nineteenth century, many Jews wanted to feel a greater part of the larger society, which led to the formation of more churchlike Reform Judaism, which now includes between 1.5 and 2 million people in this country. A third segment, Conservative Judaism, with between 1.5 and 2 million U.S. adherents, has established a middle ground between the other two denominations. Finally, Reconstructionist Judaism, with several hundred thousand followers, is the most recent and most liberal denomination, with a humanistic focus on the importance of secular Jewish culture (Smith, 2005; Grim & Masci, 2008; Kosmin, 2009; Association of Religion Data Archives, 2015; Pew Research Center, Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2013, 2015).

The social standing of Jews in the United States is well above average, with high levels of education and income that is well above average. Still, many Jews in this country are concerned about the future of their religion because only half the children growing up in Jewish households are learning Jewish culture and ritual and perhaps half a million adults of Jewish ancestry now prefer to describe themselves as having “no religion.” In addition, more than half of young people of Jewish background marry non-Jews. Others are more optimistic, pointing out that many secular Jews who claim no belief in God continue to attend synagogue, suggesting that a rising number of “mixed marriages” may attract new people to Judaism (Keister, 2003; Goldscheider, 2004; Kosmin, 2009; Winston, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2013).

Window on the World



Global Map 19-3 Hinduism in Global Perspective

Hinduism is closely linked to the culture of India.

SOURCE: Association of Religion Data Archives (2012).

Hinduism

Hinduism is the oldest of all the world religions, originating in the Indus River valley about 4,500 years ago. Today, there are about 950 million Hindus, which is almost 14 percent of the world's people. Global Map 19-3 shows that Hinduism remains an Eastern religion, mostly practiced in India and Nepal but with a significant presence in southern Africa and Southeast Asia.

Over the centuries, Hinduism and the culture of India have blended so that now one is not easily described apart from the other (although India also has a sizable Muslim population). This connection also explains why Hinduism, unlike Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, has not diffused widely to other nations. But with 1.4 million followers in the United States, Hinduism is an important part of our country's cultural diversity.

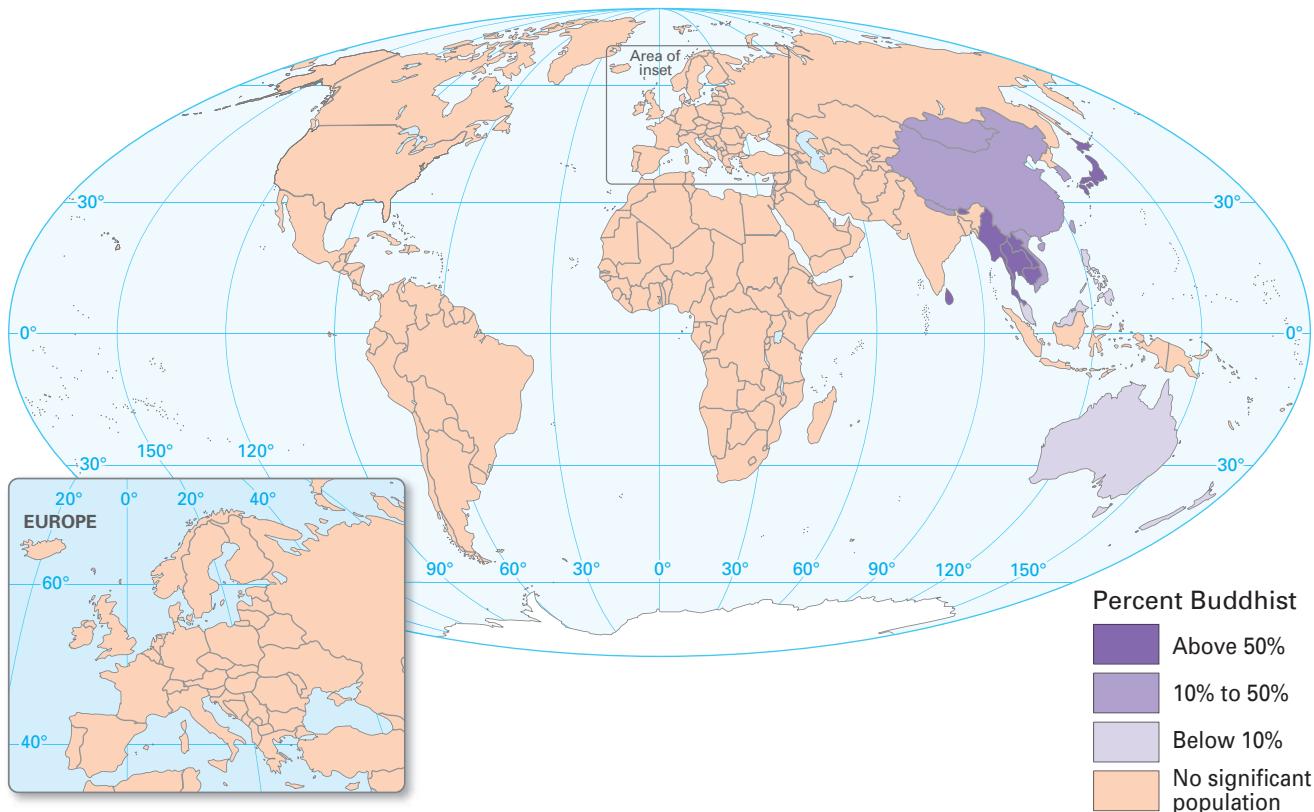
Hinduism differs from most other religions in that it is not linked to the life of any single person. In addition, Hinduism envisions God as a universal moral force rather than a specific entity. For this reason, Hinduism—like other Eastern religions, as you will see shortly—is sometimes described as an “ethical religion.” Hindu beliefs and practices vary widely, but all Hindus believe that they have moral responsibilities, called *dharma*. *Dharma*, for example, calls people to observe

the traditional caste system, described in Chapter 10 (“Social Stratification”).

Another Hindu principle, *karma*, involves a belief in the spiritual progress of the human soul. To a Hindu, each action has spiritual consequences, and proper living results in moral development. Karma works through *reincarnation*, a cycle of death and rebirth by which a person is born into a spiritual state corresponding to the moral quality of a previous life. Unlike Christianity and Islam, Hinduism recognizes no ultimate judgment at the hands of a supreme god. But in the ongoing cycle of rebirth, it may be said that people get what they deserve. For those who reach *moksha*, the state of spiritual perfection, the soul has no further need to be reborn.

The case of Hinduism shows that not all religions can be neatly labeled as monotheistic or polytheistic. Hinduism is monotheistic insofar as it views the universe as a single moral system; yet Hindus see this moral force at work in every element of nature. Hindus connect to this moral force through their private meditation and rituals, which vary from village to village across the vast nation of India. Many also participate in public events, such as the *Kumbh Mela*, which every twelve years brings some 20 million pilgrims to bathe in the purifying waters of the sacred Ganges River.

Window on the World



Global Map 19–4 Buddhism in Global Perspective

Buddhists represent a large part of the populations of most Asian nations.

SOURCE: Association of Religion Data Archives (2012).

Hinduism is not well understood by most people in the United States, although elements of Hindu thought have entered the New Age movement, discussed later in this chapter. But 3.1 million people in this country claim Asian Indian ancestry, and the number of immigrants from India is rising, which is making Hinduism more and more important in the United States (Larson, 2000; Eck, 2001; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Buddhism

Twenty-five hundred years ago, the rich culture of India gave rise to Buddhism. Today, some 495 million people, or 7 percent of humanity, are Buddhists, and almost all live in Asia. As shown in Global Map 19–4, Buddhists are a majority of the population in Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, and Japan. Buddhism is also widespread in Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China. Buddhism has much in common with Hinduism: It recognizes no god of judgment, sees each daily action as having spiritual consequences, and believes in reincarnation. But like Christianity, Buddhism has origins in the life of one person.

Siddhartha Gautama was born to a high-caste family in Nepal in 563 B.C.E. Even as a young man, he was deeply

spiritual. At the age of twenty-nine, he experienced a personal transformation, which led him to years of travel and meditation. By the end of this journey, he achieved what Buddhists describe as *bodhi*, or enlightenment. By gaining an understanding of the essence of life, Gautama became the Buddha.

Drawn by his personal charisma, followers spread the Buddha's teachings—the *dhamma*—across India. In the third century B.C.E., India's ruler became a Buddhist and sent missionaries throughout Asia, transforming Buddhism into a world religion.

Buddhists believe that much of life in this world involves suffering. This idea is rooted in the Buddha's own travels in a very poor society. But, the Buddha claimed, the solution to suffering is not seeking worldly wealth and power. On the contrary, a concern with worldly things is actually the problem, because it holds back spiritual development. Instead, the Buddha taught that we must use meditation to transcend the world—that is, to move beyond selfish concerns and material desires. Only by quieting the mind can people connect with the power of the larger universe—the goal described as *nirvana*, a state of spiritual enlightenment and peace (Thomas, 1975; Van Biema, 1997; Eck, 2001).

Confucianism

From about 200 B.C.E. until the beginning of the twentieth century, Confucianism was a state church—the official religion of China. After the 1949 revolution, the Communist government of the new People's Republic of China repressed all religious expression. But even today, although only 1 to 2 million people claim to be Confucianists, hundreds of millions of Chinese are influenced by this religion. China is still the main home to Confucian thought, although Chinese immigration has spread this religion to other nations in Southeast Asia. Only a small number of people who follow Confucius live in North America.

Confucius, whose Chinese name was K'ung Fu-tzu, lived between 551 and 479 B.C.E. Like the Buddha, Confucius was deeply moved by people's suffering. The Buddha's response was sectlike—a spiritual withdrawal from the world. Confucius took a more churchlike approach, instructing his followers to engage the world according to a code of moral conduct. In the same way that Hinduism became part of the Indian way of life, Confucianism became linked to the traditional culture of China.

A central idea of Confucianism is *jen*, meaning "humane-ness." In practice, this means that we must always place moral

principle above our self-interest, looking to tradition for guidance in how to live. In the family, Confucius taught, each of us must be loyal and considerate. For their part, families must remember their duties toward the larger community. In this model, layers of moral obligation unite society as a whole.

Of all world religions, Confucianism stands out as lacking a clear sense of the sacred. Perhaps Durkheim would have said that Confucianism is the celebration of the sacred character of society itself. Others might call Confucianism less a religion than a model of disciplined living. However you look at it, Confucianism shares with religion a body of beliefs and practices through which its followers seek moral goodness and social harmony (Schmidt, 1980; McGuire, 1987; Ellwood, 2000).

Religion: East and West

You may already have noticed two general differences between the belief systems of Eastern and Western societies. First, religions that arose in the West (Christianity, Islam, Judaism) have a clear focus on God as a distinct entity. Eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism), however, see divine power in everything, so that these belief systems make little distinction between the sacred and the profane and seem more like ethical codes for living.

Second, followers of Western religions form congregations, worshiping together in a special place at a regular time. Followers of Eastern religions, by contrast, express their religion anywhere and everywhere in their daily lives. Religious temples do exist, but they are used by individuals as part of their daily routines rather than by groups according to a rigid schedule. This is why visitors to a country like Japan are as likely to find temples there filled with tourists as with worshipers.

Despite these two differences, however, all religions have a common element: a call to move beyond selfish, everyday concerns in pursuit of a higher moral purpose. Religions may take different paths to this goal, but they all encourage a spiritual sense that there is more to life than what we see around us.

Global Snapshot

- In general, people in higher-income countries are less religious than those in lower-income nations. The U.S. population is an important exception to this pattern.

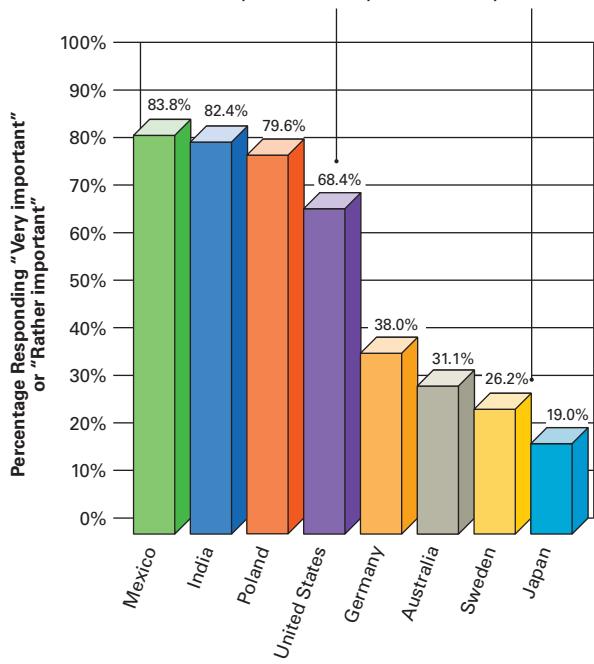


Figure 19–2 Religiosity in Global Perspective

Religion is stronger in the United States than it is in most other high-income nations.

SOURCE: World Values Survey (2015).

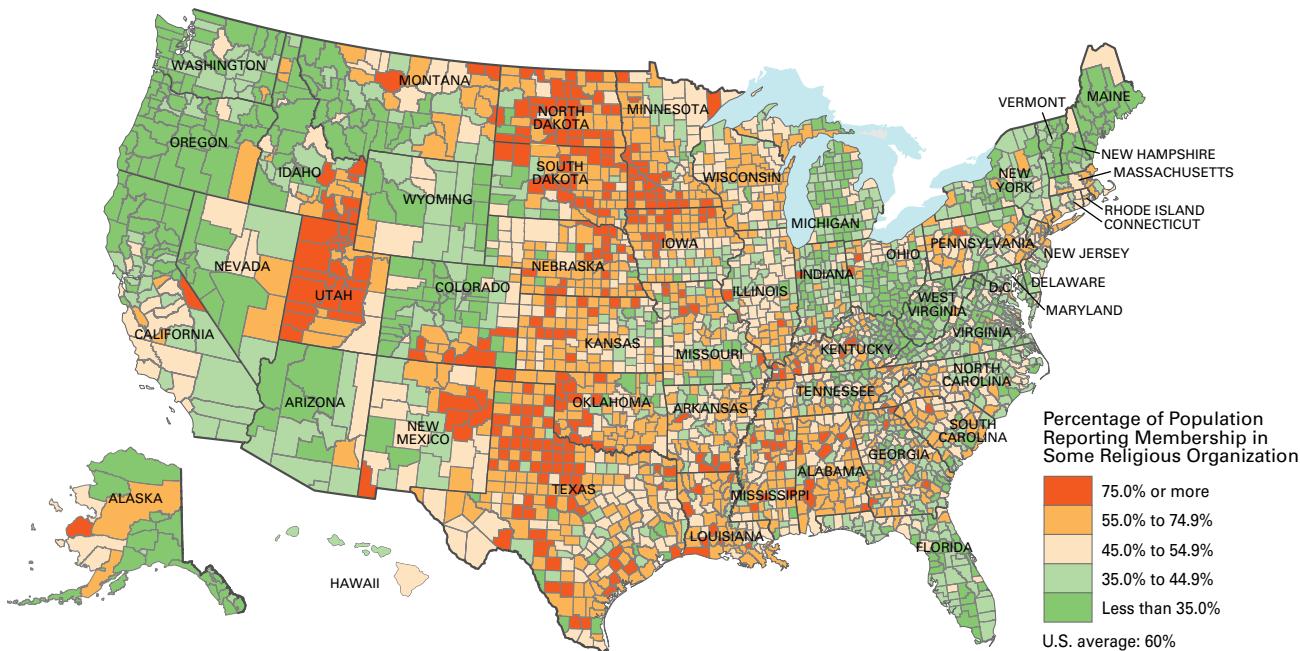
Religious Trends in the United States

19.5 Analyze patterns of religiosity in the United States.

Compared to almost every other high-income nation in the world, the United States is a religious country (World Values Survey, 2015). As Figure 19–2 shows, almost 70 percent of U.S. adults claim that religion is important in their life, and this share is higher than in most other high-income countries.

That said, scholars debate exactly how religious we are. Some claim that religion remains central to our way of life, but others conclude that a decline of the traditional

Seeing Ourselves



National Map 19-1 Religious Membership across the United States

In general, people in the United States are more religious than people in other high-income nations. Yet membership in a religious organization is more common in some parts of the country than in others. What pattern do you see in the map? Can you explain the pattern?

SOURCE: Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (2012).

family and the growing importance of science are weakening religious faith (Greeley, 2008; Smith, 2012).

Religious Affiliation

National surveys show that about 80 percent of U.S. adults identify with a religion (Gallup, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2013; Smith et al., 2013:261). Table 19-1 presents the results of the most recent survey of denominational affiliation showing that about half of U.S. adults say they are Protestants, one-fourth Catholics, and 1.5 percent Jews. Large numbers of people follow dozens of other religions, from animism to Zen Buddhism, making our society the most religiously diverse on Earth (Eck, 2001). This remarkable religious diversity results from a constitutional ban on government-sponsored religion and from our historically high numbers of immigrants from all over the world.

About 90 percent of U.S. adults report that they had at least some formal religious instruction when growing up, and 60 percent say they now belong to a religious organization (Smith et al., 2013:601, 2477). National Map 19-1 shows the share of people who claim to belong to any church across the United States.

National Map 19-2 on page 526 goes a step further, showing that the religion most people identify with varies by region. New England and the Southwest are mostly Catholic, the South is mostly Baptist, and Lutherans

predominate in the northern Plains states. In and around Utah, most people belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, whose followers are more commonly known as Mormons.

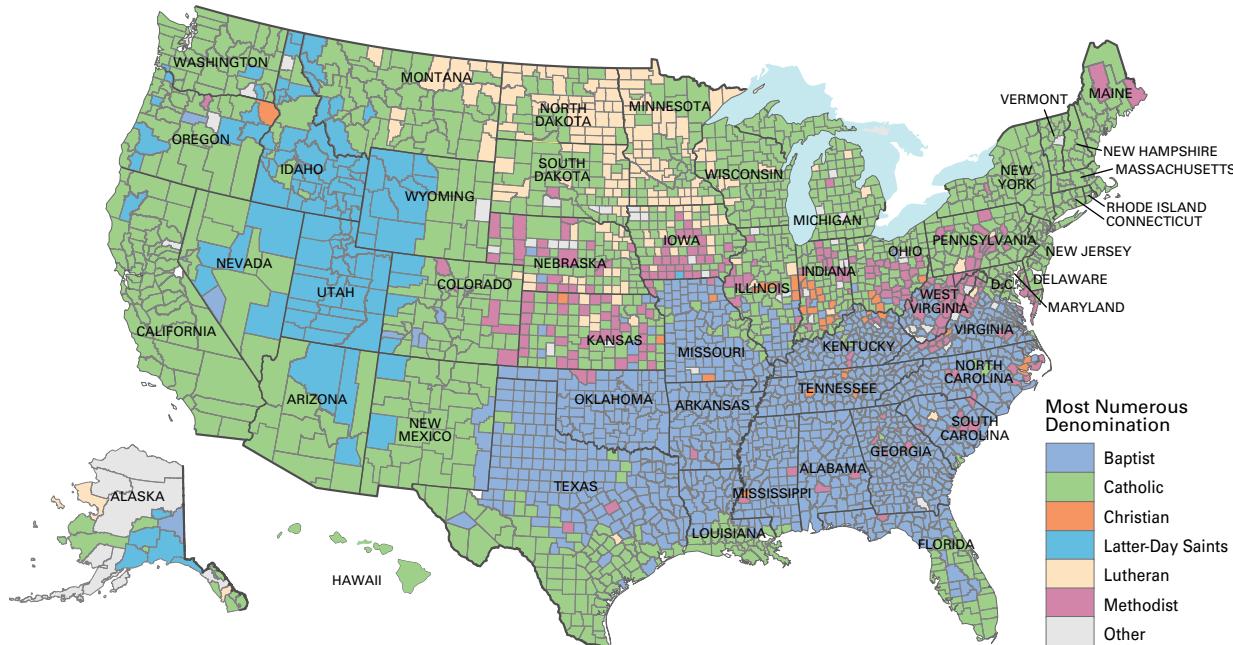
CHANGING AFFILIATION A lot of change is going on within the world of religion. Within the United States, membership in established, mainstream Protestant churches such as the

Table 19-1 Religious Identification in the United States, 2012

Religion	Share of Respondents Indicating a Preference
Protestant denominations	50.7%
Baptist	17.5
Methodist	6.4
Lutheran	4.5
Presbyterian	1.8
Episcopalian	1.8
All others or no denomination	18.6
Catholic	24.6
Jewish	1.5
Other or no answer	1.8
No religious preference	21.4

SOURCE: General Social Surveys, 1972–2012: Cumulative Codebook (Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, March 2013).

Seeing Ourselves



National Map 19–2 Religious Diversity across the United States

In most counties, a large share of people who report having an affiliation are members of the same religious organization. So although the United States is religiously diverse at the national level, most people live in communities where one denomination predominates. What historical facts might account for this pattern?

SOURCE: Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (2012).

Episcopalian and Presbyterian denominations has fallen by almost 50 percent since 1960. Within a year or so—if it has not happened already—our nation will no longer have a majority of the population identifying with a Protestant denomination (Pew Research Center, 2012). At the same time, as we shall see shortly, other religious organizations (including Mormons, Catholics, and both liberal “New Age” spiritual movements and conservative fundamentalist organizations) have increased in popularity.

Another dynamic aspect of religion is that many people are moving from one religious organization to another. A survey by the Pew Research Center, Forum on Religion and Public Life (2008) shows that 44 percent of adults in the United States report that they have switched religious affiliation at some point in their lives. When we add in those who have moved away from religion altogether, the pattern by which people are born and raised with a religious affiliation they keep throughout their lives is no longer the case for at least half of the U.S. population.

Such personal changes mean that religious organizations experience a pattern of people coming and going. Catholics, for example, have represented almost one-fourth of the U.S. adult population for some time. But this fairly stable statistic hides the fact that about one-third of all people raised Catholic have left the church. At the same time, an ever larger number of people—including many immigrants—have joined this church. A more extreme example is the Jehovah’s Witnesses: Two-thirds of the people

raised in this church have left, but their numbers have been more than replaced by converts recruited by members who travel door-to-door spreading their message.

This pattern of religious “churn” means that there is an active and competitive marketplace of religious organizations in the United States. Perhaps one result of this active competition for members is that U.S. society remains among the most religious in the world. But it also reflects a loosening of ties to the religious organizations people are born into, so men and women now have more choice about their religious beliefs and affiliation.

Religiosity

Religiosity is *the importance of religion in a person’s life*. However, exactly how religious we are depends on how we operationalize this concept. For example, 90 percent of U.S. adults claim to believe in a divine power, although just 59 percent claim that they “know that God exists and have no doubts about it” (Smith et al., 2013:605). Fifty-nine percent of adults say they pray at least once a day, but just 31 percent report attending religious services on a weekly or almost weekly basis (Smith et al., 2013:275, 265).

Clearly, the question “How religious are we?” has no easy answer, and it is likely that many people in the United States claim to be more religious than they really are. Although most people in the United States say they are at least somewhat religious, probably no more than about one-third actually are.

Religiosity varies by age. In general, older people are more religious, as suggested by the fact that 90 percent of U.S. adults over the age of sixty-five claim to have a religious affiliation. By contrast, just 67 percent of people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine say the same. Researchers conclude that today's young people are less religious than their elders and that they are also less religious than young people were a generation ago (Pew Research Center, 2012; Glenn, 2013).

Religiosity also varies among denominations. Members of sects are the most religious of all, followed by Catholics and then "mainstream" Protestant denominations such as Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians.

Finally, women are more religious than men. In surveys, 63 percent of women and 49 percent of men say religion is very important in their lives. From another angle, 23 percent of men and 17 percent of women claim to have no religious affiliation (Sherkat & Ellison, 1999; Miller & Stark, 2002; Pew Research Center, 2009, 2013).

What difference does being more religious make? Researchers have linked a number of social patterns to strong religious beliefs, including low rates of delinquency among young people and low rates of divorce among adults. According to one study, religiosity helps unite children, parents, and local communities in ways that benefit young people, enhancing their educational achievement (Muller & Ellison, 2001).



In the last fifty years, traditional "mainstream" religious organizations have lost about half their membership. But during this same period, fundamentalist and new spiritual movements have increased their membership. From another angle, almost half of our people change their religious affiliation over their lifetimes.

Research shows that other denominations, including Congregationalists, Methodists, and Catholics, have moderate social standing. Lower social standing is typical of Southern Baptists, Lutherans, and especially Jehovah's Witnesses and other members of sects. Of course, there is considerable variation within all denominations (Keister, 2003; Smith & Faris, 2005; Pyle, 2006).

ETHNICITY Throughout the world, religion is tied to ethnicity, mostly because one religion stands out in a single nation or geographic region. Islam predominates in the Arab societies of the Middle East, Hinduism is fused with the culture of India, and Confucianism runs deep in Chinese society. Christianity and Judaism do not follow this pattern; although these religions are mostly Western, Christians and Jews are found all over the world.

Religion and national identity are joined in the United States as well. For example, we have Anglo-Saxon Protestants, Irish Catholics, Russian Jews, and people of Greek Orthodox heritage. This linking of nation and creed results from the influx of immigrants from nations with a single major religion. Still, nearly every ethnic category displays some religious diversity. For example, people of English ancestry may be Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jews, Hindus, Muslims, or followers of other religions.

RACE Scholars claim that the church is both the oldest and the most important social institution in the African American community. Transported to the Western Hemisphere in slave ships, most Africans became Christians, the dominant religion in the Americas, but they blended Christian belief with elements of African religions. Guided by this religious mix, African American Christians have developed rituals that seem, by European standards, far more spontaneous and emotional (Frazier, 1965; Paris, 2000; McRoberts, 2003).

Religious Diversity: Class, Ethnicity, and Race

The U.S. Congress that took office in 2015 was the most religiously diverse in the nation's history. People who identify themselves as Protestants are a slight majority (57 percent, down from almost 75 percent fifty years ago). The new Congress contains Catholics (31 percent), Jews (5 percent), Mormons (3 percent), two Muslims, the first Buddhist and the first Hindu to serve, and the first person in Congress to describe her religious affiliation as "none."

The changes in Congress reflect increasing religious diversity in the nation as a whole. The following sections explain how religious affiliation is related to a number of factors, including social class, ethnicity, and race.

SOCIAL CLASS A study of *Who's Who in America*, a listing of U.S. high achievers, showed that the 10 percent of the people who have a religious affiliation as Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and United Church of Christ members represent 33 percent of all listings in *Who's Who*. Jews, too, enjoy high social position, with this 1.5 percent of the population accounting for 12 percent of the listings in *Who's Who*.

When African Americans started moving from the rural South to the industrial cities of the North around 1940, the church played a major role in addressing the problems of dislocation, poverty, and prejudice (Pattillo, 1998). Black churches have also provided an important avenue of achievement for talented men and women. Ralph Abernathy, Martin Luther King Jr., and Jesse Jackson have all achieved world recognition for their work as religious leaders.

Today, with 87 percent of African Americans claiming a religious affiliation, this category of our population is somewhat more religious than the population as a whole. In addition, the trend toward less religious affiliation is almost entirely among white people and does not appear to apply to African Americans (Pew Research Center, 2013).

The vast majority of African Americans favor a Protestant denomination. However, there is an increasing number of non-Christian African Americans, especially in large U.S. cities. Among them, the most common non-Christian religion is Islam, with about 400,000 African American followers. Put otherwise, about 40 percent of native-born Muslims in the United States identify themselves as African American (Paris, 2000; Pew Research Center, 2009, 2013).

Student Snapshot

- Although the share has been increasing, less than one-third of women and men on U.S. campuses claim no religious affiliation.

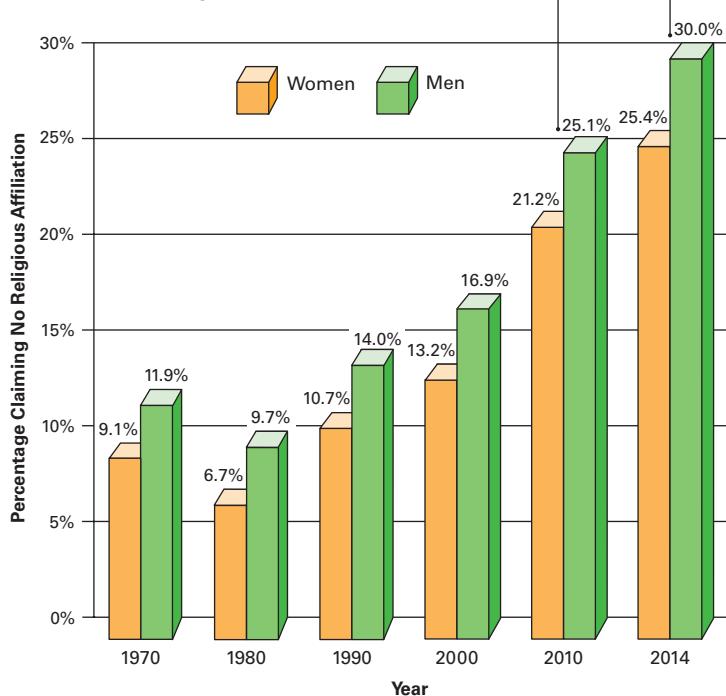


Figure 19–3 Religious Nonaffiliation among First-Year College Students, 1970–2014

In recent decades, the share of students claiming no religious affiliation has increased.

SOURCES: Astin et al. (2002) and Eagan et al. (2014).

Secularization

Secularization is the historical decline in the importance of the supernatural and the sacred. Secularization (from a Latin word for “worldly,” meaning literally “of the present age”) is commonly associated with modern, technologically advanced societies in which science is the major way of understanding.

Today, we are more likely to experience the transitions of birth, illness, and death in the presence of physicians (people who claim to have scientific knowledge) than in the company of religious leaders (who share knowledge that is based on faith). This shift alone suggests that religion’s relevance to our everyday lives has declined. Harvey Cox (1971:3) explains:

The world looks less and less to religious rules and rituals for its morality or its meanings. For some [people], religion provides a hobby, for others a mark of national or ethnic identification, for still others an aesthetic delight. For fewer and fewer does it provide an inclusive and commanding system of personal and cosmic values and explanations.

If Cox is right, should we expect religion to disappear someday? Some analysts point to survey data that show that the share of our adult population claiming no religious affiliation

has increased from about 2 percent in 1950 to about 20 percent today. Cross-national surveys carried out in thirty nations show a similar pattern, documenting an increasing share of people who identify as atheists (those who claim no divine power exists) in twenty-three of the thirty nations (Pew Research Center, 2011; Smith, 2012).

As Figure 19–3 shows, the share of first-year college students saying they have no religious preference has gone up, doubling between 1990 and 2014. This trend is mirrored in the larger adult population. Other analysts have pointed to the fact that large numbers of unaffiliated adults are now found not only in the Pacific Northwest (a long-time secular region) but also in the Northeast (where Christianity in this country first took hold) and the South (a generally more religious region) (Meacham, 2009).

But other sociologists are not so sure that religion is going away. They point out that the vast majority of people in the United States still say they believe in God, and as many people claim to pray each day (59 percent) as say that they vote in national elections (58 percent in 2012). In fact, researchers remind us, the share of people with a religious affiliation is actually higher today than it was back in 1850. Finally, more people may be switching their religious affiliation from one organization to another, and some may be leaving organized religion entirely, but their spiritual life may continue all the same (McClay, 2007; Greeley, 2008; MacDonald, 2012; Eagan et al., 2014).

Everyone sees religious change; what people disagree about is whether this change is good or bad.

Conservatives tend to see any weakening of religion as a mark of moral decline. Progressives view secularization in more positive terms, as liberation from the dictatorial beliefs of the past, giving people greater choice about what to believe. Secularization has also helped bring traditional religious practices—such as ordaining only men—into line with widespread public support for greater gender equality.

According to the secularization thesis, religion weakens in high-income nations as people enjoy higher living standards and greater economic security. A global perspective shows that this thesis holds for the rich countries of Western Europe, where most measures of religiosity have declined and are now low. But the United States—the richest country of all—is an exception, a nation in which, for now at least, religion remains quite strong.

Perhaps the most important event in the history of the secularization debate took place in 1963, when the U.S. Supreme Court banned prayer in public schools, claiming that school prayer violates the principle of separation between church and state.

Court decisions continue to play a part in the secularization debate. In 1950, Congress acted to strengthen religion by establishing a “National Day of Prayer” on the first Thursday in May as an opportunity for people “to turn to God in prayer and meditation.” In 2010, however, a federal district court in Wisconsin struck down this law as violating the principle of separation of church and state. In 2011, the federal government made a successful appeal to change this decision so that the “National Day of Prayer” continues.

Civil Religion

One expression of secularization in the world is the rise of what sociologist Robert Bellah (1975) calls **civil religion**, *a quasi-religious loyalty linking individuals in a basically secular society*. In other words, formal religion may lose power, but citizenship takes on religious qualities. Most people in the United States consider our way of life a force for moral good in the world. Many people also find religious qualities in political movements, whether liberal or conservative (Williams & Demerath, 1991).

Civil religion also involves a wide range of rituals, from singing the national anthem at major sporting events to waving the flag in public parades. At all such events, the U.S. flag serves as a sacred symbol of our national identity, and most members of our society expect people to treat it with respect.

“New Age” Seekers: Spirituality without Formal Religion

December 29, Machu Picchu, Peru. We are ending the first day exploring this magnificent city built high in the Andes Mountains by the Inca people. Lucas, a local shaman, or religious leader, is leading a group of twelve travelers in a ceremony of thanks.

Leading us into a small stone building, he kneels and places offerings—corn and beans, sugar, plants of all colors, and even bits of gold and silver—on the dirt floor in front of him. These he offers as gifts to Pachamama, or Mother Earth. With the gifts, he adds a prayer for harmony, joy, and the hope that all people will do good for others. His heartfelt words amidst such a magnificent setting make the ceremony a magical experience.

In recent decades, more and more people have been seeking spiritual development outside of established religious organizations. This trend has led some analysts to suggest that the United States is becoming a *postdenominational society*. In simple terms, a small but increasing share of people seem to be spiritual seekers, believing in a vital spiritual dimension to human existence that they pursue more or less separately from membership in any formal denomination.

What exactly is the difference between this so-called New Age focus on spirituality and a traditional concern with religion? As one analysis (Cimino & Lattin, 1999:62) puts it, spirituality is

the search for . . . a religion of the heart, not the head. It . . . downplays doctrine and dogma, and revels in direct experience of the divine—whether it's called the “holy spirit” or “divine consciousness” or “true self.” It's practical and personal, more about stress reduction than salvation, more therapeutic than theological. It's about feeling good rather than being good. It's as much about the body as the soul.

Millions of people in the United States take part in New Age spirituality. The following six core values define the New Age religious movement (Wesselman, 2001:39–42; Walsh, 2012):

- 1. Seekers believe in a higher power.** There exists a higher power, a vital force that is within all things and all people. Each of us, then, is partly divine, and the divine spirit exists everywhere in the world around us.
- 2. Seekers believe everything is connected.** Because “spirit” is everywhere in the universe, everything and everyone are interconnected. As New Agers like to say, “We are all one.”
- 3. Seekers believe in a spirit world.** The physical world we perceive with our five senses is not all there is; more important is the existence of a world beyond the senses, a spiritual reality or “spirit world.”
- 4. Seekers want to experience the spirit world.** Spiritual development means gaining the ability to experience the spirit world. Many seekers are able to “feel” the presence of spirit within them and they come to understand that helpers and teachers (traditionally called “angels”) dwell in the spirit world and can touch their lives.

5. **Seekers pursue transcendence.** Through various techniques (such as yoga, meditation, and prayer) people can gain an increasing ability to rise above the immediate physical world (the experience of “transcendence”), which seekers believe is the larger purpose of life.
6. **Some seekers pursue political change.** While for some seekers spirituality means a turning from the ways of this world, for others spirituality demands seeking both political change to end the destruction of the natural environment and an economic system that is based on competition rather than cooperation.

From a traditional point of view, this New Age concern with spirituality may seem as much psychology or liberal politics as it is religion. Perhaps it would be fair to say that New Age spirituality combines elements of rationality (an emphasis on individualism as well as tolerance and pluralism) with a spiritual focus (searching for meaning beyond everyday concerns). It is this combination that makes New Age seeking particularly popular in the modern world (Tucker, 2002; Besecke, 2003, 2005).

Religious Revival: “Good Old-Time Religion”

At the same time as New Age spirituality is becoming more popular, a great deal of change has been going on in the world of organized religion. Membership in established,

mainstream churches has fallen in recent decades, and affiliation with other formal religious organizations, including the Mormons, the Seventh-Day Adventists, and especially Christian sects, has risen dramatically.

These opposing trends suggest that secularization may be self-limiting: As many churchlike organizations become more worldly, many people leave them in favor of more sectlike communities offering a more intense religious experience (Stark & Bainbridge, 1981; Jacquet & Jones, 1991; Iannaccone, 1994; Hout, Greeley, & Wilde, 2001).

RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM **Fundamentalism** is a conservative religious doctrine that opposes intellectualism and worldly accommodation in favor of restoring traditional, otherworldly religion. In the United States, fundamentalism has made the greatest gains among Protestants. Southern Baptists, for example, are the largest Protestant religious community in the country. But fundamentalist groups have also grown among Roman Catholics, Jews, and Muslims.

In response to what they see as the growing influence of science and the weakening of the conventional family, religious fundamentalists defend what they call “traditional values.” As they see it, liberal churches have been too open to compromise and change. Religious fundamentalism is distinctive in five ways (Hunter, 1983, 1985, 1987):

1. **Fundamentalists take the words of sacred texts literally.** Fundamentalists insist on a literal reading of sacred texts such as the Bible to counter what they see as excessive



In this outstanding example of U.S. folk art, Anna Bell Lee Washington's *Baptism 3* (1924) depicts the life-changing experience by which many people enter the Christian faith.

Controversy & Debate

Does Science Threaten Religion?

Cihan: I think someday science will prove religion to be false.

Sophie: You better hope God doesn't prove you to be false.

Rasheed: Cool it, both of you. I don't think science and religion are talking about the same thing at all.

About 400 years ago, the Italian physicist and astronomer Galileo (1564–1642) helped launch the Scientific Revolution with a series of startling discoveries. Dropping objects from the Leaning Tower of Pisa, he discovered some of the laws of gravity; making his own telescope, he observed the stars and found that Earth orbited the sun, not the other way around.

For his trouble, Galileo was challenged by the Roman Catholic Church, which had preached for centuries that Earth stood motionless at the center of the universe. Galileo only made matters worse by responding that religious leaders had no business talking about matters of science. Before long, he found his work banned and himself under house arrest.

As Galileo's treatment shows, right from the start, science has had an uneasy relationship with religion. In the twentieth century, the two clashed again over the issue of creation. Charles Darwin's masterwork, *On the Origin of Species*, states that humanity evolved from lower forms of life over the course of a billion years. Yet this theory seems to fly in the face of the biblical account of creation found in Genesis, which states that "God created the heavens and the earth," introducing life on the third day and, on the fifth and sixth days, animal life, including human beings fashioned in God's own image.

Galileo would certainly have been an eager observer of the famous "Scopes monkey trial." In 1925, the state of Tennessee put a small-town science teacher named John Thomas Scopes on trial for teaching Darwinian evolution in the local high school. State law forbade teaching "any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible" and especially the idea that "man descended from a lower order of animals." Scopes was found guilty and fined \$100. His conviction was reversed on appeal, so the case never reached the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Tennessee law stayed on the books until 1967. A year later, the Supreme Court, in *Epperson v. Arkansas*, struck down all such laws as unconstitutional government support of religion.

Today, almost four centuries after Galileo was silenced, many people still debate the apparently conflicting claims of science and religion. A third of U.S.

adults believe that the Bible is the literal word of God, and many of them reject any scientific findings that run counter to it (Smith et al., 2013:303). In 2005, all eight members of the school board in Dover, Pennsylvania, were voted out of office after they took a stand that many townspeople saw as weakening the teaching of evolution; at the same time, the Kansas state school board ordered the teaching of evolution to include its weaknesses and limitations from a religious point of view ("Much Ado about Evolution," 2005). And in 2010, an Ohio middle school science teacher was dismissed from his job based on charges that he was teaching Christianity to his students (Boston, 2011).

But a middle ground is emerging: 44 percent of U.S. adults (and also many church leaders) say that the Bible is a book of truths inspired by God without being accurate in a literal, scientific sense. In addition, a 2009 survey of U.S. scientists found that half of them claimed to believe in God or some form of higher power. So it seems that many people are able to embrace science and religion at the same time. The reason this is possible is that science and religion are two different ways of understanding, and they answer different questions. Both Galileo and Darwin devoted their lives to investigating *how* the natural world works. Yet only religion can address *why* we and the natural world exist in the first place.

This basic difference between science and religion helps explain why our nation is both the most scientific and among the most religious in the world. As one scientist noted, the mathematical odds that a cosmic "big bang" 12 billion years ago created the universe and led to the formation of life as we know it are even smaller than the chance of winning a state lottery twenty weeks in a row. Doesn't such a scientific fact suggest an intelligent and purposeful power in our creation? Can't a person be a religious believer and at the same time a scientific investigator?

In 1992, a Vatican commission concluded that the church's silencing of Galileo was wrong. Today, most scientific and religious leaders agree that science and religion each represent important, but very different, truths. Many also believe that in today's rush to scientific discovery, our world has never been more in need of the moral guidance provided by religion.

What Do You Think?

1. Researchers tell us that a majority of scientists in the United States claim no religious affiliation. Why do you think most scientific people appear to reject religious accounts of human creation?
2. Why do some religious people reject scientific accounts?
3. Do you think religion and science can coexist? Explain.

SOURCES: Gould (1981), Huchingson (1994), Applebome (1996), Greeley (2008), and Pew Research Center, Forum on Religion and Public Life (2009).



intellectualism among more liberal religious organizations. For example, fundamentalist Christians believe that God created the world in seven days precisely as described in the biblical book of Genesis.

- 2. Fundamentalists reject religious pluralism.** Fundamentalists believe that tolerance and relativism water down personal faith. Therefore, they maintain that their religious beliefs are true and other beliefs are not.
- 3. Fundamentalists pursue the personal experience of God's presence.** In contrast to the worldliness and intellectualism of other religious organizations, fundamentalism seeks a return to "good old-time religion" and spiritual revival. To fundamentalist Christians, being "born again" and having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ should be evident in a person's everyday life.
- 4. Fundamentalists oppose "secular humanism."** Fundamentalists think that accommodation to the changing world weakens religious faith. They reject "secular humanism," our society's tendency to look to scientific experts rather than to God for guidance about how we should live. There is nothing new in this tension between science and religion; it has existed for centuries, as the Controversy & Debate box on page 531 explains.
- 5. Many fundamentalists endorse conservative political goals.** Although fundamentalism tends to back away from worldly concerns, some fundamentalist leaders (including Christian fundamentalists Pat Robertson and Gary Bauer) have entered politics to oppose what they call the "liberal agenda," which includes feminism and gay rights. Fundamentalists oppose abortion and gay marriage; they support the traditional two-parent family, seek a return of prayer in schools, oppose high levels of immigration, and criticize the mass media for coloring stories with a liberal bias. The Power of Society figure found at the beginning of this chapter shows that evangelical or fundamentalist Protestants are far more likely to support "old-fashioned" values about family and marriage than members of more "mainline" religious organizations or those who have no religious affiliation (Manza & Brooks, 1997; Thomma, 1997; Rozell, Wilcox, & Green, 1998; Pew Research Center, 2012).

Opponents regard fundamentalism as rigid, judgmental, and self-righteous. But many find in fundamentalism, with its greater religious certainty and emphasis on the emotional experience of God's presence, an appealing alternative to the more intellectual, tolerant, and worldly "mainstream" denominations (Marquand, 1997).

Which religions are fundamentalist? In recent years, the world has become familiar with an extreme form of

fundamentalist Islam that supports violence directed against Western culture. In the United States, the term is most correctly applied to conservative Christian organizations in the evangelical tradition, including Pentecostals, Southern Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Assemblies of God. Several national religious movements, including Promise Keepers (a men's organization) and Chosen Women, have a fundamentalist orientation. In national surveys, 25 percent of U.S. adults describe their religious upbringing as "fundamentalist," 40 percent claim a "moderate" upbringing, and 31 percent a "liberal" background (Smith et al., 2013:265).

THE ELECTRONIC CHURCH In contrast to local congregations of years past, some religious organizations, especially fundamentalist ones, have become electronic churches featuring "prime-time preachers" (Hadden & Swain, 1981). Electronic religion has not spread around the world but is found only in the United States. It has made James Dobson, Joel Osteen, Franklin Graham, Robert Schuller, and others more famous than all but a few clergy of the past. About 5 percent of the national television audience (or some 10 million people) regularly view religious television, and 20 percent (about 40 million) watch or listen to some religious programming every week or use electronic media to share their religion (Smith et al., 2013:603; Pew Research Center, 2014).

Religion: Looking Ahead

The popularity of media ministries, the growth of fundamentalism, new forms of spirituality, and the connection of millions of people to mainstream churches show that religion will remain a major part of modern society for decades to come. While the evidence suggests that there has been some decline in the importance of religion in the United States, religiosity in this country remains high. Even as some people move away from organized religion, immigration from many religious countries (in Latin America and elsewhere) and the increasing popularity of fundamentalist organizations should increase as well as diversify the religious character of U.S. society in the twenty-first century (Yang & Ebaugh, 2001; T.W. Smith, 2009, 2012).

The world is becoming more complex, and change seems to move more rapidly than our ability to make sense of it all. But rather than weakening religion, this process fires the religious imagination. As new technology gives us the power to change, extend, and even create life, we are faced with increasingly difficult moral questions. Against this backdrop of uncertainty, it is little wonder that many people look to their faith for guidance and hope.

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

CHAPTER 19 Religion

How religious is our society?

Compared to most other high-income nations, the United States has a relatively high level of religious belief and activity. We consider ourselves to be a modern, secular society, yet as this chapter explains, most people claim to be

religious and at least one-third of the population actually is. Civil religion is also evident in many aspects of our everyday lives. Look at the accompanying photos. Can you point to elements of civil religion in each of these familiar situations?

On Thanksgiving Day, most families across the United States gather to share a special dinner and give thanks for their good fortune. What religious or quasi-religious elements are part of a typical Thanksgiving celebration?



What about the Fourth of July?
How is this special day an example of civil religion?

In recent decades, football's Super Bowl has emerged as an important annual event. What elements of civil religion can you find in Super Bowl Sunday?



Hint As this chapter explains, civil religion is a quasi-religious loyalty linking members of a mostly secular society. Important events that qualify as civil religion are not formally religious but are typically defined as holidays (a word derived from "holy days"); involve gatherings of family, neighbors, and friends; and include ritual activities and the sharing of specific foods and beverages.

Seeing Sociology in Your Everyday Life

1. Make a list of other events, activities, and pastimes that might be considered examples of civil religion. (Start off with Election Day; what about baseball?) Do you know of any college events or local rituals that might be included? In each case, explain the religious element that you see and the way the event or activity affects members of a community.
2. Can you explain the difference between studying religion sociologically and holding personal religious beliefs?
3. Go to www.sociologyinfocus.com to access the Sociology in Focus blog, where you can read the latest posts by a team of young sociologists who apply the sociological perspective to topics of popular culture.

Making the Grade

CHAPTER 19 Religion

Religion: Concepts and Theories

19.1 Apply sociology's major theories to religion. (pages 511–14)

Religion is a major social institution based on setting the *sacred* apart from the *profane*.

Religion is grounded in *faith* rather than scientific evidence, and people express their religious beliefs through various rituals.

Theories of Religion

- **Structural-functional theory** describes how people celebrate the power of society through religion. Emile Durkheim identified three major functions of religion: Religion unites people, promoting social cohesion; it encourages people to obey cultural norms, promoting conformity; it gives meaning and purpose to life.
- **Symbolic-interaction theory** explains that people use religion to give everyday life sacred meaning; people create rituals that separate the sacred from the profane; Peter Berger claimed that people are especially likely to seek religious meaning when faced with life's uncertainties and disruptions.
- **Social-conflict theory** highlights religion's support of social inequality. Karl Marx claimed that religion justifies the status quo and diverts people's attention from social injustice; in this way, religion discourages change toward a more just and equal society.
- **Feminist theory** highlights the fact that major religions have traditionally been patriarchal, supporting the domination of women by men. A number of major religious organizations bar women from serving as religious leaders.

profane included as an ordinary element of everyday life

sacred set apart as extraordinary, inspiring awe and reverence

religion a social institution involving beliefs and practices based on recognizing the sacred

ritual formal, ceremonial behavior

faith belief based on conviction rather than on scientific evidence

totem an object in the natural world collectively defined as sacred

- **Liberation theology**, a fusion of Christian principles and political activism, tries to encourage social change.

liberation theology the combining of Christian principles with political activism, often Marxist in character

Types of Religious Organizations

19.3 Distinguish among church, sect, and cult. (pages 515–17)

- **Churches** are religious organizations well integrated into their society. They formally train and ordain leaders and have a highly formal style of worship. Churches fall into two categories: *state churches* (e.g., the Anglican Church in England and Islam in Morocco) and *denominations* (e.g., Christian denominations such as Baptists and Lutherans, and various categories of Judaism and Islam).
- **Sects** are the result of religious division. They hold rigid religious beliefs and are marked by charismatic leadership, a spontaneous and emotional style of worship, and members' suspicion of the larger society.
- **Cults** are religious organizations based on new and unconventional beliefs and practices.

church a type of religious organization that is well integrated into the larger society

state church a church formally allied with the state

denomination a church, independent of the state, that recognizes religious pluralism

sect a type of religious organization that stands apart from the larger society

charisma extraordinary personal qualities that can infuse people with emotion and turn them into followers

cult a religious organization that is largely outside a society's cultural traditions

Religion and Social Change

19.2 Discuss the links between religion and social change. (page 515)

- Max Weber argued, in opposition to Marx, that religion can encourage social change. He showed how Calvinism became "disenchanted," leading to a profane "Protestant work ethic" that contributed to the rise of industrial capitalism.

Religion in History and Around the World

19.4 Contrast religious patterns around the world. (pages 517–24)

- Hunting and gathering societies practiced **animism**, viewing elements of the natural world as spiritual forces.
- Belief in a single divine power began in pastoral and horticultural societies.

- Organized religion gained importance in agrarian societies.
- In industrial societies, scientific knowledge explains *how* the world works, but people look to religion to answer questions about *why* the world exists.

World Religions

- Christianity** is the most widespread religion, with 2.3 billion followers—almost one-third of the world’s people; Christianity began as a cult built on the personal charisma of Jesus of Nazareth; Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God and follow his teachings.
- Islam** has about 1.6 billion followers, who are known as Muslims—more than one-fifth of the world’s people; Muslims follow the word of God as revealed to the prophet Muhammad and written in the Qur'an, the sacred text of Islam.
- Judaism**’s 14 million followers are mainly in Israel and the United States; Jewish belief rests on the covenant between God and his chosen people, embodied in the Ten Commandments and the Old Testament of the Bible.
- Hinduism** is the oldest world religion and today has about 950 million adherents; Hindus see God as a universal moral force rather than a specific being and believe in the principles of *dharma* (moral responsibilities) and *karma* (the spiritual progress of the human soul).
- Buddhists** number about 495 million people; Buddhist teachings are similar to Hindu beliefs, but Buddhism is based on the life of one person, Siddhartha Gautama, who taught the use of meditation as a way to move beyond selfish desires to achieve *nirvana*, a state of enlightenment and peace.
- Confucianism** was the state church of China until the 1949 Communist revolution oppressed religious expression; it is still strongly linked to Chinese culture; Confucianism teaches *jen*, or “humaneness,” meaning that people must place moral principles above self-interest; layers of moral obligations unite society as a whole.

animism the belief that elements of the natural world are conscious life forms that affect humanity
monotheism belief in a single divine power
polytheism belief in many gods

Religious Trends in the United States

19.5 Analyze patterns of religiosity in the United States (pages 524–32)

The United States is one of the most religious and religiously diverse nations.

- 63% of women and 49% of men claim religion is very important in their lives
- 59% profess a firm belief in God
- 59% of adults say they pray at least once a day
- 31% say they attend religious services weekly or almost weekly
- 23% of men and 17% of women claim no religious affiliation
- In the United States, while some indicators of religiosity (like membership in mainstream churches) have declined, others (such as membership in sects) have increased.
- Religious affiliation is tied to *social class, ethnicity, and race*:
 - On average, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Jews enjoy high standing; lower social standing is typical of Baptists, Lutherans, and members of sects.
 - Religion is often linked to the ethnic background of immigrants who came from countries with a major religion.
 - Brought here as slaves, most Africans became Christians, but they blended Christian beliefs with elements of African religions.
- Secularization** is a decline in the importance of the supernatural and sacred.
- Civil religion** takes the form of a quasi-religious patriotism that ties people to their society.
- Spiritual seekers** are part of the New Age movement, which pursues spiritual development outside conventional religious organizations.
- Fundamentalism** opposes religious accommodation to the world, interprets religious texts literally, and rejects religious diversity.

religiosity the importance of religion in a person’s life

secularization the historical decline in the importance of the supernatural and the sacred

civil religion a quasi-religious loyalty linking individuals in a basically secular society

fundamentalism a conservative religious doctrine that opposes intellectualism and worldly accommodation in favor of restoring traditional, otherworldly religion

Chapter 20

Education



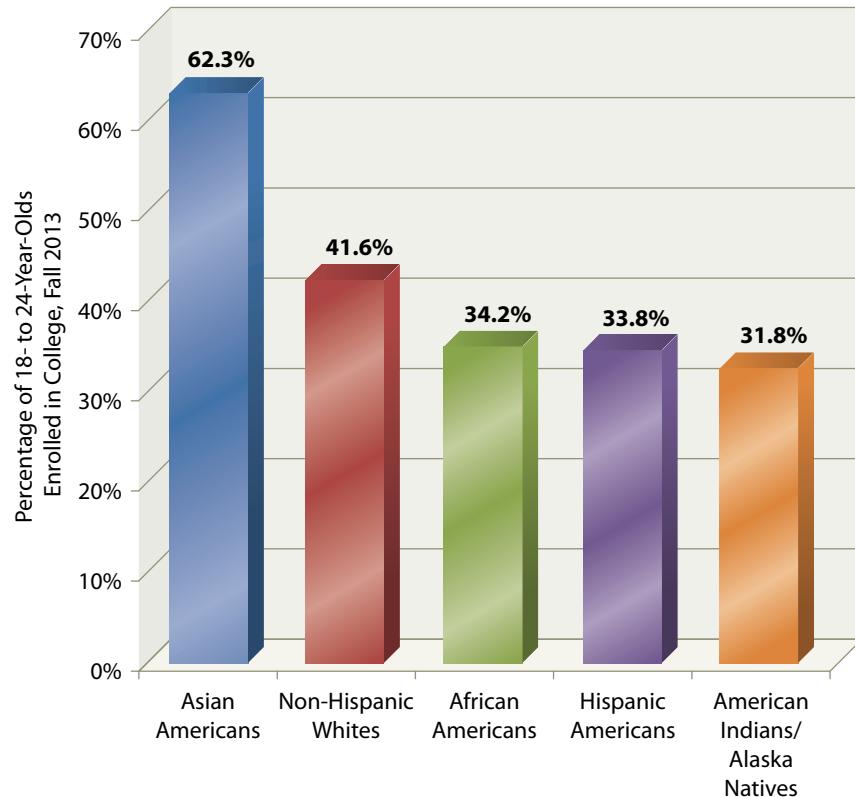
Learning Objectives

- 20.1** Compare schooling in high-, middle-, and low-income societies.
- 20.2** Apply structural-functional theory to schooling.
- 20.3** Apply social-interaction theory to schooling.
- 20.4** Apply social-conflict theory to schooling.
- 20.5** Discuss dropping out, violence, and other problems facing today's schools.
- 20.6** Summarize the debate over the performance of U.S. schools.



The Power of Society

to open the door to college



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education (2014).

Do the odds of going to college simply reflect a personal desire for more schooling? Researchers claim that almost all parents say they would like their children to go to college. But while about 42 percent of white people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four in the United States were enrolled in college in the fall of 2013, a much smaller share (31.8 percent) of American Indians and Alaskan Native people were on campus. Young Asian Americans (who benefit from both higher family income and cultural capital that encourages schooling) are especially likely to attend college (62 percent do). In short, our society is organized in a way that opens the door to higher education far wider for some categories of people than for others.

Chapter Overview

This chapter explains the operation of education, a major social institution. The chapter begins with a global survey of schooling and then focuses on education in the United States.

When Lisa Addison was growing up in Baltimore, her teachers always told her that she was smart and should go to college. “I liked hearing that,” she recalls. “But I didn’t know what to do about it. No one in my family had ever gone to college. I didn’t know what courses to take in high school. I had no idea of how to apply to a college. How would I pay for it? What would it be like if I got there?”

Discouraged and uncertain about her future, Addison found herself “kind of goofing off in school.” After finishing high school, she spent the next fifteen years working as a waitress in a restaurant and then as a kitchen helper in a catering company. Now, at the age of thirty-eight, Addison has decided to go back to school. “I don’t want to do this kind of work for the rest of my life. I am smart. I can do better. At this point, I am ready for college.”

Addison took a giant step through the door of the Community College of Baltimore County, speaking to counselors and setting her sights on an associate’s degree in business. When she finishes the two-year program, she plans to transfer to a four-year university to complete a bachelor’s degree. Then she hopes to go back into the food service industry—but this time as a manager at higher pay (Toppo & DeBarros, 2005).



Higher education is part of the American dream for almost all young people in the United States. But many face the types of challenges that delayed Lisa Addison in her journey toward a college degree. Especially for people growing up in low-income families, often with parents who are not college graduates, the odds of getting to college can be small.

Who goes to college in the United States? What difference does higher education make in the type of job you get or the money you make? This chapter answers these questions by focusing on **education**, *the social institution through which society provides its members with important knowledge, including basic facts, job skills, and cultural norms and values*. In high-income nations such as the United States, education is largely a matter of **schooling**, *formal instruction under the direction of specially trained teachers*.

education the social institution through which society provides its members with important knowledge, including basic facts, job skills, and cultural norms and values

schooling formal instruction under the direction of specially trained teachers

Education: A Global Survey

20.1 Compare schooling in high-, middle-, and low-income societies.

In the United States, young people expect to spend most of their first eighteen years in school. This was not the case a century ago, when just a small elite had the privilege of attending school. Even today, most young people in poor countries receive only a few years of formal schooling.

Schooling and Economic Development

The extent of schooling in any society is tied to its level of economic development. In low- and middle-income countries, which are home to most of the world’s people, families and communities teach young people important knowledge and skills. Formal schooling, especially learning that is not directly connected to survival, is available mainly to wealthy people who may not need to work and who can pursue personal enrichment. The word *school* is from a Greek root that means “leisure.” In ancient Greece, famous teachers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle taught aristocratic, upper-class men who had plenty of spare time. The same was true in ancient China, where the famous philosopher K’ung Fu-tzu (Confucius) shared his wisdom with a privileged few.

December 30, the Cuzco region, Peru. High in the Andes Mountains of Peru, families send their children to the local school. But "local" can mean 3 miles away or more, and there are no buses, so these children, almost all from poor families, walk at least an hour each way. Schooling is required by law, but in the rural highlands, some parents prefer to keep their children at home where they can help with the farming and livestock.

Today, the limited schooling that takes place in lower-income countries reflects the national culture. In Iran, for example, schooling is closely tied to Islam. Similarly, schooling in Bangladesh (Asia), Zimbabwe (Africa), and Nicaragua (Latin America) has been shaped by the distinctive cultural traditions of these nations.

All lower-income countries have one trait in common when it comes to schooling: There is not much of it. In the world's poorest nations (including several in Central Africa), about one-fourth of all children never get to school (World Bank, 2015). Worldwide, more than one-fourth of all children never reach the secondary grades (what we call *high school*). As a result, about one-sixth of the world's people cannot read or write. Global Map 20–1 shows the extent of illiteracy around the world, and the following national comparisons illustrate the link between the extent of schooling and economic development.

Schooling in India

India has recently become a middle-income country, but people there still earn only about 10 percent of U.S. average income, and most poor families depend on the earnings of children. Even though India has outlawed child labor, many children continue to work in factories—weaving



In many low-income nations, children are as likely to work as to attend school, and girls receive less schooling than boys. But the doors to schooling are now opening to more girls and women. These young women are studying nursing at Somalia University in downtown Mogadishu.

rugs or making handicrafts—up to sixty hours per week, which greatly limits their opportunities for schooling.

Today, 97 percent of children in India complete primary school, most often in crowded schoolrooms where one teacher typically faces thirty-five or more children. In comparison, U.S. public schoolteachers have on average fewer than twenty students in a class. Ninety-two percent of students in India go on to secondary school, but just 25 percent enter college. Currently about one-fourth of India's people are not able to read and write (UNESCO, 2015; World Bank, 2015).

Patriarchy also shapes Indian education. Indian parents are joyful at the birth of a boy because he and his future wife will both contribute income to the family. But there are economic costs to raising a girl: Parents must provide a dowry (a gift of wealth to the groom's family), and after her marriage, a daughter's work benefits her husband's family. Therefore, some Indians see less reason to invest in the schooling of girls, which is why a slightly smaller share of girls than boys will reach the secondary grades. What do the girls do while the boys are in school? Most of the children working in Indian factories are girls—a family's way of benefiting from their daughters while they can (UNESCO, 2015).

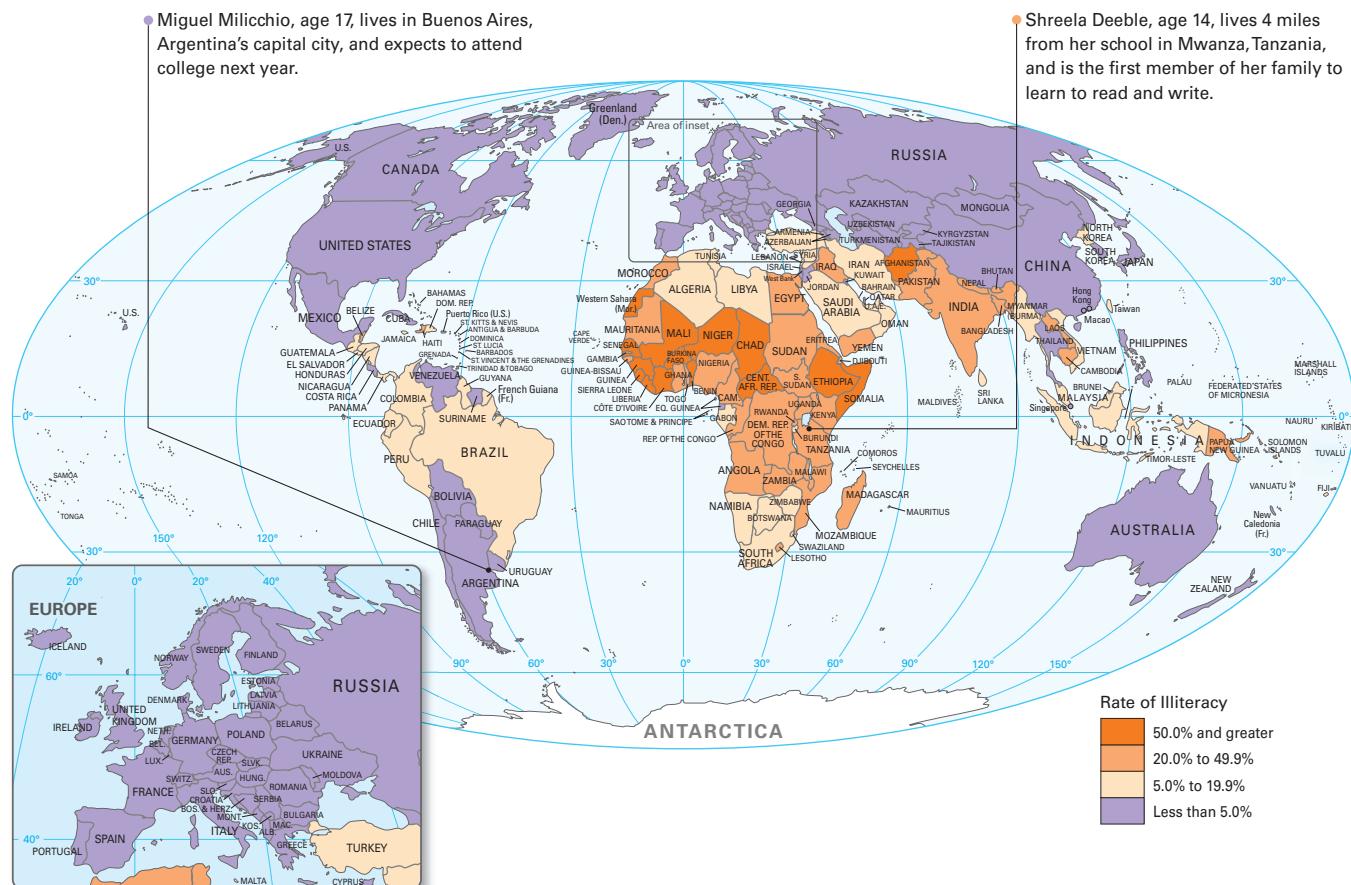
Schooling in Japan

Schooling has not always been part of the Japanese way of life. Before industrialization brought mandatory education in 1872, only a privileged few attended school. Today, Japan's educational system is widely praised for producing some of the world's highest achievers.

The early grades concentrate on transmitting Japanese traditions, especially a sense of obligation to family. Starting in their early teens, students take a series of difficult and highly competitive examinations. Their scores on these written tests, which are like the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) in the United States, decide the future of all Japanese students.

More men and women graduate from high school in Japan (99 percent) than in the United States (88 percent). But competitive examinations allow just 51 percent of high school graduates—compared to 66 percent in the United States—to enter college. Understandably, Japanese students (and their parents) take entrance examinations very seriously. About half attend "cram schools" to prepare for the exams, which means very late nights completing homework. Such hard work is one reason that many Japanese students nap in class—seen by teachers as the mark of a serious student (Steger, 2006; OECD, 2014).

Window on the World



Global Map 20-1 Illiteracy in Global Perspective

Reading and writing skills are widespread in high-income countries, where illiteracy rates generally are below 5 percent. In much of Latin America, however, illiteracy is more common, one consequence of limited economic development. In fourteen nations—almost all of them in Africa—illiteracy is the rule rather than the exception; there people rely on the oral tradition of face-to-face communication rather than the written word.

SOURCE: UNESCO (2015).

Japanese schooling produces impressive results. In a number of fields, notably mathematics and science, Japanese students (who rank fourth in the world in science and reading and sixth in mathematics) outperform students in almost every other high-income nation, including the United States (ranked twenty-seventh in science and thirty-fifth in mathematics) (World Bank, 2015).

Schooling in Great Britain

During the Middle Ages, schooling was a privilege of the British nobility, who studied classical subjects, having little concern for the practical skills needed to earn a living. But as the Industrial Revolution created a need for an educated labor force, and as working-class people demanded access to schools, a rising share of the population entered the

classroom. British law now requires every child to attend school until age sixteen.

Traditional class differences still affect British schooling. Most wealthy families send their children to what the British call *public schools*, which we would refer to as private boarding schools. These elite schools enroll about 7 percent of British students and teach not only academic subjects but also the special patterns of speech, mannerisms, and social graces of the British upper class. Because these academies are very expensive, most British students attend state-supported day schools (Department for Children, Schools, and Families, 2015).

The British have tried to reduce the importance of social background in schooling by expanding their university system and linking admission to competitive entrance examinations. For the students who score the

highest, the government pays most of the college costs. But many well-to-do children who do not score very well still manage to get into Oxford or Cambridge, the most prestigious British universities, on a par with our own Yale, Harvard, and Princeton. Many “Oxbridge” graduates go on to positions at the top of the British power elite: Most of the highest-ranking members of the British government—including Prime Minister David Cameron—have “Oxbridge” degrees.

These brief sketches of schooling in India, Japan, and Great Britain show the crucial importance of economic development. In poor countries, many children—especially girls—work rather than go to school. Rich nations enact mandatory education laws to prepare an industrial workforce as well as to satisfy demands for greater equality. But a nation’s history and culture still matter, as we see in the intense competition of Japanese schools, the traditional social stratification that shapes schools in Great Britain, and, in the next section, the practical emphasis found in the schools of the United States.

Schooling in the United States

The United States was among the first countries to set a goal of mass education. By 1850, about half the young people between the ages of five and nineteen were enrolled in school. By 1918, all states had passed a *mandatory education law* requiring children to attend school until the age of sixteen or completion of the

eighth grade. Table 20–1 shows that a milestone was reached in the mid-1960s when for the first time a majority of U.S. adults had earned high school diplomas. Today, 88.3 percent of U.S. adults twenty-five years of age or older have completed high school, and 32.0 percent have a four-year college degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

The U.S. educational system is shaped by both our high standard of living (which means that young people typically do not have to work) and our democratic principles (the idea that schooling should be provided to everyone). Thomas Jefferson thought the new nation could become democratic only if people learned to read. Today, the United States has an outstanding record of higher education for its people: The United States stands with Norway, the Netherlands, and Israel as having the highest share of adults aged twenty-five and older who have earned a university degree (OECD, 2014).

Schooling in the United States also tries to promote *equal opportunity*. National surveys show that most people think schooling is crucial to personal success, and more people than not also believe that everyone has the chance to get an education consistent with personal ability and talent (Smith et al., 2013:242, 2199). However, this opinion expresses our cultural ideals rather than reality. A century ago, for example, few women had the chance to go to college, and even today, most men and women who attend college come from families with above-average incomes.

In the United States, the educational system stresses the value of *practical learning*, knowledge that prepares people for future jobs. This emphasis is in line with what the educational philosopher John Dewey (1859–1952) called *progressive education*, having the schools make learning relevant to people’s lives. Similarly, students seek out subjects of study that they feel will give them an advantage when they are ready to compete in the job market. For example, as concerns about international terrorism have risen in recent years, so have the numbers of students choosing to study geography, international conflict, and Middle Eastern history and culture (Lord, 2001).

Table 20–1 Educational Achievement in the United States, 1910–2014

Year	High School Graduates	College Graduates	Average Years of Schooling
1910	13.5%	2.7%	8.1
1920	16.4	3.3	8.2
1930	19.1	3.9	8.4
1940	24.1	4.6	8.6
1950	33.4	6.0	9.3
1960	41.1	7.7	10.5
1970	55.2	11.0	12.2
1980	68.7	17.0	12.5
1990	77.6	21.3	12.4
2000	84.1	25.6	12.7
2010	87.1	29.9	13.0
2014	88.3	32.0	13.2

NOTES: Figures are for people 25 years of age and over. Percentage of high school graduates includes those who go on to college. Percentage of high school dropouts can be calculated by subtracting the percentage of high school graduates from 100 percent.

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau (2014) and World Bank (2015).

The Functions of Schooling

20.2 Apply structural-functional theory to schooling.

Structural-functional theory looks at ways in which formal education supports the smooth operation and stability of society. We look briefly at five ways in which this happens.

Socialization

Technologically simple societies look to families to teach skills and values and thus to transmit a way of life from one generation to the next. As societies gain more complex technology, they turn to trained teachers to develop and pass on the more specialized knowledge that adults will need to take their place in the workforce.

In primary school, children learn language and basic mathematical skills. Secondary school builds on this foundation, and for many students, college allows further specialization. In addition, all schooling teaches cultural values and norms. For example, civics classes instruct students in our political way of life, and rituals such as saluting the flag foster patriotism. Likewise, activities such as spelling bees develop competitive individualism and a sense of fair play.



Graduation from college is an important event in the lives of an ever-increasing number of people in the United States. Look over the discussion of the functions of schooling. How many of these functions do you think people in college are aware of? Can you think of other social consequences of going to college?

Cultural Innovation

Faculty at colleges and universities create culture as well as pass it on to students. Research in the sciences, the social sciences, the humanities, and the fine arts leads to discovery and changes in our way of life. For example, medical research at major universities has helped increase life expectancy, just as research by sociologists and psychologists helps us learn how to enjoy life more so that we can take advantage of our longevity.

Social Integration

Schooling molds a diverse population into one society sharing norms and values. This is one reason that states enacted mandatory education laws a century ago at a time when immigration was very high. In light of the ethnic diversity of many urban areas today, schooling continues to serve this purpose.

Social Placement

Schools identify talent and match instruction to ability. Schooling increases meritocracy by rewarding talent and hard work regardless of social background and provides a path to upward social mobility.

Latent Functions of Schooling

Schooling also serves several less widely recognized functions. It provides child care for the growing number of one-parent and two-career families. In addition, schooling occupies thousands of young people in their teens and twenties who would otherwise be competing for limited

opportunities in the job market. High schools, colleges, and universities also bring together people of marriageable age. Finally, schools establish networks that serve as a valuable career resource throughout life.

EVALUATE

Structural-functional theory stresses ways in which formal education supports the operation of a modern society. However, this approach overlooks how the classroom behavior of teachers and students can vary from one setting to another, a focus of symbolic-interaction theory, discussed next. In addition, structural-functional theory says little about many problems of our educational system and how schooling helps reproduce the class structure in each generation, which is the focus of social-conflict theory.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING Identify the five functions of schooling for the operation of society.

Schooling and Social Interaction

20.3 Apply social-interaction theory to schooling.

The basic idea of symbolic-interaction theory is that people create the reality they experience in their day-to-day interaction. We use this approach to explain how stereotypes can shape what goes on in the classroom.

The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Chapter 6 (“Social Interaction in Everyday Life”) presented the Thomas theorem, which states that situations that



How good are you as a student? The answer is that you are as good as you and your teachers think you are. The television show *Glee* demonstrates how the help of an inspiring teacher encourages students toward greater self-confidence and higher achievement.

people define as real become real in their consequences. Put another way, people who expect others to act in certain ways often encourage that very behavior. Doing so, people set up a *self-fulfilling prophecy*.

Jane Elliott, an elementary school teacher in the all-white community of Riceville, Iowa, carried out a simple experiment that showed how a self-fulfilling prophecy can take place in the classroom. In 1968, Elliott was teaching a fourth-grade class when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. Her students were puzzled and asked why a national hero had been brutally shot. Elliott responded by asking her white students what they thought about people of color, and she was stunned to find out that they held many powerful negative stereotypes.

To show the class the harmful effects of such stereotypes, Elliott performed a classroom experiment. She found that almost all of the children in her class had either blue eyes or brown eyes. She told the class that children with brown eyes were smarter and worked harder than children with blue eyes. To be sure everyone could easily tell which category a child fell into, pieces of brown or blue colored cloth were pinned to every student's collar.

Elliott recalls the effect of this "lesson" on the way students behaved: "It was just horrifying how quickly they became what I told them they were." Within half an hour, Elliott continued, a blue-eyed girl named Carol had changed from a "brilliant, carefree, excited little girl to a frightened, timid, uncertain, almost-person." Not surprisingly, in the hours that followed, the brown-eyed students came to life, speaking up more and performing better than they had

done before. The prophecy had been fulfilled: Because the brown-eyed children thought they were superior, they became superior in their classroom performance—as well as "arrogant, ugly, and domineering" toward the blue-eyed children. For their part, the blue-eyed children began underperforming, becoming the inferior people they believed themselves to be.

At the end of the day, Elliott took time to explain to everyone what they had experienced. She applied the lesson to race, pointing out that if white children thought they were superior to black children, they would expect to do better in school, just as many children of color who live in the shadow of the same stereotypes would underperform in school. The children also realized that the society that teaches these stereotypes, as well as the hate that often accompanies them, encourages the kind of violence that ended the life of Dr. King (Kral, 2005).

EVALUATE

Symbolic-interaction theory explains how we all build reality in our everyday interactions with others. When school officials define some students as "gifted," for example, we can expect teachers to treat them differently and the students themselves to behave differently as a result of having been labeled in this way. If students and teachers come to believe that one race is academically superior to another, the behavior that follows may be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

One limitation of this approach is that people do not just make up such beliefs about superiority and inferiority. Rather, these beliefs are built into a society's system of social inequality, which brings us to social-conflict theory.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING How can the labels that schools place on some students affect the students' actual performance and the reactions of others?

Schooling and Social Inequality

20.4 Apply social-conflict theory to schooling.

Social-conflict theory explains how schooling both causes and perpetuates social inequality. In this way, it can explain how stereotypes of "good" and "bad" students described in the symbolic-interaction discussion arise in the first place. In addition, a social-conflict approach challenges the structural-functional idea that schooling develops everybody's talents and abilities by claiming that the schooling people receive is closely linked to their local communities and their social standing (Wolfers, 2015).

Social Control

Schooling is a way of controlling people, reinforcing acceptance of the status quo. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) claim that the rise of public education in the late nineteenth century came at exactly the same time that factory owners needed an obedient and disciplined workforce. Once in school, immigrants learned not only the English language but also the importance of following orders.

Standardized Testing

Here is a question of the kind historically used to measure the academic ability of school-age children in the United States:

Painter is to *painting* as _____ is to *sonnet*.
 (a) driver (b) poet (c) priest (d) carpenter

The correct answer is “(b) poet”: A painter creates a painting just as a poet creates a sonnet. This question supposedly measures logical reasoning, but getting the right answer also depends on knowing what each term means. Students who are unfamiliar with the sonnet as a Western European form of written verse are not likely to answer the question correctly.

The organizations that create standardized tests claim that this type of bias has been all but eliminated because they carefully study response patterns and drop any question that favors one racial or ethnic category. But critics insist that some bias based on class, race, or ethnicity will always exist in formal testing. Because test questions will always reflect our society’s dominant culture, minority students are placed at a disadvantage (Crouse & Trusheim, 1988; Putka, 1990).

School Tracking

Despite controversy over standardized tests, most schools in the United States use them for **tracking**, *assigning students to different types of educational programs*, such as college preparatory classes, general education, and vocational and technical training.

Tracking supposedly helps teachers meet each student’s individual needs and abilities. However, one education critic, Jonathan Kozol (1992), considers tracking an example of “savage inequalities” in our school system. Most students from privileged backgrounds do well on standardized tests and get into higher tracks, where they receive the best the school can offer. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds typically do less well on these tests and end up in lower tracks, where teachers stress memorization and put little focus on creativity.

Based on these concerns, schools across the United States are cautious about making tracking assignments and give students the chance to move from one track to another. Some schools have even dropped tracking entirely. Tracking can help match instruction with students’

abilities, but rigid tracking can have a powerful impact on students’ learning and self-concept. Young people who spend years in higher tracks tend to see themselves as bright and able; students in lower tracks end up with less ambition and low self-esteem (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Kilgore, 1991; Gamoran, 1992; Kozol, 1992).

Inequality among Schools

Just as students are treated differently within schools, schools themselves differ in important ways. The biggest difference is between public and private schools.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS Across the United States, about 91 percent of the 54.8 million primary and secondary school children attend state-funded public schools. The rest go to private schools.

About 39 percent of private school students attend one of the 6,700 *parochial schools* (*parochial* is from Latin, meaning “of the parish”) operated by the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic school system grew rapidly a century ago as cities swelled with immigrants. Enrolling their children in Catholic schools helped the new arrivals hold onto their religious heritage in a new and mostly Protestant society. Today, after decades of flight from the inner city by white people, many parochial schools enroll non-Catholics, including a growing number of African Americans whose families seek an alternative to the neighborhood public school.

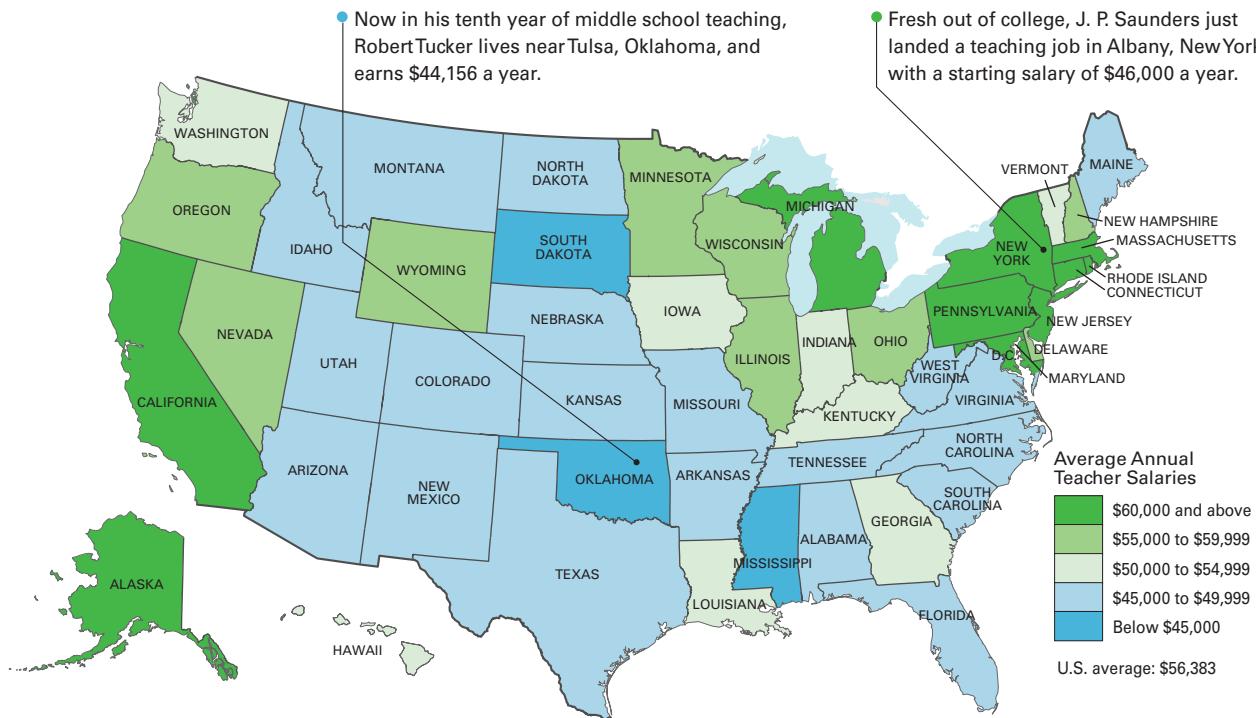
Another 38 percent of private school students attend one of more than 14,000 schools with some non-Catholic religious affiliation. Many private schools linked to Protestant denominations are known as Christian academies. These schools are favored by parents who want religious instruction for their children as well as higher academic and disciplinary standards.

There are also about 9,800 nonreligious private schools in the United States that enroll the remaining 23 percent of private school students. Many of these students are young people from well-to-do families. These institutions are typically prestigious and expensive preparatory (“prep”) schools, modeled on British boarding schools, and they not only provide strong academic programs but also convey the values and teach the way of life of the upper class. Many “preppies” maintain lifelong school-based social networks that provide numerous social advantages.

Are private schools qualitatively better than public schools? Research shows that holding family social background constant, students in private schools do outperform those in public schools on standard measures of academic success. The advantages of private schools include smaller classes, more demanding coursework, and greater discipline (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Peterson & Llaudet, 2006).

INEQUALITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLING But even public schools are not all the same. Differences in funding result

Seeing Ourselves



National Map 20–1 Teachers' Salaries across the United States

In 2013, the average public school teacher in the United States earned \$56,383. The map shows the average teacher salary for all the states ranging from a low of \$39,580 in South Dakota to a high of \$75,279 in New York. Looking at the map, what pattern do you see? What do high-salary (and low-salary) states have in common?

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education (2014).

in unequal resources; consequently, children in more affluent areas receive a better education than children living in poor communities. National Map 20–1 shows one key way in which resources differ: Average yearly teacher salaries vary by as much as \$35,000 in state-by-state comparisons.

At the local level, differences in school funding can be dramatic. Arlington County, Virginia, one of the richest suburbs in the United States, spends more than \$16,000 a year on each of its students, compared to a poor district such as Alpine, Utah, that spends only \$5,400 each year. In recent years, these differences have grown (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). The Thinking About Diversity box shows the effects of funding differences in the everyday lives of students.

Because schools are typically funded through local property taxes, schools in more affluent areas will offer a better education than schools in poor communities. This difference also benefits whites over minorities, which is why some districts enacted a policy of *busing*, transporting students to achieve racial balance and equal opportunity in schools. Although only 5 percent of U.S. schoolchildren are bused to schools outside their neighborhoods, this policy is controversial. Supporters claim that given the

reality of racial segregation, the only way government will adequately fund schools in poor, minority neighborhoods is if white children from richer areas attend. Critics respond that busing is expensive and undermines the concept of neighborhood schools. But almost everyone agreed on one thing: Given the racial imbalance of most urban areas, an effective busing scheme would have to join inner cities and suburbs, a plan that has never been politically possible. Since the 1990s, busing students to achieve racial balance in schools has sharply declined. Although there was some modest decline in racial segregation in U.S. public schools between 1970 and 1990, there has been little change since then (Logan, Oakley, & Stowell, 2008).

But other policies to address unequal schools have emerged. One plan is to provide money equally across a state. This is the approach taken by Vermont, which passed a law that distributes per-student tax money equally to all communities.

But not everyone thinks that money is the key to good schooling. Consider, for example, that Youngstown, Ohio, spends \$14,500 each year on each public school student (40 percent above the national average) but barely manages

Thinking About Diversity: Race, Class, and Gender

Schooling in the United States: Savage Inequality

Public School 261? Head down Jerome Avenue and look for the mortician's office." Off for a day studying the New York City schools, Jonathan Kozol parks his car and walks toward PS 261. Finding PS 261 is not easy because the school has no sign. In fact, the building is a former roller rink and doesn't look much like a school at all.

The principal explains that this is in a minority area of the North Bronx, so the population of PS 261 is 90 percent African American and Hispanic. Officially, the school should serve 900 students, but it actually enrolls 1,300. The rules say class size should not exceed thirty-two, but Kozol observes that it sometimes approaches forty. Because the school has just one small cafeteria, the children must eat in three shifts. After lunch, with no place to play, students squirm in their seats until told to return to their classrooms. Only one classroom in the entire school has a window to the world outside.

Toward the end of the day, Kozol remarks to a teacher about the overcrowding and the poor condition of the building. She sums up her thoughts: "I had an awful room last year. In the winter, it was 56 degrees. In the summer, it was up to 90."

"Do the children ever comment on the building?"

Kozol asks.



to graduate half of them. Newark, New Jersey, spends double the national average per student and still does not graduate half of all students (Will, 2011).

What other than money is involved? A classic report by a research team headed by James Coleman (1966) confirmed that students in mostly minority schools suffer from larger class size, insufficient libraries, and fewer science labs. But the Coleman report cautioned that more money by itself would not magically improve schooling. More important are the cooperative efforts and enthusiasm of teachers, parents, and the students themselves. In other words, even if school funding were exactly the same everywhere

"They don't say," she responds, "but they know. All these kids see TV. They know what suburban schools are like. Then they look around them at their school. They don't comment on it, but you see it in their eyes. They understand."

Several months later, Kozol visits PS 24, in the affluent Riverdale section of New York City. This school is set back from the road, beyond a lawn planted with magnolia and dogwood trees, which are now in full bloom. On one side of the building is a playground for the youngest children; behind the school are playing fields for the older kids. Many people pay the high price of a house in Riverdale because the local schools have such an excellent reputation. There are 825 children here; most are white and a few are Asian, Hispanic, or African American. The building is in good repair. It has a large library and even a planetarium. All the classrooms have windows with bright curtains.

Entering one of the many classes for gifted students, Kozol asks the children what they are doing today. A young girl answers confidently, "My name is Laurie, and we're doing problem solving." A tall, good-natured boy continues, "I'm David. One thing that we do is logical thinking. Some problems, we find, have more than one good answer." Kozol asks if such reasoning is innate or if it is something a child learns. Susan, whose smile reveals her braces, responds, "You know some things to start with when you enter school. But we learn some things that other children don't. We learn certain things that other children don't know because we're taught them."

What Do You Think?

- Are there differences between schools in your city or town? Explain.
- Why do you think there is little public concern about schooling inequality?
- What changes would our society have to make to eliminate schooling inequality?

SOURCE: Adapted from Kozol (1992:85–88, 92–96).

(as in Vermont), students who benefit from more *cultural capital*—that is, those whose parents value schooling, read to their children, and encourage the development of imagination—would still perform better. In short, we should not expect schools alone to overcome marked social inequality in the United States (Schneider et al., 1998; Israel, Beau lieu, & Hartless, 2001; Ornstein, 2010).

Further research confirms the difference that home environment makes in a student's school performance. A research team studied the rate at which school-age children gain skills in reading and mathematics (Downey, von Hippel, & Broh, 2004). Because U.S. children go to school six



Sociological research has documented the fact that young children living in low-income communities typically learn in classrooms like the one on the left, with large class sizes and low budgets that do not provide for high technology and other instructional materials. Children from high-income communities typically enjoy classroom experiences such as the one shown on the right, with small classes and the latest learning technology.

to seven hours a day, five days a week, and do not attend school during summer months, the researchers calculate that children spend only about 13 percent of their waking hours in school. During the school year, high-income children learn somewhat more quickly than low-income children, but the learning gap is far greater during the summer season when children are not in school. The researchers conclude that when it comes to student performance, schools matter, but the home and local neighborhood matter more. Put another way, schools close some of the learning gap that is created by differences in family resources, but they do not “level the playing field” between rich and poor children the way we like to think they do (Wolfers, 2015).

Access to Higher Education

Schooling is the main path to good jobs. But only 66 percent of U.S. high school graduates enroll in college immediately after graduation. Among young people eighteen to twenty-four years old, about 40 percent are enrolled in college (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2014).

A crucial factor affecting access to U.S. higher education is family income. College is expensive: The fifty most expensive colleges and universities in the United States all cost more than \$60,000 a year. Even at state-supported institutions, annual tuition averages about \$10,000 a year—a challenge for most working families—and many universities charge much more. The high cost of higher education means that college attendance is more common among families with higher incomes. In the United States, some 6.4 million families have at least one child enrolled in college. Of these families, 48 percent have incomes of at least \$75,000 annually (roughly the richest 30 percent, who fall within the upper-middle class and upper class), 43 percent

have incomes of at least \$20,000 but less than \$75,000 (the middle class and working class), and only 9 percent have incomes of less than \$20,000 a year (the lower class including families classified as poor) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

These economic differences are one reason that the education gap between whites and minorities widens at the college level. As Figure 20–1 shows, African Americans are not quite as likely as non-Hispanic whites to graduate from high school and are much less likely to complete four or more years of college. Hispanics, many of whom speak Spanish as their first language, have a lower rate of high school graduation, and again, the gap is much greater when it comes to college degrees. Schooling is an important path to social mobility in our society, but the promise of schooling has not overcome the racial inequality that exists in the United States.

Completing college brings many rewards, including higher earnings. In the past forty years, as our economy has shifted to work that requires processing information, the gap in average income between people who complete only high school and those who earn a four-year college degree has more than doubled. In fact, today, a college degree adds as much as \$1 million to a person’s lifetime income. In simple terms, higher education is a good investment.

Table 20–2 gives details. In 2013, men who were high school graduates averaged \$40,289, and college graduates averaged \$67,236. The ratios in parentheses show that a man with a bachelor’s degree earns 2.6 times as much in annual income as a man with eight or fewer years of schooling. Across the board, women earn less than men, although as with men, adding years of schooling boosts their income, although not quite as much. Keep in mind that for both men and women, some of the greater earnings have to do with social background, because those with the most schooling are likely to come from relatively well-off families.

Greater Opportunity: Expanding Higher Education

With some 20 million people enrolled in colleges and universities, the United States is a world leader in providing a college education to its people. This country also enrolls more students from abroad than any other, with almost 750,000 nonresident students in 2012.

One reason for this achievement is that there are 4,294 colleges and universities in the United States. This number includes 2,634 four-year institutions (which award bachelor's degrees) as well as 1,660 two-year colleges (which award associate's degrees). Some two-year colleges are private, but most are publicly funded community colleges that serve a local area (usually a city or a county) and charge a low tuition (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2014).

Because higher education is a key path to better jobs and higher income, the government makes money available to help certain categories of people pay the costs of college. After World War II, the GI Bill provided college funds to veterans, with the result that tens of thousands of men and women were able to attend college. Some branches of the military continue to offer college money to enlistees; in addition, veterans continue to benefit from a number of government grants and scholarships.

Community Colleges

Since the 1960s, the expansion of state-funded community colleges has further increased access to higher education. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2014), the 1,660 two-year colleges across the United States now enroll 39.7 percent of all college undergraduates.

Community colleges provide a number of specific benefits. First, their relatively low tuition cost places college courses and degrees within the reach of millions

Diversity Snapshot

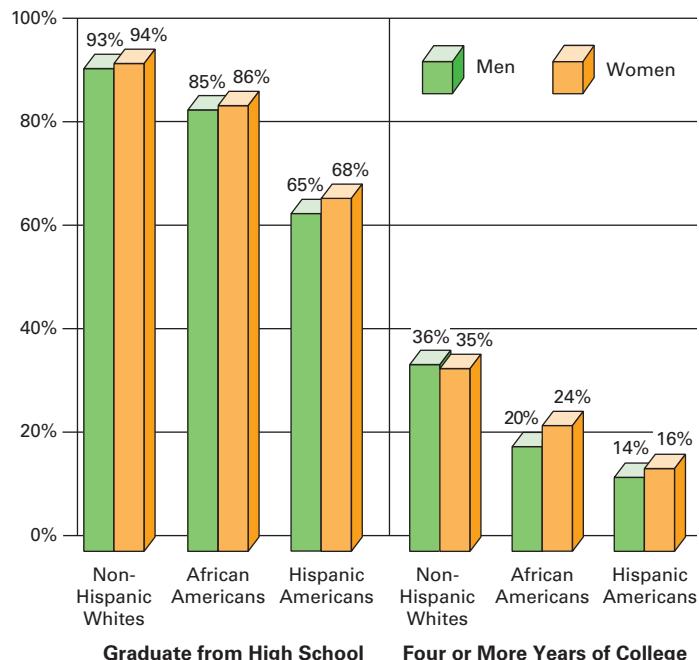


Figure 20-1 Educational Achievement for Various Categories of People, Aged 25 Years and Over, 2014

U.S. society still provides less education to minorities.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (2014).

of families that could not otherwise afford them. Many students at community colleges today are the first in their families to pursue a college degree. The lower cost of community colleges is especially important during periods of economic recession. When the economy slumps and people lose their jobs, college enrollments soar, especially at community colleges.

Second, community colleges have special importance for minorities. Currently, 37 percent of all African American and 48 percent of Hispanic undergraduates in the United States attend community colleges.

Third, although it is true that community colleges serve local populations, they also attract students from around the world. Many community colleges recruit students from abroad, and about 11 percent of all foreign students enrolled on a U.S. campus are studying at community colleges (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2014).

Fourth, the top priority of faculty who work at large universities is typically research, but the most important job for community college faculty is teaching. Thus, although teaching loads are high (typically four or five classes each semester), community colleges appeal to faculty who find their greatest pleasure in the classroom. Community college students often get more attention from

Table 20-2 Median Income by Sex and Educational Attainment, 2013

Education	Men	Women
Professional degree	\$126,725 (4.8)	\$85,396 (4.3)
Doctorate	105,281 (4.0)	75,091 (3.8)
Master's degree	86,308 (3.3)	61,281 (3.1)
Bachelor's degree	67,236 (2.6)	50,745 (2.6)
1–3 years of college	47,650 (1.8)	35,242 (1.8)
4 years of high school	40,289 (1.5)	30,801 (1.6)
9–11 years of school	30,565 (1.2)	22,248 (1.1)
0–8 years of school	26,160 (1.0)	19,840 (1.0)

NOTES: Figures are for persons aged 25 years and over working full time. The earnings ratio, in parentheses, indicates what multiple of the lowest income level a person with the indicated amount of additional schooling earns.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (2014).

faculty than do students at large universities (Jacobson, 2003). Finally, community colleges teach the knowledge and career skills that countless people depend on to find the jobs they want.

Privilege and Personal Merit

If attending college is a rite of passage for rich men and women, as social-conflict analysis suggests, then *schooling transforms social privilege into personal merit*. Given our cultural emphasis on individualism, we tend to see credentials as badges of ability rather than as symbols of family affluence (Sennett & Cobb, 1973).

When we congratulate the new graduate, we rarely recognize the resources—in terms of both money and cultural capital—that made this achievement possible. Yet young people from families with incomes exceeding \$200,000 a year average almost 400 points higher on the SAT college entrance examination than young people from families with less than \$20,000 in annual income (College Board, 2014). The richer students are more likely to get into college; once there, they are also more likely to complete their studies and get a degree. In a *credential society*—one that evaluates people on the basis of their schooling—companies hire job applicants with the best education. This process ends up helping people who have advantages to begin with and harming those who are already disadvantaged (Collins, 1979).

EVALUATE

Social-conflict theory links formal education to social inequality to show how schooling transforms privilege into personal worthiness and social disadvantage into personal deficiency. However, the social-conflict approach overlooks the extent to which finishing a degree reflects plenty of hard work and the extent to which schooling provides upward social mobility for talented women and men from all backgrounds. In addition, despite the claims that schooling supports the status quo, today's college curricula challenge social inequality on many fronts.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING Explain several ways in which education is linked to social inequality.

APPLYING THEORY

Education

	Structural-Functional Theory	Symbolic-Interaction Theory	Social-Conflict Theory
What is the level of analysis?	Macro-level	Micro-level	Macro-level
What is the importance of education for society?	Schooling performs many vital tasks for the operation of society, including socializing the young and encouraging discovery and invention to improve our lives. Schooling helps unite a diverse society by teaching shared norms and values.	How teachers define their students—as well as how students think of themselves—can become real to everyone and affect students' educational performance.	Schooling maintains social inequality through unequal schooling for rich and poor. Within individual schools, tracking provides privileged children with a better education than poor children.

The Applying Theory table sums up what each of the theoretical approaches shows us about education.

Problems in the Schools

20.5 Discuss dropping out, violence, and other problems facing today's schools.

An intense debate revolves around the quality of schooling in the United States. Perhaps because we expect our schools to do so much—teach, equalize opportunity, instill discipline, and fire our children's imagination—people are divided on whether public schools are doing their job. Although about half of adults give schools in their local community a performance grade of A or B, the same share gives a grade of C or below (PDK/Gallup Poll, 2014).

Discipline and Violence

When many of today's older teachers think back to their own student days, school "problems" consisted of talking out of turn, chewing gum, breaking the dress code, or cutting class. Today schools are grappling with serious issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, and outright violence. Although almost everyone agrees that schools should teach personal discipline, many think the job is no longer being done.

Schools do not create violence; in most cases, violence spills into the schools from the surrounding society. In the wake of a number of school shootings in recent decades, many school districts have adopted zero-tolerance policies that require suspension or expulsion for serious misbehavior or bringing weapons on campus.

Deadly school shootings—including the deaths of thirty-three students at Virginia Tech University in 2007, the 2010 death of a student who entered the library at the University of Texas at Austin and shot himself with an AK-47 assault rifle, and the 2012 deaths of six students and one employee at Oikos University in California—have shocked the nation. Such tragic incidents also raise serious questions about balancing students' right to privacy (typically laws forbid colleges from informing parents of a student's

grades or mental health issues) and the need to ensure the safety of the campus population. In the Virginia Tech case, had the university been able to bring the young man's mental health problems to the attention of the police or his family, the tragedy might have been prevented (Gibbs, 2007; Shedd, 2008).

Student Passivity

If some schools are plagued by violence, many more are filled with students who are bored. Some of the blame for passivity can be placed on the fact that electronic devices, from television to iPods, now consume more of young people's time than school, parents, and community activities. But schools must share the blame because the educational system itself encourages student passivity (Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1981).

BUREAUCRACY The small, personal schools that served countless local communities a century ago have evolved into huge educational factories. In a study of high schools across the United States, Theodore Sizer (1984:207–9) identified five ways in which large, bureaucratic schools undermine education:

1. **Rigid uniformity.** Bureaucratic schools run by outside specialists (such as state education officials) generally ignore the cultural character of local communities and the personal needs of their children.
2. **Numerical ratings.** School officials define success in terms of numerical attendance records and dropout rates and "teach to the tests," hoping to raise achievement test scores. In the process, they overlook dimensions of schooling that are difficult to quantify, such as creativity and enthusiasm.
3. **Rigid expectations.** Officials expect fifteen-year-olds to be in the tenth grade and eleventh-graders to score at a certain level on a standardized verbal achievement test. Rarely are exceptionally bright and motivated students permitted to advance more quickly or graduate early. Similarly, poor performers are pushed from grade to grade, doomed to fail year after year.
4. **Specialization.** Students in middle school and high school learn Spanish from one teacher, receive guidance from another, and are coached in sports by still others. Students shuffle between fifty-minute periods throughout the school day. As a result, no school official comes to know the child well.
5. **Little individual responsibility.** Highly bureaucratic schools do not empower students to learn on their own. Similarly, teachers have little say in what they teach in their classes and how they do it; any change in the pace of learning risks disrupting the system.

Of course, with 55 million schoolchildren in the United States, schools must be bureaucratic to get the job done.

But Sizer recommends that we "humanize" schools by reducing rigid scheduling, cutting class size, and training teachers more broadly so that they become more involved in the lives of their students. Overall, as James Coleman (1993) has suggested, schools need to be less "administratively driven" and more "output-driven." Perhaps this transformation could begin by ensuring that graduation from high school depends on what students have learned rather than simply on the number of years they have spent in the building.

COLLEGE: THE SILENT CLASSROOM Passivity is also common among college and university students. Sociologists rarely study the college classroom—a curious fact, considering how much time they spend there. One exception was a study at a coeducational university where David Karp and William Yoels (1976) found that, even in small classes, only a few students spoke up. Passivity seems to be a classroom norm, and students may even become irritated if one of their number is especially talkative.

According to Karp and Yoels, most students think classroom passivity is their own fault. Yet as anyone who observes young people outside the classroom knows, they are usually active and vocal. It is clearly the schools that teach students to be passive and to view instructors as experts who serve up "knowledge" and "truth." Most college students find little value in classroom discussion and see their proper role as listening quietly and taking notes. As a result, the researchers estimate, just 10 percent of college class time is used for discussion.

Faculty can bring students to life in their classrooms by making use of four teaching strategies: (1) calling on students by name when they volunteer, (2) positively reinforcing student participation, (3) asking analytical rather than factual questions and giving students time to answer, and (4) asking for student opinions even when no one volunteers a response (Auster & MacRone, 1994).

Dropping Out

If many students are passive in class, others are not there at all. The problem of *dropping out*—quitting school before earning a high school diploma—leaves young people (many of whom are disadvantaged to begin with) unprepared for the world of work and at high risk of poverty. For example, school dropouts account for more than 50 percent of all people receiving welfare assistance and more than 80 percent of the prison population (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007).

The good news is that the high school dropout rate for people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four declined from more than 16 percent in the late 1960s to 6.8 percent in 2013 (a total of 2.7 million young people). Dropping out is least pronounced among non-Hispanic whites (5.1 percent), higher among non-Hispanic



For all categories of people in the United States, dropping out of school greatly reduces the chances of getting a good job and earning a secure income. Why is the dropout rate particularly high among Hispanic students?

African Americans (7.3 percent), and highest of all among Hispanics (11.7 percent) (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2014).

Some students drop out because of problems with the English language, others because of pregnancy, and some because they must work to help support their family. For children growing up in families with income in the lowest 25 percent, the dropout rate is more than three times higher than for children living in high-income families (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). These data suggest that many dropouts are young people whose parents also have little schooling, revealing a multigenerational cycle of disadvantage.

Academic Standards

Perhaps the most serious educational issue confronting our society is the quality of schooling. In 1983, a comprehensive report on the quality of U.S. schools, titled *A Nation at Risk*, was issued by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE). It begins with this alarming statement:

If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. (1983:5)

Supporting this claim, the report notes that "nearly 40 percent of seventeen-year-olds cannot draw inferences

from written material; only one-fifth can write a persuasive essay; and only one-third can solve mathematical problems requiring several steps" (NCEE, 1983:9). Furthermore, scores on the SAT have shown little improvement over time. In 1967, mean scores for students were 516 on the mathematical test and 543 on the verbal test; by 2014, the average in mathematics was about the same, and the verbal average had plunged to just 497. Nationwide, 25 percent of twelfth-graders are below the basic skills in reading, 35 percent are below the basic level in math, and 40 percent are below the basic level in science (Barnes, 2002a; National Assessment of Education Progress, 2011, 2014; College Board, 2014).

For many people, even basic literacy is at issue. **Functional illiteracy**, *a lack of the reading and writing skills needed for everyday living*, is a problem for one in three U.S. children. For older people, about 30 million U.S. adults (about 14 percent of the total) lack basic skills in reading and writing.

A Nation at Risk recommended drastic reform. First, it called for schools to require *all* students to complete several years of English, mathematics, social studies, general science, and computer science. Second, schools should not promote students until they meet achievement standards. Third, teacher training must improve, and teachers' salaries must be raised to draw talent into the profession. The report concluded that schools must meet public expectations and that citizens must be prepared to pay for a job well done.

What has happened in the years since this report was issued? In some respects, schools have improved. In 2012, a report by the National Center for Education Statistics looked back over the last two decades and noted more students taking courses in science and mathematics, a modest decline in the dropout rate, a trend toward schools offering more challenging courses, a smaller share high school students working for income, and a larger share of high school graduates continuing to college. At the same time, the evidence suggests that a majority of elementary school students are falling below standards in reading; in many cases, they can't read at all. In short, although some improvement is evident, much remains to be done.

The United States spends more on schooling its children than almost any other nation—half again more than in Japan and Europe. Even so, a recent government report comparing the academic performance of fifteen-year-olds in sixty-five countries found that the United States placed twenty-seventh in science and thirty-fifth in mathematics. Such statistics fuel fears that our country is losing its leadership in science to other nations, including China, India, and South Korea (European Union, 2015; World Bank, 2015).

Cultural values also play a part in how hard students work at their schooling. For example, U.S. students are generally less motivated and do less homework than students

in Japan. Japanese young people also spend twenty-one more days in school each year than U.S. students. Perhaps one approach to improving academic performance is simply to have students spend more time in school (TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Center, 2013).

Grade Inflation

Academic standards depend on using grades that have clear meaning and are awarded for work of appropriate quality. Yet recent decades have seen substantial *grade inflation*, the awarding of ever-higher grades for average work. Though not necessarily found in every school, the trend toward grade inflation is evident across the country in both high schools and colleges.

One study of high school grades revealed a dramatic change in grades between 1968 and 2014. In 1968, as shown in Figure 20–2, the high school records of students who had just entered college included more grades of C+ and below than grades of A–, A, and A+. By 2014, however, these A grades outnumbered grades of C+ and below by more than eighteen to one (Eagan et al., 2014).

A few colleges and universities have enacted policies that limit the share of A's (generally to one-third of all grades). But there is little evidence that grade inflation will slow down anytime soon. As a result, the C grade (which used to mean "average") may all but disappear, making just about every student "above average."

What accounts for grade inflation? In part, today's teachers are concerned about the morale and self-esteem of their students and perhaps their own popularity. In any case, teachers clearly are not as "tough" as they used to be. At the same time, the ever more competitive process of getting into college and graduate school puts increasing pressure on high schools and colleges to award high grades (Astin et al., 2002).

Current Issues in U.S. Education

20.6 Summarize the debate over the performance of U.S. schools.

Our society's schools continuously confront new challenges. This section explores several recent and important educational issues, including school choice, home schooling, schooling people with disabilities, adult education, and the teacher shortage.

School Choice

Some analysts claim that our public schools teach poorly because they have no competition. Giving parents options for schooling their children might force all schools

to do a better job. This is the essence of a policy called *school choice*.

The goal of school choice is to create a market for schooling so that parents and students can shop for the best value. According to one proposal, the government would give vouchers to families with school-age children and allow them to spend that money at public, private, or parochial schools. In recent years, major cities, including Indianapolis, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., as well as the states of Florida and Illinois, have experimented with choice plans aimed at making public schools perform better to win the confidence of families.

Supporters claim that giving parents a choice about where to enroll their children is the only sure way to improve all schools. But critics (including teachers' unions) charge that school choice amounts to giving up on our nation's commitment to public education and that it will do little to improve schools in central cities, where the need is greatest (Cohen, 1999; Morse, 2002).

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed a new education bill that downplayed vouchers in favor of another approach to greater choice. Starting in the 2005–06 school year, all public schools began testing every child in reading, mathematics, and science in grades three through eight. Although the federal government provides more

Student Snapshot

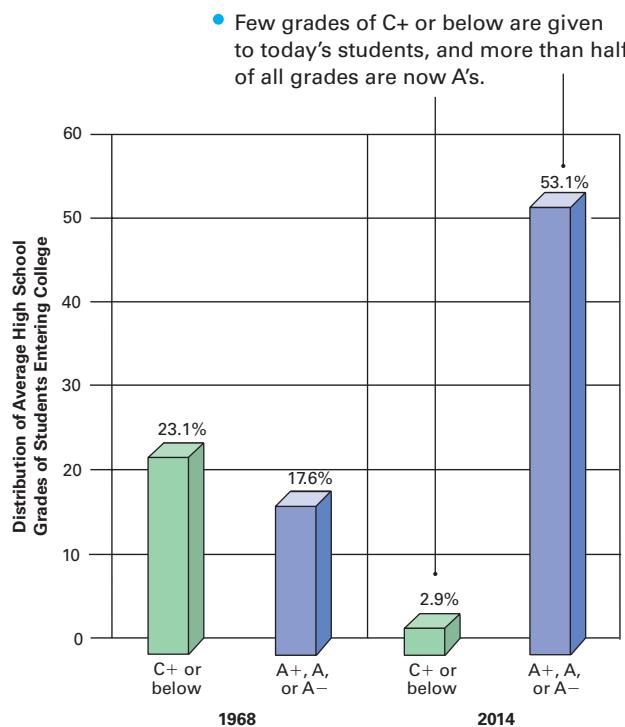


Figure 20–2 Grade Inflation in U.S. High Schools

In recent decades, teachers have given higher and higher grades to students.

SOURCES: Astin et al. (2002) and Eagan et al. (2014).

aid to schools where students do not perform well, schools that do not show improvements in test scores over a period of time must give their students the choice of either special tutoring or transportation to another school. This program, called “No Child Left Behind,” has succeeded in identifying schools that are not doing a good job educating children, and the program has raised some measures of student performance. At the same time, however, there has been little change in many of the worst-performing schools.

By 2012, 48 percent of this nation’s public schools had been labeled as failing because they missed their student performance targets. Critics now point to poll numbers that show a majority of U.S. adults supporting making changes to the No Child Left Behind Act because it has not improved public education. In addition, critics claim that this policy—much of which has been carried forward by the Obama administration under the banner of “Race to the Top”—has directed attention away from the arts, foreign languages, and literature in favor of “teaching to the tests” (Wallis & Steptoe, 2007; Dillon, 2011; Ravitch, 2011; Gallup, 2012; Rich, 2013).

A more modest type of school choice involves *magnet schools*, more than 2,900 of which now exist across the country. Magnet schools, which enroll just 4.6 percent of public school students, offer special facilities and programs that promote educational excellence in a particular field, such as computer science, foreign languages, science and mathematics, or the arts. In school districts with magnet schools, parents can choose the school best suited to their child’s particular talents and interests.

Another school choice strategy involves *charter schools*, public schools that are given more freedom to try out new policies and programs. There are more than 6,000 such schools in forty states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico; they enroll 2.3 million students, 65 percent of whom are minorities. In many of these schools, students have demonstrated high academic achievement—a requirement for renewal of the charter—and students who graduate from charter schools are more likely than students in normal public schools to gain admission to a college (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

A final development in the school choice movement is *schooling for profit*. Advocates of this plan say that school systems can be operated by private profit-making companies more efficiently than by local governments. Private schooling is nothing new, of course; more than 30,000 schools in the United States are currently run by private organizations and religious groups. What is new is that hundreds of public schools, enrolling hundreds of thousands of students, are now run by private businesses for profit.

Research confirms that many public school systems suffer from bureaucratic bloat, spending too much and

teaching too little. And our society has long looked to competition to improve quality. Evidence suggests that for-profit schools have greatly reduced administrative costs, but the educational results appear mixed. Although several companies claim to have improved student learning, some cities have cut back on business-run schools. In recent years, school boards in Baltimore, Miami, Hartford, and Boston have canceled the contracts of for-profit schooling corporations. But other cities are deciding to give for-profit schooling a try. For example, after Philadelphia’s public school system failed to graduate one-third of its students, the state of Pennsylvania took over that city’s schools and turned over most of them to for-profit companies. Although there was some improvement in student performance, school officials were still dissatisfied and so, in 2010, they turned for assistance to independent companies that operate as nonprofit organizations. Emotions on both sides of the for-profit schools issue run high, with each side claiming to speak for the well-being of the schoolchildren caught in the middle (Sizer, 2003; Garland, 2007; Richburg, 2008; Mezzacappa, 2010).

A recent initiative is called Common Core State Standards, a federally mandated set of standards that specifies skills that children should learn in each grade. This program started in 2010, setting performance standards that were adopted by forty-five states. Supporters claim that Common Core provides needed uniformity from state to state. They identify basic skills—such as understanding fractions and sentence structure—that the federal government claims should be “common” to everyone’s schooling. They argue that Common Core may raise student performance in the United States, which has lagged behind that of many other nations. In addition, supporters claim this initiative is a way to make schools and teachers more accountable. But some critics fear an increasing federal government role in education, which they believe should be left up to the states and local communities. In recent years, a rising concern among parents is that their children are facing an increasing workload to prepare for difficult tests—at the expense of other learning—and such criticisms raise doubts about the future of this program (Altman, 2014; Lahey, 2014; Lu, 2014).

Home Schooling

Home schooling is gaining popularity across the United States. About 1.8 million children (more than 3 percent of all school-age children) receive their formal schooling at home.

Why do parents—especially mothers—undertake the enormous challenge of schooling their own children? Several generations ago, most of the parents who pioneered home schooling (which is now legal in every state) wanted to give their children a strongly religious

upbringing. Some home-schooling parents today also feel this way. But many home-schooling families simply do not believe that public schools are doing a good job and think they can do better. To benefit their children, they are willing to alter work schedules and relearn algebra or other necessary subjects. Many belong to groups in which parents pool their efforts, specializing in what each knows best (Lois, 2013).

Advocates of home schooling point out that given the poor performance of many public schools, no one should be surprised that a growing number of parents are stepping up to teach their own children. In addition, this system works—on average, students who learn at home outperform those who learn in school. Critics argue that home schooling reduces the amount of funding going to local public schools, which ends up hurting the majority of students. In addition, as one critic points out, home schooling “takes some of the most affluent and articulate parents out of the system. These are the parents who know how to get things done with administrators” (Chris Lubienski, quoted in Cloud & Morse, 2001:48).

Schooling People with Disabilities

Many of the 6.4 million children with disabilities in the United States face special challenges getting to and from school; once there, many with crutches or wheelchairs cannot negotiate stairs and other obstacles inside school buildings. Other children with developmental disabilities such as mental retardation require extensive personal attention from specially trained teachers. Because of these challenges, many children with mental and physical disabilities have received a public education only after persistent efforts by parents and other concerned citizens (Horn & Tynan, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

More than 60 percent of children with disabilities attend public schools and spend about 80 percent of their time in general classes. This pattern reflects the principle of **mainstreaming**, *integrating students with disabilities or special needs into the overall educational program*. Mainstreaming is a form of *inclusive education* that works best for physically impaired students who have no difficulty keeping up academically with the rest of the class. A benefit of putting children with and without



All states in the United States permit home schooling. In Europe, however, many nations outlaw this practice. This German family requested and received political asylum in the United States so that they could teach their children at home. Why do you think home schooling has been controversial?

disabilities in the same classroom is allowing everyone to learn to interact with people who differ from one another.

Adult Education

Almost 100 million U.S. adults over the age of twenty-five are enrolled in some type of schooling. These older students range in age from the mid-twenties to the seventies and beyond and make up about 40 percent of students in degree-granting programs. Adults in school are more likely to be women (61 percent) than men (39 percent), and most have above-average incomes.

Why do adults return to the classroom? The most obvious reasons given are to advance a career or train for a new job, but many are in class simply for personal enrichment (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

The Teacher Shortage

A final challenge for U.S. schools is hiring enough teachers to fill the classrooms. In the United States, there are more than 430,000 teaching vacancies each year. When positions are not filled, both teachers and students suffer from ever-larger class sizes.

Surveys show that most teachers are satisfied with their jobs (Primary Sources, 2014). But a number of factors—including low salaries, frustration over extensive bureaucracy, and large class sizes—have combined to discourage many people from seeking careers in teaching. As a result, there is a shortage of high-quality teachers, especially in mathematics and the sciences.

How will these slots be filled with well-trained teachers? Most people who complete training in education do



Educators have long debated the best way to teach children with disabilities. On one hand, such children may benefit from separate facilities staffed by specially trained teachers. On the other hand, children are less likely to be stigmatized as "different" if they are included in regular classrooms.

not have a degree in a specific field, such as mathematics, biology, or English. Therefore, many of these men and women have trouble passing state certification tests in the subject they want to teach. As a result, many schools, especially in low-income neighborhoods, are staffed by teachers who may be just one chapter ahead of their students. From another angle, almost half of this country's public school teachers have SAT scores that put them in the bottom one-third of all students who took the tests (Quaid, 2008; Kristof, 2011).

What all this adds up to is a need for higher-quality teachers. For our nation's public schools to improve, two things must happen: First, teachers who do not teach well must receive additional training or lose their jobs, and second, well-qualified people need to be attracted into the classroom by higher pay and greater public respect (Ripley, 2008; Kristof, 2011).

Getting rid of bad teachers (and perhaps bad principals, too) means changing rules that make it difficult or impossible to fire someone after a few years on the job. Gaining well-qualified teachers depends on adopting various recruitment strategies. Some schools offer incentives such as higher salaries (the average salary for a thirty-year-old teacher in public schools is only about \$45,000 a year) to draw into teaching people who already have had successful careers. Some schools provide signing bonuses (especially for hard-to-fill positions in disciplines such as chemistry) or give housing allowances (in cities such as New York, where quality housing is often out of the reach of teachers). The pay gap between teachers and other professionals has increased in recent decades. President Obama (2007) has written that he believes that school districts should pay highly qualified and effective teachers

as much as \$100,000 a year—but, he adds, they also should be able to dismiss unqualified and ineffective teachers.

Other policy ideas include having community colleges play a larger role in teacher education and having government and school boards make it easier for well-trained people to get the certification they need to enter the classroom. Finally, many school districts are going global, actively recruiting in countries such as Spain, India, and the Philippines to bring talented women and men from around the world to teach in U.S. classrooms (Evelyn, 2002; Ripley, 2008; Wallis, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Debate about education in the United States extends beyond the issues noted here. The *Controversy & Debate* box highlights the declining share of college students who are men.

Schooling: Looking Ahead

Although the United States remains among the world leaders in sending people to college, the public school system continues to struggle with serious problems. In terms of quality of schooling, this country has fallen behind many other high-income nations, a fact that calls into question the future strength of the United States on the world stage.

Many of the problems of schooling discussed in this chapter have their roots in the larger society. We cannot expect schools *by themselves* to provide high-quality education. Schools will improve only to the extent that students, teachers, parents, and local communities commit themselves to educational excellence. In short, educational problems are *social* problems for which there is no quick fix.

For much of the twentieth century, there were just two models for education in the United States: public schools run by the government and private schools operated by nongovernmental organizations. In recent decades, however, many new ideas about schooling have emerged, including schooling for profit and a wide range of school choice programs. In the decades ahead, we are likely to see some significant changes in mass education, guided in part by social science research into the outcomes of different strategies.

Another factor that will continue to reshape schools is new information technology. Today all but the poorest primary and secondary schools use computers for instruction. Computers encourage students to be more active and allow them to progress at their own pace. Even so, computers will never bring to the educational process the personal insights and imagination of a motivated human teacher.

Controversy & Debate

The Twenty-First-Century Campus: Where Are the Men?

Meg: I mean, what's with this campus not having enough men?

Tricia: It's no big deal. I'd rather focus on my work.

Mark: I think it's, like, really cool for us guys.

A century ago, the campuses of colleges and universities across the United States might as well have hung out a sign that read "Men Only." Almost all of the students and faculty were male. There were a small number of women's colleges, but many more schools—including some of the best-known U.S. universities such as Yale, Harvard, and Princeton—barred women outright.

Since then, women have won greater social equality. By 1980, the number of women enrolled at U.S. colleges finally matched the number of men.

In a surprising trend, however, the share of women on campus has continued to increase. As a result, in 2013, men accounted for only 44 percent of all U.S. undergraduates. Meg DeLong noticed the gender imbalance right away when she moved into her dorm at the University of Georgia at Athens; she soon learned that just 39 percent of her first-year



At the college level, online learning is now available at about three-fourths of all institutions, and about one-fourth of today's college students take one or more courses online. An increasing share of textbooks is now electronic, and this digital format allows readers to become more active in their own learning (Parker, Lenhart, & Moore, 2011).

classmates were men. In some classes, there were few men, and women usually dominated discussions. Out of class, DeLong and many other women soon complained that having so few men on campus hurt their social life. Not surprisingly, most of the men felt otherwise (Fonda, 2000).

What accounts for the shifting gender balance on U.S. campuses? One theory is that young men are drawn away from college by the lure of jobs, especially in high technology. This pattern is sometimes termed the "Bill Gates syndrome" or the "Mark Zuckerberg syndrome," after the men who dropped out of college to become rich and famous by founding large computer companies. In addition, analysts point to an anti-intellectual male culture. Young women are drawn to learning and seek to do well in school, but young men attach less importance to studying. Rightly or wrongly, more men seem to think they can get a good job without investing years of their lives and a considerable amount of money in getting a college degree.

The gender gap is evident in all racial and ethnic categories and at all class levels. Among African Americans on campus, only 38 percent are men. The lower the income level, the greater the gender gap in college attendance.

Many college officials are concerned about the lack of men on campus. In an effort to attract more balanced enrollments, some colleges are adopting what amounts to affirmative action programs for males. But courts in several states have already ruled such policies illegal. Many colleges, therefore, are turning to more active recruitment; admissions officers are paying special attention to male applicants and stressing a college's strength in mathematics and science—areas traditionally popular with men. In the same way that colleges across the country are striving to increase their share of minority students, the hope is that they can also succeed in attracting a larger share of men.

What Do You Think?

1. Why do you think women outnumber men on the college campus?
2. Is there a gender imbalance on your campus? Does it create problems? What problems? For whom?
3. Should colleges try to balance enrollments by sex? Is affirmative action for men a good or bad way to do this?

Technology will never solve all the problems that plague our schools, including violence and rigid bureaucracy. What we need is a broad plan for social change that renews this country's early ambition to provide universal schooling of high quality—a goal that we have yet to achieve.

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

CHAPTER 20 Education

How big is our society's inequality in schooling?

All schools, of course, differ in many ways. But there are several tiers of schooling in the United States, and these reflect the social class standing of the students

they enroll. The four images shown here provide a closer look at schools at different levels of this educational hierarchy.

At the top of the schooling hierarchy are private day and boarding schools. The best of these schools, such as the Hopkins School in New Haven, Connecticut, have large endowments, small classes with extremely well-trained and very dedicated teachers, and magnificent campuses with facilities that rival those of the nation's top colleges. What do you estimate is the annual cost to attend such a school?



In the middle of the educational hierarchy are the best public high schools, most of which are found in suburban communities. This classroom in Briarcliff High School in Briarcliff Manor, New York, has small classes with good teachers and offers many extracurricular activities. What level of income do you think is typical of the families that are able to send their children to schools such as this?



At the lower end of the hierarchy are the public schools found in our nation's large cities. Thomas Jefferson High School in Los Angeles is better than most, yet compared to suburban and private boarding schools, its classes are larger, its teachers are not as well trained, and the risk of violence within its walls is higher. What can you say about the students who attend inner-city schools?

When Barack and Michelle Obama moved to the White House in 2009, they faced the choice of where to enroll their two young daughters. They chose Sidwell Friends, a private school. What factors might they have considered before making this choice?



Hint Private day and boarding schools provide an outstanding education, and the independent living experience of boarding schools also helps students prepare for success in a good college or university. Although schools like Hopkins provide financial aid to many students, the cost of a single year at such a school for most students is at least \$35,000, and the typical cost at a boarding school is at least \$50,000, which is just about as much as the average family earns in a year. Suburban high schools are supported through tax money; yet the cost of homes in these affluent communities is typically hundreds of thousands of dollars, putting this level of schooling out of reach for a large share of U.S. families. Public schools in the inner city enroll students from families with below-average incomes, which means these schools have the highest percentage of minority students. Liberal Democrats such as the Obamas strongly support public education, but they, like most other residents of the White House (Amy Carter went to public school), have chosen private schooling for their children, whether for educational or security reasons.

Seeing Sociology in Your Everyday Life

1. Make a visit to a public or private secondary school near your college or home. What is the typical social background of students enrolled there? Does the school have a tracking policy? If so, find out how it works. How much importance does a student's social background have in the school's process of making a tracking assignment?
2. Why are you in college? What benefits do you expect to receive from continuing your education? Consider the consequences of schooling both for your career and for personal development.
3. Go to www.sociologyinfofocus.com to access the Sociology in Focus blog, where you can read the latest posts by a team of young sociologists who apply the sociological perspective to topics of popular culture.

Making the Grade

CHAPTER 20 Education

Education: A Global Survey

20.1 Compare schooling in high-, middle-, and low-income societies. (pages 539–42)

Education is the social institution for transmitting knowledge and skills, as well as teaching cultural norms and values.

- In preindustrial societies, education occurs informally within the family.
- Industrial societies develop formal systems of schooling to educate their children.
- Differences in schooling in societies around the world today reflect both cultural values and each country's level of economic development.

Schooling in India

- Despite the fact that India is now a middle-income country, patriarchy continues to shape education in India. Many more boys attend school than girls, who are often expected to work in factories at young ages.
- Today, 97% of children in India complete primary school, and 92% go on to secondary school.

Schooling in Japan

- The earliest years of schooling in Japan concentrate on transmitting Japanese cultural traditions.
- More men and women graduate from high school in Japan (99%) than in the United States (87%), but only half of high school graduates gain college admission, which is determined by highly competitive examinations.

Schooling in Great Britain

- During the Middle Ages, schooling was a privilege of the British nobility. The Industrial Revolution created a need for a literate workforce.
- Traditional class differences still affect British schooling; elite schools, which enroll 7% of British students, provide a path for admission to the most prestigious universities.

Schooling in the United States

- The United States was among the first countries to undertake compulsory mass education, reflecting both democratic political ideals and the needs of the industrial-capitalist economy.
- Schooling in the United States claims to promote equal opportunity, but the opportunity to go to college is closely tied to family income.
- The U.S. educational system stresses the value of practical learning that prepares young people for their place in the workforce.

education the social institution through which society provides its members with important knowledge, including basic facts, job skills, and cultural norms and values

schooling formal instruction under the direction of specially trained teachers

The Functions of Schooling

20.2 Apply structural-functional theory to schooling. (pages 542–43)

Structural-functional theory focuses on the ways in which schooling contributes to the orderly operation of society. Key functions of schooling include

- *Socialization*—teaching the skills that young people need to succeed in life, as well as cultural values and norms
- *Cultural innovation*—providing the opportunity for academic research that leads to important discoveries
- *Social integration*—molding a diverse population into one society by teaching cultural norms and values
- *Social placement*—reinforcing meritocracy and providing a path for upward social mobility
- *Latent functions*—providing child care and the opportunity for building social networks

Schooling and Social Interaction

20.3 Apply social-interaction theory to schooling. (pages 543–44)

Symbolic-interaction theory looks at how we build reality in our day-to-day interactions.

- The “self-fulfilling prophecy” describes how self-image can affect how students perform in school. Students who think they are academically superior are likely to perform better; those who think they are inferior are likely to perform less well.

Schooling and Social Inequality

20.4 Apply social-conflict theory to schooling. (pages 544–50)

Social-conflict theory links schooling to inequality involving class, race, and gender.

- Formal education serves as a means of generating conformity to produce obedient adult workers.
- Standardized tests have been criticized as culturally biased tools that may lead to labeling less privileged students as personally deficient.
- **Tracking** has been challenged by critics as a program that gives a better education to privileged youngsters.

- The majority of young people in the United States attend state-funded public schools. A small proportion of students—usually the most well-to-do—attend elite private college preparatory schools.
- Differences in school funding affect the quality of education: Public schools in more affluent areas offer a better education than schools in poorer areas.
- Largely due to the high cost of college, only 66% of U.S. students enroll in college directly after high school graduation; the higher a family's income, the more likely it is that children will attend college.
- Earning a college degree today adds as much as \$1 million to a person's lifetime income.

tracking assigning students to different types of educational programs

Problems in the Schools

20.5 Discuss dropping out, violence, and other problems facing today's schools. (pages 550–53)

Violence permeates many schools, especially in poor neighborhoods.

- Critics charge that schools today fall short in their attempts to teach personal discipline.

The bureaucratic character of schools fosters **student passivity**. Schools have evolved into huge educational factories that

- demand rigid uniformity
- define success in terms of numerical ratings
- hold rigid expectations of students
- require too much specialization
- instill little individual responsibility in students

The high school **dropout rate**—currently 6.8%—leaves many young people unprepared for the world of work and at high risk of poverty. The dropout rate for children in families with income in the bottom 25% is more than three times higher than for children living in high-income families.

Declining academic standards are reflected in today's lower average scores on achievement tests, the **functional illiteracy** of a significant proportion of high school graduates, and grade inflation.

functional illiteracy a lack of the reading and writing skills needed for everyday living

Current Issues in U.S. Education

20.6 Summarize the debate over the performance of U.S. schools. (pages 553–57)

The **school choice movement** seeks to make schools more accountable to the public. Innovative school choice options include magnet schools, schooling for profit, and charter schools.

Home Schooling

- The original pioneers of home schooling did not believe in public education because they wanted to give their children a strongly religious upbringing.
- Home schooling advocates today point to the poor performance of public schools.

Schooling People with Disabilities

- In the past, children with mental or physical disabilities were schooled in special classes.
- **Mainstreaming** affords them broader opportunities and exposes all children to a more diverse student population.

Adult Education

- Adults represent a growing proportion of students in the United States.
- Most older learners are women who are engaged in job-related study.

The Teacher Shortage

- A number of factors—including low salaries and frustration over extensive bureaucracy, as well as increases in class size due to rising enrollments—have combined to discourage many people from seeking careers in teaching, resulting in a shortage of high-quality teachers.
- To address this shortage, many school districts are recruiting teachers from abroad.

mainstreaming integrating students with disabilities or special needs into the overall educational program

Chapter 21

Health and Medicine



Learning Objectives

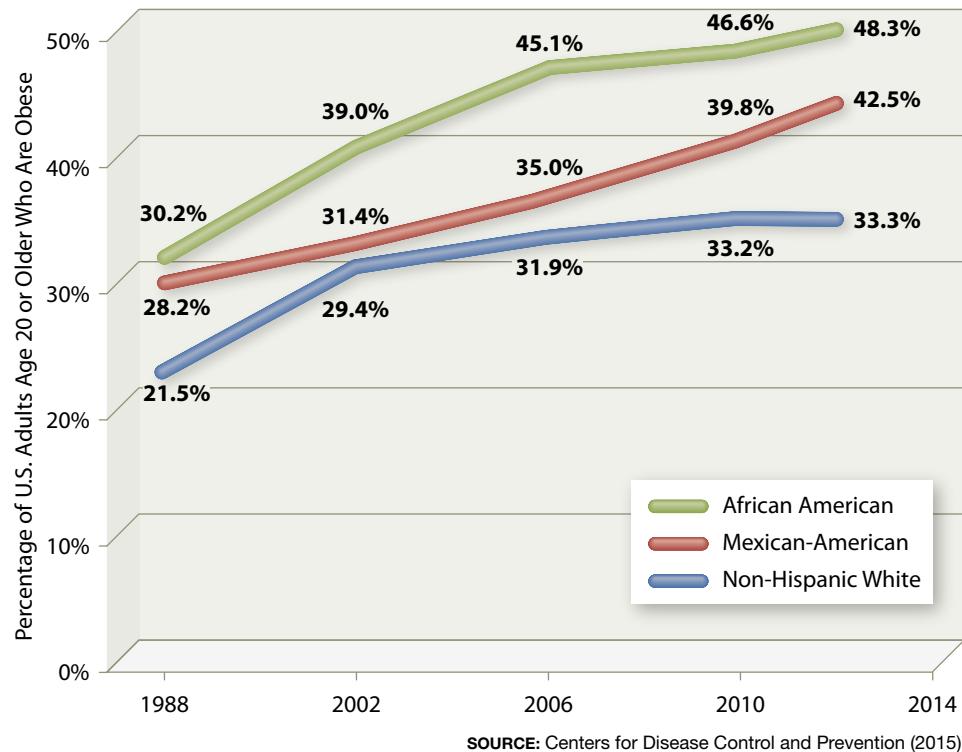
- 21.1** Explain how patterns of health are shaped by society.
- 21.2** Contrast patterns of health in low- and high-income countries.
- 21.3** Analyze how race, class, gender, and age are linked to health.

- 21.4** Compare the medical systems in nations around the world.
- 21.5** Apply sociology's major theories to health and medicine.



The Power of Society

to shape patterns of health



What is one of the most disturbing trends in the United States involving health? The answer is the rising rate of obesity. Government studies show that most U.S. adults over the age of twenty are at least somewhat overweight and that rates of obesity (being considerably overweight) are rapidly increasing for all categories of the U.S. population. Since 1988, the share of white people who are obese has risen from about 22 percent to 33 percent. The share of African Americans and Mexican Americans who are obese is even higher and also has been on the rise. While we might think health is a matter of personal choices or sometimes the result of sheer luck, the rise in average body weight in the United States reflects changes in our way of life, including diet and patterns of exercise.

Chapter Overview

This chapter explores health care, including medicine, a social institution of major importance. The chapter begins by explaining why health is a social issue and why sociologists have much to say about human health.

Krista Peters cannot remember a time in her life when she was not on a diet. The sixteen-year-old, who lives in a small Pennsylvania town, shakes her head. “It’s, like, I can’t do anything about it. I know I don’t look good. My mom says I shouldn’t eat so much; the nurse at school says the same thing. But if it’s up to me, then why can’t I ever lose any weight?”

Peters does have a weight problem. Although she stands just 5 feet 2 inches tall, she weighs 240 pounds. Doctors would call her seriously obese, and the longer she remains so heavy, the greater her odds of serious disease and even death at a young age.

Krista Peters is not alone. In a society where fast food has become something of a national dish and people use the word “supersize” as a verb, men and women all across the United States are getting fat. Not some people—*most* people. According to the experts, about 64 percent of U.S. adults are overweight and 29 percent are clinically obese. In response to the rising level of body weight among young people, government officials have recently mandated more fruits and vegetables, as well as limits on junk food, on school cafeteria menus.

Being overweight is a serious health issue. People like Krista Peters are at high risk for heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Among young people, being overweight carries health risks the same way that cigarette smoking does. Each year, more than 100,000 people in the United States die early from diseases related to being overweight. Body weight is not just a personal problem; it is also a *social* problem. The choices people make do matter, but members of our society are up against some powerful cultural forces. Consider the fact that the U.S. population is confronted with unhealthy fast food at every turn. Our national consumption of salty potato chips, sugar-rich soft drinks, high-calorie pizza, and chocolate candy bars rises every year. Car companies and airlines have even had to design larger seats to fit more “supersized” people (Bellandi, 2003; Witt, 2004; Bennett, 2006; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). ■



What Is Health?

21.1 Explain how patterns of health are shaped by society.

In ideal terms, according to the World Health Organization (1946:3), **health** is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. This definition underscores the major theme of this chapter: Health is not just a matter of personal choice, nor is it only a biological issue; patterns of well-being and illness are rooted in the organization of society.

Health and Society

Society shapes people’s health in four major ways:

1. **Cultural patterns define health.** Standards of health vary from place to place. A century ago, yaws, a contagious skin disease, was so common in sub-Saharan Africa that people there considered it normal (Dubos,

1980). In the United States, a rich diet is so common that most adults and about one-sixth of children are overweight. “Health,” therefore, is sometimes a matter of having the same disease as your neighbors (Pinhey, Rubinstein, & Colfax, 1997; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

What people see as healthful also reflects what they think is morally good. Members of our society (especially men) think a competitive way of life is “healthy” because it fits our cultural mores, but stress contributes to heart disease and many other illnesses. People who object to homosexuality on moral grounds call this sexual orientation “sick,” even though it is natural from a biological point of view. Thus ideas about health act as a form of social control, encouraging conformity to cultural norms.

2. **Cultural standards of health change over time.** In the early twentieth century, some doctors warned

women not to go to college because higher education would strain the female brain. Others claimed that masturbation was a threat to health. We know now that both of these ideas are false. Fifty years ago, on the other hand, few doctors understood the dangers of cigarette smoking or too much sun exposure, practices that we now recognize as serious health risks. Even patterns of basic hygiene change over time. Today, most people in the United States bathe every day; this is three times as often as fifty years ago (Gillespie, 2000).

- 3. A society's technology affects people's health.** In poor nations, infectious diseases are widespread because of malnutrition and poor sanitation. As industrialization raises living standards, people become healthier. But industrial technology also creates new threats to health. As Chapter 22 ("Population, Urbanization, and Environment") explains, high-income ways of life threaten human health by overtaxing the world's resources and creating pollution.
- 4. Social inequality affects people's health.** All societies distribute resources unequally. In general, the rich have far better physical and mental health than the poor.

Health: A Global Survey

21.2 Contrast patterns of health in low- and high-income countries.

We see the close link between health and social life in the fact that human well-being improved over the long course of history as societies developed more advanced technology. Differences in societal development are also the cause of striking differences in health around the world today.

Health in Low-Income Countries

December 25, Yucay, Peru. We're attending the Christmas Day street festival in this small village in the Andes Mountains. There is much excitement and happiness everywhere. I notice something unusual—at least by North American standards—not one of the hundreds of people who have passed by along the main street is wearing glasses. One Peruvian friend says that in this poor community, there are no optometrists or eye doctors, and no one has any extra money to afford glasses.

In the United States and much of the world, severe poverty cuts decades off the long life expectancy that is typical of rich countries. A look at Global Map 15–1, "Life Expectancy in Global Perspective," shows that people in most parts of Africa have a life expectancy of less than sixty years, and in the poorest countries, nearly

one in ten newborns dies within a year and almost one in four people dies before reaching the age of thirty (United Nations, 2013; Population Reference Bureau, 2014; World Bank, 2015).

The World Health Organization reports that 1 billion people around the world—about one person in six—suffer from serious illness due to poverty. Most poverty-linked disease occurs in low-income countries, where poverty accounts for 70 percent of all illness. In rich countries, by contrast, poverty is the cause of just 7 percent of all illness (Bloom et al., 2011; Murray et al., 2012).

How does poverty threaten health? In simple terms, poor sanitation and malnutrition kill people of all ages. A lack of safe drinking water is also common, and bad water carries a number of infectious diseases, including influenza, pneumonia, and tuberculosis, which are widespread killers in poor societies today. To make matters worse, medical personnel are few and far between; as a result, the world's poorest people—many of whom live in Central Africa—never see a physician.

In a classic vicious circle, poverty breeds disease, which in turn undermines the ability to work. When medical technology controls infectious disease, the populations of poor nations soar. Without resources to provide for the current population, poor societies can ill afford population increases. Therefore, programs that lower death rates in poor countries will succeed only if they are coupled with programs that reduce birth rates.

Health in High-Income Countries

By 1800, as the Industrial Revolution took hold, factory jobs in the cities attracted people from all over the countryside. Cities quickly became overcrowded, causing serious sanitation problems. Factories fouled the air with smoke, which few people recognized as a health threat until well into the twentieth century. Workplace accidents were common.

Gradually, industrialization improved health in Western Europe and North America by providing better nutrition and safer housing for most people, so that by about 1850, health began to improve. Around this time, medical advances began to control infectious diseases. In 1854, for example, a physician named John Snow mapped the street addresses of London's cholera victims and found that they had all drunk contaminated water from the same well. Not long afterward, scientists linked cholera to a specific bacterium and developed a vaccine against the deadly disease. Armed with scientific knowledge, early environmentalists campaigned against common practices such as discharging raw sewage into the same rivers used for drinking water. By the early twentieth century, death rates from infectious diseases had fallen sharply.

Table 21–1 Leading Causes of Death in the United States, 1900 and 2013

1900	2013
1. Influenza and pneumonia	1. Heart disease
2. Tuberculosis	2. Cancer
3. Stomach and intestinal disease	3. Lung disease (noncancerous)
4. Heart disease	4. Accidents
5. Cerebral hemorrhage	5. Stroke
6. Kidney disease	6. Alzheimer's disease
7. Accidents	7. Diabetes
8. Cancer	8. Influenza and pneumonia
9. Disease in early infancy	9. Kidney disease
10. Diphtheria	10. Suicide

SOURCES: Information for 1900 is from Cockerham (1986); information for 2013 is from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014).

A glance at Table 21–1 shows that the leading killers in 1900 were infectious diseases, such as influenza, pneumonia, and tuberculosis. Today, in all but the poorest nations of the world, such diseases account for just a small percentage of deaths. It is now chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, cancer, and stroke, that cause most deaths, usually in old age (Murray et al., 2012).

Health in the United States

21.3 Analyze how race, class, gender, and age are linked to health.

Because the United States is a rich nation, health is generally good by world standards, and it is certainly better than what is typical of poor countries. At the same time, although the United States spends more on health care per person than any other high-income nation, this nation's people have higher rates of disease, are less likely to live to age fifty, and end up dying sooner than people in most other high-income countries (Tavernise, 2012; United Nations, 2013). In addition, some categories of people have better health than others.

Who Is Healthy? Age, Gender, Class, and Race

Social epidemiology is the study of how health and disease are distributed throughout a society's population. Just as early social epidemiologists traced the spread of diseases, researchers today examine the connection between health and our physical and social environments. National Map 21–1 surveys life expectancy—a key measure of human health—for counties across the United States, where there is more than a ten-year difference in average life expectancy between the richest and poorest communities.

Patterns of health can be viewed in terms of age, gender, social class, and race.

AGE AND GENDER In the United States, the death of a young person is a rare event that is typically viewed as unexpected and tragic. Still, young people do fall victim to accidents and, more recently, to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

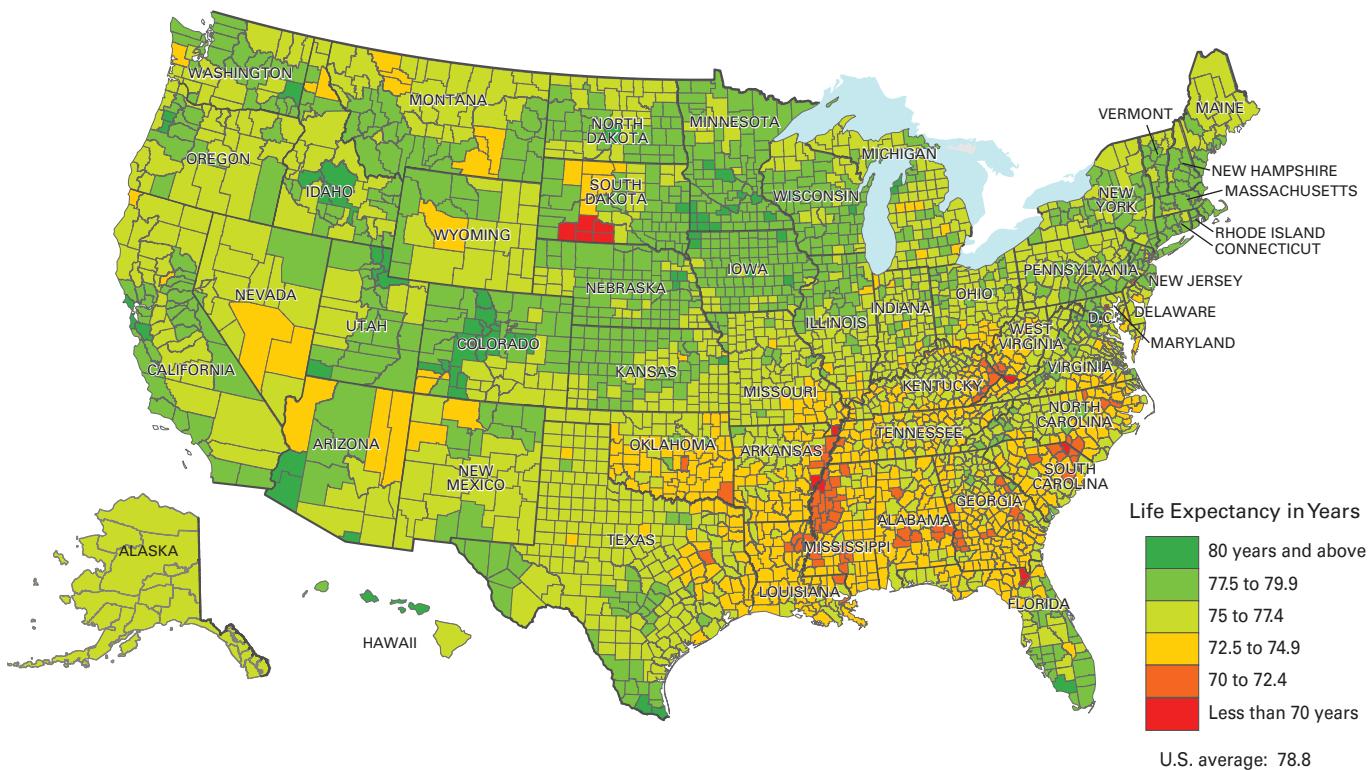
Across the life course, women have better health than men. First, girls are less likely than boys to die before or immediately after birth. Then, as socialization begins, males become more aggressive and individualistic, which contributes to young males having four times the risk of suicide, and five times the risk of dying from a homicide (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014). Later in life, men are also more likely to die from heart disease. As the Thinking About Diversity box on page 568 explains, the combination of chronic impatience, uncontrolled ambition, and frequent outbursts of hostility that doctors call "coronary-prone behavior" is a fairly close match with our culture's definition of masculinity. This is one important way in which gender affects the "bottom line" of longevity, with women, on average, outliving men by about five years.

SOCIAL CLASS AND RACE Government researchers tell us that 78 percent of adults in families with incomes over \$100,000 think their health is excellent or very good, but only 47 percent of adults in families earning less than \$35,000 say the same. Conversely, just 4 percent of higher-income people describe their health as either fair or poor compared with 23 percent of low-income people. Having a higher income and greater wealth boosts people's health by improving their nutrition, enabling them to receive better health care, and allowing them to live in safer and less stressful surroundings (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014).

Research suggests that African Americans are no different from whites in terms of their desire for good health and willingness to seek medical help. But poverty among African Americans—at almost three times the rate for whites—shapes people's everyday options and helps explain why black people are more likely to die in infancy and, as adults, are more likely to suffer the effects of high blood pressure and heart disease as well as violence and drug abuse (Schnittker, Pescosolido, & Croghan, 2005; McNeil, 2011; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

The life expectancy of white children born in 2013 is nearly four years greater than that of African Americans (78.9 years versus 75.1). From another angle, 82 percent of white men but just 73 percent of African American men will live to age sixty-five. The comparable figures for women are 89 percent for whites and 83 percent for African Americans (Arias, 2014; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014).

Seeing Ourselves



National Map 21–1 Life Expectancy across the United States

How long people typically live is a good measure of the overall health of a population. Life expectancy varies from county to county across the United States and reflects factors such as nutrition and diet and smoking habits. Looking at the map, what pattern do you see? Can you explain it?

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2012).

Infant mortality—the death rate among children under one year of age—is twice as high for severely disadvantaged children as for children born into privileged families. Although the health of the richest children in our nation is the best in the world, our poorest children are as vulnerable to disease as those in low-income nations such as Nigeria and Cambodia.

Cigarette Smoking

Cigarette smoking tops the list of preventable health hazards in the United States. More than 440,000 men and women in the United States die prematurely each year as a direct result of cigarette smoking, a figure that exceeds the death toll from alcohol, cocaine, heroin, homicide, suicide, automobile accidents, and AIDS combined. Smokers also suffer more frequent minor illnesses such as the flu, and pregnant women who smoke increase the likelihood of spontaneous abortion and low-birthweight babies. Even nonsmokers exposed to cigarette smoke have a higher risk of smoking-related diseases; health officials estimate that secondhand smoke causes heart disease or lung cancer that

kills about 42,000 people each year (CDC, 2010, 2014, 2015; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014).

Only after World War I did smoking become popular in this country. Despite growing evidence of its dangers, smoking remained fashionable until around a generation ago. Today, however, an increasing number of people consider smoking a mild form of social deviance, and an increasing number of states have banned smoking in public buildings (Niesse, 2007).

The popularity of cigarettes peaked in 1960, when 45 percent of U.S. adults smoked. By 2013, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015), only 19.6 percent were still lighting up. Although smoking is not as common as it was, not everyone who stops using cigarettes stops using tobacco. Government studies show that smoking bans and higher taxes on cigarettes have lowered the consumption of cigarettes, although most of the decline in recent years has been among people who have taken up pipe smoking or the use of smokeless tobacco (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

Quitting smoking is difficult because cigarette smoke contains nicotine, a physically addictive drug. Many

Thinking About Diversity: Race, Class, and Gender

Masculinity: A Threat to Health?

Jeff: Cindy! If you don't get out of there in ten seconds, I'm gonna beat you up!

Cindy: Chill out! I have as much right to be in the bathroom as you do. I'll come out when I am ready.

Jeff: Are you going to take *all day*?

Cindy: Why are you guys always in such a hurry?

Doctors call it "coronary-prone behavior." Psychologists call it the "Type A personality." Sociologists recognize it as our culture's concept of masculinity. This combination of attitudes and behavior, common among men in our society, includes not just impatience ("C'mon! Get outta my bathroom!") but also uncontrolled ambition ("I've gotta have it—I need that!") and free-floating hostility ("Why are people *such idiots*?").

This pattern, although normal from a cultural point of view, is one major reason that men who are driven to succeed are at high risk of heart disease. By acting out the Type A personality, we may get the job done, but we set in motion complex biochemical processes that are very hard on the human heart.

Here are a few questions to help you assess your own degree of risk (or that of someone important to you):



1. Do you believe you have to be aggressive to succeed?

Do "nice guys finish last"? If your answer to this question is yes, for your heart's sake, try to remove hostility from your life. Here's a place to start: Eliminate profanity from your speech. Whenever someone in everyday life starts getting to you, try replacing aggression with compassion, which can be surprisingly effective in dealing with other people. Medically speaking, compassion and humor—rather than irritation and aggravation—will improve your health.

2. How well do you handle uncertainty and opposition?

Do you have moments when you fume "Why won't the waiter take my order?" or "This customer just doesn't get it!"? We all like to know what's going on, and we like others to agree with us. But the world often doesn't work that way. Accepting uncertainty and opposition makes us more mature and certainly healthier.

3. Are you uncomfortable showing positive emotions?

Many men think giving and accepting love—from women, from children, and from other men—is a sign of weakness. But the medical truth is that love supports health and anger damages it.

As human beings, we have a great deal of choice about how to live. Think about the choices you make, and reflect on how our society's idea of masculinity often makes us hard on others (including those we love) and, just as important, hard on ourselves.

What Do You Think?

1. Do you think masculinity is harmful to health? Why or why not?
2. Have you had any experiences that cause you to link masculinity or femininity to health?
3. How might we try to modify our behavior in the interest of better health?

SOURCES: Friedman and Rosenman (1974) and M. P. Levine (1990).

people smoke to cope with stress: Divorced and separated people, the unemployed, and people serving in the armed forces are likely to smoke. Smoking is much more common among working-class people than among those with more income and education. A larger share of men (21 percent) than women (15 percent) smokes. But cigarettes, the only form of tobacco popular with women, have taken a toll on women's health. By 1987, lung cancer surpassed breast cancer as a cause of death among U.S. women, who now account for 39 percent of all smoking-related deaths (Pampel, 2006; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010, 2014).

Tobacco is a \$90 billion industry in the United States. With revenues like that, the tobacco industry is able to spend more than \$15 million a year employing lobbyists in Washington to influence tobacco policy. It is also able to finance efforts aimed at presenting the controversy over smoking in terms of the "anti-smoking lobby" versus people who choose to smoke and at playing down the ways that tobacco companies threaten public health (Eriksen, Makay, & Ross, 2012).

In 1997, the tobacco industry admitted that cigarette smoking is harmful to health and agreed to stop marketing cigarettes to young people. Despite the antismoking trend

in the United States, research shows that 6 percent of middle school students, 23 percent of high school students, and 28 percent of college students smoke at least occasionally (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012; American College Health Association, 2014). In addition, the use of chewing tobacco—known to cause cancers of the mouth and throat—is increasing among the young.

The tobacco industry has increased its sales abroad, especially in low- and middle-income countries where there is less regulation of tobacco products and where 80 percent of the world's smokers now live. In many countries, especially in Asia, a large majority of men smoke. Worldwide, more than 1 billion adults (about 25 percent of the total) smoke, consuming some 6 trillion cigarettes annually, and there is not yet any sign of the decline in smoking that has occurred in high-income countries. If the current global trends continue, tobacco-related deaths will increase to more than 8 million a year by 2030, which amounts to one person in the world dying every four seconds (Horton, 2012; World Health Organization, 2014).

The harm that can come from cigarette smoking is real. But the good news is that about ten years after quitting, an ex-smoker's health is about as good as that of someone who never smoked at all.

Eating Disorders

An **eating disorder** is a physical and mental disorder that involves intense dieting or other unhealthy method of weight control driven by the desire to be very thin. One eating disorder, *anorexia nervosa*, is characterized by dieting to the point of starvation; another is *bulimia*, which involves binge eating followed by induced vomiting to avoid weight gain.

Gender plays a part in eating disorders: among teenagers, girls are about three times more likely than boys to be affected by these diseases. Among adults, women are three times more likely to suffer from anorexia nervosa and five times more likely to suffer from bulimia than are men. People with eating disorders come from all social backgrounds although risk levels are highest among whites living in affluent families.

For women, U.S. culture equates slimness with being successful and attractive to men. Conversely, we tend to stereotype overweight women (and to a lesser extent men) as lazy, sloppy, and even stupid (Neporent, 2013; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Mental Health, 2015).

Research shows that most college-age women believe that "guys like thin girls," that being thin is critical to physical attractiveness, and that they are not as thin as men would like. In fact, most college women want to be even thinner than most college men want them to be. Men



Over the last few decades, the rate of cigarette smoking by U.S. teens has been declining. In recent years, however, smokeless cigarettes have gained popularity with many young people. Some analysts are concerned that the increasing use of e-cigarettes, while less harmful than conventional cigarettes, may reverse the longer-term trend away from nicotine products.

typically express greater satisfaction with their own body shape (Fallon & Rozin, 1985).

Because few women are able to meet our culture's unrealistic standards of beauty, many women develop a low self-image. This feeling may encourage the sales of makeup, clothes, and various beauty aids, as does the mass media's focus on people's appearance. But it also leads many young women to diet to the point of risking their health and even their lives.

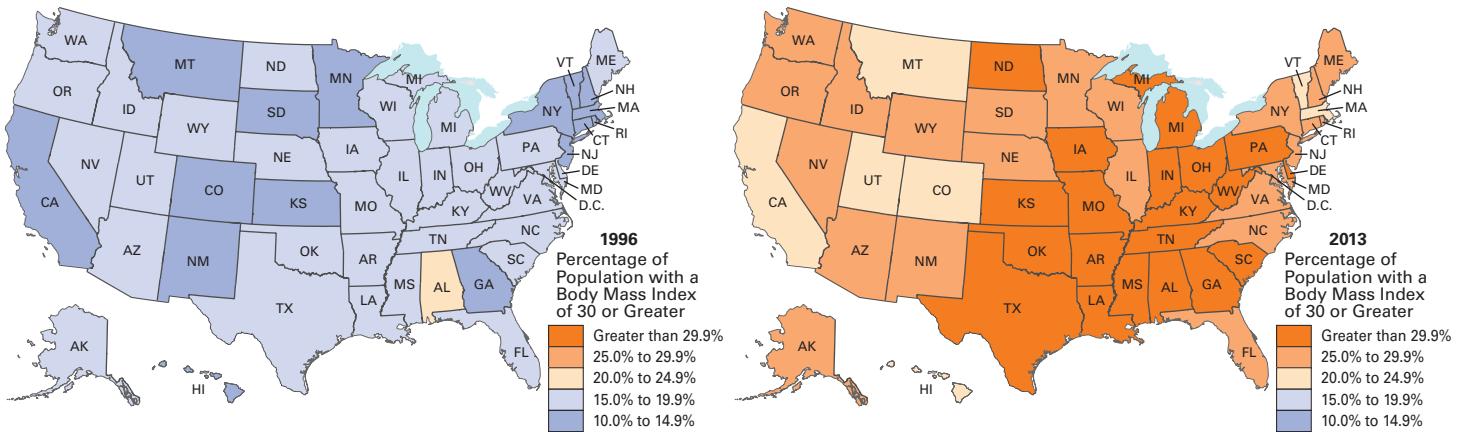
People with eating disorders contend with more than their illness. Research indicates that they are also viewed by others not as people with a mental disorder but as weak individuals who are seeking attention. In fact, the stigma attached to eating disorders was found to be more severe than the stigma attached to depression (Roehrig & McLean, 2010).

Obesity

Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia are serious, but they are not the biggest eating-related problem in the United States. Obesity in the population as a whole is rapidly reaching crisis proportions. For the world as a whole, the average person weighs 137 pounds; for the United States, the average is about 180 pounds (196 pounds for men and 166 pounds for women) (BioMed Central, 2012; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013).

As noted in the opening to this chapter, the government reports that 64 percent of U.S. adults are overweight, which is defined in terms of a *body mass index* (BMI) of 25.0 to 29.9, or roughly 10 to 30 pounds over a healthy weight. Of all U.S. adults, 35 percent are clinically obese, with a

Seeing Ourselves



National Map 21–2 Obesity across the United States, 1996 and 2013

The map on the left shows the percentage of each state's population that was medically obese in 1996; the one on the right shows the figures for 2013. What factors do you think are responsible for the trend toward more and more obesity in our country?

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015).

BMI over 30, which means that they are at least 30 pounds over their healthy weight. National Map 21–2 shows the dramatic increase in obesity across the United States between 1996 and 2013.

Being overweight can limit physical activity and raises the risk of a number of serious diseases, including heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. According to the U.S. government, the cost of treating diseases caused by obesity due to such illnesses is about \$147 billion every year. Most seriously, some 112,000 people die each year in the United States from diseases related to being overweight (Ferraro & Kelley-Moore, 2003; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010).

A cause for national concern is the fact that the obesity rate for the United States is among the highest in the world—well above the rates for Canada, European nations, and Japan—and it is rising. In this country, obesity is evident even in infants. A recent study found that almost one-third of nine-month-old infants were overweight enough to be classified as either obese or at risk for obesity. The trend toward higher rates of obesity among infants and children—the rate is now three times what it was just thirty years ago—suggests that the medical problems of this new generation will be even greater as they reach middle age and may ultimately reverse the historical trend toward greater life expectancy (Moss & Yeaton, 2010; Stockdale, McIntyre, & Sauter, 2011; OECD, 2012; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

What are the social causes of obesity? One factor is that we live in a society in which more and more people have jobs that keep them sitting in front of computer screens rather than engaging in the type of physical labor that was common a century ago. Even when we are not on the job,

most of the work around the house is done by machines (or other people). Children spend more of their time sitting as well—watching television or playing video games.

Then, of course, there is diet. The typical person in the United States is eating more salty and fatty food than ever before (Wells & Buzby, 2008). And as companies try to sell food for less money to gain efficiencies of scale, all meals are getting bigger. The Department of Agriculture reported that in 2000, the typical U.S. adult consumed 140 more pounds of food in a year than was true a decade earlier. Comparing old and new editions of cookbooks, recipes that used to say they would feed six now say they will feed four. As shown in the Power of Society figure at the beginning of this chapter, the obesity problem is greater among minorities than among white people. In large part, this difference reflects income. The odds of being overweight go up among people with lower incomes partly because they may lack the education to make healthy choices and partly because stores in low-income communities offer a greater selection of low-cost, high-fat snack foods and fewer healthful fruits and vegetables (Hellmich, 2002).

Just as researchers have tracked a rising tide of obesity in the United States, they are also finding increasing prejudice directed against people who are overweight. Simply put, many people see being thin as embodying important cultural values such as personal discipline, trying hard, and ambition to succeed. Being overweight, by contrast, seems to imply the absence of these same traits.

Such attitudes are not only widespread but also can be quite harmful. Evidence suggests that physicians are likely to doubt the ability of overweight patients to follow “doctor’s orders”; similarly, juries may be less likely

to feel sympathy for an overweight person accused of a crime. Perhaps most important of all, employers tend to assess workers and job candidates who are overweight in less positive terms, even in the absence of any supporting evidence (Neporent, 2013).

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Sexual activity is both pleasurable and vital to the continuation of our species. But sexual activity can transmit more than fifty kinds of *sexually transmitted diseases* (STDs). Because our culture associates sex with sin, some people regard these diseases not only as illnesses but also as marks of immorality.

STDs grabbed national attention during the “sexual revolution” of the 1960s, when infection rates rose dramatically as people began sexual activity earlier and with a greater number of partners. This means that the rise in STDs is an exception to the general decline of infectious diseases during the twentieth century. By the late 1980s, the rising dangers of STDs, especially AIDS, generated a sexual counterrevolution as people moved away from casual sex (Kain, 1987; Laumann et al., 1994). The following sections briefly describe several common STDs.

GONORRHEA AND SYPHILIS Gonorrhea and syphilis, among the oldest known diseases, are caused by microscopic organisms that are almost always transmitted by sexual contact. Untreated, gonorrhea causes sterility; syphilis damages major organs and can result in blindness, mental disorders, and death.

In 2013, some 333,000 cases of gonorrhea and 17,375 cases of syphilis were officially recorded in the United States, although the actual numbers may be several times higher. Most cases are contracted by non-Hispanic African Americans (57 percent), with lower numbers recorded among non-Hispanic whites (26 percent), Latinos (14 percent), and Asian Americans and Native Americans (1 percent each) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014).

Both gonorrhea and syphilis can easily be cured with antibiotics such as penicillin. Thus neither is a major health problem in the United States.

GENITAL HERPES Genital herpes is a virus that is fairly common, infecting at least 23 million adolescents and adults in the United States (one in six). Though far less dangerous than gonorrhea and syphilis, herpes is incurable. People with genital herpes may not have any symptoms, or they may experience periodic, painful blisters on the genitals accompanied by fever and headache. Although not fatal to adults, pregnant women with genital herpes can transmit the disease during a vaginal delivery, and it can be deadly to a newborn. Therefore, women with active infections usually give birth by cesarean section (Sobel, 2001; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014).



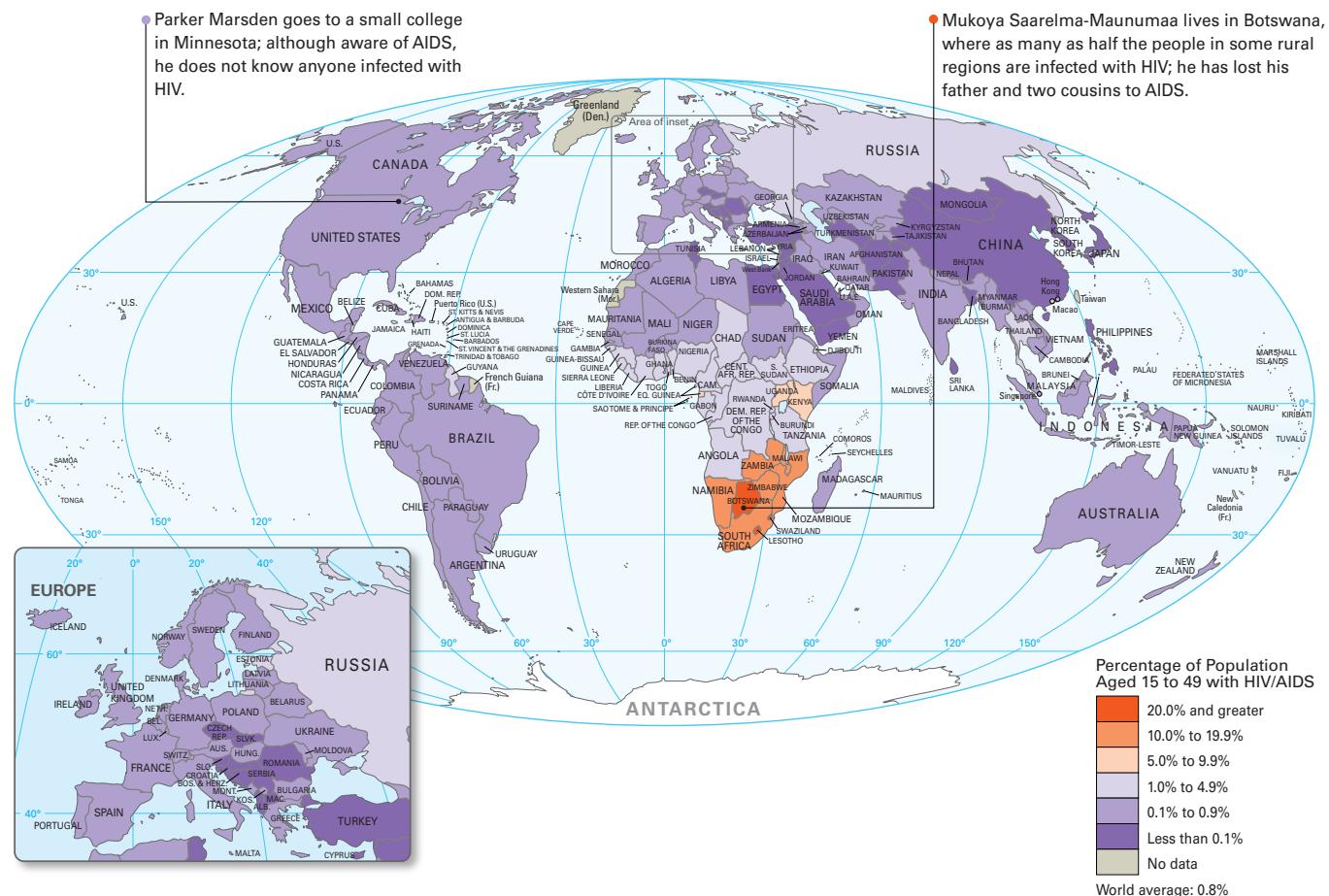
The obesity rate for the U.S. population is among the highest in the world and it is increasing. As a nation, we are “big gainers” in terms of body mass. This trend has sparked popular television shows such as *The Biggest Loser*, which celebrates individuals who dramatically drop their weight through a program of fitness training and lifestyle changes. But is the solution to the national trend toward obesity simply a matter of personal effort? What changes to our culture would help move the entire population toward a healthier lifestyle?

AIDS The most serious of all sexually transmitted diseases is *acquired immune deficiency syndrome* (AIDS). Identified in 1981, it is incurable and almost always fatal. AIDS is caused by the *human immunodeficiency virus* (HIV), which attacks white blood cells, weakening the immune system. AIDS thus makes a person vulnerable to a wide range of diseases that eventually cause death.

AIDS deaths in the United States numbered 13,712 in 2012. In addition, officials recorded 26,688 new cases in the United States in 2013, raising the total number of cases on the official record to 1,194,039. Of these people, 658,507 have died (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

Globally, the number of HIV infections is no longer rapidly increasing. In 2013, about 2.1 million adults and children became infected, which represents a 38 percent drop from a decade earlier. At the same time, the number of infected people is huge, at about 35 million people. The global AIDS death toll now exceeds 37 million, with less than 1 percent of the 2013 total of 1.53 million deaths occurring here in the

Window on the World



Global Map 21-1 HIV/AIDS Infection of Adults in Global Perspective

Seventy-one percent of all people infected with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa. In Swaziland, one-fourth of people between the ages of fifteen and forty-nine are infected with HIV/AIDS. This very high infection rate reflects the prevalence of other sexually transmitted diseases and infrequent use of condoms, two factors that promote transmission of HIV. South and Southeast Asia account for about 14 percent of global HIV infections; by contrast, North America and South America taken together account for 8 percent of global HIV infections. From another angle, in Thailand, 1.1 percent of people aged fifteen to forty-nine are now infected compared to 0.6 percent of comparable people in the United States. The incidence of infection in Muslim nations is extremely low by world standards.

SOURCES: Population Reference Bureau (2012) and UNAIDS (2015).

United States (UNAIDS, 2015). Global Map 21-1 shows that Africa (especially south of the Sahara) has the highest HIV infection rate and accounts for 70 percent of new HIV infections. The good news is that many of the countries in this region of the world are making dramatic strides toward reducing the rate of infection, especially among children. The risk of infection remains higher for females than for males, not only because HIV is transmitted more easily from men to women but also because many African cultures encourage women to be submissive to men. According to some analysts, the AIDS crisis threatens the political and economic security of Africa, which in turn affects the entire world (Ashford, 2002; UNAIDS, 2015).

Upon infection, people with HIV display no symptoms at all, so most are unaware of their condition. Symptoms of AIDS may not appear for a year or longer, but during this time an infected person may infect others. Within five years, up to one-third of infected people in the United States develop symptoms of AIDS; up to half develop AIDS within ten years; and most become sick within twenty years. In low-income countries, the progression of this illness is much more rapid, with many people dying within a few years of becoming infected.

HIV is infectious but not contagious. That means that HIV is transmitted from person to person through direct contact with blood, semen, or breast milk but not through

casual contact such as shaking hands, hugging, sharing towels or dishes, swimming together, or even coughing and sneezing. The risk of transmitting the virus through saliva (as in kissing) is extremely low. The chance of transmitting HIV through sexual activity is greatly reduced by the use of latex condoms. However, abstinence or an exclusive relationship with an uninfected person is the only sure way to avoid infection.

Specific behaviors put people at high risk of HIV infection. The first is *anal sex* with an infected person because anal sex can cause rectal bleeding, allowing easy transmission of HIV from one individual to another. The fact that many homosexual and bisexual men engage in anal sex helps explain why these categories of people account for 49 percent of AIDS cases in the United States.

Sharing needles used to inject drugs is a second high-risk behavior. At present, intravenous drug users account for 23 percent (in Figure 21–1, represented as 17 percent plus 6 percent with “multiple exposure”) of persons with AIDS. Sex with an intravenous drug user is also very risky. Because intravenous drug use is more common among poor people in the United States, AIDS is now becoming a disease of the socially disadvantaged. Minorities make up the majority of people with AIDS: African Americans (who are 13.2 percent of the total population) account for 42 percent of people with AIDS, and Latinos (17.1 percent of the population) represent 21 percent of AIDS cases. Almost 80 percent of all women and children with the disease are African American or Latino. By contrast, Asian Americans and Native Americans together account for only about 1.4 percent of people with AIDS (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

Use of any drug, including alcohol, also increases the risk of HIV infection to the extent that it impairs judgment. In other words, even people who understand what places them at risk of infection may act less responsibly if they are under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or some other drug.

As Figure 21–1 shows, 49 percent of people with AIDS in the United States became infected through homosexual contact, although heterosexuals, infected in various ways, account for about 51 percent of AIDS cases. But heterosexual activity can transmit HIV, and the danger rises with the number of sexual partners one has, especially if they fall into high-risk categories. Worldwide, heterosexual relations are the primary means of HIV transmission, accounting for two-thirds of all infections.

In the United States, treating just one person with AIDS can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, which is well beyond the reach of many people. Government health programs, private insurance, and personal savings rarely cover more than a fraction of the cost of treatment. In addition, there is the mounting cost of caring for at least 75,000 children orphaned by AIDS (worldwide, the number is around 16.6 million). The good news is that the cost of new

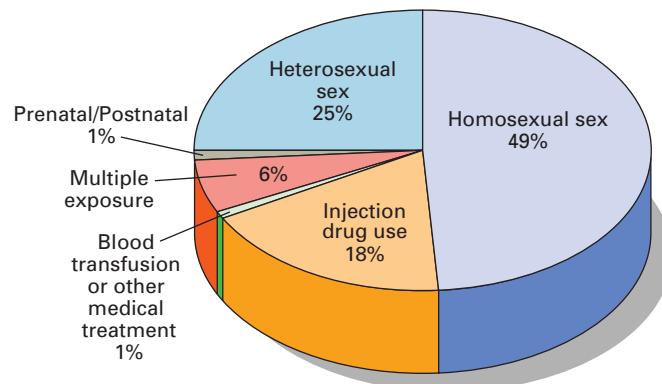


Figure 21–1 Types of Transmission for Reported U.S. AIDS Cases as of 2013

There are several ways that people can be infected with HIV.

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015).

drugs and treatment therapies has gone down, and as a result millions of lives have been saved worldwide. Even so, AIDS continues to represent both a medical and a social problem of monumental proportions.

In the early 1980s, the U.S. government responded slowly to the AIDS crisis, largely because the earliest people to be infected, gay men and intravenous drug users, were widely viewed as deviant. But funds allocated for AIDS research and education have increased rapidly (the 2015 federal budget provides \$31 billion), and researchers have identified some drugs, including protease inhibitors, that suppress the symptoms of the disease enough to greatly extend the lives of people infected with HIV. But educational programs remain the most effective weapon against AIDS, since prevention is the only way to stop the spread of a disease that so far has no cure.

Ethical Issues Surrounding Death

Now that technological advances are giving human beings the power to draw the line separating life and death, we must decide how and when to do so. In other words, questions about the use of medical technology have added an ethical dimension to health and illness.

WHEN DOES DEATH OCCUR? Common sense suggests that life ceases when breathing and heartbeat stop. But the ability to replace a heart and artificially sustain respiration makes that definition of death obsolete. Medical and legal experts in the United States now define death as an *irreversible* state involving no response to stimulation, no movement or breathing, no reflexes, and no indication of brain activity (Wall, 1980; Jones, 1998).

DO PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO DIE? Today, medical personnel, family members, and patients themselves face the burden of deciding when a terminally ill person should die. Among the most difficult cases are the



In the African nation of Kenya, about 159 people die from AIDS every day. In recent years, the spread of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa has been greatly reduced. Even so, some 190,000 children under age fourteen in Kenya are now living with HIV. This Nairobi infant, who already has AIDS, is fighting for his life.

roughly 15,000 people in the United States in a permanent vegetative state who cannot express their desires about life and death.

Generally speaking, the first duty of physicians and hospitals is to protect a patient's life. Even so, a mentally competent person in the process of dying may refuse medical treatment and even nutrition, either at the time or, in advance, through a document called a *living will* that states the extent of medical care a person would or would not want in the event of an illness or injury that leaves the person unable to make decisions.

WHAT ABOUT MERCY KILLING? *Mercy killing* is the common term for **euthanasia**, assisting in the death of a person suffering from an incurable disease. Euthanasia (from the Greek, meaning "a good death") poses an ethical dilemma, being at once an act of kindness and a form of killing.

Whether there is a "right to die" is one of today's most difficult issues. All people with incurable diseases have a right to refuse treatment that might prolong their lives. But whether a doctor should be allowed to help bring about death is at the heart of the debate. In 1994, three states—Washington, California, and Oregon—asked voters whether doctors should be able to help people who wanted to die. Only Oregon's proposition passed, and the law was quickly challenged and remained tied up in state court until 1997, when Oregon voters again endorsed it. As of 2015, Oregon doctors have legally assisted in the death of about 860 terminally ill patients. In 1997, however, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that under the U.S. Constitution, there is no "right to die," a decision that has slowed the spread of such laws. Only in 2008 did Washington become the second state to allow physician-assisted suicide, and Montana and Vermont have since done the same (Death with Dignity Center, 2015).

Supporters of *active euthanasia*—allowing a dying person to enlist the services of a physician to bring on a quick death—argue that there are circumstances (as when a dying person suffers great pain) that make death preferable to life. Critics counter that permitting active euthanasia invites abuse (see Chapter 15, "Aging and the Elderly"). They fear that patients will feel pressure to end their lives in order to spare family members the burden of caring for them and the high costs of hospitalization. Research in the Netherlands, where physician-assisted suicide is legal, indicates that about one-fifth of all such deaths have occurred without a patient explicitly requesting to die (Gillon, 1999).

In the United States, a majority of adults express support for giving terminally ill people the right to choose to die with a doctor's help (Smith et al., 2013:427). Therefore, the right-to-die debate is sure to continue.

The Medical Establishment

21.4 Compare the medical systems in nations around the world.

Medicine is the social institution that focuses on fighting disease and improving health. Through most of human history, health care was the responsibility of individuals and their families. Medicine emerges as a social institution only as societies become more productive and people take on specialized work.

Members of agrarian societies today still turn to various traditional health practitioners, including acupuncturists and herbalists, who play a central part in improving health. In industrial societies, medical care falls to specially trained and licensed professionals, from anesthesiologists to X-ray technicians. Today's medical establishment in the United States took form over the past 200 years.

The Rise of Scientific Medicine

In colonial times, physicians, herbalists, druggists, barbers, midwives, and ministers practiced the healing arts. But not all were effective: Unsanitary instruments, lack of anesthesia,

medicine the social institution that focuses on fighting disease and improving health

holistic medicine an approach to health care that emphasizes the prevention of illness and takes into account a person's entire physical and social environment

and simple ignorance made surgery a terrible ordeal, and physicians probably killed as many people as they saved.

Physicians made medicine into a science by studying the human body and how it works and emphasizing surgery to repair the body and the use of drugs to fight disease. Pointing to their specialized knowledge, these doctors gradually established themselves as professionals who earned medical degrees. The American Medical Association (AMA) was founded in 1847 and symbolized the growing acceptance of a scientific model of medicine.

Still, traditional approaches to health care had their supporters. The AMA opposed them by seeking control of the certification process. In the early 1900s, state licensing boards agreed to certify only doctors trained in scientific programs approved by the AMA. As a result, schools teaching other healing skills began to close, which soon limited the practice of medicine to individuals holding an M.D. degree. In the process, both the prestige and the income of physicians rose dramatically. Today, men and women with M.D. degrees earn high incomes, ranging from an average of about \$175,000 annually for doctors practicing pediatrics to more than \$500,000 for those practicing cardiac surgery (American Medical Group Association, 2012; U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

Practitioners who did things differently, such as osteopathic physicians, concluded that they had no choice but to fall in line with AMA standards. Thus osteopaths (with D.O. degrees), originally trained to treat illness by manipulating the skeleton and muscles, today treat illness with drugs in much the same way as medical doctors (with M.D. degrees). Chiropractors, herbal healers, and midwives still practice using traditional methods, but they have lower standing within the medical profession. The tension and conflict between scientific medicine and traditional healing continue today, both in the United States and in many other countries.

Scientific medicine, taught in expensive, urban medical schools, also changed the social profile of doctors such that most came from privileged backgrounds and practiced in cities. Women, who had played a large part in many fields of healing, were pushed aside by the AMA. Some early medical schools did focus on the training of women and African Americans, but gradually most of these schools ran out of money and closed. Only in recent decades has the social diversity of medical doctors increased, with women and African Americans representing 37 percent and 6 percent, respectively, of all physicians. Asian Americans represent 21 percent of all U.S. physicians and Hispanic Americans account for 6 percent (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

Holistic Medicine

In recent decades, the scientific model of medicine has been combined with the more traditional model of **holistic medicine**, *an approach to health care that emphasizes the prevention of illness and takes into account a person's entire physical and social environment*. Holistic practitioners agree on the need for drugs, surgery, artificial organs, and high technology, but they emphasize treatment of the whole person rather than symptoms and focus on health rather than disease. There are three foundations of holistic health care (Gordon, 1980; Patterson, 1998):

- Treat patients as people.** Holistic practitioners concern themselves not only with symptoms but also with how environment and lifestyle affect their patients. Holistic practitioners extend the bounds of conventional medicine, taking an active role in fighting poverty, environmental pollution, and other dangers to public health.
- Encourage responsibility, not dependency.** In the scientific model, patients are dependent on physicians. Holistic medicine tries to shift some responsibility for health from physicians to people themselves by encouraging health-promoting behavior. Holistic medicine thus favors an *active* approach to *health* rather than a *reactive* approach to *illness*.
- Provide personal treatment.** Scientific medicine locates medical care in impersonal offices and hospitals, both disease-centered settings. By contrast, holistic practitioners favor, as much as possible, a personal and relaxed environment such as the home.

In sum, holistic care does not oppose scientific medicine but shifts the emphasis from treating disease toward



Traditional healers work to improve people's health throughout the world. This patient is receiving a traditional needle therapy in Suining, a city in China's Sichuan province. Do you think people in the United States are accepting of traditional healing practices? Why or why not?

achieving the greatest well-being for everyone. Because the AMA currently recognizes more than fifty medical specialties, it is clear that there is a need for practitioners who are concerned with the whole patient.

Paying for Medical Care: A Global Survey

As medicine has come to rely on high technology, the costs of providing medical care have skyrocketed. Countries throughout the world use various strategies to meet these costs.

MEDICINE IN SOCIALIST NATIONS In nations with mostly socialist economies, government provides medical care directly to the people. These countries hold that all citizens have the right to basic medical care. The state owns and operates medical facilities and uses public funds to pay salaries to doctors and other medical care workers, who are government employees.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA This economically growing but mostly agrarian nation faces the immense task of providing for the health of more than 1.3 billion people. China has experimented with private medicine, but the government controls most medical care.

China's "barefoot doctors," roughly comparable to U.S. paramedics, bring some modern methods of medical care to millions of peasants in rural villages. Otherwise,

traditional healing arts, including acupuncture and the use of medicinal herbs, are still widely practiced in China. The Chinese approach to health is based on a holistic concern for the interplay of mind and body (Kaptchuk, 1985).

RUSSIAN FEDERATION The Russian Federation has transformed what was a state-dominated economy into more of a market system, so medical care, like so much else, is in transition. But the state remains in charge of health care, and the government claims that everyone has a right to basic medical care.

As in China, people in the Russian Federation do not choose a physician but report to a local government-operated health facility. Russian doctors have much lower incomes than U.S. doctors, earning about the same salary as skilled industrial workers in the United States. As a strategy to attract more people into medicine, Russian president Vladimir Putin recently pledged to increase physician salaries. Also, more than 72 percent of Russian doctors are women, compared to 37 percent in the United States. As in our society, occupations dominated by women in the Russian Federation offer lower pay.

In recent years, the Russian Federation has suffered setbacks in health care, partly because of a falling standard of living. A rising demand for medical attention has strained a bureaucratic system that at best provides highly standardized and impersonal care. The optimistic view is that government efforts will improve the quality of medical services. But that country's medical establishment so far has resisted change (Mason, 2003; Zuckerman, 2006; Vasilyeva, 2014).

MEDICINE IN CAPITALIST NATIONS People living in nations with mostly capitalist economies usually pay for medical care out of their own pockets. However, because high cost puts medical care beyond the reach of many people, government programs underwrite much of the expense.

Sweden In 1891, Sweden began a mandatory, comprehensive system of government medical care. Citizens pay for this program with their taxes, which are among the highest in the world. Typically, physicians are government employees, and most hospitals are government-managed. Because this medical system resembles that found in socialist societies, Sweden's system is called **socialized medicine**, *a medical care system in which the government owns and operates most medical facilities and employs most physicians*. Figure 21–2 shows the extent of socialized medicine in specific high-income countries.

Great Britain In 1948, Great Britain established a dual system of medical service. All British citizens are entitled to medical care provided by the National Health Service, but those who can afford to do so may go to doctors and hospitals that operate privately.

Canada Since 1972, Canada has had a "single-payer" model of medical care that provides health services to all Canadians.

Global Snapshot

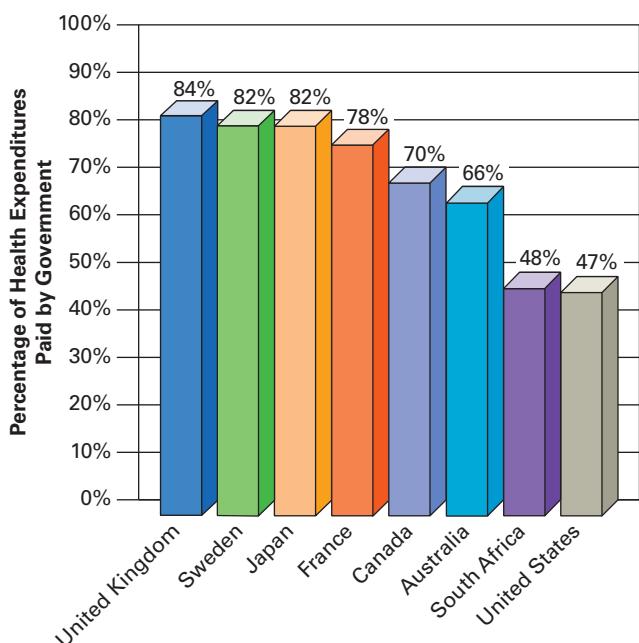


Figure 21–2 Extent of Socialized Medicine in Selected Countries

The governments of most high-income countries pay a greater share of their people's medical costs than the U.S. government does.

SOURCE: World Bank (2015).

Like a giant insurance company, the Canadian government pays doctors and hospitals according to a set schedule of fees. Like Great Britain, Canada also has some physicians working outside the government-funded system and setting their own fees, although costs are regulated by the government.

Canada boasts of providing care for everyone at a lower cost than the (nonuniversal) medical system in the United States. However, the Canadian system uses less state-of-the-art technology and responds more slowly, meaning that people may wait months for major surgery. But the Canadian system provides care for all citizens, regardless of income, unlike the United States, where lower-income people are often denied medical care (Rosenthal, 1991; Macionis & Gerber, 2008).

Japan Physicians in Japan operate privately, but a combination of government programs and private insurance pays their patients' medical costs. As shown in Figure 21–2, the Japanese approach medical care much as the Europeans do, with most medical expenses paid through the government.

Paying for Medical Care: The United States

The United States stands alone among industrialized nations in having no universal, government-sponsored program of medical care. Ours is a **direct-fee system**, *a medical care system in which patients pay directly for the services of physicians and hospitals*. Europeans look to government to fund from 70 to nearly 90 percent of their medical costs (paid for through taxation), but the U.S. government pays just 47 percent of this country's medical costs (World Bank, 2015).

In the United States, rich people can purchase the best medical care in the world. Yet the poor are worse off than their counterparts in Europe. This difference explains the relatively high death rates among infants and adults in the United States compared to those in most other high-income nations. In fact, in terms of infant mortality (the odds that an infant will die during the first year of life), the United States is ranked only forty-ninth among global nations and below many European countries. From another angle, researchers report that, despite spending more money per person than other high-income countries, the United States provides its people with higher rates of disease and injury and also a shorter life span (*The Lancet*, 2013; Population Reference Bureau, 2015).

Several states, including Maine, Vermont, and Massachusetts, have enacted programs that provide health

socialized medicine a medical care system in which the government owns and operates most medical facilities and employs most physicians

direct-fee system a medical care system in which patients pay directly for the services of physicians and hospitals

care to everyone. Why does the United States have no national program that provides universal care? First, during World War II, the government took control of the economy and froze worker earnings. As a way to increase pay within the wage freeze, more employers began providing health care benefits. Second, labor unions tried to expand health care benefits from employers rather than go after government programs. Third, the public generally favors a private, worker-and-employer system rather than a government-based system because our culture stresses individual self-reliance. Fourth and finally, the AMA and the health insurance industry have strongly and consistently opposed national medical care. There is no question that health care in this country is very expensive. The cost of medical care increased dramatically from \$12 billion in 1950 to \$2.9 trillion in 2013. This sum amounts to \$9,255 per person, more than any other nation in the world spends for medical care (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). Who pays the medical bills?

PRIVATE INSURANCE PROGRAMS In 2013, about 169 million people (54 percent) received some medical care benefits from a family member's employer or labor union. Another 34.5 million people (10 percent) purchased private coverage on their own. Combining these figures, 64 percent of the U.S. population has private insurance, although few such programs pay all medical costs (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

PUBLIC INSURANCE PROGRAMS In 1965, Congress created Medicare and Medicaid. Medicare pays a portion of the medical costs of men and women over age sixty-five; in 2013, it covered 49 million women and men, 16 percent of the population. In the same year, Medicaid, a medical insurance program for the poor, provided benefits to 54 million people, about 17 percent of the population. An additional 14 million veterans, 4.5 percent of the population, can obtain free care in government-operated hospitals. In all, one-third of this country's people get medical benefits from the government, but most also have private insurance (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATIONS About 73 million people (23 percent) in the United States belong to a **health maintenance organization (HMO)**, *an organization that provides comprehensive medical care to subscribers for a fixed fee*. HMOs vary in their costs and benefits, and none provides full coverage. Fixed fees make these organizations profitable to the extent that their subscribers stay healthy; therefore, many take a preventive approach to health. At the same time, HMOs have been criticized for refusing to pay for medical procedures that they consider unnecessary. Congress is currently debating the extent to which patients can sue HMOs to obtain better care.

In all, 87 percent of the U.S. population has some medical care coverage, either private or public. Yet most plans do not provide full coverage, so a serious illness threatens even middle-class people with financial hardship. Most programs also exclude certain medical services, such as



How great a role should the federal government have in providing health care to people? The 2010 Affordable Care Act, commonly called Obamacare, expanded government's role by mandating what must be included in health care coverage. Some religious organizations, such as this one holding a rally in Washington, DC, have objected to being required to provide employees with contraception and abortion as part of their insurance. Do you think such organizations should be free to decide for themselves what coverage to provide or not provide? Why?

dental care and treatment for mental health and substance abuse problems. Worse, 42 million people (about 13 percent of the population) have no medical insurance at all, even though more than half of these people are working full time. Almost as many people lose their medical coverage temporarily each year due to layoffs or job changes. Caught in the medical care bind are mostly low- to moderate-income people who do not qualify for Medicaid yet cannot afford the cost of the preventive medical care they need to stay healthy (Brink, 2002; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2015).

THE 2010 HEALTH CARE LAW In 2010, Congress passed a new law (Affordable Care Act of 2010) that made significant changes to the way this country pays for health care. The law extends medical insurance to more people; at the same time, the law has a huge cost—estimated at almost \$1 trillion over the first ten years—so that the change will take effect in stages.

Here are some of the most important features of the new health care law:

1. Starting right away, all families will pay an insurance tax. Lower-income families, however, will receive subsidies to help pay the cost of the insurance; high-income families will pay higher taxes on their income to help fund the program.
2. Six months after enactment of the new law, insurance companies could no longer legally drop customers because they get sick or legally refuse coverage to children because of preexisting conditions.
3. Insurance companies cannot set caps on the amount of money they will pay to any individual for medical expenses over a lifetime.
4. Parents can use their health care plans to include children up to the age of twenty-six.
5. In 2014, insurance companies could no longer refuse coverage to anyone of any age due to pre-existing health conditions.
6. In 2014, all families were required to purchase insurance coverage. Government will regulate both the benefits available and the costs.
7. People who do not buy health insurance face penalties; these penalties will increase over time.

In all, the 2010 health care law, reviewed in 2012 and declared to be constitutional by the Supreme Court, will provide health care insurance to some 32 million people

(of 49 million total) in the United States who currently do not have this protection. The Obama administration claims that this bill, although providing something short of universal health care coverage, is nonetheless a major step toward that goal.

The Nursing Shortage

In recent years, numerous researchers have called attention to a projected shortage of nurses across the United States. In 2014, there were nearly 2.7 million registered nurses (who hold the R.N. degree), an increase of 15 percent since 2004. At the same time, they pointed out, more than 100,000 positions for nurses remain unfilled. Looking ahead, our aging population will require many more nurses in the decades to come. These facts support the claim that a nursing shortage is likely to increase (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

There is no question that our society is experiencing an increasing need for nurses. This increasing demand is due to several factors. First, technological advances in medicine allow more illnesses to be treated. Second, there has been a rapid expansion in hospital out-patient services, such as same-day surgery, rehabilitation, and chemotherapy. Third, an increasing focus on preventive care, rather than simply treating disease or accidents, means more people than ever are receiving care. Fourth, and most important of all, is the aging population of the United States. Compared to young people, the oldest members of our society consume much more medical services.

The field of nursing continues to attract young people. Undergraduate enrollment in nursing programs has increased from about 116,000 people in 2005 to 176,000 in 2014. This increasing enrollment has helped to ease the nursing shortage, which is now most serious in southern and western states (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2015).

One reason for an undersupply of nurses is a shortage of nursing schools. In 2012, because of this lack of faculty and facilities, nursing programs turned away almost 80,000 qualified applicants (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2014, 2015). A broader reason is that today's young women have a wide range of job choices, and fewer are drawn to the traditionally female occupation of nursing. This fact is evident in the rising average age of working nurses, which is now forty-seven. Another is that some of today's nurses are unhappy with their working conditions, citing heavy patient loads, too much required overtime, a stressful working environment, and a lack of recognition and respect from supervisors, physicians, and hospital managers.

Such facts are bringing change to the profession. Salaries, which range from about \$46,000 to \$95,000 for general-duty nurses to \$160,000 and more for certified nurse-anesthetists, are rising, and the typical nurse has enjoyed a steady rise in pay over the last five years. Some hospitals and physicians are also offering signing bonuses in efforts to attract new nurses. In addition, nursing programs are trying harder to recruit a more diverse population, seeking more minorities (which currently represent 27 percent of all nurses) and more men (now only 10 percent of registered nurses) (Yin, 2002; Marquez, 2006; American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2015; U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).



The challenges of nursing in the emergency room of a large New York City hospital are played out weekly on the television show *Nurse Jackie*. In light of the increasing demand for nurses in the United States, would you consider a career in nursing?

Structural-Functional Theory: Role Analysis

Talcott Parsons (1951) viewed medicine as society's strategy to keep its members healthy. According to this model, illness is dysfunctional because it undermines people's abilities to perform their roles.

THE SICK ROLE Society responds to sickness not only by providing medical care but also by affording people a *sick role*, *patterns of behavior defined as appropriate for people who are ill*. According to Parsons, the sick role releases people from normal obligations such as going to work or attending classes. To prevent abuse of this privilege, however, people cannot simply claim to be ill; they must "look the part" and, in serious cases, get the help of a medical expert. After assuming the sick role, the patient must want to get better and must do whatever is needed to regain good health, including cooperating with health professionals.

THE PHYSICIAN'S ROLE Physicians evaluate people's claims of sickness and help restore the sick to normal routines. To do this, physicians use their specialized knowledge and expect patients to cooperate with them, providing necessary information and following "doctor's orders" to complete the treatment.

EVALUATE

Parsons's analysis links illness and medicine to the broader organization of society. Others have extended the concept of the sick role to some non-illness situations such as pregnancy (Myers & Grasmick, 1989).

Theories of Health and Medicine

21.5 Apply sociology's major theories to health and medicine.

Each of sociology's major theoretical approaches—structural-functional theory, symbolic-interaction theory, and social-conflict and feminist theories—helps us organize and interpret facts and issues concerning human health.

One limitation of the sick-role concept is that it applies to acute conditions (like the flu or a broken leg) better than to chronic illnesses (like heart disease), which may not be reversible. In addition, a sick person's ability to assume the sick role (to take time off from work to regain health) depends on the patient's resources; many working poor, for example, cannot afford to assume a sick role. Finally, illness is not entirely dysfunctional; it can have some positive consequences: Many people who experience serious illness find that it provides the opportunity to reevaluate their lives and gain a better sense of what is truly important (D. G. Myers, 2000; Ehrenreich, 2001).

Finally, critics point out that Parsons's analysis gives doctors, rather than patients, the primary responsibility for health. A more prevention-oriented approach gives each of us as individuals the responsibility to pursue health.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING Define the sick role. How does turning illness into a role in this way help society operate?

Symbolic-Interaction Theory: The Meaning of Health

According to the symbolic-interaction approach, society is less a grand system than a complex and changing reality. In this model, health and medical care are socially constructed by people in everyday interaction.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ILLNESS If both health and illness are socially constructed, people in a poor society may view hunger and malnutrition as normal. Similarly, many members of our own society give little thought to the harmful effects of a rich diet.

Our response to illness is also based on social definitions that may or may not square with medical facts. People with AIDS may be forced to deal with fear and prejudice that have no medical basis. Likewise, students may pay no attention to signs of real illness on the eve of a vacation but head for the infirmary hours before a midterm



Definitions of health are based on cultural standards, including ideas about beauty. Every year, millions of people undergo cosmetic surgery to bring their appearance into line with societal definitions of how people ought to look.

examination with a case of the sniffles. In short, health is less an objective fact than a negotiated outcome.

How people define a medical situation may actually affect how they feel. Medical experts marvel at *psychosomatic* disorders (a fusion of Greek words for "mind" and "body"), when state of mind guides physical sensations (Hamrick, Ansbaugh, & Ezell, 1986). Applying the sociologist W. I. Thomas's theorem (presented in Chapter 6, "Social Interaction in Everyday Life"), we can say that once health or illness is defined as real, it can become real in its consequences.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF TREATMENT Also in Chapter 6, we used Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach to explain how physicians tailor their physical surroundings (their office) and their behavior (the "presentation of self") so that others see them as competent and in charge.

The sociologist Joan Emerson (1970) further illustrates this process of reality construction in her analysis of the gynecological examination carried out by a male doctor. This situation is vulnerable to serious misinterpretation, since a man's touching of a woman's genitals is conventionally viewed as a sexual act and possibly an assault.

To ensure that people define the situation as impersonal and professional, the medical staff wear uniforms and furnish the examination room with nothing but medical equipment. The doctor's manner and overall performance are designed to make the patient feel that to him, examining the genital area is no different from treating any other part of the body. A female nurse is usually present during the examination, not only to assist the physician but also to avoid any impression that a man and a woman are "alone together."

Managing situational definitions in this way is only rarely taught in medical schools. The oversight is unfortunate, because as Emerson's analysis shows, understanding how people construct reality in the examining room is as important as mastering the medical skills required for treatment.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF PERSONAL IDENTITY A final insight provided by the symbolic-interaction approach is how surgery can affect people's social identity. The reason that medical procedures can have a major effect on how we think of ourselves is that our culture places great symbolic importance on some organs and other parts of our bodies. People who lose a limb (say, in military combat) typically experience serious doubts about being "as much of a person" as before. The effects of surgery can be important even when there is no obvious change in physical appearance. For example, Jean Elson (2004) points out that one out of three women in the United States eventually has her uterus surgically removed in a procedure known as a *hysterectomy*. In interviews with women who had undergone the procedure, Elson found that the typical woman faced serious self-doubt about gender identity, asking, in effect, "Am I still a woman?" Only 10 percent of hysterectomies

are for cancer; most are for pain, bleeding, or cysts—serious conditions but not so dangerous as to rule out other types of treatment. Perhaps, Elson points out, doctors might be more willing to consider alternative treatment if they were aware of how symbolically important the loss of the uterus is to many women.

Many women who undergo breast surgery have much the same reaction, doubting their own feminine identity and worrying that men will no longer find them attractive. For men to understand the significance of such medical procedures, it is only necessary to imagine how a male might react to the surgical loss of any or all of his genitals.

EVALUATE

Symbolic-interaction theory reveals that what people view as healthful or harmful depends on numerous factors that are not, strictly speaking, medical. This approach also shows that in any medical procedure, both patient and medical staff engage in a subtle process of reality construction. Finally, this approach has helped us understand the symbolic importance of limbs and other bodily organs; the loss of any part of the body—through accident or elective surgery—can have important consequences for personal identity.

By directing attention to the meanings people attach to health and illness, symbolic-interaction theory draws criticism for implying that there are no objective standards of well-being. Certain physical conditions do indeed cause definite changes in people, regardless of how we view those conditions. People who lack sufficient nutrition and safe water, for example, suffer from their unhealthy environment, whether they define their surroundings as normal or not.

Self-reported measures of student health show a downward trend. Students' self-assessments of their "emotional health" are now as low as ever recorded (Eagan et al., 2014). And, as Figure 21–3 shows, the share of first-year college students in the United States who describe their physical health as "above average" is lower today than it was in 1985. Do you think such research findings reflect changing perceptions or a real decline in health (due, say, to eating more unhealthy food)?

CHECK YOUR LEARNING Explain what it means to say that health, the treatment of illness, and personal identity are all socially constructed.

Social-Conflict and Feminist Theories: Inequality and Health

Social-conflict analysis points out the connection between health and social inequality and, taking a cue from Karl Marx, ties medicine to the operation of capitalism. Researchers have focused on three main issues: access to medical care, the effects of the profit motive, and the politics of medicine.

Student Snapshot

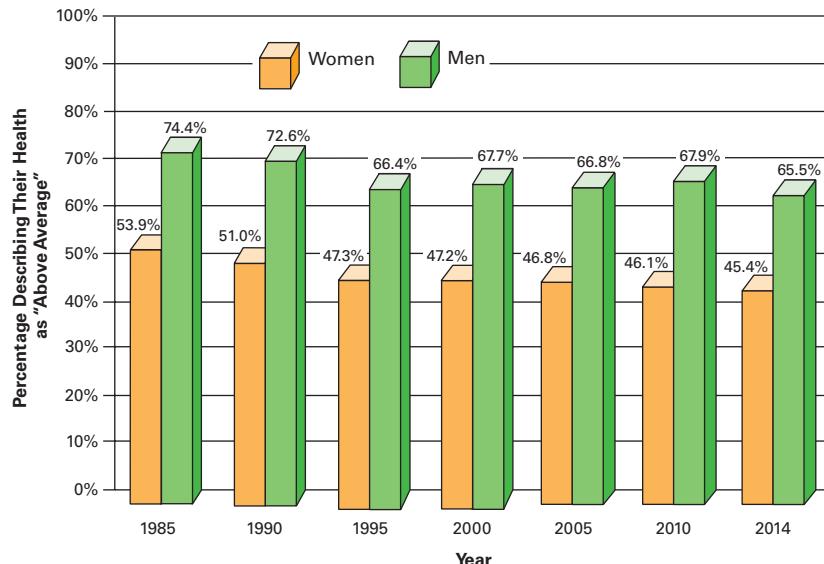


Figure 21–3 Self-Assessment of Physical Health by First-Year College Students, 1985–2014

Since 1985, a smaller number of students have described their health as "above average."

SOURCES: Astin et al. (2002) and Eagan et al. (2014).

ACCESS TO CARE Health is important to everyone. Yet by requiring individuals to pay for medical care, capitalist societies allow the richest people to have the best health. The access problem is more serious in the United States than in other high-income nations because we do not have a universal medical care system.

Conflict theorists argue that the capitalist system provides excellent medical care for the rich but not for the rest of the population. Most of the 42 million people who lack medical care coverage at present have low to moderate incomes under \$50,000 per year. When a serious illness strikes, the experience is starkly different for rich and poor people in our society.

THE PROFIT MOTIVE Some conflict analysts go further, arguing that the real problem is not access to medical care but the nature of capitalist medicine itself. The profit motive turns physicians, hospitals, and the pharmaceutical industry into money-hungry corporations. The drive for higher profits encourages physicians to recommend unnecessary tests and surgery and to rely too much on expensive drugs and treatments rather than focusing on helping people improve their living conditions and lifestyles.

Tens of millions of surgical procedures are performed in the United States each year, and most are elective, which means that they are not prompted by a medical emergency but are intended to promote long-term health. Of course, any medical procedure or use of drugs is risky, and as many as 10 percent of patients are harmed each year as a result. Therefore, the decision to perform surgery,

APPLYING THEORY

Health

	Structural-Functional Theory	Symbolic-Interaction Theory	Social-Conflict and Feminist Theories
What is the level of analysis?	Macro-level	Micro-level	Macro-level
How is health related to society?	Illness is dysfunctional for society because it prevents people from carrying out their daily roles. The sick role releases people who are ill from responsibilities while they try to get well.	Societies define "health" and "illness" differently according to their living standards. How people define their own health affects how they actually feel (psychosomatic conditions).	Health is linked to social inequality with rich people having more access to care than poor people. Capitalist medical care places the drive for profits over the needs of people. Scientific medicine downplays the social causes of illness, including poverty, racism, and sexism.

social-conflict theorists argue, reflects not just the medical needs of patients but also the financial interests of surgeons and hospitals (Cowley, 1995; Nuland, 1999).

Finally, say conflict theorists, our society is too tolerant of physicians having a direct financial interest in the tests and procedures they order for their patients (Pear & Eckholm, 1991). Medical care should be motivated by a concern for people, not profits.

MEDICINE AS POLITICS Although science claims to be politically neutral, feminists claim that scientific medicine often takes sides on significant social issues. For example, the medical establishment has always strongly opposed government medical care programs and only recently allowed a significant number of women to join the ranks of physicians. The history of medicine itself shows that racial and sexual discrimination has kept women and other minorities out of medicine, but discrimination has been supported by "scientific" opinions about, say, the inferiority of certain categories of people (Leavitt, 1984). Consider the diagnosis of "hysteria," a term that has its origins in the Greek word *hyster*, meaning "uterus." In choosing this word to describe a wild, emotional state, the medical profession suggested that being a woman is somehow the same as being irrational.

Even today, according to conflict theory, scientific medicine explains illness exclusively in terms of bacteria and viruses, ignoring the damaging effects of poverty. In effect, scientific medicine hides the bias in our medical system by transforming this social issue into simple biology.

EVALUATE

Social-conflict analysis provides still another view of how health, medicine, and society are related. According to this approach, social inequality is the reason some people have better health than others.

The most common objection to the conflict approach is that it minimizes the gains in U.S. health brought about by scientific medicine and higher living standards. Although there is plenty of room for improvement, health indicators for our population as a whole rose steadily over the course of the twentieth century and compare well with those of other industrial nations.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING Explain how health and medical care are related to social classes, to capitalism, and to gender stratification.

In sum, sociology's major theoretical approaches explain why health and medicine are social issues. The Applying Theory table sums up what they teach us. Advancing technology will not solve every health problem. On the contrary, as the Controversy & Debate box explains, today's advancing technology is raising new questions and concerns.

The renowned French scientist Louis Pasteur (1822–1895), who spent much of his life studying how bacteria cause disease, said just before he died that health depends less on bacteria than on the social environment in which the bacteria are found (Gordon, 1980:7). Explaining Pasteur's insight is sociology's contribution to human health.

Health and Medicine: Looking Ahead

In the early 1900s, deaths from infectious diseases like diphtheria and measles were widespread. Because scientists had yet to develop penicillin and other antibiotics, even a simple infection from a minor wound might become life-threatening. Today, a century later, most members of our society take for granted good health and long life.

More people in the United States are taking personal responsibility for their health. Even so there are some grounds for concern. The increasing obesity epidemic is one major problem. If this trend continues, the younger generation may become the first in some time to have lower rather than higher life expectancy. Every one of us can live better and longer if we eat sensibly and in moderation, exercise regularly, and avoid tobacco.

Another health problem that our society faces, discussed throughout this chapter, is the double standard that provides good health to the rich but causes higher rates of disease for the poor. International comparisons show that the United States lags in some measures of human health because of the large share of our population that lives at the margins of our society. An important question, even after the recent health care reforms, is what our society should do about the millions of people who live with low income and without the security of medical care.

Controversy & Debate

The Genetic Crystal Ball: Do We Really Want to Look?

Felisha: Before I get married, I want my partner to have a genetic screening. It's like buying a house or a car—you should check it out before you sign on the line.

Eva: Do you expect to get a warranty, too?

The liquid in the laboratory test tube seems ordinary enough, like a syrupy form of water. But this liquid is one of the greatest medical breakthroughs of all time; it may even hold the key to life itself. The liquid is deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA, the spiraling molecule found in cells of the human body that contains the blueprint for making each one of us human as well as different from every other person.

The human body is composed of some 100 trillion cells, most of which contain a nucleus of twenty-three pairs of chromosomes (one of each pair comes from each parent). Each chromosome is packed with DNA in segments called genes. Genes guide the production of protein, the building block of the human body.

If genetics sounds complicated (and it is), the social implications of genetic knowledge are even more complex. Scientists discovered the structure of the DNA molecule in 1952, and in recent years they have made great gains in "mapping" the human genome. Charting the genetic landscape may lead to understanding how each bit of DNA shapes our being.



Scientists are learning more and more about the genetic factors that prompt the eventual development of serious diseases. If offered the opportunity, would you want to undergo a genetic screening that would predict the long-term future of your own health?

But do we really want to turn the key to unlock the secrets of life itself? And what do we do with this knowledge once we have it? Research has already identified genetic abnormalities that cause sickle-cell anemia, muscular dystrophy, Huntington's disease, cystic fibrosis, some forms of cancer, and other crippling and deadly afflictions. Genetic screening—gazing into a person's genetic "crystal ball"—could let people know their medical destiny and allow doctors to manipulate segments of DNA to prevent diseases before they appear.

But many people urge caution in such research, warning that genetic information can easily be abused. At its worst, genetic mapping opens the door to Nazi-like efforts to breed a "super-race." In 1994, the People's Republic of China began to use genetic information to regulate marriage and childbirth with the purpose of avoiding "new births of inferior quality."

It seems inevitable that some parents will want to use genetic testing to evaluate the health (or even the eye color) of their future children. What if they want to abort a fetus because it falls short of their standards? Should parents be allowed to use genetic manipulation to create "designer children"?

Then there is the issue of "genetic privacy." Can a prospective spouse request a genetic evaluation of her fiancé before agreeing to marry? Can a life insurance company demand genetic testing before issuing a policy? Can an employer screen job applicants to weed out those whose future illnesses might drain the company's health care funds? Clearly, what is scientifically possible is not always morally desirable. Society is already struggling with questions about the proper use of our expanding knowledge of human genetics. Such ethical dilemmas will multiply as genetic research moves forward in the years to come.

What Do You Think?

1. Traditional wedding vows join couples "in sickness and in health." Do you think individuals have a right to know the future health of their potential partner before tying the knot? Why or why not?
2. Do you think parents should be able to genetically "design" their children? Why or why not?
3. Is it right that private companies doing genetic research are able to patent their discoveries so that they can profit from the results, or should this information be made available to everyone? Explain your answer.

SOURCES: D. Thompson (1999) and Golden and Lemonick (2000).

Finally, we know that health problems are far greater in low-income nations than they are in the United States. The good news is that life expectancy for the world as a whole has been rising—from forty-eight years in 1950 to seventy-one years today—and the biggest gains have occurred in poor countries (Population Reference Bureau,

2014). But in much of Latin America, Asia, and especially Africa, hundreds of millions of adults and children lack not only medical attention but adequate food and safe drinking water as well. Improving the health of the world's poorest people is a critical challenge in the years to come.

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

CHAPTER 21 Health and Medicine

How does society affect patterns of health?

Certain occupations put people at higher-than-average risk of accident or death. One example is coal mining, which has long been one of the deadliest jobs. Although the death toll from mining accidents in the United States

has gone down over time, even miners who manage to avoid mine collapses or explosions typically suffer harm from years of breathing coal dust. Look at the photos shown here: How do they link health to a way of life?



Crews on fishing boats such as this one spend months at a time battling high seas and often frigid temperatures. As documented on the television show *The Deadliest Catch*, it is a rare and fortunate fishing season that brings no death or serious injury. What other jobs threaten the health and well-being of U.S. workers?



Are high death tolls in coal mining a thing of the past? In 2007, China reported 3,786 deaths in coal mines in that country. Here, rescuers remove a body from a mine after a gas explosion killed more than 80 miners.



In U.S. history, the deadliest year for coal miners was 1907, when 3,242 miners lost their lives. This photo was taken after a mine explosion near Monongah, West Virginia, that killed 358 people. In 2014, there were 16 mining deaths. What social patterns (think about class, gender, and other factors) can you see in the history of mining and health?

Hint Among the most dangerous jobs in the United States are farming (dangers come from using power equipment), mining, timber cutting, truck driving, and constructing tall buildings. Many members of the military also face danger on a daily basis. In general, people in the working class are at greater risk than middle-class people, who typically work in offices; men also predominate in the most dangerous jobs. Overall, about 4,600 U.S. (nonmilitary) workers lose their lives every year in workplace accidents.

Seeing Sociology in Your Everyday Life

- Take a trip to the local courthouse or city hall to find public records showing people's cause of death and age at death. Compare the records for a century ago and today. What patterns do you find in life expectancy and causes of death?
- What facts have you learned from this chapter that you can use to improve your own health? In what specific ways can sociology help raise people's level of well-being?
- Go to www.sociologyinfofocus.com to access the Sociology in Focus blog, where you can read the latest posts by a team of young sociologists who apply the sociological perspective to topics of popular culture.

Making the Grade

CHAPTER 21 Health and Medicine

What Is Health?

21.1 Explain how patterns of health are shaped by society. (pages 564–65)

Health is a social issue because personal well-being depends on a society's level of technology and its distribution of resources.

- A society's culture shapes definitions of health, which change over time.
- A society's technology affects people's health.
- Social inequality affects people's health.

health a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being

Health: A Global Survey

21.2 Contrast patterns of health in low- and high-income countries. (pages 565–66)

Health in Low-Income Countries

- Poor nations suffer from inadequate sanitation, hunger, and other problems linked to poverty.
- Life expectancy in low-income nations is about twenty years less than in the United States; in the poorest nations, 10 percent of children die within a year of birth, and almost 25 percent die before the age of thirty.

Health in High-Income Countries

- In the nineteenth century, industrialization improved health dramatically in Western Europe and North America.
- A century ago, infectious diseases were leading killers; today, most people in the United States die in old age of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, cancer, or stroke.

Health in the United States

21.3 Analyze how race, class, gender, and age are linked to health. (pages 566–74)

Who Is Healthy? Age, Gender, Class, and Race

- About 82 percent of white men but just 73 percent of African American men live to age sixty-five. Comparable figures for women are 89 percent for whites and 83 percent for African Americans.
- Throughout the life course, women have better health than men. Our culture's definition of masculinity promotes aggressive and individualistic behavior that contributes to men's higher rate of coronary disease as well as accidents and violence.

- People of high social position enjoy better health than the poor, a result of better nutrition, wider access to health care, and safer and less stressful living conditions.
- Poverty among African Americans, which is almost three times the rate for whites, helps explain why black people are more likely to die in infancy and to suffer the effects of violence, drug abuse, and poor health.

Cigarette Smoking

- Cigarette smoking is the greatest preventable cause of death; more than 440,000 people in the United States die prematurely each year as a result of smoking cigarettes.
- Many people smoke as a way to relieve stress. Smoking is more common among men, working-class people, divorced people, the unemployed, and those serving in the armed forces.
- Tobacco is a \$90 billion industry in the United States; the tobacco industry has increased its sales abroad, especially in low-income countries.

Eating Disorders and Obesity

- Eating disorders—anorexia nervosa and bulimia—are tied to cultural expectations of thinness. Among adults, females are three times more likely than males to suffer from anorexia nervosa and five times more likely to suffer from bulimia.
- In the United States, 64 percent of adults are overweight; being overweight raises the risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.
- Social causes of obesity include an inactive lifestyle and a diet heavy in salt and fatty foods.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- STDs became a matter of national concern during the "sexual revolution" beginning in the 1960s; by the late 1980s, the dangers of STDs, especially AIDS, caused a sexual counterrevolution as people turned away from casual sex.
- Specific behaviors that put people at risk of AIDS include anal sex, sharing needles, and use of any drug.

Ethical Issues Surrounding Death

- Questions about the use of medical technology have added an ethical dimension to health and illness.
- Supporters of a "right to die" argue that individuals should be able to decide for themselves when to use or refuse medical treatment to prolong their lives.

social epidemiology the study of how health and disease are distributed throughout a society's population
eating disorder a physical and mental disorder that involves an intense form of dieting or other unhealthy method of weight control driven by the desire to be very thin
euthanasia assisting in the death of a person suffering from an incurable disease; also known as *mercy killing*

The Medical Establishment

21.4 Compare the medical systems in nations around the world. (pages 574–79)

The Rise of Scientific Medicine

- Health care was historically a family concern but with industrialization became the responsibility of trained specialists.
- The model of scientific medicine is the foundation of the U.S. medical establishment.

Holistic Medicine

- Holistic medicine, focusing on prevention of illness, takes a broader and more traditional approach than scientific medicine.
- Holistic practitioners focus on health rather than disease; they emphasize treating patients as people, encourage people to take responsibility for their own health, and provide treatment in personal, relaxed surroundings.

Paying for Medical Care: A Global Survey

- Socialist societies define medical care as a right; they offer basic care equally to everyone.
- Capitalist societies view medical care as a commodity to be purchased, although most help pay for medical care through socialized medicine or national health insurance.

Paying for Medical Care: The United States

- The 2010 health care reforms are a recent effort to move the United States closer to the goal of having everyone covered by health insurance.
- Most people have private or government health insurance, but about 42 million people in the United States do not have medical insurance.

The Nursing Shortage

- The aging of U.S. society is a major factor raising the demand for nursing.
- While the nursing shortage has declined in most of the country, there remains a shortage of nurses in many southern and western states.

medicine the social institution that focuses on fighting disease and improving health
holistic medicine an approach to health care that emphasizes prevention of illness and takes into account a person's entire physical and social environment

socialized medicine a medical care system in which the government owns and operates most medical facilities and employs most physicians

direct-fee system a medical care system in which patients pay directly for the services of physicians and hospitals

health maintenance organization (HMO) an organization that provides comprehensive medical care to subscribers for a fixed fee

Theories of Health and Medicine

21.5 Apply sociology's major theories to health and medicine. (pages 579–83)

Structural-functional theory considers illness to be dysfunctional because it reduces people's abilities to perform their roles. According to Talcott Parsons, society responds to illness by defining roles:

- The *sick role* excuses the ill person from routine social responsibilities.
- The *physician's role* is to use specialized knowledge to take charge of the patient's recovery.

Symbolic-interaction theory investigates how health and medical care are socially constructed by people in everyday interaction:

- Our response to illness is not always based on medical facts.
- How people define a medical situation may affect how they feel.

Social-conflict theory focuses on the unequal distribution of health and medical care. Marxist theory criticizes the U.S. medical establishment for

- its overreliance on drugs and surgery
- the dominance of the profit motive
- overemphasis on the biological rather than the social causes of illness

Feminist theory criticizes the medical establishment for "scientific" statements and policies that effectively allow men to dominate women.

sick role patterns of behavior defined as appropriate for people who are ill

Chapter 22

Population, Urbanization, and Environment



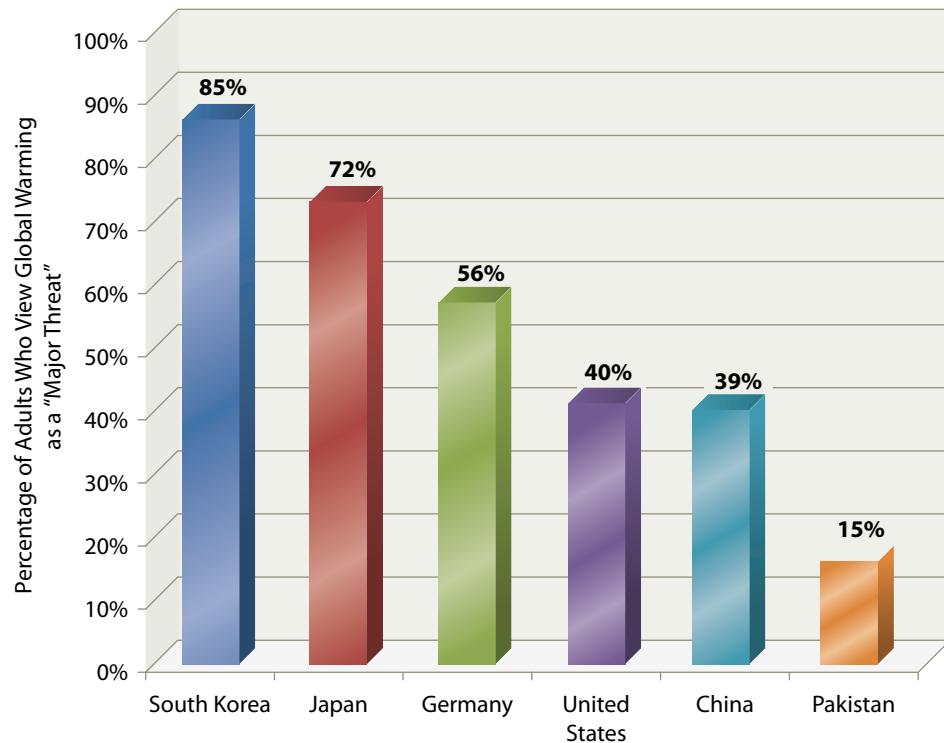
Learning Objectives

- 22.1** Explain the concepts of fertility, mortality, and migration, and how they affect population size.
- 22.2** Analyze population trends using Malthusian theory and demographic transition theory.
- 22.3** Summarize patterns of urbanization in the United States and around the world.
- 22.4** Identify the contributions of Tönnies, Durkheim, Simmel, Park, Wirth, and Marx to our understanding of urban life.
- 22.5** Describe the third urban revolution now under way in poor societies.
- 22.6** Analyze current environmental problems such as pollution and global warming.



The Power of Society

to shape our view of global warming



SOURCE: Pew Research Center (2015).

Are attitudes about global warming just our personal opinions? One way to answer this question is to look around the world. The population of the United States has been divided on the issue of global warming, with less than a majority seeing global warming as a “major threat.” In most other high-income nations, however, most people make this claim. The level of concern about global warming is far lower in low-income nations, where people are more concerned with their basic needs such as food and shelter. Clearly, society has the power to shape our view on environmental issues just as it shapes so many other aspects of our lives.

Chapter Overview

This chapter explores three dimensions of social change: population dynamics, urbanization, and increasing threats to the natural environment. Not only are all three important, but they are closely linked as well.

"I'm telling you," Micah stated confidently from the edge of his dorm-room chair, "the weather is changing."

"Look," replied an unconvinced friend, Christine, who was shaking her head. "We've had tornados and severe storms as long as anyone can remember. It doesn't mean anything..."

"Yes it does. Weather is getting more severe. Not every day, but in general. Something is going on."

Most scientists who study weather patterns agree with Micah. They conclude that, with the oceans warming, the weather is changing. The trend toward more severe storms has prompted many to wonder if higher average temperatures and more severe weather are not a "once in a lifetime" event but what might well become the "new normal." With population highly concentrated in massive urban areas—a pattern found not just in the United States but also in much of the world—climate change may well be putting hundreds of millions of people at risk. Politicians, too, are speaking out about climate change. In 2015, President Obama stated that climate change amounted to a threat to our national security (Shane, 2015).

Our planet is a single vast environmental system—one that is shaped for better or worse by the 7.2 billion people (in 2014) on Earth. This chapter explores how human society both relies on and shapes the natural environment. Our planet is changing, not only in terms of global warming and other environmental trends but also in terms of a steadily increasing population. Similarly, a majority of the world's people now live in the dense concentrations we call cities and the share of population that is urban continues to rise. ■



Demography: The Study of Population

22.1 Explain the concepts of fertility, mortality, and migration, and how they affect population size.

When humans first began to cultivate plants some 12,000 years ago, Earth's entire *Homo sapiens* population was around 5 million, about the number living in just the state of Colorado today. Very slow growth pushed the global total in 1 C.E. to perhaps 300 million, or about the current population of the United States.

Starting around 1750, world population began to spike upward. We now add more than 86 million people to the planet each year; today, the world holds 7.2 billion people (Population Reference Bureau, 2014).

The causes and consequences of this drama are the basis of **demography**, *the study of human population*. Demography (from Greek, meaning "description of people") is a cousin of sociology that analyzes the size and composition

of a population and studies how and why people move from place to place. Demographers not only collect statistics but also raise important questions about the effects of population growth and suggest how it might be controlled. The following sections present basic demographic concepts.

Fertility

The study of human population begins with how many people are born. **Fertility** is *the incidence of childbearing in a country's population*. During her childbearing years, from the onset of menstruation (typically in the early teens) to menopause (usually in the late forties), a woman is capable of bearing more than twenty children. But **fecundity**, or maximum possible childbearing, is sharply reduced by cultural norms, finances, and personal choice.

Demographers describe fertility using the **crude birth rate**, *the number of live births in a given year for every 1,000 people in a population*. To calculate a crude birth rate, divide the number of live births in a year by the society's total population, and multiply the result by 1,000. In the United

States in 2013, there were 3.93 million live births in a population of 316.1 million, yielding a crude birth rate of 12.4 (Martin et al., 2014).

January 18, Coshocton County, Ohio. Having just finished the mountains of meat and potatoes that make up a typical Amish meal, we have gathered in the living room of Jacob Raber, a member of this rural Amish community. Mrs. Raber, a mother of four, is telling us about Amish life. "Most of the women I know have five or six children," she says with a smile, "but certainly not everybody—some have eleven or twelve!"

A country's birth rate is described as "crude" because it is based on the entire population, not just women in their childbearing years. In addition, this measure ignores differences between various categories of the population: Fertility among the Amish, for example, is quite high, and fertility among Asian Americans is low. But the crude measure is easy to calculate and allows rough comparisons of the fertility of one country or region in relation to others. Part (a) of Figure 22–1 shows that on a global scale the crude birth rate of North America is low.

Mortality

Population size also reflects **mortality**, *the incidence of death in a country's population*. To measure mortality, demographers use the **crude death rate**, *the number of deaths in a given year for every 1,000 people in a population*. This time,

we take the number of deaths in a year, divide by the total population, and multiply the result by 1,000. In 2013, there were 2.6 million deaths in the U.S. population of 316.1 million, yielding a crude death rate of 8.2 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). Part (a) of Figure 22–1 shows that this rate is about average.

A third useful demographic measure is the **infant mortality rate**, *the number of deaths among infants under one year of age for each 1,000 live births in a given year*. To compute infant mortality, divide the number of deaths of children under one year of age by the number of live births during the same year, and multiply the result by 1,000. In 2013, there were 23,440 infant deaths and 3.93 million live births in the United States. Dividing the first number by the second and multiplying the result by 1,000 yields an infant mortality rate of 5.96. Part (b) of Figure 22–1 indicates that by world standards, North American infant mortality is very low.

But remember that differences exist among various categories of people. For example, African Americans, with nearly three times the burden of poverty as whites, have an infant mortality rate of 11.2—more than twice the white rate of 5.1.

Low infant mortality greatly raises **life expectancy**, *the average life span of a country's population*. U.S. males born in 2013 can expect to live 76.4 years, and females can look forward to 81.2 years. As part (c) of Figure 22–1 shows, life expectancy in North America is twenty years greater than is typical of low-income countries in Africa.

Global Snapshot

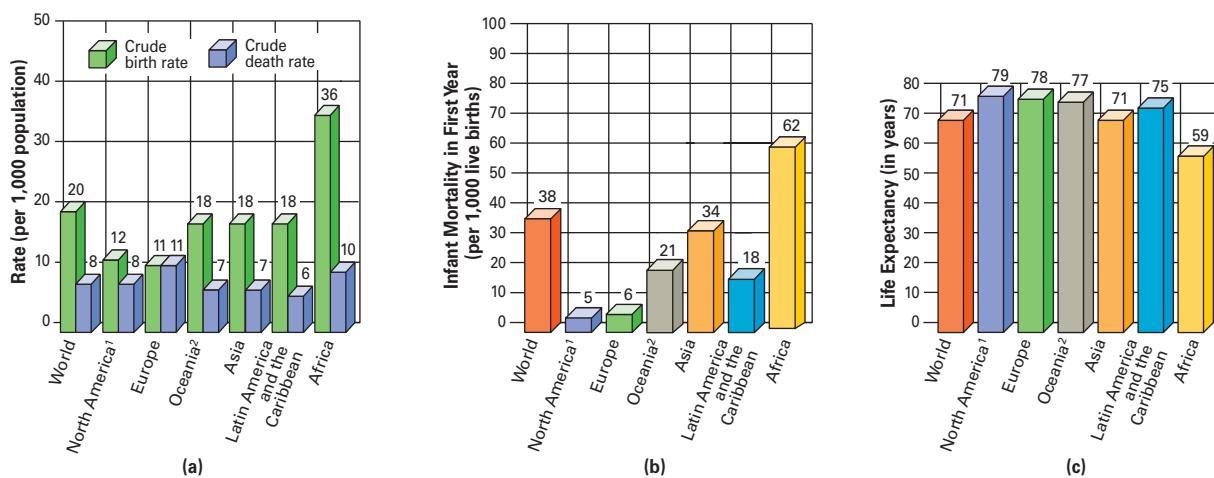


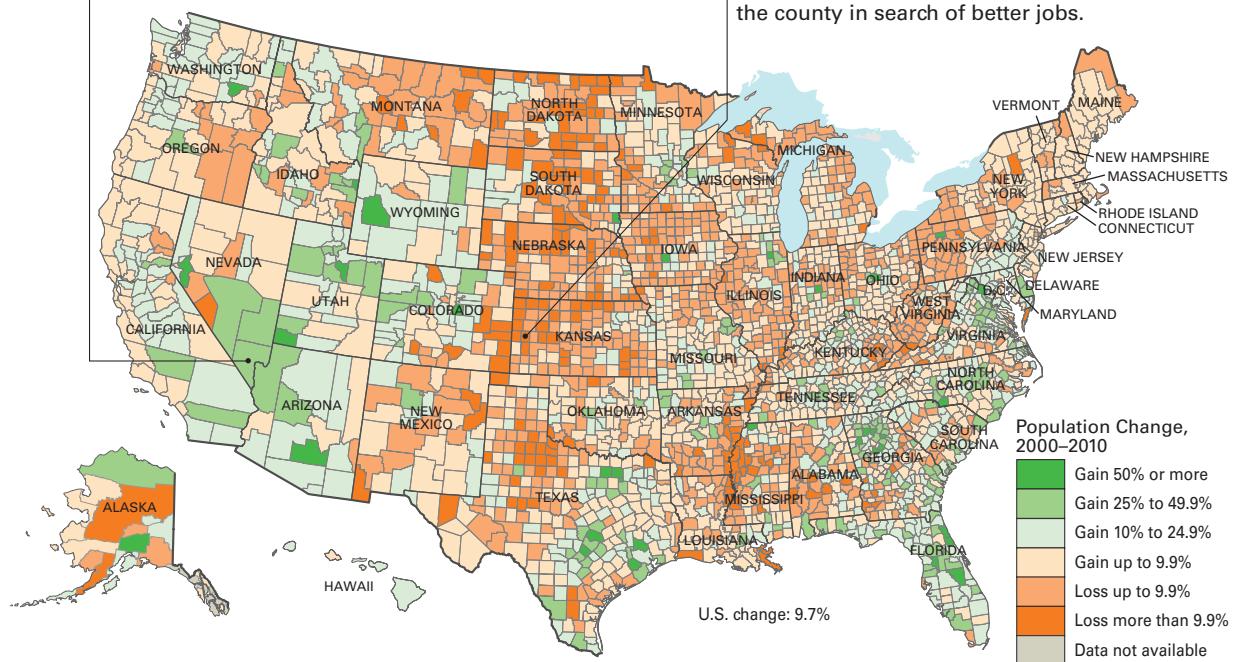
Figure 22–1 (a) Crude Birth Rates and Crude Death Rates, (b) Infant Mortality Rates, and (c) Life Expectancy around the World, 2014

By world standards, North America has a low birth rate, an average death rate, a very low infant mortality rate, and high life expectancy.

¹ United States and Canada. ² Australia, New Zealand, and South Pacific Islands.

Seeing Ourselves

Cheryl Richardson, age 36, has just moved to Las Vegas to work in the expanding tourism industry, which has boosted the region's population.



Tom and Ellen Posten, in their sixties, live in Wichita County, Kansas; like many other families in the area, their children have all moved out of the county in search of better jobs.

National Map 22–1 Population Change across the United States

This map shows that between 2000 and 2010, population moved from the heartland of the United States toward the coasts. What do you think is causing this internal migration? What categories of people do you think remain in counties that are losing population?

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (2011).

Migration

Population size is also affected by **migration**, *the movement of people into and out of a specified territory*. Movement into a territory, or *immigration*, is measured as an *in-migration rate*, calculated as the number of people entering an area for every 1,000 people in the population. Movement out of a territory, or *emigration*, is measured in terms of an *out-migration rate*, the number leaving for every 1,000 people. Both types of migration usually occur at the same time; the difference between them is the *net migration rate*.

All nations experience internal migration, movement within their borders from one region to another.

National Map 22–1 shows where the U.S. population is moving and the places that are being left behind (notice the gains in the western states and along the East Coast, and the heavy losses in the Plains States in the middle of the country).

Migration is sometimes voluntary, as when people leave a small town and move to a larger city. In such cases, “push-pull” factors are typically at work; a lack of jobs “pushes” people to move, and more opportunity elsewhere “pulls” them to a larger city. Migration can also be involuntary, as during the forced transport of 10 million Africans to the Western Hemisphere as slaves or when Hurricane Katrina forced tens of thousands of people to flee New Orleans.

demography the study of human population

fertility the incidence of childbearing in a country's population

crude birth rate the number of live births in a given year for every 1,000 people in a population

mortality the incidence of death in a country's population

crude death rate the number of deaths in a given year for every 1,000 people in a population

infant mortality rate the number of deaths among infants under one year of age for each 1,000 live births in a given year

migration the movement of people into and out of a specified territory

Population Growth

Fertility, mortality, and migration all affect the size of a society's population. In general, rich nations (such as the United States) grow as much from immigration as from natural increase; poorer nations (such as Pakistan) grow almost entirely from natural increase.

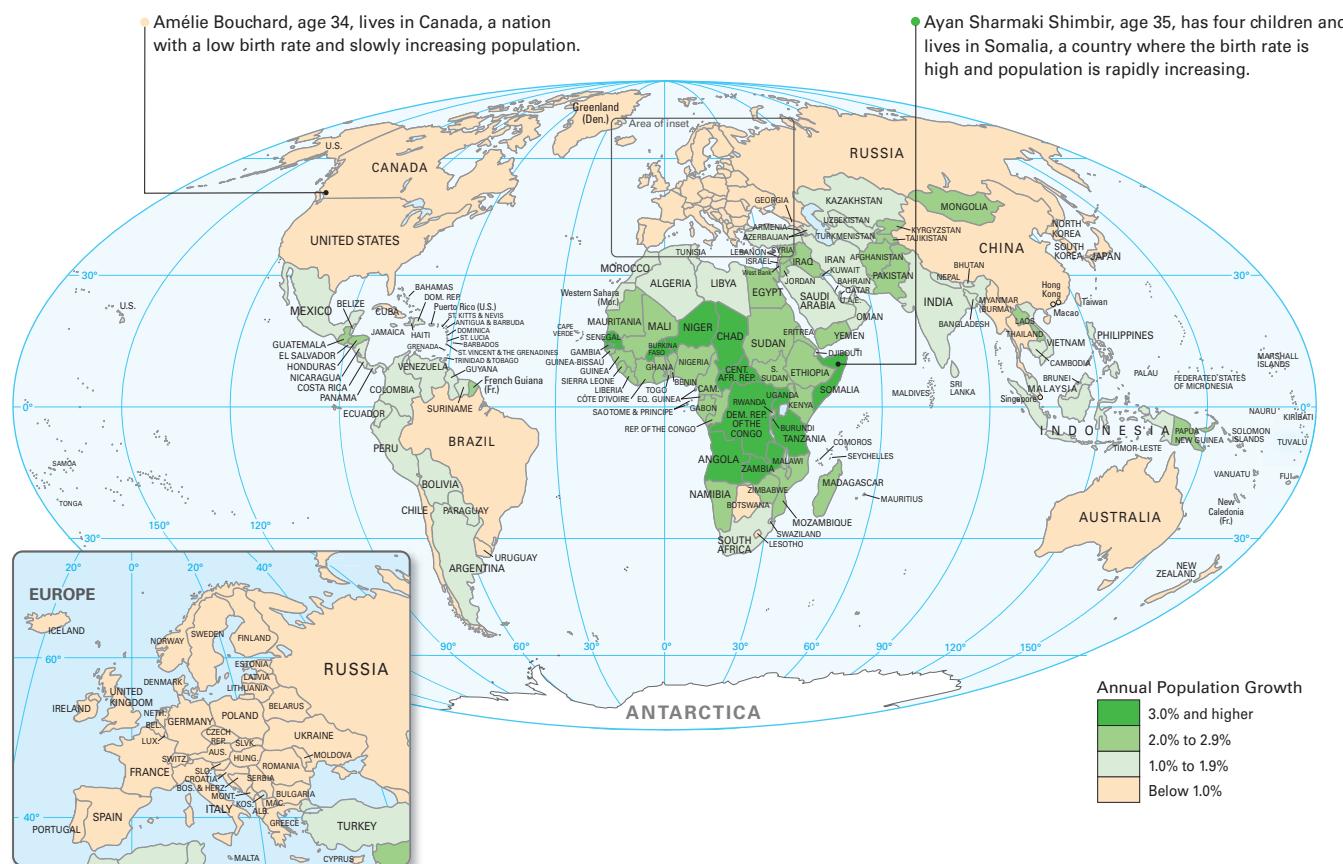
To calculate a population's natural growth rate, demographers subtract the crude death rate from the crude birth rate. The natural growth rate of the U.S. population in 2013 was 4.2 per 1,000 (the crude birth rate of 12.4 minus the crude death rate of 8.2), or about 0.4 percent annual growth.

Global Map 22–1 shows that population growth in the United States and other high-income nations is well below the world average of 1.2 percent. Earth's low-growth

continents are Europe (currently showing no growth) and North America (0.4 percent). Close to the global average are Oceania (1.1 percent), Asia (1.1 percent), and Latin America (1.2 percent). The highest-growth region in the world is Africa (2.5 percent).

A handy rule of thumb for estimating a nation or region's growth is to divide the number 70 by the population growth rate; this yields the *doubling time* in years. Thus an annual growth rate of 2 percent (found in the Latin American nation of Honduras) doubles a population in thirty-five years, and a 3 percent growth rate (found in the African nation of the Democratic Republic of Congo) drops the doubling time to just twenty-three years. The rapid population growth of the poorest countries is deeply troubling because these countries can barely support the populations they have now.

Window on the World



Global Map 22–1 Population Growth in Global Perspective

The richest countries of the world—including the United States, Canada, and the nations of Europe—have growth rates below 1 percent. The nations of Latin America and Asia typically have growth rates around 1.2 percent, a rate that doubles a population in fifty-eight years. Africa has an overall growth rate of 2.5 percent (despite only small increases in countries with a high rate of AIDS), which cuts the doubling time to twenty-eight years. In global perspective, we see that a society's standard of living is closely related to its rate of population growth: Population is rising fastest in the world regions that can least afford to support more people.

SOURCE: Population Reference Bureau (2014).

Population Composition

Demographers also study the makeup of a society's population at a given point in time. One variable is the **sex ratio**, *the number of males for every 100 females in a nation's population*. In 2013, the sex ratio in the United States was 97 (that is, 97 males for every 100 females). Sex ratios are usually below 100 because, on average, women outlive men. In places such as Plainville, Kansas, which has an aging population, the sex ratio is only 89, or 89 males for every 100 females. In India, however, the sex ratio is 107 because, not only is the population much younger, but also many parents value sons more than daughters and may either abort a female fetus or, after birth, give more care to their male children, raising the odds that a female child will die.

A more complex measure is the **age-sex pyramid**, *a graphic representation of the age and sex of a population*. Figure 22–2 presents the age-sex pyramids for the populations of the United States and Mexico. Higher mortality with advancing age gives these figures a rough pyramid shape. In the U.S. pyramid, the bulge in the middle reflects high birth rates during the *baby boom* from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s. The contraction for people in their twenties and thirties reflects the subsequent *baby bust*. The birth rate of 12.4 in 2013 is half what it was (25.3) at the height of the baby boom in 1957.

Comparing the U.S. and Mexican age-sex pyramids reveals different demographic trends. The pyramid for Mexico, like that of other lower-income nations, is wide

at the bottom (reflecting higher birth rates) and narrows quickly by what we would call middle age (due to higher mortality). In short, Mexico is a much younger society, with a median age of twenty-eight compared to thirty-seven in the United States. With a larger share of females still in their childbearing years, Mexico's crude birth rate (19.0) is considerably higher than our own (12.4), and its annual rate of population growth (1.4 percent) is more than three times the U.S. rate (0.4 percent).

History and Theory of Population Growth

22.2 Analyze population trends using Malthusian theory and demographic transition theory.

In the past, people wanted large families because human labor was the key to productivity. In addition, until rubber condoms were invented in the mid-1800s, prevention of pregnancy was uncertain at best. But high death rates from infectious diseases put a constant brake on population growth.

A major demographic shift began about 1750 as the world's population turned upward, reaching the 1 billion mark by 1800. This milestone (which took all of human history to reach) was repeated barely a century later in 1930, when a second billion people were added to the planet. In other words, not only was population increasing, but the

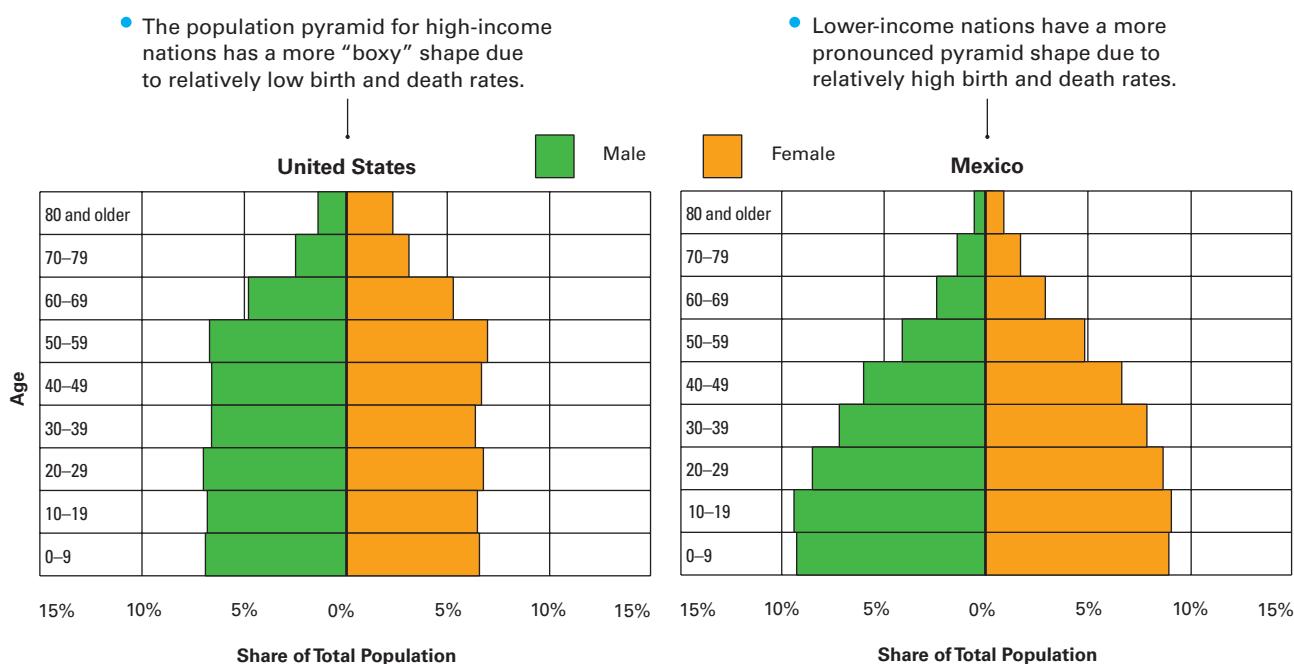


Figure 22–2 Population Age-Sex Pyramids for the United States and Mexico, 2013

By looking at the shape of a country's population pyramid, you can tell its level of economic development and predict future levels of population increase.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (2013).

rate of growth was accelerating as well. Global population reached 3 billion by 1962 (just thirty-two years later) and 4 billion by 1974 (only twelve years after that). The rate of world population increase has slowed recently, but our planet passed the 5 billion mark in 1987, the 6 billion mark in 1999, and the 7 billion mark early in 2012. In no previous century did the world's population even double; in the twentieth century, it *quadrupled*.

Currently, the world is gaining 86.6 million people each year; 98 percent of this increase is in lower-income countries. Experts predict that Earth's population will reach 8 billion by 2025 and will climb more slowly to about 9.5 billion by 2050 (United Nations, 2013). Given the world's troubles feeding the present population, such an increase is a matter of urgent concern.

Malthusian Theory

The sudden population spurt 250 years ago sparked the development of demography. Thomas Robert Malthus (1766–1834), an English economist and clergyman, warned that population increase would soon lead to social chaos. Malthus (1926, orig. 1798) calculated that population would increase in what mathematicians call a *geometric progression*, illustrated by the series of numbers 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and so on. At such a rate, Malthus concluded, world population would soon soar out of control.

Food production would also increase, Malthus explained, but only in *arithmetic progression* (as in the series 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and so on) because even with new agricultural technology, farmland is limited. Thus Malthus presented a distressing vision of the future: people reproducing beyond what the planet could feed, leading ultimately to widespread starvation and war over what resources were left.

Malthus recognized that artificial birth control or abstinence might change his prediction. But he considered one morally wrong and the other impractical. Famine and war therefore stalked humanity in Malthus's mind, and he was justly known as "the dismal parson."

EVALUATE

Fortunately, Malthus's prediction was flawed. First, by 1850, the European birth rate began to drop, partly because children were becoming an economic liability rather than an asset and partly because people began using artificial birth control. Second, Malthus underestimated human ingenuity: Modern drip-irrigation techniques, advanced fertilizers, and effective pesticides increased farm production and saved vital resources far more than he could have imagined (Yemma, 2011).

Some people criticized Malthus for ignoring the role of social inequality in world abundance and famine. For example, Karl Marx (1967, orig. 1867) objected to viewing suffering as a "law of nature" rather than the curse of capitalism. More recently, "critical demographers" have claimed that saying poverty is caused by high birth rates in low-income countries amounts to blaming the victims. On the contrary, they see global inequality as the real issue (Horton, 1999; Kuumba, 1999).

Still, Malthus offers an important lesson. Habitable land, clean water, and fresh air are limited resources, and greater economic productivity has taken a heavy toll on the natural environment. In addition, medical advances have lowered death rates, pushing up world population. Common sense tells us that no level of population growth can go on forever. People everywhere must become aware of the dangers of population increase.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING What did Malthus predict about human population increase? About food production? What was his overall conclusion?

Demographic Transition Theory

A more complex analysis of population change is **demographic transition theory**, *a thesis that links population patterns to a society's level of technological development*. Figure 22–3 on page 596 shows the demographic consequences at four levels of technological development.

Preindustrial, agrarian societies (Stage 1) have high birth rates because of the economic value of children and the absence of birth control. Death rates are also high because of low living standards and limited medical technology. Deaths from outbreaks of disease cancel out births, so population rises and falls only slightly over time. This was the case for thousands of years in Europe before the Industrial Revolution.



This street scene in Mumbai, India, conveys the vision of the future found in the work of Thomas Robert Malthus, who feared that population increase would overwhelm the world's resources. Can you explain why Malthus had such a serious concern about population? How is demographic transition theory a more hopeful analysis?

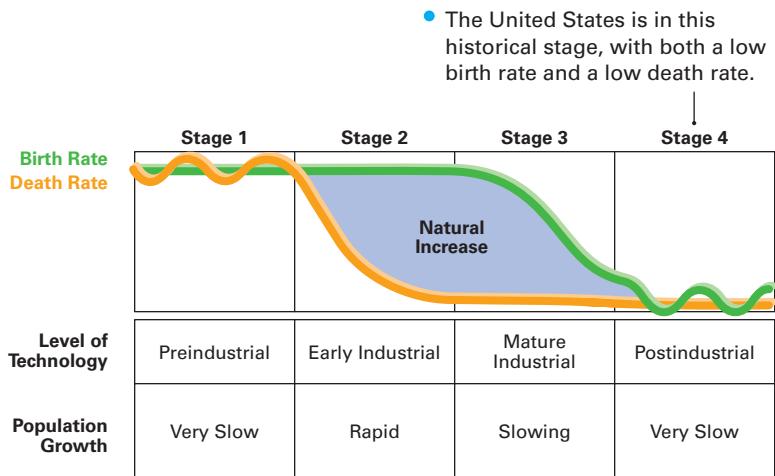


Figure 22–3 Demographic Transition Theory

Demographic transition theory links population change to a society's level of technological development.

Stage 2, the onset of industrialization, brings a demographic transition as death rates fall due to greater food supplies and scientific medicine. But birth rates remain high, resulting in rapid population growth. It was during Europe's Stage 2 that Malthus formulated his ideas, which accounts for his pessimistic view of the future. The world's poorest countries today are in this high-growth stage.

In Stage 3, a mature industrial economy, the birth rate drops, curbing population growth once again. Fertility falls because most children survive to adulthood and because high living standards make raising children expensive. In short, affluence transforms children from economic assets into economic liabilities. Smaller families, made possible by effective birth control, are also favored by women working outside the home. As birth rates follow death rates downward, population growth slows further.

Stage 4 corresponds to a postindustrial economy in which the demographic transition is complete. The birth rate keeps falling, partly because dual-income couples gradually become the norm and partly because the cost of raising children continues to increase. This trend, linked to steady death rates, means that population grows only very slowly or even decreases. This is the case today in Japan, Europe, and the United States.

- The United States is in this historical stage, with both a low birth rate and a low death rate.

planet will become increasingly divided into industrialized "haves," enjoying low population growth, and nonindustrialized "have-nots," struggling in vain to feed more and more people.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING Explain the four stages of demographic transition theory.

Global Population Today: A Brief Survey

What can we say about population in today's world? Drawing on the discussion so far, we can identify important patterns and reach several conclusions.

THE LOW-GROWTH NORTH When the Industrial Revolution began in the Northern Hemisphere, the population increase in Western Europe

and North America was a high 3 percent annually. But in the centuries since, the growth rate has steadily declined, and in 1970, it fell below 1 percent. As our postindustrial society settles into Stage 4, the U.S. birth rate is below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman, a point demographers term **zero population growth**, *the rate of reproduction that maintains population at a steady level*. In 2014, eighty-four nations, almost all of them high-income countries, were at or below the point of zero population growth.

Among the factors that serve to hold down population in these postindustrial societies are a high proportion of men and women in the labor force, rising costs of raising children, trends toward later marriage and singlehood, and widespread use of contraceptives and abortion.

In high-income nations, then, population increase is not the pressing problem that it is in poor countries. On the contrary, many governments in high-income countries, including Italy and Japan, are concerned about a future problem of *underpopulation* because declining population size may be difficult to reverse and because the swelling ranks of the elderly can look to fewer and fewer young people for support (El Nasser & Overberg, 2011; Population Reference Bureau, 2014; Martin et al., 2015).

THE HIGH-GROWTH SOUTH Population is a critical problem in poor nations of the Southern Hemisphere. No nation of the world lacks industrial technology entirely; demographic transition theory's Stage 1 applies today to remote rural areas of low-income nations. But much of Latin America, Africa, and Asia is at Stage 2, with a mix of agrarian and industrial economies. Advanced medical technology, supplied by rich countries, has sharply reduced death rates, but birth rates remain high. This is why lower-income countries now account for about 83 percent of Earth's people and 98 percent of annual global population increase.

EVALUATE

Demographic transition theory suggests that the key to population control lies in technology. Instead of the runaway population increase feared by Malthus, this theory sees technology slowing growth and spreading material plenty.

Demographic transition theory is linked to modernization theory, one approach to global development discussed in Chapter 12 ("Global Stratification"). Modernization theorists are optimistic that poor countries will solve their population problems as they industrialize. But critics, notably dependency theorists, strongly disagree. Unless there is a redistribution of global resources, they maintain, our

In some of the world's poorest countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Africa, women still have, on average, more than six children during their lifetimes. But in most poor countries, birth rates have fallen from about six children per woman (typical in 1950) to about three. But this level of fertility is still high enough to make global poverty much worse. This is why leaders in the battle against global poverty point to the importance of reducing fertility rates in low-income nations.

Notice, too, that a key element in controlling world population growth is improving the status of women. Why? Because of this simple truth: Give women more life choices and they will have fewer children. History has shown that women who are free to decide when and where to marry, bear children as a matter of choice, and have access to education and to good jobs will limit their own fertility (Axinn & Barber, 2001; Roudi-Fahimi & Kent, 2007; Population Reference Bureau, 2014).

THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDE High- and low-income nations display very different population dynamics, a gap that is sometimes called the *demographic divide*. In Italy, a high-income nation with very low growth, women average just 1.4 children in their lifetimes. Such a low birth rate means that the number of annual births is less than the number of deaths. This means that at the moment, Italy is actually *losing* population. Looking ahead to 2050, and even assuming some gains from immigration, Italy's population is projected to be less than it is today. But the share of elderly people in Italy—now 22 percent—will only increase as time goes on.

How different are the patterns in a low-income nation such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There, women still average six to seven children, so even with a high mortality rate, this nation's population will almost triple by 2050. The share of elderly people is extremely low—about 3 percent—and almost half that country's people are below the age of sixteen. With such a high growth rate, it is no surprise that the problem of poverty is bad and getting worse: About three-fourths of the people are undernourished (Population Reference Bureau, 2014).

In sum, a demographic divide now separates rich countries with low birth rates and aging populations from poor countries with high birth rates and very young populations. Just as humanity has devised ways to reduce deaths around the world, it must now bring down population growth, especially in poor countries where projections suggest a future as bleak as that imagined by Thomas Malthus centuries ago.



Fertility in the United States has fallen during the past century and is now quite low. But some categories of the U.S. population have much higher fertility rates. One example is the Amish, a religious society living in rural areas of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and other states. It is common for Amish couples to have five, six, or more children. Why do you think the Amish favor large families?

Today, China stands out as a nation that has taken a strong stand on reducing population increase. That country's controversial one-child policy, enacted back in the 1970s, has reduced China's population by about 250 million.

Urbanization: The Growth of Cities

22.3 Summarize patterns of urbanization in the United States and around the world.

October 8, Hong Kong. The cable train grinds to the top of Victoria Peak, where we behold one of the world's most spectacular vistas: the city of Hong Kong at night! A million bright, colorful lights ring the harbor as ships, ferries, and traditional Chinese junks slowly slip by. Day or night, few places match Hong Kong for sheer energy: This small city is as economically productive as the state of Wisconsin or the nation of Finland. We could sit here for hours entranced by the spectacle of Hong Kong.

Throughout most of human history, the sights and sounds of great cities such as Hong Kong, Paris, and New York were simply unimaginable. Our distant ancestors lived in small, nomadic groups, moving as they depleted vegetation or hunted migratory game. The tiny settlements that marked the emergence of civilization in the Middle East some 12,000 years ago held only a small fraction of Earth's people. Today, the largest three or four cities of the world hold as many people as the entire planet did back then.

Urbanization is the concentration of population into cities. Urbanization redistributes population within a society and transforms many patterns of social life. We will trace these changes in terms of three urban revolutions: the emergence of cities 10,000 years ago, the development of industrial cities after 1750, and the explosive growth of cities in poor countries today.

The Evolution of Cities

Cities are a relatively new development in human history. Only about 12,000 years ago did our ancestors begin living in permanent settlements, which set the stage for the *first urban revolution*.

THE FIRST CITIES As explained in Chapter 4 ("Society"), hunting and gathering forced people to move all the time; however, once our ancestors discovered how to domesticate animals and cultivate crops, they were able to stay in one place. Raising their own food also created a material surplus, which freed some people from food production and allowed them to build shelters, make tools, weave cloth, and take part in religious rituals. The emergence of cities led to both higher living standards and job specialization.

The first city that we know of was Jericho, which lies to the north of the Dead Sea in what is now the West Bank. When first settled some 10,000 years ago, it was home to only 600 people. But as the centuries passed, cities grew to tens of thousands of people and became the centers of vast empires. By 3000 B.C.E., Egyptian cities flourished, as did cities in China about 2000 B.C.E. and in Central and South America about 1500 B.C.E. In North America, however, only a few Native American societies formed settlements; widespread urbanization had to await the arrival of European settlers in the seventeenth century.

PREINDUSTRIAL EUROPEAN CITIES European cities date back some 5,000 years to the Greeks and later the Romans, both of whom created great empires and founded cities across Europe, including Vienna, Paris, and London. With the fall of the Roman Empire, the so-called Dark Ages began as people withdrew into defensive walled settlements and warlords battled for territory. Only in the eleventh century did Europe become more peaceful; trade flourished once again, allowing cities to grow.

Medieval cities were quite different from those familiar to us today. Beneath towering cathedrals, the narrow and winding streets of London, Brussels, and Florence teemed with merchants, artisans, priests, peddlers, jugglers, nobles, and servants. Occupational groups such as bakers, carpenters, and metalworkers clustered together in distinct sections or "quarters." Ethnicity also defined communities as residents tried to keep out people who differed from themselves. The term "ghetto" (from the Italian

borghetto, meaning "outside the city walls") was first used to describe the neighborhood in which the Jews of Venice were segregated.

INDUSTRIAL EUROPEAN CITIES As the Middle Ages came to a close, steadily increasing commerce enriched a new urban middle class, or *bourgeoisie* (French, meaning "townspeople"). With more and more money, the bourgeoisie soon rivaled the hereditary aristocracy.

By about 1750, the Industrial Revolution triggered a *second urban revolution*, first in Europe and then in North America. Factories unleashed tremendous productive power, causing cities to grow bigger than ever before. London, the largest European city, reached 550,000 people by 1700 and exploded to 6.5 million by 1900 (A. F. Weber, 1963, orig. 1899; Chandler & Fox, 1974).

Cities not only grew but changed shape as well. Older winding streets gave way to broad, straight boulevards to handle the increasing flow of commercial traffic. Steam and electric trolleys soon crisscrossed the expanding cities. Because land was now a commodity to be bought and sold, developers divided cities into regular-sized lots (Mumford, 1961). The center of the city was no longer the cathedral but a bustling central business district filled with banks, retail stores, and tall office buildings.

With a new focus on business, cities became more crowded and impersonal. Crime rates rose. Especially at the outset, a few industrialists lived in grand style, but most men, women, and children barely survived by working in factories.

Organized efforts by workers to improve their lives eventually brought changes to the workplace, better housing, and the right to vote. Public services such as water, sewer systems, and electricity further improved urban living. Today, some urbanites still live in poverty, but a rising standard of living has partly fulfilled the city's historical promise of a better life.

The Growth of U.S. Cities

Most of the Native Americans who inhabited North America for thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans were migratory people who formed few permanent settlements. The spread of villages and towns came after European colonization.

COLONIAL SETTLEMENT, 1565–1800 In 1565, the Spanish built a settlement at Saint Augustine, Florida, and in 1607, the English founded Jamestown, Virginia. The first lasting settlement came in 1624, when the Dutch established New Amsterdam, later renamed New York.

New York and Boston (founded by the English in 1630) started out as tiny villages in a vast wilderness. They resembled medieval towns in Europe, with narrow, winding streets that still curve through lower Manhattan and

downtown Boston. When the first census was completed in 1790, as Table 22–1 shows, just 5 percent of the nation’s people lived in cities.

URBAN EXPANSION, 1800–1860 Early in the nineteenth century, as cities along the East Coast grew bigger, towns sprang up along the transportation routes that opened the American West. By 1860, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago were changing the face of the Midwest, and about one-fifth of the U.S. population lived in cities.

Urban expansion was greatest in the northern states; New York City, for example, had ten times the population of Charleston, South Carolina. The division of the United States into the industrial-urban North and the agrarian-rural South was one major cause of the Civil War (Schlesinger, 1969).

THE METROPOLITAN ERA, 1860–1950 The Civil War (1861–65) gave an enormous boost to urbanization as factories strained to produce weapons. Waves of people deserted the countryside for cities in hopes of finding better jobs. Joining them were tens of millions of immigrants, mostly from Europe, forming a culturally diverse urban mix.

In 1900, New York’s population soared past the 4 million mark, and Chicago, a city of only 100,000 people in 1860, was closing in on 2 million. Such growth marked the era of the **metropolis** (from the Greek, meaning “mother city”), *a large city that socially and economically dominates an urban area*. Metropolises became the economic centers of the United States. By 1920, urban areas were home to a majority of the U.S. population.

Industrial technology pushed the urban skyline ever higher. In the 1880s, steel girders and mechanical elevators allowed buildings to rise more than ten stories high. In 1930, New York’s Empire State Building was hailed as an urban wonder, reaching 102 stories into the clouds.

URBAN DECENTRALIZATION, 1950–PRESENT The industrial metropolis reached its peak about 1950. Since then, something of a turnaround—termed *urban decentralization*—has occurred as people have left downtown areas for outlying **suburbs**, *urban areas beyond the political boundaries of a city*. The old industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest stopped growing, and some lost considerable population in the decades after 1950. At the same time, suburban populations increased rapidly. The urban landscape of densely packed central cities evolved into sprawling suburban regions.

Suburbs and Urban Decline

Imitating the European aristocracy, some of the rich had town houses in the city as well as large country homes beyond the city limits. But not until after World War II did ordinary people find a suburban home within their reach. With more and more cars in circulation, new four-lane highways, government-backed mortgages, and

Table 22–1 Urban Population of the United States, 1790–2050

Year	Population (in millions)	Percentage Living in Cities
1790	3.9	5.1
1800	5.3	6.1
1820	9.6	7.3
1840	17.1	10.5
1860	31.4	19.7
1880	50.2	28.1
1900	76.0	39.7
1920	105.7	51.3
1940	131.7	56.5
1960	179.3	69.9
1980	226.5	73.7
2000	281.4	79.0
2020 (projected)	337.9	82.5
2040 (projected)	383.2	85.9
2050 (projected)	400.9	87.4

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau (2010) and United Nations (2014).

inexpensive tract homes, the suburbs grew rapidly. By 1999, most of the U.S. population lived in the suburbs and shopped at nearby malls rather than in the older and more distant downtown shopping districts (Pederson, Smith, & Adler, 1999; Macionis & Parrillo, 2016).

As many older cities of the Snowbelt—the Northeast and Midwest—lost higher-income taxpayers to the suburbs, they struggled to pay for expensive social programs for the poor who remained. Many cities fell into financial crisis, and urban decay became severe. Soon the inner city came to be synonymous with slums, crime, drugs, unemployment, poverty, and minorities.

The urban critic Paul Goldberger (2002) points out that the decline of central cities has also led to a decline in the importance of public space. Historically, the heart of city life was played out on the streets. The French word for a sophisticated person is *boulevardier*, which literally means “street person”—a term that has a negative meaning in the United States today. The active life that once took place on public streets and in public squares now takes place in shopping malls, the lobbies of cineplex theaters, and gated residential communities—all privately owned spaces. Further reducing the vitality of today’s urban places is the spread of television, the Internet, and other media that people use without leaving home.

Postindustrial Sunbelt Cities

As older Snowbelt cities fell into decline, Sunbelt cities in the South and the West began to grow rapidly. The soaring populations of cities such as Los Angeles and Houston



These recent college graduates have migrated to San Francisco in pursuit of economic opportunity. While many smaller cities struggle to keep the young people who are born there, large cities on the West Coast and the East Coast are magnets for young women and men beginning their careers.

reflect a population shift to the Sunbelt, where 61 percent of U.S. people now live. In addition, most of today's immigrants enter the country in the Sunbelt region. In 1950, nine of the ten biggest U.S. cities were in the Snowbelt; today, seven of the top ten are in the Sunbelt (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

Unlike their colder counterparts, Sunbelt cities came of age after urban decentralization began. So although cities like Chicago have long been enclosed by a ring of politically independent suburbs, cities like Houston have pushed their boundaries outward to include suburban communities. Chicago covers 227 square miles; Houston is more than twice that size, and the greater Houston urban area covers almost 9,000 square miles—an area the size of the state of New Hampshire.

The great sprawl of Sunbelt cities has drawbacks. Many people in cities such as Atlanta, Dallas, Phoenix, and Los Angeles complain that unplanned growth results in traffic-clogged roads, poorly planned housing developments, and schools that cannot keep up with the inflow of children. Not surprisingly, voters in many communities across the United States have passed ballot initiatives seeking to limit urban sprawl (Romero & Liserio, 2002; Sullivan, 2007).

Megalopolis: The Regional City

Another result of urban decentralization is urban regions or regional cities. The U.S. Census Bureau (2013) recognizes 381 *metropolitan statistical areas* (MSAs). Each includes at least one city with 50,000 or more people. The bureau also recognizes 541 *micropolitan statistical areas*, urban areas with at least one city of 10,000 to 50,000 people. *Combined statistical areas* (CSAs) include both metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas.

The biggest CSAs contain millions of people and cover large areas that extend into several states. In 2011, the largest CSA was New York and its adjacent urban areas in Long Island, western Connecticut, northern New Jersey, and eastern Pennsylvania, with a total population of more than 23 million. Next in size is the CSA in southern California that includes

Los Angeles, Riverside, and Long Beach, with a population of more than 18.5 million.

As regional cities grow, they begin to overlap. In the early 1960s, the French geographer Jean Gottmann (1961) coined the term **megalopolis** to designate *a vast urban region containing a number of cities and their surrounding suburbs*. Along the East Coast, a 400-mile megalopolis stretches all the way from New England to Virginia. Other supercities cover the eastern coast of Florida and stretch from Cleveland west to Chicago.

Edge Cities

Urban decentralization has also created *edge cities*, business centers some distance from the old downtowns. Edge cities—a mix of corporate office buildings, shopping malls, hotels, and entertainment complexes—differ from suburbs, which contain mostly homes. The population of suburbs peaks at night, but the population of edge cities peaks during the workday.

As part of expanding urban regions, most edge cities have no clear physical boundaries. Some do have names, including Las Colinas (near the Dallas–Fort Worth airport), Tyson's Corner (in Virginia, near Washington, D.C.),

metropolis a large city that socially and economically dominates an urban area

suburbs urban areas beyond the political boundaries of a city

megalopolis a vast urban region containing a number of cities and their surrounding suburbs

and King of Prussia (northwest of Philadelphia). Other edge cities are known only by the major highways that flow through them, including Route 1 in Princeton, New Jersey, and Route 128 near Boston (Garreau, 1991; Macionis & Parrillo, 2016).

Changes to Rural Areas

Most of the United States—75 percent of the land area—is rural. At the same time, most of the nation's people are urban: The 2010 census showed that 83.7 percent of the country's 309 million people were living in urban places.

As shown in Table 22–1, the trend toward becoming an urban society has been under way over the course of U.S. history. Immigration has played a part in the process of urbanization because most newcomers settle in cities. In addition, there has been net migration from rural areas to urban places, typically by people seeking greater social, educational, and economic opportunity.

During the 1990s, however, there developed a new trend, which analysts called the *rural rebound*. What this meant was that, instead of losing population to the urban areas, two-thirds of rural counties actually gained population. These gains were due mostly to migration as more people moved to rural places than left them for cities. The biggest gains in this process were seen in rural counties with special beauty such as lakes or ski areas. People were drawn to such rural communities not only by their natural beauty and clean air but also by their slower pace of life with less traffic and less crime.

Between 2000 and 2010, however, the rural rebound pattern faded, so that once again, most rural counties lost more people to migration than they gained. But the pattern was uneven. Rural counties that were highly scenic continued to increase in population due to migration, as did rural areas within commuting distance to large cities. By contrast, remote rural areas and those where the economy was largely based on farming saw little or no population gains or experienced declines.

If rural areas lose more people to migration than they attract, the only way they can maintain their populations is through natural increase—that is, if births outnumber deaths. But while natural increase did occur in some rural counties between 2000 and 2010, it did not occur in most. With typically older populations, most rural counties recorded more deaths than births, which meant that—unless migration made up the difference—populations declined.

Finally, rural places in the United States are becoming more socially diverse. The common view of rural areas as lacking racial and ethnic diversity has some basis in fact, as just 21 percent of this country's rural people fall into minority categories. Even so, keep in mind that some regions of the country have always had large minority populations, including African Americans in the South, Hispanic Americans in



The rural rebound has been most pronounced in towns that offer spectacular natural beauty. There are times when people living in the scenic town of Park City, Utah, cannot even find a parking space.

the Southwest, and Native Americans in Alaska. But rural areas in general have become more diverse, a trend that is seen in the fact that minorities (that is, people other than non-Hispanic whites) accounted for 83 percent of the rural population increase between 2000 and 2010 (K. M. Johnson, 1999; Johnson & Fugitt, 2000; K. M. Johnson, 2012).

Urbanism as a Way of Life

22.4 Identify the contributions of Tönnies, Durkheim, Simmel, Park, Wirth, and Marx to our understanding of urban life.

Early sociologists in Europe and the United States focused their attention on the rise of cities and how urban life differed from rural life. We briefly examine their accounts of urbanism as a way of life.

Ferdinand Tönnies: *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*

In the late nineteenth century, the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1937) studied how life in the new industrial metropolis differed from life in rural villages. From this contrast, he developed two concepts that have become a lasting part of sociology's terminology.

Tönnies (1963, orig. 1887) used the German word *Gemeinschaft* ("community") to refer to *a type of social organization in which people are closely tied by kinship and tradition*. The *Gemeinschaft* of the rural village joins people in what amounts to a single primary group.

By and large, argued Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft* is absent in the modern city. On the contrary, urbanization creates *Gesellschaft* ("association"), *a type of social organization in which people come together only on the basis of individual self-interest*. In the *Gesellschaft* way of life, individuals are motivated by their own needs rather than by a desire to help improve the well-being of everyone. By and large, city dwellers have little sense of community or common identity and look to others mainly when they need something. Tönnies saw in urbanization a weakening of close, long-lasting social relations in favor of the brief and impersonal ties or secondary relationships typical of business.

Emile Durkheim: Mechanical and Organic Solidarity

The French sociologist Emile Durkheim (see Chapter 4, "Society") agreed with much of Tönnies's thinking about cities. However, Durkheim countered that urbanites do not

Gemeinschaft a type of social organization in which people are closely tied by kinship and tradition

Gesellschaft a type of social organization in which people come together only on the basis of individual self-interest

lack social bonds; they simply organize social life differently than rural people.

Durkheim described traditional, rural life as *mechanical solidarity*, social bonds based on common sentiments and shared moral values. With its emphasis on tradition, Durkheim's concept of mechanical solidarity bears a striking similarity to Tönnies's *Gemeinschaft*. Urbanization erodes mechanical solidarity, Durkheim explained, but it also generates a new type of bonding, which he called *organic solidarity*, social bonds based on specialization and interdependence. This concept, which parallels Tönnies's *Gesellschaft*, reveals an important difference between the two thinkers. Both thought the growth of industrial cities weakened tradition, but Durkheim optimistically pointed to a new kind of solidarity. Where societies had been built on *likeness* (mechanical solidarity), Durkheim now saw social life based on *difference* (organic solidarity).

For Durkheim, urban society offered more individual choice, moral tolerance, and personal privacy than people find in rural villages. In sum, Durkheim thought that something is lost in the process of urbanization, but much is gained.

Georg Simmel: The Blasé Urbanite

The German sociologist Georg Simmel (1858–1918) offered a microanalysis of cities, studying how urban life shapes



Peasants Returning from a Village Fair (left, c. 1624), by Pieter Brueghel the Younger, conveys the essential unity of rural life forged by generations of kinship and neighborhood. By contrast, Lily Furedi's *Subway* (right) communicates the impersonality common to urban areas. Taken together, these paintings capture Tönnies's distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*.

Brueghel, Pieter the Younger, 1564–1638. *Peasants returning from a Village Fair*, after 1624. Oil on wood, 42.6 x 56.5 cm. Private collection, Courtesy Gallerie de Jonckheere. Akg images/Newscom. Lily Furedi, American. *Subway*. Oil on canvas, 99 x 123 cm. National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C./Smithsonian Institute.

individual experience. According to Simmel, individuals perceive the city as a crush of people, objects, and events. To prevent being overwhelmed by all this stimulation, urbanites develop a *blasé attitude*, tuning out much of what goes on around them. Such detachment does not mean that city dwellers lack compassion for others; they simply keep their distance as a survival strategy so that they can focus their time and energy on the people and things that really matter to them.

The Chicago School: Robert Park and Louis Wirth

Sociologists in the United States soon joined the study of rapidly growing cities. Robert Park, a leader of the first U.S. sociology program at the University of Chicago, sought to add a street-level perspective by getting out on the streets and studying real cities. As he said of himself, “I suspect that I have actually covered more ground, tramping about in cities in different parts of the world, than any other living man” (1950:viii). Walking the streets, Park found the city to be an organized mosaic of distinctive ethnic communities, commercial centers, and industrial districts. Over time, he observed, these “natural areas” develop and change in relation to one another. To Park, the city was a living organism—a human kaleidoscope.

Another major figure in the Chicago School of urban sociology was Louis Wirth (1897–1952). Wirth (1938) is best known for blending the ideas of Tönnies, Durkheim, Simmel, and Park into a comprehensive theory of urban life.

Wirth began by defining the city as a setting with a large, dense, and socially diverse population. These traits result in an impersonal, superficial, and transitory way of life. Living among millions of others, urbanites come into contact with many more people than residents of rural areas. So when city people notice others at all, they usually know them not in terms of *who they are* but *what they do*—as, for instance, the bus driver, the florist, or the grocery store clerk. These specialized urban relationships are pleasant for all concerned, but we should remember that self-interest rather than friendship is usually the main reason behind the interaction.

The impersonal nature of urban relationships, together with the great social diversity found in cities today, makes city dwellers more tolerant than rural villagers. Rural communities often jealously enforce their narrow traditions, but the heterogeneous population of a city rarely shares any single code of moral conduct (T. C. Wilson, 1985, 1995).

EVALUATE

In both Europe and the United States, early sociologists presented a mixed view of urban living. Rapid urbanization troubled Tönnies, and Wirth saw personal ties and traditional morality lost

in the anonymous rush of the city. Durkheim and Park emphasized urbanism’s positive face, pointing to more personal freedom and greater personal choice.

One problem with all these views is that they paint urbanism in broad strokes that overlook the effects of class, race, and gender. There are many kinds of urbanites—rich and poor, black and white, Anglo and Latino, women and men—all leading distinctive lives (Gans, 1968). As the Thinking About Diversity box on page 604 explains, the share of minorities in the largest U.S. cities increased sharply since 1990. We see social diversity most clearly in cities where various categories of people are large enough to form distinct, visible communities (Macionis & Parrillo, 2013).

CHECK YOUR LEARNING Which of the urban sociologists—Tönnies, Durkheim, Park, and Wirth—were more positive about urban life? Which were more negative? In each case, explain why.

Urban Ecology

Sociologists (especially members of the Chicago School) developed **urban ecology**, *the study of the link between the physical and social dimensions of cities*. One issue of interest to urban ecologists is why cities are located where they are. Broadly speaking, the first cities emerged in fertile regions where the ecology favored raising crops. Preindustrial people, concerned with defense, built their cities on mountains (ancient Athens was perched on an outcropping of rock) or surrounded by water (Paris and Mexico City were founded on islands). With the coming of the Industrial Revolution, economic considerations gained importance, which explains why all the major U.S. cities were situated near rivers or natural harbors that facilitated trade.

Urban ecologists also study the physical design of cities. In 1925, Ernest W. Burgess, a student and colleague of Robert Park, described land use in Chicago in terms of *concentric zones*. City centers, Burgess observed, are business districts bordered by a ring of factories, followed by residential rings with housing that becomes more expensive the farther it is from the noise and pollution of the city’s center.

Homer Hoyt (1939) refined Burgess’s observations, noting that distinctive districts sometimes form *wedge-shaped sectors*. For example, one fashionable area may develop next to another, or an industrial district may extend outward from a city’s center along a train or trolley line.

Chauncy Harris and Edward Ullman (1945) added yet another insight: As cities decentralize, they lose their single-center form in favor of a *multicentered model*. As cities grow, residential areas, industrial parks, and shopping districts typically push away from one another. Few people wish to live close to industrial areas, for example, so the city becomes a mosaic of distinct districts.

Social area analysis investigates what people in particular neighborhoods have in common. Three factors

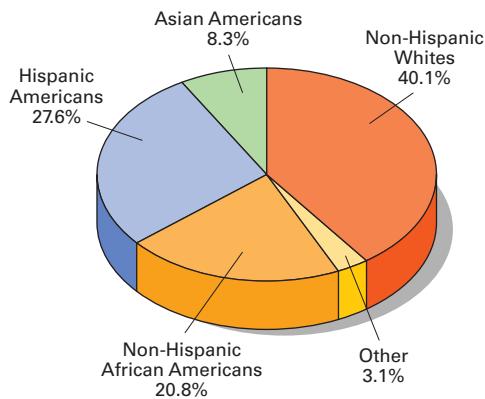
Thinking About Diversity: Race, Class, and Gender

Minorities Have Become a Majority in the Largest U.S. Cities

In the nation's largest cities, the "minority-majority" is already here. According to the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau, minorities—Hispanics, African Americans, and Asians—are now a majority of the population in sixty-three of the one hundred largest U.S. cities. This number is up from forty-eight in 2000 and thirty in 1990.

What accounts for the change? One reason is that large cities have been losing their non-Hispanic white population. For example, between 1990 and 2000, half of Detroit's non-Hispanic white population left that city; between 2000 and 2010, Detroit lost half of the white population that remained. As a result, by 2013, 92 percent of that Snowbelt city's current population included people of various racial and ethnic minorities.

The same trend toward a larger minority population in cities holds in the Sunbelt. Between 2000 and 2013, the minority population of Garland, Texas, rose from 47 percent



Population Profile for the 100 Largest U.S. Cities, 2013

Racial and ethnic minorities make up a majority of the population of this country's 100 largest cities.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (2014).

to 67 percent. In Phoenix, Arizona, minorities represented 44 percent of the population in 2000, a share that climbed to 54 percent by 2013.

Overall, the minority share of the population of the 100 largest cities in the United States stood at 48 percent in 1990. This share increased to 56 percent by 2000, and it swelled to 60 percent by 2013.

But perhaps the biggest reason for the minority-majority trend in urban population is the increase in immigration. People arriving from other nations, together with higher birth rates among these new immigrants, resulted in a 26 percent gain in the Hispanic population (about 3.5 million people) of the largest 100 cities between 2000 and 2013. The Asian population also surged by 36 percent (more than 1.3 million people). With a far lower level of immigration, African Americans represented a 7 percent smaller share of the people in these large cities in 2013 compared to 2000.

Political officials and other policymakers examine these figures closely. Clearly, the future vitality of the largest U.S. cities depends on meeting the needs and taking advantage of the contributions of the swelling minority—and especially immigrant—populations.

What Do You Think?

1. Why is the minority share of the populations of large U.S. cities increasing?
2. What positive changes and what challenges does a "minority-majority" bring to a city?
3. Before Hurricane Katrina (2005), African Americans represented 67 percent of the population of New Orleans; after the storm, the share had fallen to 40 percent. Why do you think this was the case?

SOURCES: Schmitt (2001) and U.S. Census Bureau (2014).

seem to explain most of the variation: family patterns, social class, and race and ethnicity (Shevky & Bell, 1955; Johnston, 1976). Families with children look for areas with single-family homes or large apartments and good schools. The rich seek high-prestige neighborhoods, often in the central city near cultural attractions. People with a common race or ethnic heritage tend to cluster in distinctive communities.

Brian Berry and Philip Rees (1969) tied together many of these insights. They explained that distinct family types tend to settle in the concentric zones described by Burgess. Specifically, households with many children tend to live in the outer areas of a city, while "young singles" cluster toward the city's center. Social class differences

are primarily responsible for the sector-shaped districts described by Hoyt—for instance, the rich occupy one "side of the tracks" and the poor the other. And racial and ethnic neighborhoods are found at various points throughout the city, consistent with Harris and Ullman's multicentered model.

Urban Political Economy

In the late 1960s, many large U.S. cities were rocked by riots. In the wake of this unrest, some analysts turned away from the ecological approach to a social-conflict understanding of city life. The *urban political economy* model

applies Karl Marx's analysis of conflict in the workplace to conflict in the city (Lindstrom, 1995).

Political economists reject the ecological approach's view of the city as a natural organism with particular districts and neighborhoods developing according to an internal logic. They claim that city life is defined by larger institutional structures, especially the economy. Capitalism is the key to understanding urban life because this economic system transforms the city into real estate traded for profit and concentrates wealth and power in the hands of the few. From this point of view, for example, the decline in industrial Snowbelt cities after 1950 was the result of deliberate decisions by the corporate elite to move their production facilities to the Sunbelt (where labor is cheaper and less likely to be unionized) or to move production out of the country entirely to low-income nations (Molotch, 1976; Castells, 1977, 1983; Lefebvre, 1991; Jones & Wilson, 1999).

EVALUATE

The fact that many U.S. cities are in crisis, with widespread poverty, high crime, and barely functioning schools, seems to favor the political economy model over the urban ecology approach. But one criticism applies to both: They focus on U.S. cities during a limited period of history. Much of what we know about industrial cities does not apply to preindustrial U.S. towns in our own past or to the rapidly growing cities in many poor nations today. It is unlikely that any single model of cities can account for the full range of urban diversity.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING In your own words, explain what the urban ecology theory and the urban political economy theory teach us about cities.



The Industrial Revolution created great cities across the United States. In recent decades, however, the movement of industry abroad has brought decline to Detroit and other older cities in the "Rustbelt." Yet today's high levels of immigration are bringing new life to many cities as a new generation of young people joins the urban mix. In the Detroit metropolitan area, much of a recent gain in population is due to surging Arab immigration.

urban revolution began about 8000 B.C.E. with the first urban settlements and continued until permanent settlements were in place on several continents. About 1750, the second urban revolution took off; it lasted for two centuries as the Industrial Revolution spurred rapid growth of cities in Europe and North America.

A third urban revolution is now under way. Today, approximately 80 percent of people in industrial societies are already city dwellers. But extreme urban growth is occurring in low-income nations. In 1950, about 25 percent of the people in poor countries lived in cities. In 2008, for the first time in history, the world as a whole became mostly urban, with more than half of humanity living in cities; in 2014 the urban share reached 54 percent (United Nations, 2014).

As the population of our planet continues to climb, the share of humanity living in urban places is also increasing. As noted earlier, global population is projected to reach 9.5 billion by 2050. Almost all of this increase will take place in cities, as the urban share of the world's population climbs to about 66 percent (United Nations, 2014).

Not only are more of the world's people living in cities, but also more of these cities are passing the 10 million mark. In 1975, only three cities in the world, Tokyo, New York, and Mexico City, had populations exceeding 10 million, and all these cities were in higher-income nations. In 2014, twenty-eight cities had passed this mark, and only seven of them were in high-income nations. By 2030, thirteen more "megacities" will be added to the list and none of these thirteen will be in a high-income nation (eight in Asia, two in Latin America, and three in Africa) (Brokerhoff, 2000; United Nations, 2014).

Urbanization in Poor Nations

22.5 Describe the third urban revolution now under way in poor societies.

November 16, Cairo, Egypt. People call the vast Muslim cemetery in Old Cairo the "City of the Dead." In truth, it is very much alive: Tens of thousands of squatters have moved into the mausoleums, making this place an eerie mix of life and death. Children run across the stone floors, clotheslines stretch between the monuments, and an occasional television antenna protrudes from a tomb roof. With Cairo's population increasing at the rate of 1,000 people a day, families live where they can.

As noted earlier, twice in its history, the world has experienced a revolutionary expansion of cities. The first

This third urban revolution is taking place in the developing world because many poor nations have entered the high-growth Stage 2 of the demographic transition. Falling death rates have fueled population increases in Latin America, Asia, and especially Africa. For urban areas, the rate of increase is *twice* as high because in addition to natural increase, millions of people leave the countryside each year in search of jobs, health care, education, and conveniences such as running water and electricity.

Cities do offer more opportunities than rural areas, but they provide no quick fix for the massive problems of escalating population and grinding poverty. Many cities in less economically developed nations—including Mexico City, Egypt's Cairo, India's Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), and Manila in the Philippines—are simply unable to meet the basic needs of much of their populations. All these cities are surrounded by wretched shantytowns—settlements of makeshift homes built from discarded materials. As noted in Chapter 12 ("Global Stratification"), even city dumps are home to thousands of poor people, who pick through the piles of waste hoping to find enough to eat or sell to make it through another day.

Environment and Society

22.6 Analyze current environmental problems such as pollution and global warming.

The human species has prospered, rapidly expanding over the entire planet. An increasing share of the global population now lives in cities, complex settlements that offer the promise of a better life than that found in rural villages.



People in New York City recently came together in opposition to hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as "fracking." What are the arguments in favor of this process of extracting natural gas from the earth? What are the arguments against fracking? Where do you stand?

But these advances have come at a high price. Never before in history have human beings placed such demands on the planet. This disturbing development brings us to the final section of this chapter: the interplay between the natural environment and society. Like demography, **ecology** is another cousin of sociology, formally defined as *the study of the interaction of living organisms and the natural environment*. Ecology rests on the research of natural scientists as well as social scientists. This text focuses on the aspects of ecology that involve familiar sociological concepts and issues.

The **natural environment** is *Earth's surface and atmosphere, including living organisms, air, water, soil, and other resources necessary to sustain life*. Like every other species, humans depend on the natural environment to survive. Yet with our capacity for culture, humans stand apart from other species; we alone take deliberate action to remake the world according to our own interests and desires, for better and for worse.

Why is the environment of interest to sociologists? Environmental problems, from pollution to acid rain to global warming, do not arise from the natural world operating on its own. Such problems result from the specific actions of human beings, which means they are *social* problems.

The Global Dimension

The study of the natural environment requires a global perspective. The reason is simple: Regardless of political divisions among nations, the planet is a single **ecosystem**, *a system composed of the interaction of all living organisms and their natural environment*.

The Greek meaning of *eco* is "house," reminding us that this planet is our home and that all living things and their natural environment are interrelated. A change in any part of the natural environment ripples throughout the entire global ecosystem.

Consider, from an ecological point of view, our national love of hamburgers. People in North America (and, increasingly, around the world) have created a huge demand for beef, which has greatly expanded the ranching industry in Brazil, Costa Rica, and other Latin American nations. To produce the lean meat sought by fast-food corporations, cattle in Latin America feed on grass, which uses a great deal of land. Latin American ranchers get the land for grazing by clearing thousands of square miles of forests each year. These tropical forests are vital to maintaining Earth's atmosphere. Deforestation ends up threatening everyone, including people in the United States enjoying their hamburgers (N. Myers, 1984a).

Technology and the Environmental Deficit

Sociologists point to a simple formula: $I = PAT$, where environmental impact (I) reflects a society's population (P), its level of affluence (A), and its level of technology (T). Members of societies with simple technology—the hunters and gatherers described in Chapter 4 ("Society")—hardly affect the environment because they are few in number, are poor, and have only simple technology. On the contrary, nature affects their lives as they follow the migration of game, watch the rhythm of the seasons, and suffer from natural catastrophes such as fires, floods, droughts, and storms.

Societies at intermediate stages of technological development, being both larger and richer, have a somewhat greater capacity to affect the environment. But the environmental impact of horticulture (small-scale farming), pastoralism (the herding of animals), and even agriculture (the use of animal-drawn plows) is limited because people still rely on muscle power for producing food and other goods.

Humans' ability to control the natural environment increased dramatically with the Industrial Revolution. Muscle power gave way to engines that burn fossil fuels: coal at first and then oil. Such machinery affects the environment in two ways: We consume more natural resources, and we release more pollutants into the atmosphere. Even more important, armed with industrial technology, we are able to bend nature to our will, tunneling through mountains, damming rivers, irrigating deserts, and drilling for oil in the arctic wilderness and on the ocean floor. This explains why people in rich nations, who represent just 24 percent of humanity, account for half of the world's energy use (World Bank, 2015).

Not only do high-income societies use more energy, but also they produce 100 times more goods than people in agrarian societies do. Higher living standards in turn increase the problem of solid waste (because people ultimately throw away most of what they produce) and pollution (industrial production generates smoke and other toxic substances).

From the start, people recognized the material benefits of industrial technology. But only a century later did they begin to see the long-term effects on the natural environment. Today, we realize that the technological power to make our lives better can also put the lives of future generations at risk.

Evidence is mounting that we are running up an **environmental deficit**, *profound long-term harm to the natural environment caused by humanity's focus on short-term material affluence* (Bormann, 1990). The concept of environmental deficit is important for three reasons. First, it reminds us that environmental concerns are *sociological*, reflecting societies' priorities about how people should live. Second, it suggests that much environmental damage—to



The most important insight sociology offers about our physical world is that environmental problems do not simply "happen." Rather, the state of the natural environment reflects the ways in which social life is organized—how people live and what they think is important. The greater the technological power of a society, the greater that society's ability to threaten the natural environment.

the air, land, and water—is unintended, at least in the sense that most people do not realize all the consequences of cutting down forests, strip mining, or using throwaway packaging. Again, sociological analysis is helpful in making such consequences clearer. Third, in some respects, the environmental deficit is *reversible*. Inasmuch as societies have created environmental problems, societies can also undo many of them.

Culture: Growth and Limits

Whether we recognize environmental dangers and decide to do something about them is a cultural matter. Thus along with technology, culture has powerful environmental consequences.

THE LOGIC OF GROWTH When you turn on the television news, you might hear a story like this: "The government reported bad economic news today, with the economy growing by only half a percent during the first quarter of the year." If you stop to think about it, our culture defines an economy that isn't growing as "stagnant" (which is bad) and an economy that is getting smaller as a "recession" or a "depression" (which is *very* bad). What is "good" is *growth*—lots of it—which makes the economy get bigger

and bigger. More cars, bigger homes, more income, more spending—the idea of *more* is at the heart of our cultural definition of living well (McKibben, 2007).

One of the reasons we define growth in positive terms is that we value *material comfort*, believing that money and the things it buys improve our lives. We also believe in the idea of *progress*, thinking the future will be better than the present. In addition, we look to *science* to make our lives easier and more rewarding. In simple terms, “having things is good,” “life gets better,” and “people are clever.” Taken together, such cultural values form the *logic of growth*.

An optimistic view of the world, the logic of growth holds that powerful technology has improved our lives and new discoveries will continue to do so in the future. Throughout the history of the United States and other high-income nations, the logic of growth has been the driving force behind settling the wilderness, building towns and roads, and pursuing material affluence.

However, “progress” can lead to unexpected problems, including strain on the environment. The logic of growth responds by arguing that people (especially scientists and other technology experts) will find a way out of any problem that growth places in our path. For example, before the world runs short of oil, scientists will come up with new hybrid and electric cars, and eventually hydrogen, solar, or nuclear engines (or some yet unknown technology) will develop to meet the world’s energy needs.

Environmentalists counter that the logic of growth is flawed because it assumes that natural resources such as oil, clean air, fresh water, and topsoil will always be plentiful. We can and will exhaust these *finite* resources if we continue to pursue growth at any cost. Echoing Malthus,

environmentalists warn that if we call on Earth to support increasing numbers of people, we will surely deplete finite resources, destroying the environment—and ourselves—in the process.

THE LIMITS TO GROWTH If we cannot invent our way out of the problems created by the logic of growth, perhaps we need another way of thinking about the world. Environmentalists therefore counter that growth must have limits. Stated simply, the *limits-to-growth thesis* is that humanity must put in place policies to control the growth of population, production, and use of resources in order to avoid environmental collapse.

In *The Limits to Growth*, a controversial book that was influential in launching the environmental movement, Donella Meadows and her colleagues (1972) used a computer model to calculate the planet’s available resources, rates of population growth, amount of land available for cultivation, levels of industrial and food production, and amount of pollutants released into the atmosphere. The authors concede that any long-range predictions are speculative, and some critics think they are plain wrong (Simon, 1981). But right or wrong, the conclusions of the study call for serious consideration. First, the authors claim that we are quickly consuming Earth’s finite resources. Supplies of oil, natural gas, and other energy sources are declining and will continue to drop, a little faster or slower depending on the conservation policies of rich nations and the speed with which other nations such as India and China continue to industrialize. Within the next 100 years, resources will run out, crippling industrial output and causing a decline in food production.

This limits-to-growth theory shares Malthus’s pessimism about the future. People who accept it doubt that current patterns of life are sustainable for even another century. Perhaps we all can learn to live with less. This may not be as hard as you might think: Research shows, for example, that an increase in material consumption in recent decades has not brought an increase in levels of personal happiness (D. G. Myers, 2000). In the end, environmentalists warn, either we make fundamental changes in how we live, placing less strain on the natural environment, or widespread hunger and conflict will force change on us.

Solid Waste: The Disposable Society

Across the United States, people generate a massive amount of solid waste—about 1.375 billion pounds *every day*. Figure 22–4 shows the average composition of a typical community’s trash.

As a rich nation of people who value convenience, the United States has become a *disposable society*. We consume more products than virtually any other nation, and many of these products have throwaway packaging.

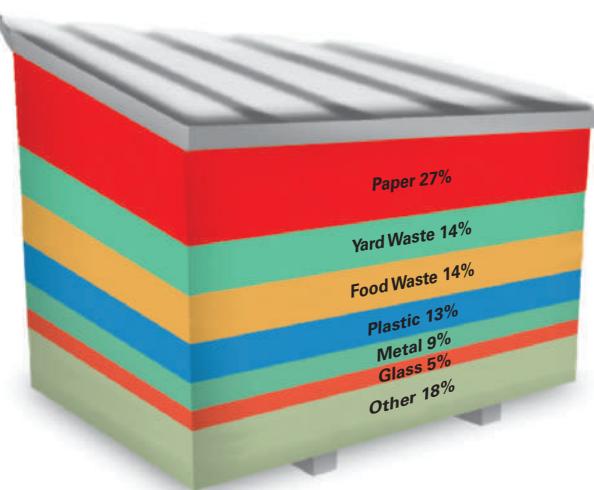


Figure 22–4 Composition of Community Trash

We throw away a wide range of material, with paper the single largest part of our trash.

SOURCE: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2014).

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

Why Grandma Macionis Had No Trash

Grandma Macionis, we always used to say, never threw anything away. Not food, not bottles or cans, not paper. Not even coffee grounds. Nothing.

Grandma was born and raised in Lithuania—the “old country”—where life in a poor village shaped her in ways that never changed, even after she came to the United States as a young woman and settled in Philadelphia.

In her later years, when I knew her, I can remember the family traveling together to her house to celebrate her birthday. We never knew what to get Grandma, because she never seemed to need anything. She lived a simple life and had simple clothes and showed little interest in “fancy things.” She had no electric appliances. She used her simple tools until they wore out. Her kitchen knives, for example, were worn narrow from decades of sharpening. The food that was left

over from meals was saved. What could not be saved was recycled as compost for her vegetable garden.

After opening a birthday present, she would carefully save the box, refold the wrapping paper, and roll up the ribbon—all of these things meant as much to her as whatever gift they contained. We all knew her routines and we smiled together as we watched her put everything away, knowing she would find a way to use each item again and again.

As strange as Grandma sometimes seemed to her grandchildren, she was a product of her culture. A century ago, in fact, there was little “trash.” If socks wore thin, people mended them, probably more than once. When they were beyond repair, they were used as rags for cleaning or sewn with bits of other old clothing into a quilt. Everything had value—if not in one way, then in another.

During the twentieth century, as women joined men in working outside the home, income went up. Families began buying more appliances and other “timesaving” products. Before long, few people cared about the kind of recycling that Grandma practiced. Soon cities sent crews from block to block to pick up truckloads of discarded material. The era of “trash” had begun.



Grandma Macionis, in the 1970s, with the author.

What Do You Think?

1. Just as Grandma Macionis was a product of her culture, so are we. Do you know people who have plenty but never seem to think they have enough?
2. What cultural values make people today demand time-saving products and “convenience” packaging?
3. Do you think recent decades have brought a turnaround so that people are now more aware of a need to recycle? How does today’s recycling differ from that practiced by Grandma Macionis?

For example, fast food is served with cardboard, plastic, and Styrofoam containers that we throw away within minutes. Countless other products, from film to fishhooks, are elaborately packaged to make the products more attractive to the customer and to discourage tampering and theft.

Manufacturers market soft drinks, beer, and fruit juices in aluminum cans, glass jars, and plastic containers, which not only consume finite resources but also generate mountains of solid waste. Then there are countless items intentionally designed to be disposable: pens, razors, flashlights, batteries, even cameras. Other products, from light bulbs to automobiles, are designed to have a limited useful life and then become unwanted junk. As Paul Connett (1991) points out, even the words we use to describe what we throw away—*waste, litter, trash, refuse, garbage, rubbish*—show how little we value what we cannot

immediately use. But this was not always the case, as the Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life box explains.

Living in a rich society, the average person in the United States consumes about fifty times more energy, plastics, lumber, water, and other resources than someone living in a low-income country such as Bangladesh or Tanzania and nearly twice as much as people in some other high-income countries such as Sweden and Japan. This high level of consumption means not only that we in the United States use a disproportionate share of the planet’s natural resources but also that we generate most of the world’s refuse.

We like to say that we throw things “away.” But most of the 250 million tons of solid waste our society produced in 2012 never went away. Rather, most of it ended up in landfills, which are, literally, filling up. Material in landfills

can pollute underground water supplies. Although in most places, laws now regulate what can be discarded in a landfill, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2015) has identified 1,322 dump sites across the United States containing hazardous materials that are polluting water both above and below the ground. In addition, what goes into landfills all too often stays there, sometimes for centuries. Tens of millions of tires, diapers, and other items we bury in landfills each year do not decompose but will remain as an unwelcome legacy for future generations.

Environmentalists argue that we should address the problem of solid waste by doing what many of our grandparents did: Use less and turn “waste” into a resource. Part of the solution is *recycling*, reusing resources we would otherwise discard. Recycling is an accepted practice in Japan and many other nations, and it is becoming more common in the United States, where we now reuse about one-third of waste materials (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2014). This share has remained the same for several decades due to low landfill fees and lack of a national recycling plan. Environmentalists hope that the level of recycling will increase—as it has in most other high-income countries—in the years ahead.

Water and Air

Oceans, lakes, and streams are the lifeblood of the global ecosystem. Humans depend on water for drinking, bathing, cooking, cleaning, recreation, and a host of other activities.

According to what scientists call the *hydrologic cycle*, Earth naturally recycles water and refreshes the land. The process begins as heat from the sun causes Earth’s water, 97 percent of which is in the oceans, to evaporate and form clouds. Because water evaporates at lower temperatures than most pollutants, the water vapor that rises from the seas is relatively pure, leaving various contaminants behind. Water then falls to the Earth as rain, which drains into streams and rivers and finally returns to the sea. Two major concerns about water, then, are supply and pollution.

WATER SUPPLY Less than one-tenth of 1 percent of Earth’s water is suitable for drinking. It is not surprising, then, that for thousands of years, water rights have figured prominently in laws around the world. Today, some regions of the world, especially the tropics, enjoy plentiful fresh water, using a small share of the available supply. However, high demand, coupled with modest reserves, makes water supply a matter of concern in much of North America and Asia, where people look to rivers rather than rainfall for their water. In China, aquifers are dropping rapidly. In the Middle East, water supply is reaching a critical level. Iran is rationing water in its capital city. In Egypt, the Nile River provides just one-sixth as much water per person as

it did in 1900. Across northern Africa and the Middle East, as many as 1 billion people may lack the water they need for irrigation and drinking by 2030. From another angle, by this time the world will be able to provide 40 percent less water than the planet requires (United Nations Environment Programme, 2008; Walsh, 2009).

Rising population and the development of more complex technology have greatly increased the world’s appetite for water. The global consumption of freshwater (now estimated at about 3,800 cubic kilometers, or 133 trillion cubic feet per year) has doubled since 1950 and is rising steadily. As a result, even in parts of the world that receive plenty of rainfall, people are using groundwater faster than it can be replenished naturally. In the Tamil Nadu region of southern India, for example, so much groundwater is being used that the water table has fallen 100 feet over the last several decades. Mexico City—which has sprawled to some 1,400 square miles—has pumped so much water from its underground aquifer that the city has sunk 30 feet during the past century and continues to drop about 2 inches per year. Farther north in the United States, the Ogallala aquifer, which lies below seven states from South Dakota to Texas, is now being pumped so rapidly that some experts fear it could run dry in just a few decades.

In light of such developments, we must face the reality that water is a valuable and finite resource. Greater conservation of water by individuals—the average person in the United States consumes about 88 gallons of water a day, which amounts to about 2.5 million gallons over a lifetime—is part of the answer. However, households around the world account for just 10 percent of water use. It is even more crucial that we curb water consumption by industry, which uses 20 percent of the global total, and farming, which consumes 70 percent of the total for irrigation.

Perhaps new irrigation technology will reduce the future demand for water. But here again, we see how population increase, as well as economic growth, strains our ecosystem (Solomon, 2010; U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, 2014; UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme, 2014; United Nations, 2014).

WATER POLLUTION In large cities from Mexico City to Cairo to Shanghai, many people have no choice but to drink contaminated water. Infectious diseases such as typhoid, cholera, and dysentery, all caused by waterborne microorganisms, spread rapidly through these populations. Besides ensuring ample *supplies* of water, then, we must also protect the *quality* of water.

Water quality in the United States is generally good by global standards. However, even here the problem of water pollution is steadily growing. Across the United States, rivers, streams, and underground aquifers absorb hundreds of millions of pounds of pesticides, nitrogen fertilizers, and toxic waste each year. This pollution results

not only from intentional dumping but also from the application of agricultural fertilizers and lawn chemicals (Bair, 2011; Galbraith, 2012).

Not all water pollution results from chemicals that people apply to the ground. A special problem is *acid rain*—falling precipitation made acidic by air pollution—which destroys plant and animal life. Acid rain begins with power plants burning fossil fuels (oil and coal) to generate electricity; this burning releases sulfuric and nitrous oxides into the air. As the wind sweeps these gases into the atmosphere, they react with the air to form sulfuric and nitric acids, which turns atmospheric moisture acidic.

This is a clear case of one type of pollution causing another: Air pollution (from smokestacks) ends up contaminating water (in lakes and streams that collect acid rain). Acid rain is truly a global phenomenon because the regions that suffer the harmful effects may be thousands of miles from the source of the original pollution. For instance, British power plants have caused acid rain that has devastated forests and fish in Norway and Sweden, up to 1,000 miles to the northeast. In the United States, we see a similar pattern as smokestacks in the Midwest have harmed the natural environment of upstate New York and New England.

AIR POLLUTION Because we are surrounded by air, most people in the United States are more aware of air pollution than contaminated water. One of the unexpected consequences of industrial technology, especially the factory and the motor vehicle, has been a decline in air quality. In London in the mid-twentieth century, factory smokestacks, automobiles, and coal fires used to heat homes all added up to probably the worst urban air quality the world has ever known. The fog that some British jokingly called “pea soup” was in reality a deadly mix of pollutants: In 1952, an especially thick haze that hung over London for five days killed 4,000 people.

Air quality improved in the final decades of the twentieth century. Rich nations passed laws that banned high-pollution heating, including the coal fires that choked London. In addition, scientists devised ways to make factories and motor vehicles operate much more cleanly. In fact, today’s vehicles produce only a fraction of the pollution that spewed from models of the 1950s and 1960s. And cleaner air has improved human health: Experts estimate



Water is vital to life, and it is also in short supply. The state of Gujarat, in western India, has experienced a long drought. In the village of Natwarghad, people crowd together, lowering pots into the local well, taking what little water is left.

that improvement in U.S. air quality over the past several decades has added almost half a year to the average life span (Chang, 2009).

If high-income countries can breathe a bit more easily than they once did, the problem of air pollution in poor societies is becoming more serious. One reason is that people in low-income countries still rely on wood, coal, peat, and other “dirty” fuels to cook their food and heat their homes. In addition, nations eager to encourage short-term industrial development may pay little attention to the longer-term dangers of air pollution. As a result, many cities in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Asia are plagued by air pollution as bad as London’s “pea soup” back in the 1950s.

The Rain Forests

Rain forests are regions of dense forestation, most of which circle the globe close to the equator. The largest tropical rain forests are in South America (notably Brazil), west-central Africa, and Southeast Asia. In all, the world’s rain forests cover some 1.5 billion acres, or about 5 percent of Earth’s total land surface.

Like other global resources, rain forests are falling victim to the needs and appetites of the surging world population. As noted earlier, to meet the demand for beef, ranchers in Latin America burn forested areas to increase their supply of grazing land. We are also losing rain forests to the hardwood trade. People in rich nations pay high prices for mahogany and other woods because, as the environmentalist Norman Myers (1984b:88) puts it, they

have “a penchant for parquet floors, fine furniture, fancy paneling, weekend yachts, and high-grade coffins.” Under such economic pressure, the world’s rain forests are now less than half their original size, and they continue to shrink by about 1 percent (15 million acres) annually, which amounts to about 30 acres a minute. Unless we stop this loss, the rain forests will vanish before the end of this century and with them will go protection for Earth’s biodiversity and climate (United Nations, 2011; The Nature Conservancy, 2015).

Global Climate Change

Why are rain forests so important? One reason is that they cleanse the atmosphere of carbon dioxide (CO_2). Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the amount of carbon dioxide produced by humans, mostly from factories and automobiles, has risen sharply. Much of this carbon dioxide is absorbed by the oceans. But plants also take in carbon dioxide and expel oxygen. This is why rain forests are vital to maintaining the chemical balance of the atmosphere.

The problem is that production of carbon dioxide is rising while the amount of plant life on Earth is shrinking. To make matters worse, rain forests are being destroyed mostly by burning, which releases even more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Experts estimate that the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide is now 42 percent higher than it was 250 years ago and rising rapidly (Gore, 2006; Adam, 2008; U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, 2015).

High above Earth, carbon dioxide acts like the glass roof of a greenhouse, letting heat from the sun

pass through to the surface while preventing much of it from radiating away from the planet. The result of this *greenhouse effect*, say ecologists, is **global warming**, *a rise in Earth’s average temperature due to an increasing concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere*. Over the past century, the global temperature has risen about 1.3° Fahrenheit (to an average of 58° F), which is the highest level since taking measurements first began in 1880. Scientists continue to debate the numbers, but they warn that the planet’s temperature could rise by 3° F to as much as 5° F during this century. Already, the polar ice caps are melting, and over the last century, the average level of the oceans has risen about six inches. Scientists predict that increasing average temperatures could melt so much ice that the sea level would rise enough to cover low-lying land all around the world: Water would cover all of the Maldives Islands in the Indian Ocean, most of Bangladesh, and much of the coastal United States, including Washington, D.C., right up to the steps of the White House. Such a change would create perhaps 100 million “climate change refugees.” This same process of rising temperatures will affect other regions of the world very differently. The U.S. Midwest, currently one of the most productive agricultural regions in the world, would likely become more arid. No wonder that, for more than a decade, government agencies in the United States and elsewhere in the world have been working to “climate-proof” our nation—and especially coastal cities—against the ravages of extreme weather (Gillis, 2011; McMahon, 2011; Reed, 2011; Klinenberg, 2013).

Some scientists point out that we cannot be sure of the consequences of global warming. Others point to the fact that global temperature changes have been taking place throughout history, apparently having little or nothing to do with rain forests or human activity. A few are optimistic, suggesting that higher concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere might speed up plant growth (since plants thrive on this gas), and this increase would correct the imbalance and push Earth’s temperature downward once again. But the consensus among scientists is now clear: Global warming is a serious problem that threatens the future of all of us (Kerr, 2005; Gore, 2006; International Panel on Climate Change, 2007; Singer, 2007; Ridley, 2012).



Only a handful of global leaders have spoken out on the issue of global warming. In 2015, Pope Francis pointed to human selfishness—and also to the capitalist economic system that encourages selfishness—as primary causes of global warming. Do you agree with the pope that an effective response to this environmental issue requires radical change?

Declining Biodiversity

Our planet is home to as many as 30 million species of animals, plants, and microorganisms. As rain forests are cleared and humans extend their control over nature, several dozen unique species of plants and animals cease to exist each day, reducing the planet’s *biodiversity*.

But given the vast number of living species, why should we be concerned by the loss of a few?

Environmentalists give four reasons. First, our planet's biodiversity provides a varied source of human food. Using agricultural high technology, scientists can "splice" familiar crops with more exotic plant life, making food more bountiful as well as more resistant to insects and disease. Certain species of life are even considered vital to the production of human food. Bees, for example, perform the work of pollination, a necessary stage in the growth of plants. The fact that the bee population has declined by one-third in the United States and by two-thirds in the Middle East is cause for serious concern. Thus sustaining biodiversity helps feed our planet's rapidly increasing population.

Second, Earth's biodiversity is a vital genetic resource used by medical and pharmaceutical researchers to produce hundreds of new compounds each year that cure disease and improve our lives. For example, children in the United States now have a good chance of surviving leukemia, a disease that was almost a sure killer two generations ago, because of a compound derived from a tropical flower called the rosy periwinkle. The oral birth control pill, used by tens of millions of women in this country, is another product of plant research involving the Mexican forest yam. Because biodiversity itself allows our ecosystem to control many types of diseases, it is likely that if biodiversity declines, the transmission of disease will increase.

Third, with the loss of any species of life—whether it is the magnificent California condor, the famed Chinese panda, the spotted owl, or even a single species of ant—the beauty and complexity of our natural environment are diminished. There are clear warning signs of such loss: Three-fourths of the world's 10,000 species of birds are declining in number.

Finally, unlike pollution, the extinction of any species is irreversible and final. An important ethical question, then, is whether we who live today have the right to impoverish the world for those who live tomorrow (E. O. Wilson, 1991; Keesing et al., 2010; Capella, 2011).

Environmental Racism

Conflict theory has given rise to the concept of **environmental racism**, *patterns of development that expose poor people, especially minorities, to environmental hazards*. Historically, factories that spew pollution have stood near neighborhoods of the poor and people of color. Why? In part, the poor themselves were drawn to factories in search of work, and their low incomes often meant they could afford housing only in undesirable neighborhoods.



Members of small, simple societies, such as the Mentawi in Indonesia, live in harmony with nature; they do not have the technological means to greatly affect the natural world. Although we in complex societies like to think of ourselves as superior to such people, the truth is that there is much we can—indeed, we must—learn from them.

Sometimes the only housing that fit their budgets stood in the very shadow of the plants and mills where they worked.

Nobody wants a factory or dump nearby, but the poor have little power to resist. Through the years, the most serious environmental hazards have been located near Newark, New Jersey (not in upscale Bergen County), in southside Chicago (not wealthy Lake Forest), or on Native American reservations in the West (not in affluent suburbs of Denver or Phoenix) (Commission for Racial Justice, 1994; Bohon & Humphrey, 2000).



Environmental problems are more serious in low-income communities. This family, living in East Orosi, California, must buy bottled water because water from the ground is no longer safe to drink. More seriously, many families are not aware that they are consuming unsafe water.

There is also an element of environmental racism in the pattern of global warming. As average temperature increases and weather patterns become more severe, the people who work outdoors—farm laborers and others with low-paying jobs—feel these changes the most. In short, the jobs of lower-income people, which include a disproportionate share of minorities, are the ones most affected by the weather (Davenport, 2015).

Toward a Sustainable Society and World

The demographic analysis presented in this chapter reveals some disturbing trends. We see, first, that Earth's population has reached record levels because birth rates remain

high in poor nations and death rates have fallen just about everywhere. Reducing fertility will remain a pressing need throughout this century. Even with some recent decline in the rate of population increase, the nightmare Thomas Malthus described is still a real possibility, as the Controversy & Debate box explains.

Further, population growth remains greatest in the poorest countries of the world, which cannot meet the needs of their present populations, much less future ones. Supporting almost 87 million additional people on our planet each year, 85 million of them in economically less developed countries, will require a global commitment to provide not just food but housing, schools, and employment as well. The well-being of the entire world may ultimately depend on resolving the economic and social

Controversy & Debate

Apocalypse: Will People Overwhelm the Planet?

Nushawn: I'm telling you, there are too many people already! Where is everyone going to live?

Tabitha: Have you ever been to Kansas? Or Wyoming? There's plenty of empty space out there.

Marco: Maybe now. But I'm not so sure about our children—or their children

Are you worried about the world's increasing population? Think about this: By the time you finish reading this feature, more than 1,000 people will have been added to our planet. By this time tomorrow, global population will have risen by more than 237,000. Currently, as the table shows, there are more than four births for every two deaths on the planet, pushing the world's population upward by 86.6 million annually. Put another way, global population growth amounts to adding another Germany to the world each year.

It is no wonder that many demographers and environmentalists are deeply concerned about the future. Earth has an unprecedented population of 7.2 billion; the 3.2 billion people we have added since 1974 alone roughly equals the planet's total in 1963. Might Thomas Robert Malthus, who predicted that overpopulation would push the world into

war and suffering, be right after all? If we do not change our ways, predict Lester Brown and other *neo-Malthusians*, we face a coming apocalypse. Brown admits that Malthus failed to imagine how much technology (especially the use of fertilizers and the ability to genetically modify plants) could boost the planet's agricultural output. But he maintains that Earth's rising population is rapidly outstripping its finite resources. Families in many poor countries can find little firewood, members of rich countries are depleting the oil reserves, and everyone is draining our supply of clean water and poisoning the planet with waste. Some analysts argue that we have already passed Earth's "carrying capacity" for population and we need to hold the line or even reduce global population to ensure humanity's long-term survival.

But other analysts, the *anti-Malthusians*, sharply disagree. Julian Simon points out that two centuries after Malthus predicted catastrophe, Earth supports almost six times as many people who, on average, live longer, healthier lives than ever before. With more advanced technology, people have devised ways to increase productivity and limit population increase. As Simon sees it, this is cause for celebration. Human ingenuity has consistently proved the doomsayers wrong, and Simon is betting it will continue to do so.

What Do You Think?

1. Where do you place your bet? Do you think Earth can support 8 or 10 billion people?
2. What, if anything, do you think should be done about global population increase?
3. Were Malthus alive today, would he feel relieved or would he say "I told you so!"? Explain.

SOURCES: Brown (1995), Simon (1995), Scanlon (2001), Smail (2007), Population Reference Bureau (2014), and U.S. Census Bureau (2014).

Global Population Increase, 2014

	Births	Deaths	Net Increase
Per year	143,341,000	56,759,000	86,582,000
Per month	11,945,083	4,729,917	7,215,167
Per day	392,715	155,504	237,211
Per hour	16,363	6,479	9,884
Per minute	273	108	165
Per second	4.5	1.8	2.7

problems of poor, overly populated countries and bridging the widening gulf between "have" and "have-not" nations.

Urbanization is continuing, especially in poor countries. For thousands of years, people have sought out cities in the hope of finding a better life. But the sheer numbers of people who live in today's megacities—including Mexico City, São Paulo (Brazil), Lagos (Nigeria), Mumbai (India), and Manila (Philippines)—have created urban problems on a massive scale.

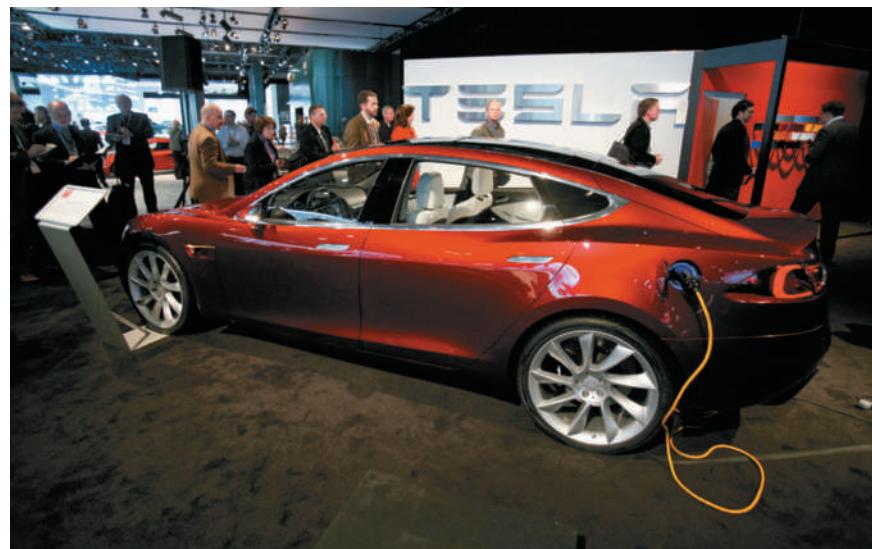
Around the world, humanity is facing a serious environmental challenge. Part of this problem is population increase, which is greatest in poor countries. But part of the problem is the high levels of consumption in rich nations such as our own. By increasing the planet's environmental deficit, our present way of life is borrowing against the well-being of our children and their children. Globally, members of rich societies, who currently consume so much of Earth's resources, are mortgaging the future security of the poor countries of the world.

The answer, in principle, is to create an **ecologically sustainable culture**, *a way of life that meets the needs of the present generation without threatening the environmental legacy of future generations*. Sustainable living depends on three strategies.

First, the world needs to *bring population growth under control*. The current population of 7.2 billion is already straining the natural environment. Clearly, the higher the world's population climbs, the more difficult environmental problems will become. Even if the recent slowing of population growth continues, the world will have close to 10 billion people by 2050. Few analysts think that the planet can support this many people; most argue that we must hold the line at about 7 billion, and some argue that we must *decrease* population in the coming decades (Smail, 2007).

A second strategy is to *conserve finite resources*. This means meeting our needs with a responsible eye toward the future by using resources efficiently, seeking alternative sources of energy, and in some cases, learning to live with less.

A third strategy is to *reduce waste*. Whenever possible, simply using less is the best solution. Learning to live with less is not likely to come easily, but keep in mind the research that suggests that as our society has consumed more and more, people have not become any happier (D. G. Myers, 2000). Recycling programs, too, are part of



If human ingenuity created the threats to our environment that we now face, can humans also solve these problems? In recent years, a number of designs for small, environmentally friendly cars show the promise of new technology. But do such innovations go far enough? Will we have to make more basic changes to our way of life to ensure human survival in the centuries to come?

the answer, and recycling can make everyone part of the solution to our environmental problems.

In the end, making all these strategies work depends on a basic change in the way we think about ourselves and our world. Our *egocentric* outlook sets our own interests as standards for how to live, but a sustainable environment demands an *ecocentric* outlook that helps us see how the present is tied to the future and why everyone must work together. Most nations in the southern half of the world are *underdeveloped*, unable to meet the basic needs of their people. At the same time, most countries in the northern half of the world are *overdeveloped*, using more resources than the planet can sustain over time. The changes needed to create a sustainable ecosystem will not come easily, and they will be costly. But the price of not responding to the growing environmental deficit will certainly be greater (Kellert & Bormann, 1991; Brown et al., 1993; Population Action International, 2000; Gore, 2006).

Finally, consider that the great dinosaurs dominated this planet for some 160 million years and then perished forever. Humanity is far younger, having existed for a mere 250,000 years. Compared to the rather dimwitted dinosaurs, our species has the gift of great intelligence. But how will we use this ability? What are the chances that our species will continue to flourish 160 million years—or even 160 years—from now? The answer depends on the choices that will be made by one of the 30 million species living on Earth: human beings.

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

CHAPTER 22 Population, Urbanization, and Environment

Why is the environment a social issue?

As this chapter explains, the state of the natural environment depends on how society is organized,

especially the importance a culture attaches to consumption and economic growth.



We learn to see economic expansion as natural and good. When the economy stays the same for a number of months, we say we are experiencing “stagnation.” How do we define a period when the economy gets smaller, as happened during the fall of 2008?



What would it take to convince members of our society that smaller (rather than bigger) might be better? Why do we seem to prefer not just bigger cars but also bigger homes and more and more material possessions?

Hint If expansion is “good times,” then contraction is a “recession” or perhaps even a “depression.” Such a worldview means that it is normal—or even desirable—to live in a way that increases stress on the natural environment. Sustainability, an idea that is especially important as world population increases, depends on learning to live with what we have or maybe even learning to live with less. Although many people seem to think so, it really doesn’t require a 6,000-pound SUV to move around urban areas. Actually, it might not require a car at all. This new way of thinking requires that we do not define social standing and personal success in terms of what we own and what we consume. Can you imagine a society like that? What would it be like?

Seeing Sociology in Your Everyday Life

1. Here is an illustration of the problem of runaway growth (Milbrath, 1989:10): “A pond has a single water lily growing on it. The lily doubles in size each day. In thirty days, it covers the entire pond. On which day does it cover half the pond?” When you realize the answer, discuss the implications of this example for population increase.
2. Do you think that the world’s increasing population is a problem or not? What about the state of our planet’s natural environment?
3. Go to www.sociologyinfofocus.com to access the Sociology in Focus blog, where you can read the latest posts by a team of young sociologists who apply the sociological perspective to topics of popular culture.

Making the Grade

CHAPTER 22 Population, Urbanization, and Environment

Demography: The Study of Population

22.1 Explain the concepts of fertility, mortality, and migration, and how they affect population size. (pages 590–94)

Demography analyzes the size and composition of a population and how and why people move from place to place.

- **Fertility** is the incidence of childbearing in a country's population. Demographers describe fertility using the **crude birth rate**.
- **Mortality** is the incidence of death in a country's population. Demographers measure mortality using both the **crude death rate** and the **infant mortality rate**.
- The **net migration rate** is the difference between the in-migration rate and the out-migration rate.
- In general, rich nations grow almost as much from immigration as from natural increase; poorer nations grow almost entirely from natural increase.
- Demographers use **age-sex pyramids** to show the composition of a population graphically and to project population trends.

demography the study of human population

fertility the incidence of childbearing in a country's population

crude birth rate the number of live births in a given year for every 1,000 people in a population

mortality the incidence of death in a country's population

crude death rate the number of deaths in a given year for every 1,000 people in a population

infant mortality rate the number of deaths among infants under one year of age for each 1,000 live births in a given year

life expectancy the average life span of a country's population

migration the movement of people into and out of a specified territory

sex ratio the number of males for every 100 females in a nation's population

age-sex pyramid a graphic representation of the age and sex of a population

- **Demographic transition theory** claims that technological advances slow population increase.
- Currently, the world is gaining 86.6 million people each year, with 98% of this increase taking place in poor countries. World population is expected to reach about 9.55 billion by 2050.

demographic transition theory a thesis that links population patterns to a society's level of technological development

zero population growth the rate of reproduction that maintains population at a steady level

Urbanization: The Growth of Cities

22.3 Summarize patterns of urbanization in the United States and around the world. (pages 597–601)

The **first urban revolution** began with the appearance of cities about 10,000 years ago.

- By about 2,000 years ago, cities emerged in most regions of the world except North America.
- Preindustrial cities have low-rise buildings; narrow, winding streets; and personal social ties.

A **second urban revolution** began about 1750 as the Industrial Revolution propelled rapid urban growth in Europe.

- Cities' physical form changed as planners created wide, regular streets to facilitate commerce.
- The emphasis on business, and the increasing size of cities, made urban life more impersonal.

A **third urban revolution** is now occurring in poor countries.

In the United States, urbanization has been going on for more than 400 years.

- Urbanization came to North America with European colonists.
- By 1850, hundreds of new cities had been founded from coast to coast.
- By 1920, a majority of the U.S. population lived in urban areas.
- Since 1950, the decentralization of cities has resulted in the growth of suburbs and edge cities.
- Rural areas represent 75% of the nation's land area; although rural places that are near large cities, as well as those that are especially scenic, are attracting migrants, rural areas currently lose net population through migration to cities.
- Sunbelt cities—but not the older Snowbelt cities—are increasing in size and population.

History and Theory of Population Growth

22.2 Analyze population trends using Malthusian theory and demographic transition theory. (pages 594–97)

- Historically, world population grew slowly, as high birth rates were offset by high death rates.
- About 1750, world population rose sharply, mostly due to falling death rates.
- In the late 1700s, Thomas Robert Malthus warned that population growth would outpace food production, resulting in social calamity.

urbanization the concentration of population into cities
metropolis a large city that socially and economically dominates an urban area
suburbs urban areas beyond the political boundaries of a city
megalopolis a vast urban region containing a number of cities and their surrounding suburbs

Urbanism as a Way of Life

22.4 Identify the contributions of Tönnies, Durkheim, Simmel, Park, Wirth, and Marx to our understanding of urban life. (pages 601–5)

Rapid urbanization during the nineteenth century led early sociologists to study the differences between rural and urban life.

Ferdinand Tönnies built his analysis on the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*.

- *Gemeinschaft*, typical of the rural village, joins people in what amounts to a primary group.
- *Gesellschaft*, typical of the modern city, describes individuals motivated by their own needs rather than by a desire to help improve the well-being of the community.

Emile Durkheim agreed with much of Tönnies's thinking but claimed that urbanites do not lack social bonds; the basis of social solidarity simply differs in the two settings. He described

- **mechanical solidarity**—social bonds based on common sentiments and shared moral values. This type of social solidarity is typical of traditional, rural life.
- **organic solidarity**—social bonds based on specialization and interdependence. This type of social solidarity is typical of modern, urban life.

Georg Simmel claimed that the overstimulation of city life produced a blasé attitude in urbanites.

Robert Park, at the University of Chicago, claimed that cities permit greater social freedom.

Louis Wirth saw large, dense, heterogeneous populations creating an impersonal and self-interested, though tolerant, way of life.

Karl Marx's analysis of conflict in the city is echoed in the urban political economy model.

Gemeinschaft a type of social organization in which people are closely tied by kinship and tradition

Gesellschaft a type of social organization in which people come together only on the basis of individual self-interest

urban ecology the study of the link between the physical and social dimensions of cities

Urbanization in Poor Nations

22.5 Describe the third urban revolution now under way in poor societies. (pages 605–6)

- The third urban revolution is taking place now in low-income nations.
- Almost all global population increase is taking place in cities. Of the twenty-eight cities with population greater than 10 million, 19 are in low- or middle-income nations.

Environment and Society

22.6 Analyze current environmental problems such as pollution and global warming. (pages 606–15)

The state of the **environment** is a social issue because it reflects how human beings organize social life.

- Societies increase the **environmental deficit** by focusing on short-term benefits and ignoring the long-term consequences brought on by their way of life.
- The more complex a society's technology, the greater its capacity to alter the natural environment.
- The *logic-of-growth thesis* supports economic development, claiming that people can solve environmental problems as they arise.
- The *limits-to-growth thesis* states that societies must curb development to prevent eventual environmental collapse.
- 54% of the solid waste we throw away ends up in landfills, which are filling up and can pollute groundwater.
- The supply of clean water is already low in some parts of the world. Industrial technology has caused a decline in air quality.
- Rain forests help remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and are home to a large share of this planet's living species. Under pressure from development, the world's rain forests are now half their original size and are shrinking by about 1% annually.
- Conflict theory has drawn attention to **environmental racism**.

Toward a Sustainable Society and World

- Our planet's population has reached record levels due to high fertility in low-income nations, coupled with declining mortality almost everywhere.
- As population increases, humanity faces environmental challenges that involve both greater consumption of resources and higher levels of pollution.

ecology the study of the interaction of living organisms and the natural environment

natural environment Earth's surface and atmosphere, including living organisms, air, water, soil, and other resources necessary to sustain life

ecosystem a system composed of the interaction of all living organisms and their natural environment

environmental deficit profound long-term harm to the natural environment caused by humanity's focus on short-term material affluence

rain forests regions of dense forestation, most of which circle the globe close to the equator

global warming a rise in Earth's average temperature due to an increasing concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere

environmental racism patterns of development that expose poor people, especially minorities, to environmental hazards

ecologically sustainable culture a way of life that meets the needs of the present generation without threatening the environmental legacy of future generations

Chapter 23

Collective Behavior and Social Movements



Learning Objectives

23.1 Distinguish various types of collective behavior.

23.2 Identify five types of crowds and three explanations of crowd behavior.

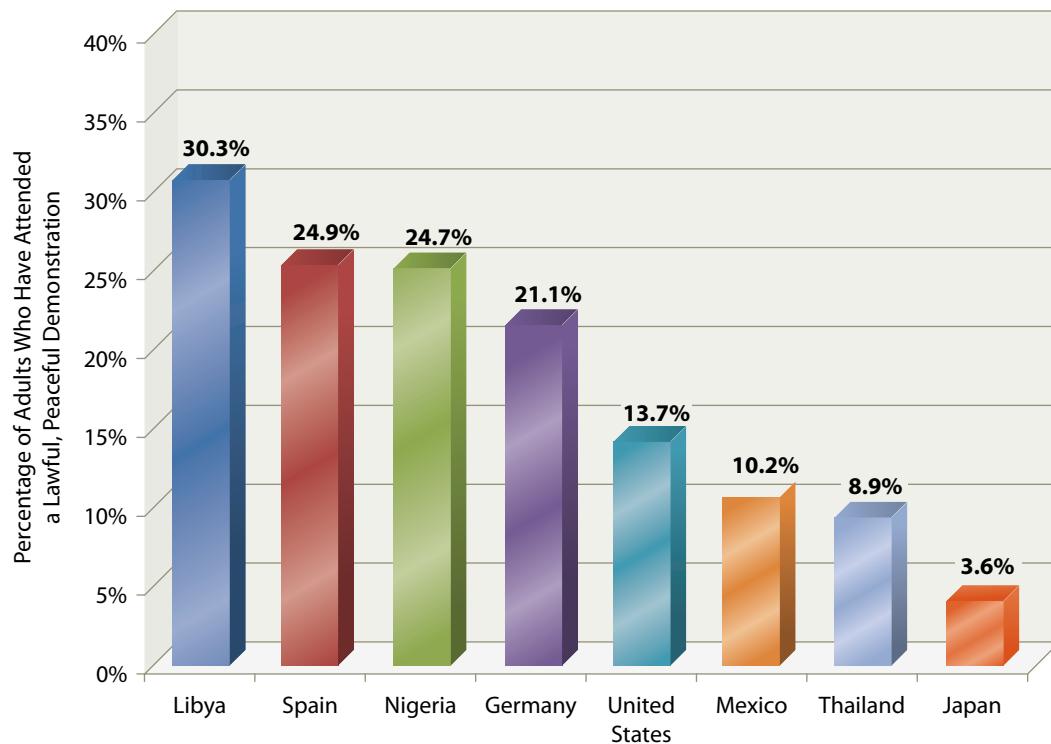
23.3 Describe rumor, disasters, and other types of mass behavior.

23.4 Analyze the causes and consequences of social movements.



The Power of Society

to encourage or discourage participation
in social movements



SOURCE: World Values Survey (2015).

Is being active in a social movement just a matter of personal choice? When asked if they had ever attended a lawful, peaceful demonstration in support of some social movement, about 14 percent of U.S. adults said “yes.” In some nations, that share is lower: Just 9 percent of adults in Thailand say they have engaged in a demonstration and only 4 percent of the Japanese say the same. But 21 percent of Germans have engaged in demonstration, as have 25 percent of Nigerians, 25 percent of Spaniards, and 30 percent of Libyans. Whether people “take to the streets” to show their support for a cause depends on more than decisions made by individuals; it also reflects the culture of the larger society.

Chapter Overview

This chapter explores the wide-ranging patterns of behavior that sociologists describe as “collective behavior,” including crowd behavior, rumor and gossip, panics, disasters, and social movements.

Many remember it as the day the earth moved. On March 11, 2011, a 9.0-magnitude earthquake shook the nation of Japan. It pushed the entire country about fifteen feet closer to the United States and even caused a slight change in the way Earth spins on its axis. But these were the observations of scientists. To the people on the ground in northeastern Japan, it was a day they will never forget. For perhaps 20,000 of them, it was the last day of their lives.

The monster earthquake caused countless buildings to collapse. But that was not the worst of it. Along the coastline, even the strongest buildings—constructed to withstand such emergencies—were no match for the three-story-tall tsunami wave that was unleashed by the violent movement of the earth beneath the sea. The wave washed across northeastern Japan, topping seawalls and wiping out entire towns.

And even then, the disaster did not end. The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station, damaged by the earthquake and then flooded by the giant wave of seawater, began releasing radiation. The radiation was soon measured in the nation’s capital of Tokyo and, within days, slightly elevated radiation levels were even measured in the United States. The long-term effects of this radiation on the Japanese people are still a matter of chilling speculation (Gibbs, 2011).

Across Japan and around the world, people were stunned by television and newspaper images of the devastation caused by this natural disaster. In an age that sometimes tricks us into believing that we have control of nature, the public was reminded how vulnerable we are to forces completely beyond our control. In addition, as happened in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina tore into the city of New Orleans, we had an opportunity to observe how people in a society react to a major disaster, coping with both physical devastation and social disintegration as entire communities are torn apart. ■



Studying disasters such as the one that continues to threaten the people of Japan is one example of the work sociologists do when they investigate **collective behavior**, *activity involving a large number of people that is unplanned, often controversial, and sometimes dangerous*. This chapter investigates various types of collective behavior, including what happens when people must deal with not only disasters but also mobs and riots, panic and mass hysteria, rumor and gossip, and fashions and fads. In addition, it will examine social movements, a type of collective behavior aimed at changing people’s lives in some important way.

Studying Collective Behavior

23.1 Distinguish various types of collective behavior.

Collective behavior is complex and difficult to study for three reasons:

1. **Collective behavior is diverse.** Collective behavior involves a wide range of human action. At first glance, it is difficult to see what disasters have in common with fads, rumors, and mob behavior.
2. **Collective behavior is variable.** Sometimes a rumor about some issue, such as how closely the U.S. government is tracking personal telephone calls and emails, spreads across the United States and around the world. But other rumors quickly die out. Why does one rumor catch on but others do not?
3. **Much collective behavior is transitory.** Sociologists have long studied social institutions such as the family because they are continuing parts of society. Disasters, rumors, and fads, however, come and go quickly.

Some researchers are quick to point out that these problems apply not just to collective behavior but to most forms of human behavior as well (Aguirre & Quarantelli, 1983). In addition, collective behavior is not always so surprising; anyone can predict that crowds will form at sporting events and music festivals, and sociologists can study

these gatherings firsthand or record them on videotape to study later. Researchers can even anticipate some natural disasters such as tornadoes, which are common in some parts of the United States, and be ready to study how people respond to such events (D. L. Miller, 1985).

As a result of their efforts, sociologists now know a great deal about collective behavior. The first lesson to learn is that all collective behavior involves the action of some **collectivity**, *a large number of people whose minimal interaction occurs in the absence of well-defined and conventional norms*. Collectivities are of two types. A *localized collectivity* refers to people physically close to one another, as in the case of crowds and riots. A *dispersed collectivity* or *mass behavior* involves people who influence one another despite being spread over a large area. Examples of this type of collective behavior include rumors, public opinion, and fashion.

Be sure to keep in mind how collectivities differ from the already familiar concept of social groups (see Chapter 7, "Groups and Organizations"). Here are three key differences:

- 1. People in collectivities have little or no social interaction.** People in groups interact frequently and directly; by contrast, people in mobs or other localized collectivities interact very little. Most people taking part in dispersed collectivities, such as a fad, do not interact at all.
- 2. Collectivities have no clear social boundaries.** Group members share a sense of identity, but people engaged in collective behavior usually do not. People in a local crowd may have the same object of their attention, such as someone on a ledge threatening to jump, but they feel little sense of unity with those around them. Individuals involved in dispersed collectivities, such as students worried about the possibility of a military draft, have almost no awareness of shared membership. To give another example, people may share concerns over many issues, but usually it is difficult to know exactly who falls within the ranks of, say, the environmental or feminist movement.
- 3. Collectivities generate weak and unconventional norms.** Conventional cultural norms usually regulate the behavior of people in groups. Some collectivities, such as people traveling together on an airplane, do observe conventional norms, but their interaction is usually limited to polite small talk with respect for the privacy of others sitting nearby. Other collectivities—such as excited fans after a game who take to the streets drinking and overturning cars—behave according to no clear guidelines (Weller & Quarantelli, 1973; Turner & Killian, 1987).

collective behavior activity involving a large number of people that is unplanned, often controversial, and sometimes dangerous

collectivity a large number of people whose minimal interaction occurs in the absence of well-defined and conventional norms

Localized Collectivities: Crowds

23.2 Identify five types of crowds and three explanations of crowd behavior.

One major form of collective behavior is the **crowd**, *a temporary gathering of people who share a common focus of attention and who influence one another*. Crowds are a fairly new development: Most of our ancestors never saw a large crowd. In medieval Europe, for example, about the only time large numbers of people gathered in one place was when armies faced off on the battlefield (Laslett, 1984). Today, however, crowds of 25,000 or more are common at rock concerts and sporting events and even in the registration halls of large universities. Some political events and demonstrations, including the recent rallies in cities of the Middle East, reached 100,000 people or more. Estimates placed the size of the crowd at President Obama's first inauguration ceremony in Washington, D.C., at about 1.5 million (Tucker, 2009; Bialik, 2011).



The 2013 Boston Marathon ended with a terrorist blast that killed three people. The two suspects (visible at the back of the crowd) were identified from images taken by many people using their smartphones. In what ways has computer-based technology changed the character of supposedly anonymous crowds?

All crowds include a lot of people, but they differ in their social dynamics. Herbert Blumer (1969) identified four categories of crowds:

A *casual crowd* is a loose collection of people who interact little, if at all. People lying on a beach or people who rush to the scene of an automobile accident have only a passing awareness of one another.

A *conventional crowd* results from deliberate planning, as illustrated by a country auction, a college lecture, or a presidential inauguration. In each case, the behavior of people involved follows a clear set of norms.

An *expressive crowd* forms around an event with emotional appeal, such as a religious revival, a Rolling Stones concert, or the New Year's Eve celebration in New York City's Times Square. Excitement is the main reason people join expressive crowds, which makes this spontaneous experience exhilarating for those involved.

An *acting crowd* is a collectivity motivated by an intense, single-minded purpose, such as an audience rushing the doors of a concert hall or fleeing from a mall after hearing gunshots. Acting crowds are set in motion by powerful emotions, which can sometimes trigger mob violence.

Any crowd can change from one type to another. In 2001, a conventional crowd of more than 10,000 fans filed into a soccer stadium in Johannesburg, South Africa, to watch a match between two rival teams. After a goal was scored, the crowd erupted, and people began to push toward the field. Within seconds, an acting crowd had formed, and a stampede began, crushing forty-seven people to death (Nessman, 2001). In 2009, when a US Airways jet crash-landed in the Hudson River minutes after taking off from a New York airport, some passengers briefly panicked, creating an acting crowd. But by the time the plane came to rest, everyone followed directions and evacuated the plane safely in a surprisingly quiet and conventional manner (Ripley, 2009).

Deliberate action by a crowd is not simply the product of rising emotions. Participants in *protest crowds*—a fifth category we can add to Blumer's list—may stage marches, boycotts, sit-ins, and strikes for political purposes (McPhail & Wohlstein, 1983). The antigovernment demonstrations that took place in cities across the Middle East during 2010 and 2011 are examples of protest crowds. In some cases, protest crowds have the low-level energy characteristic of a conventional crowd; at other times (especially when government forces go on the offensive), people become emotional enough to form an acting crowd.

Mobs and Riots

When an acting crowd turns violent, the result may be the birth of a **mob**, a *highly emotional crowd that pursues a violent or destructive goal*. Despite, or perhaps because of, their intense emotions, mobs tend to dissipate quickly. How long a mob continues to exist depends on its precise goals and whether its leadership tries to inflame or calm the crowd.

crowd	a temporary gathering of people who share a common focus of attention and who influence one another	mob	a highly emotional crowd that pursues a violent or destructive goal	riot	a social eruption that is highly emotional, violent, and undirected
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Lynching is the most notorious example of mob behavior in the United States. The term comes from a man named William Lynch, who lived in Virginia during the colonial period. At a time before there were formal police and courts of law, Lynch took it upon himself to enforce law and order in his community. His name soon came to be associated with violence and murder committed outside of the law.

In the United States, lynching has always been colored by race. After the Civil War, so-called lynch mobs terrorized newly freed African Americans. Any person of color who challenged white superiority risked being hanged or burned alive by hate-filled whites.

Lynch mobs—typically composed of poor whites who felt threatened by competition from freed slaves—reached their peak between 1880 and 1930. Police recorded some 5,000 lynchings in that period, though many more undoubtedly occurred. Often lynchings were popular events, attracting hundreds of spectators; sometimes victims were killed quickly, but others were tortured before being put to death. Most of these terrorist killings took place in the Deep South, where the farming economy depended on a cheap and obedient labor force. On the western frontier, lynch mobs targeted people of Mexican and Asian descent. In about 25 percent of reported lynchings, whites killed other whites. Lynching women was rare; only about 100 such cases are known, almost all involving women of color (White, 1969, orig. 1929; Grant, 1975; Lacayo, 2000).

A highly energized crowd with no particular purpose is a **riot**, a *social eruption that is highly emotional, violent, and undirected*. Unlike the action of a mob, a riot usually has no clear goal, except perhaps to express dissatisfaction. The cause of most riots is some long-standing anger or grievance. As a “violent situation waiting to happen,” a riot typically is ignited by some minor or major incident that causes people to start destroying property and harming other persons. A mob action usually ends when some specific violent goal is accomplished (such as a lynching); a riot tends to go on until the rioters run out of steam or police and community leaders gradually bring them under control.

Throughout our nation's history, riots have been sparked by social injustice. Industrial workers, for example, have rioted to vent rage over unfair working conditions. In 1886, a bitter struggle by Chicago factory workers for an eight-hour workday led to the explosive Haymarket Riot, which left eleven dead and scores injured. Prison inmates sometimes express anger and despair through riots.

In addition, race riots have occurred in this country with striking regularity. Early in the twentieth century, crowds of whites attacked African Americans in Chicago, Detroit, and other cities. In the 1960s, seemingly trivial events sparked rage at continuing prejudice and discrimination, causing violent riots in numerous inner-city ghettos. In Los Angeles in 1992, the acquittal of white police officers involved in the beating of black motorist Rodney King set off an explosive riot. Violence and fires killed more than fifty people, injured thousands, and destroyed property worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Rioting sparked by instances in which African American men had died at the hands of police officers took place in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014 and in Baltimore, Maryland, in 2015 as well as in other cities across the United States (Shane, 2015).

Not all riots are fueled by anger or hate. They can also begin with very positive feelings. In 2000, for example, young men celebrating New York City's National Puerto Rican Day began spraying water on young women in the crowd. During the next few hours, sexual violence erupted as dozens of women were groped, stripped, and assaulted—apparently resulting, as one report put it, from a mixture of "marijuana, alcohol, hot weather, testosterone idiocy, and lapses in police [protection]" (Barstow & Chivers, 2000:1). On a number of state university campuses, a win by the home sports team was all it took to send hundreds of students into the streets, drinking alcohol and soon lighting fires and battling with police. As one analyst put it, in an "anything goes" culture, some people think they can get away with whatever they feel like doing (Pitts, 2000; Madensen & Eck, 2006).

Crowds, Mobs, and Social Change

What does a riot accomplish? One answer is "power." As the recent Occupy Wall Street movement illustrated, ordinary people can gain power when they act collectively. The power of the crowd to challenge the status quo and sometimes to force social change is the reason crowds are controversial. Throughout history, defenders of the status quo have feared "the mob" as a threat. By contrast, those seeking change have supported collective action.



People came together in 2012 in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy along the East Coast of the United States. Which of the theories of crowd behavior discussed in this section of the chapter best explains this event?

CONTAGION THEORY An early explanation of collective behavior was offered by the French sociologist Gustave Le Bon (1841–1931). According to Le Bon's *contagion theory* (1960, orig. 1895), crowds have a hypnotic influence on their members. Shielded by the anonymity found in large numbers, people forget about personal responsibility and give in to the contagious emotions of the crowd. A crowd thus assumes a life of its own, stirring up emotions and driving people toward irrational, even violent, action.

EVALUATE

Le Bon's idea that crowds provide anonymity and can generate strong emotions is surely true. Yet as Clark McPhail (1991) claims, a considerable body of research shows that "the madding crowd" does not take on a life of its own. Rather, the actions of people in a crowd usually result from some obvious causes. In 2013, for example, 233 people were killed when fire swept through a nightclub in Santa Maria, Brazil. Echoing conventional thinking about crowd behavior, the police described the situation in the club as "very chaotic." There certainly was panic. Later investigation, however, revealed that the panic did not occur because the crowd suddenly and mysteriously "went crazy" but because the band set off some fireworks that set the building ablaze. As smoke quickly filled the large room, people rushed for a single exit, a situation made more difficult by security personnel who blocked the door trying to be sure that anyone who left the room had paid their drink tabs (Barbassa, 2013).

Although collective behavior may involve strong emotions, such feelings may not be irrational, as contagion theory suggests. Emotions—as well as action—can reflect real fear (as panic at a nightclub fire) or result from a sense of injustice (as in political protests) (Jasper, 1998).

CHECK YOUR LEARNING State the contagion theory of crowd behavior. What are several criticisms of this theory?

Theories of Crowd Behavior

What accounts for the behavior of crowds? Social scientists have developed several explanations.

CONVERGENCE THEORY *Convergence theory* holds that crowd behavior comes not from the crowd itself but also from the particular people who join in. From this point of view, a crowd is a convergence of like-minded individuals. Contagion theory states that crowds cause people to act in a certain way; convergence theory says the opposite, claiming that people who wish to act in a certain way come together to form crowds.

In recent years, the crowds that formed at political demonstrations opposing repressive governments in the Middle East did not cause participants to oppose their government leaders. On the contrary, participants came together because of already existing political attitudes.

EVALUATE

By linking crowds to broader social forces, convergence theory rejects Le Bon's claim that crowd behavior is irrational in favor of the view that people in crowds express existing beliefs and values. But in fairness to Le Bon, people sometimes do things in a crowd that they would not have the courage to do alone, because crowds can spread responsibility among many people. In addition, crowds can intensify an emotion simply by creating a critical mass of like-minded people.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING State the convergence theory of crowd behavior. What are two criticisms of this theory?

EMERGENT-NORM THEORY Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian (1987) developed the *emergent-norm theory* of crowd dynamics. These researchers admit that social behavior is never entirely predictable, but if similar interests draw people into a crowd, distinctive patterns of behavior may emerge.

According to Turner and Killian, crowds begin as collectivities containing people with mixed interests and motives. Especially in the case of expressive, acting, and protest crowds, norms may be vague and changing. In the minutes and hours after the earthquake and tsunami devastated Japan, for example, many people fled in terror. But, quickly, people began to come to each other's aid, and the Japanese resolved to undertake a collective effort to rebuild their way of life. In short, the behavior of people in crowds may change over time as people draw on their traditions or make new rules as they go along.

EVALUATE

Emergent-norm theory represents a middle-ground approach to crowd dynamics. Turner and Killian (1993) explain that crowd behavior is neither as irrational as contagion theory suggests nor as deliberate as convergence theory implies. Certainly, crowd behavior reflects the desires of participants, but it is also guided by norms that emerge as the situation unfolds.

Decision making does play a role in crowd behavior, although people watching from the sidelines may not realize it. For example, frightened people racing for higher ground may appear to be victims

of irrational panic, but from their point of view, fleeing an oncoming tsunami makes a lot of sense.

Emergent-norm theory points out that people in a crowd take on different roles. Some step forward as leaders; others become lieutenants, rank-and-file followers, inactive bystanders, and even opponents (Weller & Quarantelli, 1973; Zurcher & Snow, 1981).

CHECK YOUR LEARNING State the emergent-norm theory of crowd behavior. What are several criticisms of this theory?

Dispersed Collectivities: Mass Behavior

23.3 Describe rumor, disasters, and other types of mass behavior.

It is not just people clustered together in crowds who take part in collective behavior. **Mass behavior** refers to *collective behavior among people spread over a wide geographic area*.

Rumor and Gossip

A common type of mass behavior is **rumor**, *unconfirmed information that people spread informally, often by word of mouth or by using electronic devices*. People pass along rumors through face-to-face communication, of course, but today's modern technology—including telephones, the mass media, e-mail, text messaging, and the Internet—spreads rumors faster and farther than ever before.

Rumor has three main characteristics:

- 1. Rumor thrives in a climate of uncertainty.** Rumors arise when people lack clear and certain information about an issue. In Ferguson, Missouri, and Baltimore Maryland, for example, rumors about potential police action spread quickly among people engaged in recent street demonstrations.
- 2. Rumor is unstable.** People change a rumor as they pass it along, usually giving it a "spin" that serves their own interests. Pro-police people are likely to spread rumors about violent demonstrators. Critics of the police are likely to spread rumors about violent police.
- 3. Rumor is difficult to stop.** The number of people aware of a rumor increases very quickly because each person spreads information to many others. The mass media and the Internet can quickly spread local issues and events across the country and around the world. E-mail has particular importance in the process of spreading a rumor because most of us tend to believe something we hear from friends (Garrett, 2011). Eventually, of course, rumors go away. But, in general, the only way to control rumors is for a believable source to issue a clear and convincing statement of the facts.

Rumor can trigger the formation of crowds or other collective behavior. For this reason, officials establish

rumor control centers during a crisis in order to manage information. Yet some rumors persist, perhaps just because people enjoy them; the rumor that the Beatles' Paul McCartney had mysteriously died in 1966 is classic example.

Gossip is *rumor about people's personal affairs*. Charles Horton Cooley (1962, orig. 1909) explained that rumor involves some issue many people care about, but gossip interests only a small circle of people who know a particular person. This is why rumors spread widely but gossip tends to be localized.

Communities use gossip as a means of social control, using praise and blame to encourage people to conform to local norms. Also, people gossip about others to put them down and to raise their own standing as social "insiders" (Baumgartner, 1998; Nicholson, 2001). At the same time, no community wants gossip to get out of control to the point that no one knows what to believe, which is why people who gossip too much are criticized as "busybodies."



Rumors spread in a climate of uncertainty. People have often speculated on the health of the aging revolutionary leader Fidel Castro, who has not been seen in public for years. In 2015, on his eighty-ninth birthday, the Cuban government released a photograph of Castro in the company of Bolivian president Evo Morales and Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro.

Medical Association, for example, physicians have a lot to say about medical care in the United States, just as members of the National Education Association have a great deal of influence on public education.

Special-interest groups and political leaders all try to shape public tastes and attitudes by using **propaganda**, *information presented with the intention of shaping public opinion*. Although we tend to think of propaganda in negative terms, it is not necessarily false. A thin line separates information from propaganda; the difference depends mostly on the presenter's intention. We offer *information* to enlighten others; we use *propaganda* to sway people toward our own point of view. Political speeches, commercial advertising, and even some college lectures may include propaganda in an effort to steer people toward thinking or acting in some specific way.

Sometimes, of course, propaganda is a matter of saying something that simply is not true. One organization that followed campaign advertising during the 2012 presidential election reported that roughly one-fifth of third-party political ads contained information that was not true (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2013). Often, however, propaganda is a matter of deciding *which* facts to present—a practice that we often refer to as *spin*. For example, in a recent debate over rising oil prices, President Barack Obama claimed that the United States now imports less than half of the oil the nation consumes. Senator Mitch McConnell countered that the United States imports more than 60 percent of the oil we consume. Is someone lying? No. The two claims were simply based on different ways of calculating the answer. Each person was dealing with facts but *spinning* the facts to support a particular political position (Morse, 2011).

Public Opinion and Propaganda

Another type of dispersed collective behavior is **public opinion**, *widespread attitudes about controversial issues*. Exactly who is, or is not, included in any "public" depends on the issue involved. Over the years in the United States, publics have formed over numerous controversial issues, from global warming and air pollution to handguns and health care. More recently, the public has debated immigration policy, same-sex marriage, and the legalization of marijuana.

Whatever the issue, a small share of people will have no opinion at all. The absence of an opinion may be due to either ignorance or indifference. Even on many important issues, surveys show that between 5 and 20 percent of people will have no clear opinion. In unusual cases, the undecided share of the public can be a majority of people. One 2011 survey that asked people what they thought of the conservative Tea Party movement, for example, found that 55 percent of U.S. adults claimed that they were either not informed enough to have an opinion (36 percent) or they were undecided (19 percent). Others simply refused to say (2 percent) (Polling Report, 2013).

Also, not everyone's opinion carries the same weight. Some categories of people are more likely to be asked for their opinion, and what they say will have more clout because they are better educated, wealthier, or better connected. By forming an organization, various categories of people can increase their voice. Through the American

Fashions and Fads

Fashions and fads also involve people spread over a large area. A **fashion** is a *social pattern favored by a large number of people*. People's tastes in clothing, music, and automobiles, as well as ideas about politics, change often, going in and out of fashion.

In preindustrial societies, clothing and personal appearance change very little, reflecting traditional *style*. Women and men, the rich and the poor, lawyers and carpenters wear distinctive clothes and hairstyles that reflect their occupations and social standing (Lofland, 1973; Crane, 2000).

In industrial societies, however, established style gives way to changing fashion. For one thing, modern people care less about tradition and are often eager to try out new "lifestyles." Higher rates of social mobility also cause people to use their appearance to make a statement about themselves. The German sociologist Georg Simmel (1971, orig. 1904) explained that rich people usually stand out as the trendsetters; with plenty of money to spend on luxuries, they attract lots of attention. As the U.S. sociologist Thorstein Veblen (1953, orig. 1899) put it, fashion involves *conspicuous consumption* as people buy expensive products



Fashion refers to social patterns that are popular within a society's population. In modern societies, the mass media play an important part in guiding people's tastes. For example, the popular television show *Project Runway* sets standards for attractive clothing. Fads are patterns that change more quickly. *Project Runway* is one example of the recent fad that had brought so many "reality shows" to television.

(from designer handbags to Hummers) not because they need them but simply to show off their wealth.

Ordinary people who want to look wealthy are eager to buy less expensive copies of what the rich make fashionable. In this way, a fashion moves downward through the class structure. But eventually, the fashion loses its prestige when too many average people now share "the look," so the rich move on to something new. In short, fashions are born along the Fifth Avenues and Rodeo Drives of the rich, gain popularity in Targets and Walmarts across the country, and are eventually pushed aside in favor of something new.

Since the 1960s, however, there has been a reversal of this pattern in the United States, and many fashions favored by rich people are drawn from people of lower social position. This pattern began with blue jeans, which have long been worn by people doing manual labor. During the civil rights and antiwar movements of the 1960s, denim jeans became popular among college students who wanted to identify with "ordinary people." Today, emblems of the hip-hop culture allow even the most affluent entertainers and celebrities to mimic styles that began among the inner-city poor. Even rich and famous people often identify with their ordinary roots: In one of her songs, Jennifer Lopez asks her friends not to be fooled by all her new jewelry because she is still the same Jenny who lived with them in the old neighborhood.

A **fad** is an *unconventional social pattern that people embrace briefly but enthusiastically*. Fads, sometimes called *crazes*, are common in high-income societies, where many people have the money to spend on amusing, if often frivolous, things. During the 1950s, two young Californians produced a brightly colored plastic hoop, a version of a toy popular in Australia that you can swing around your waist by gyrating your hips. The "hula hoop" became a national craze. In less than a year, hula hoops had all but vanished, only to reappear from time to time. *Pokémon* cards are another example of the rise and fall of a fad. More recently, the social media game Candy Crush has gained enormous popularity, but will it be around five years from now? How do fads differ from fashions? Fads capture the public imagination but quickly burn out. Because fashions reflect basic cultural values like individuality and sexual attractiveness, they tend to stay around for a while. Therefore, a fashion—but rarely a fad—becomes a more lasting part of popular culture. Streaking, for instance, was a fad that came out of nowhere and soon vanished; denim clothing, however, is an example of fashion that originated in the rough mining camps of Gold Rush California in the 1870s and is still popular today.

Panic and Mass Hysteria

A **panic** is a *form of collective behavior in which people in one place react to a threat or other stimulus with irrational, frantic, and often self-destructive behavior*. The classic illustration of a panic is people streaming toward the exits of a crowded theater

mass behavior collective behavior among people spread over a wide geographic area

rumor unconfined information that people spread informally, often by word of mouth	public opinion widespread attitudes about controversial issues	fashion a social pattern favored by a large number of people	panic a form of collective behavior in which people in one place react to a threat or other stimulus with irrational, frantic, and often self-destructive behavior	mass hysteria or moral panic a form of dispersed collective behavior in which people react to a real or imagined event with irrational and even frantic fear
gossip rumor about people's personal affairs	propaganda information presented with the intention of shaping public opinion	fad an unconventional social pattern that people embrace briefly but enthusiastically		

after someone yells, “Fire!” As they flee, they trample one another, blocking the exits so that few actually escape.

Closely related to panic is **mass hysteria** or **moral panic**, *a form of dispersed collective behavior in which people react to a real or imagined event with irrational and even frantic fear*. Whether the cause of the hysteria is real or not, a large number of people take it very seriously.

One example of a moral panic occurred during the 1950s as some political leaders encouraged widespread fear of “communists” who had become officials in U.S. government. In the 1960s, another wave of controversy was set off by flag burnings in opposition to the Vietnam War. In the 1980s, fear of AIDS or of people with AIDS caused a moral panic among some people. In early 2013, another moral panic arose as people feared that Congress’s failure to resolve budget disagreements might push the United States over a “fiscal cliff.”

Sometimes moral panics arise over situations that pose little real danger to anyone. Take, for example, the case of fear arising from AIDS; there is almost no chance of becoming infected with HIV by simply interacting with someone who has this disease. At another level, however, the fear itself can become a danger, as for example, if the fear of AIDS were to give rise to a hate crime targeting a person with AIDS.

One factor that makes moral panics common in our society is the influence of the mass media. Diseases, disasters, and deadly crime all get intense coverage by television and other media, which hope to gain an audience. As sociologist Erich Goode (2000:549) points out, “The mass media *thrive* on scares; contributing to moral panics is the media’s stock in trade.” It was the mass media, after all, that popularized the term “fiscal cliff” to imply that the country was on a path toward imminent catastrophe.

Mass hysteria is sometimes triggered by an event that, at the extreme, sends people into chaotic flight. Of course, people who see others overcome by fear may become more afraid themselves, and the hysteria feeds on itself. When a presidential 747 chased by an Air Force jet flew low over New York City in a 2009 “photo op,” it sent thousands of people who remembered the 9/11 attacks running into the

streets, although everyone eventually realized that there was no real danger.

Disasters

A **disaster** is *an event, generally unexpected, that causes extensive harm to people and damage to property*. Disasters are of three types. Earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and forest fires are all examples of *natural disasters* (K. T. Erikson, 2005a). A second type is the *technological disaster*, which is widely regarded as an accident but is more accurately a failure to control technology (K. T. Erikson, 2005a). The 2011 radiation leak from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant is one recent example of a technological disaster. A second is the 2010 oil spill resulting from the explosion on an oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico, which released as much as 200 million gallons of oil into the water. A third type of disaster is the *intentional disaster*, in which one or more organized groups deliberately harm others. War, terrorist attacks, and genocide in places including Syria (2012–2013), Libya (2011), the Darfur region of Sudan (2003–2010), Yugoslavia (1992–1995), and Rwanda (1994) are all examples of intentional disasters.

The full scope of the harm caused by disasters may become evident only many years after the event takes place. The Thinking Globally box on page 630 provides an example of a technological disaster that is still affecting people and their descendants more than fifty years after it occurred.

Kai Erikson (1976, 1994, 2005a) has investigated dozens of disasters of all types. From the study of floods, nuclear contamination, oil spills, and genocide, Erikson reached three major conclusions about the consequences of disasters.

First, disasters are *social disruptions*. We all know that disasters harm people and destroy property, but only recently have analysts begun to discuss disasters as threats to *human security* (Futamora, Hobson, & Turner, 2011). This concept points to the fact that disasters also damage human community. In 1972, when a dam burst and sent a mountain of water down West Virginia’s Buffalo Creek,

Thinking Globally

A Never-Ending Atomic Disaster

It was just after dawn on March 1, 1954, and the air was already warm on Utrik Island, a small bit of coral and volcanic rock in the South Pacific that is one of the Marshall Islands. The island was home to 159 people, who lived by fishing much as their ancestors had done for centuries. The population knew only a little about the outside world—a missionary from the United States taught the local children, and two dozen military personnel lived at a small U.S. weather station with an airstrip that received one plane each week.

At 6:45 A.M., the western sky suddenly lit up brighter than anyone had ever seen, and seconds later, a rumble like a massive earthquake rolled across the island. Some of the Utrik people thought the world was coming to an end. And truly, the world they had always known was gone forever.

About 160 miles to the west, on Bikini Island, the United States military had just detonated an atomic bomb, a huge device with 1,000 times the power of the bomb used at the end of World War II to destroy the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The enormous blast vaporized the entire



island and sent a massive cloud of dust and radiation into the atmosphere. The military expected the winds to take the cloud north into an open area of the ocean, but the cloud blew east instead. By noon, the radiation cloud had engulfed a Japanese fishing boat ironically called the *Lucky Dragon*, exposing the twenty-three people on board to a dose of radiation that would eventually sicken or kill them all. By the end of the afternoon, the deadly cloud reached Utrik Island.

The cloud was made up of coral and rock dust—all that was left of Bikini Island. The dust fell softly on Utrik Island, and the children, who remembered pictures of snow shown to them by their missionary teacher, ran out to play in the white powder that was piling up everywhere. No one realized that it was contaminated with deadly radiation.

Three-and-one-half days later, the U.S. military landed planes on Utrik Island and informed all the people that they would have to leave immediately, bringing nothing with them. For three months, the island people were housed at another military base, and then they were returned home.

Many of the people who were on the island that fateful morning died young, typically from cancer or some other disease associated with radiation exposure. But even today, those who survived consider themselves and their island poisoned by the radiation, and they believe that the poison will never go away. The radiation may or may not still be in their bodies and in the soil and sand on the island, but it has certainly worked its way deep into their culture. More than fifty years after the bomb exploded, people still talk about the morning that “everything changed.” The damage from this disaster turned out to be much more than medical—it was a social transformation that left the people with a deep belief that they are all sick, that life will never be the same, and that powerful people who live on the other side of the world could have prevented the disaster but did not.

What Do You Think?

1. In what sense is a disaster like this one or the 2011 radiation leak in Japan never really over?
2. In what ways did the atomic bomb test change the culture of the Utrik people?
3. The U.S. government never formally took responsibility for what happened. What elements of global stratification do you see in what happened to the people of Utrik Island?

SOURCE: Based on K. T. Erikson (2005a).

it killed 125 people, destroyed 1,000 homes, and left 4,000 people homeless. After the waters had returned to normal and help was streaming into the area, the people were paralyzed not only by the loss of family members

and friends but also by the loss of their entire way of life. Despite more than forty years of effort, they have not been able to rebuild the community life they once knew. We can pinpoint when disasters start, but as Erikson points out,



Sociologists classify disasters using three types. The 2015 earthquake in Nepal that killed more than 9,000 people is an example of a natural disaster. The 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill was a technological disaster. The plight of thousands of refugees forced to flee war-torn African and Middle Eastern nations in unsafe, overloaded boats in unsuccessful attempts to reach the shores of Europe is an example of an intentional disaster.

we cannot predict when their effects will end. The full consequences of the radiation leak in Japan following the 2011 earthquake discussed in the opening to this chapter are still far from clear.

Second, Erikson discovered that the social damage is more serious when an event involves some toxic substance, as is usually the case with technological disasters. As the case of radiation falling on Utrik Island shows us, people feel “poisoned” when they have been exposed to a dangerous substance that they fear and over which they have no control.

Third, the social damage is most serious when the disaster is caused by the actions of other people. This can happen through negligence or carelessness (in the case of technological disasters) or through willful action (in the case of intentional disasters). Our belief that “other people will do us no harm” is a basic foundation of social life, Erikson claims. But when others act carelessly (as in the case of the 2010 Gulf oil spill) or intentionally in ways that harm us (as when some Middle Eastern government leaders used deadly force to put down protests in 2011 and 2012), many who survive lose their trust in others to such a degree that it may never be restored.

most important types of collective behavior because they often have lasting effects on our society.

Social movements, such as the political movement that sprang up in response to the deaths of African American men who engaged with police, are common in the modern world. But this was not always the case. Preindustrial societies are tightly bound by tradition, making social movements extremely rare. However, the many subcultures and countercultures found in industrial and postindustrial societies encourage social movements dealing with a wide range of public issues. In the United States, for example, the gay rights movement gradually won legal changes in cities and states across the country, forbidding discrimination based on sexual orientation and most recently allowing legal same-sex marriage. Like any social movement that seeks change, the gay rights movement has prompted a countermovement made up of traditionalists who want to limit the social acceptance of homosexuality and who believe traditional values are under attack. In today’s society, almost every important public issue gives rise to a social movement favoring change and an opposing countermovement resisting it.

Social Movements

23.4 Analyze the causes and consequences of social movements.

A **social movement** is an organized activity that encourages or discourages social change. Social movements are among the

Types of Social Movements

Sociologists classify social movements according to several variables (Aberle, 1966; Cameron, 1966; Blumer, 1969). One variable asks, *Who is changed?* Some movements target selected people, and others try to change everyone. A second variable asks, *How much change?* Some movements seek

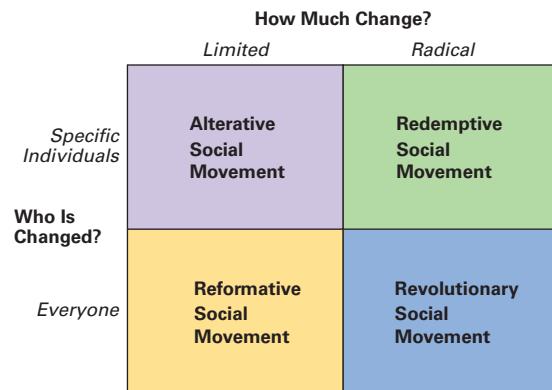


Figure 23–1 Four Types of Social Movements

There are four types of social movements, reflecting who is changed and how great the change is.

SOURCE: Based on Aberle (1966).

only limited change in our lives, and others pursue radical transformation of society. Combining these variables results in four types of social movements, shown in Figure 23–1.

Alterative social movements are the least threatening to the status quo because they seek limited change in only a part of the population. Their aim is to help certain people *alter* their lives. Promise Keepers, one example of an alternative social movement, encourages men to live more spiritual lives and be more supportive of their families.

Redemptive social movements also target specific people, but they seek radical change. Their aim is to help certain people *redeem* their lives. For example, Alcoholics Anonymous is an organization that helps people with an alcohol addiction to achieve a sober life.

Reformative social movements aim for only limited social change but target everyone. Multiculturalism, described in Chapter 3 (“Culture”), is an educational and political movement that advocates social equality for people of all races and ethnicities. Reformative social movements generally work inside the existing political system. Some are *progressive*, promoting a new social pattern, and others are *reactionary*, opposing those who seek change by trying to preserve the status quo or to revive past social patterns. Thus just as multiculturalists push for greater racial equality, white supremacist organizations try to maintain the historical dominance of white people.

Revolutionary social movements are the most extreme of all, seeking the transformation of an entire society. Sometimes pursuing specific goals, sometimes spinning utopian dreams, these social movements reject existing social institutions as flawed in favor of a radically new alternative. Both the left-wing Communist party (pushing for government control of the entire economy) and the right-wing militia groups (advocating the destruction of “big government”) seek to radically change our way of life (van Dyke & Soule, 2002).

Claims Making

In 1981, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention began to track a strange disease that was rapidly killing people, most of them homosexual men. The disease came to be known as AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). Although AIDS was clearly a deadly disease, there was little public attention and few stories in the mass media. It was only about five years later that the public became aware of the rising number of deaths and began to think of AIDS as a serious social threat.

The change in public thinking was the result of **claims making**, *the process of trying to convince the public and public officials of the importance of joining a social movement to address a particular issue*. In other words, for a social movement to form, some issue has to be defined as a problem that demands public attention. Usually, claims making begins with a small number of people. In the case of AIDS, the gay community in large cities (notably San Francisco and New York) mobilized to convince people of the dangers posed by this deadly disease. Over time, if the mass media give the issue attention and public officials speak out on behalf of the problem, it is likely that the social movement will gain strength.

Considerable public attention has now been given to AIDS, and there is ongoing research aimed at finding a cure for this deadly disease. The process of claims making goes on all the time for dozens of issues. Today, for example, a movement to ban the use of cellular telephones in automobiles has pointed to the thousands of automobile accidents each year related to the use of phones while driving; so far, fourteen states have passed laws banning the use of handheld phones, thirty-eight others ban cell phones for new drivers, and forty-five ban text messaging for all drivers; the debate continues elsewhere (McVeigh, Welch, & Bjarnason, 2003; Governors’ Highway Safety Association, 2015).

social movement an organized activity that encourages or discourages social change

claims making the process of trying to convince the public and public officials of the importance of joining a social movement to address a particular issue

Explaining Social Movements

Because social movements are intentional and long-lasting, sociologists find this type of collective behavior easier to explain than brief episodes of mob behavior or mass hysteria described earlier in the chapter. Several theories have gained importance.

DEPRIVATION THEORY *Deprivation theory* holds that social movements seeking change arise among people who feel deprived. People who feel they lack enough income, safe working conditions, basic political rights, or plain human dignity may organize a social movement to bring about a more just state of affairs (Morrison, 1978; J. D. Rose, 1982).

The rise of the Ku Klux Klan and the passage of Jim Crow laws by whites intent on enforcing segregation in the South after the Civil War illustrate deprivation theory. With the end of slavery, white landowners lost a source of free labor, and poorer whites lost the claim that they were socially superior to African Americans. This change produced a sense of deprivation, prompting whites to try to keep all people of color “in their place” (Dollard et al., 1939). African Americans’ deprivation was far greater, of course, but as minorities in a racist society, they had little opportunity to organize. During the twentieth century, however, African Americans did organize successfully in pursuit of racial equality.

As Chapter 7 (“Groups and Organizations”) explains, deprivation is a relative concept. Regardless of anyone’s absolute amount of money and power, people feel either good or bad about their situation only by comparing themselves to some other category of people. **Relative deprivation**, then, is a *perceived disadvantage arising from some specific comparison* (Stouffer et al., 1949; Merton, 1968).

Alexis de Tocqueville’s study of the French Revolution offers a classic illustration of relative deprivation (1955, orig. 1856). Why did rebellion occur in progressive France, where feudalism was breaking down, rather than in more traditional Germany, where peasants were much worse off? Tocqueville’s answer was that as bad as their condition was, German peasants had known nothing but feudal servitude, and so they could imagine little else and had no basis for feeling deprived. French peasants, by contrast, had seen improvements in their lives that made them eager for more change. Consequently, the French—but not the Germans—felt relative deprivation. As Tocqueville saw it, increasing freedom and prosperity did not satisfy people as much as it sparked their desire for an even better life.

Closer to home, Tocqueville’s insight helps explain patterns of rioting during the 1960s. Protest riots involving African Americans took place not in the South, where many black people lived in miserable poverty, but in Detroit at a time when the city’s auto industry was booming, black unemployment was low, and black home ownership was the highest in the country (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1998).

EVALUATE

Deprivation theory challenges our commonsense assumption that the worst-off people are the most likely to organize for change. People do not organize simply because they suffer in an absolute sense; rather, social movements arise out of a sense of *relative deprivation*. Both Tocqueville and Marx—as different as they were in many



Claims making is the process of trying to convince others of the importance of some problem and the need for specific change. In 2015, the Confederate battle flag was finally removed from the state house in South Carolina. Efforts to remove this flag—which some people associate with military valor but many others associate with slavery and racism—had failed in the past. What changed this time around? The brutal killing of nine African Americans during a church service by a troubled young man who had been photographed with this flag was enough to sway public opinion that the time had come to abandon this flag.

ways—agreed on the importance of relative deprivation in the formation of social movements.

But most people experience some discontent all the time, so deprivation theory leaves us wondering why social movements arise among some categories of people and not others. A second problem is that deprivation theory suffers from circular reasoning: We assume that deprivation causes social movements, but often the only evidence of deprivation is the social movement itself (Jenkins & Perrow, 1977). A third limitation is that this approach focuses on the cause of a social movement and tells us little about what happens after movements take form (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996).

CHECK YOUR LEARNING State the basic idea of the deprivation theory of social movements. What are several criticisms of this theory?



A curious fact is that rioting by African Americans in U.S. cities during the 1960s was more common in the North (here, in Detroit), where good factory jobs were available and living standards were higher, than in the South, where a larger share of people lived in rural areas with lower incomes. Relative deprivation theory explains this apparent contradiction by pointing out that it was in the North, where life had improved, that people came to expect equality. Relative to that goal, the reality of second-class citizenship became intolerable.

MASS-SOCIETY THEORY William Kornhauser's *mass-society theory* (1959) argues that socially isolated people seek out social movements as a way to gain a sense of belonging and importance. From this point of view, social movements are most likely to arise in impersonal, *mass* societies. This theory points out that the *personal* as well as the *political* consequences of social movements offer a sense of community to people otherwise adrift in society (Melucci, 1989).

It follows, says Kornhauser, that categories of people with weak social ties are those most eager to join a social movement. People who are well integrated socially, by contrast, are unlikely to seek membership in a social movement.

Kornhauser concludes that activists tend to be psychologically vulnerable people who eagerly join groups and can be manipulated by group leaders. For this reason, Kornhauser claims, social movements are rarely very democratic.

EVALUATE

To Kornhauser's credit, his theory focuses on both the kind of society that produces social movements and the kinds of people who join them. But one criticism is that there is no clear standard for measuring the extent to which we live in a "mass society," so his thesis is difficult to test.

A second criticism is that explaining social movements in terms of people hungry to belong ignores the social-justice issues that movements address. Put otherwise, mass-society theory suggests that flawed people, rather than a flawed society, are responsible for social movements.

What does research show about mass-society theory? The record is mixed. Research by Frances Piven and Richard Cloward

(1977) supports Kornhauser's approach. Piven and Cloward found that a breakdown of routine social patterns has encouraged poor people to form social movements. Also, a study of the New Mexico State Penitentiary found that when prison programs that promoted social ties among inmates were suspended, inmates were more likely to protest their conditions (Useem & Goldstone, 2002).

But other studies cast doubt on this approach. Some researchers conclude that the Nazi movement in Germany did not draw heavily from socially isolated people (Lipset, 1963; Oberschall, 1973). Similarly, many of the people who took part in urban riots during the 1960s had strong ties to their communities (Sears & McConahay, 1973). Evidence also suggests that most young people who join religious movements have fairly normal family ties (Wright & Piper, 1986). Finally, researchers who have examined the biographies of 1960s' political activists find evi-

dence of deep and continuing commitment to political goals rather than isolation from society (McAdam, 1988, 1989; Whalen & Flacks, 1989).

CHECK YOUR LEARNING State the basic idea of the mass-society theory of social movements. What are several criticisms of this theory?

CULTURE THEORY In recent years, sociologists have developed *culture theory*, the recognition that social movements depend not only on material resources and the structure of political power but also on cultural symbols. That is, people in any particular situation are likely to mobilize to form a social movement only to the extent that they develop "shared understandings of the world that legitimate and motivate collective action" (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996:6; see also Williams, 2002).

In part, mobilization depends on a sense of injustice, as suggested by deprivation theory. In addition, people must come to believe that they are not able to respond to their situation effectively by acting alone.

Finally, social movements gain strength as they develop symbols and a sense of community that both build strong feelings and direct energy into organized action. Media images of the burning World Trade Center towers after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, helped mobilize people to support the U.S. military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. Likewise, photos of gay couples celebrating their weddings have helped fuel both the gay rights

movement and the countermovement trying to prevent the spread of gay marriage. Colorful rubber bracelets are now used by at least a dozen social movements to encourage people to show support for various causes.

EVALUATE

A strength of culture theory is reminding us that social movements depend not just on material resources but also on cultural symbols. At the same time, powerful symbols (such as the flag and ideas about patriotism and respecting our leaders) help support the status quo. How and when symbols turn people from supporting the system toward protest against it are questions in need of further research.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING State the basic idea of the culture theory of social movements. What is the main criticism of this theory?

RESOURCE-MOBILIZATION THEORY *Resource-mobilization theory* points out that no social movement is likely to succeed—or even get off the ground—without substantial resources, including money, human labor, office and communications equipment, access to the mass media, and a positive public image. In short, any social movement rises or falls on how well it attracts resources, mobilizes people, and forges alliances.

Outsiders can be just as important as insiders in affecting the outcome of a social movement. Because socially disadvantaged people, by definition, lack the money, contacts, leadership skills, and organizational know-how that a successful movement requires, sympathetic outsiders fill the resource gap. In U.S. history, well-to-do white people, including college students, performed a vital service to the

black civil rights movement in the 1960s, and affluent men have joined women as leaders of the women's movement.

Resources connecting people are also vital. The 1989 prodemocracy movement in China was fueled by students whose location on campuses clustered together in Beijing allowed them to build networks and recruit new members (Zhao, 1998). More recently, the Internet, including Facebook and Twitter, was an important resource that helped organizations to mobilize hundreds of thousands of people who took part in the political movements in many nations in the Middle East (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Preston, 2011).

Closer to home, in the 2008 presidential campaign, YouTube videos of Barack Obama were viewed almost 2 billion times, surely contributing to his success in that election. In the months leading up to the 2012 presidential election, 47 percent of all voters identified the Internet as a major source of their political information, which is almost twice the share who said they relied on newspapers and almost as large as the share who claimed to rely on television. Put another way, 41 percent of U.S. voters now claim that they get *most* of their political news from the Internet (Pew Research Center, 2011, 2012).

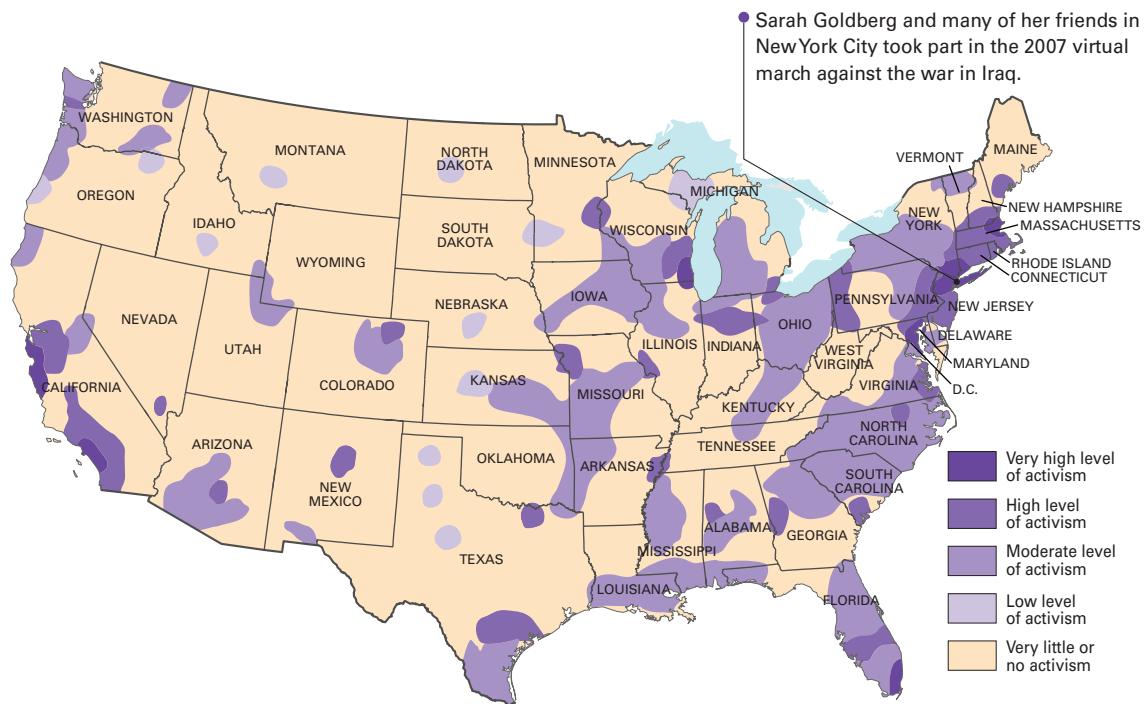
Of course, Internet-based activism on any particular issue is not equally likely everywhere in the United States. In 2007, the liberal activist organization MoveOn.org used the Internet to create a “virtual march” in which people across the country telephoned their representatives in Congress to oppose the troop “surge” in Iraq. National Map 23–1 on page 636 shows where that organization had more or less success in mobilizing opposition to the war in Iraq.

The availability of organizing ideas online has helped people on campuses and elsewhere increase support for



Social movements are often given great energy by powerful visual images, which is one key idea of culture theory. During World War II, this photo of six soldiers raising the U.S. flag on the tiny Pacific island of Iwo Jima increased morale at home and was the inspiration for a memorial sculpture. Some twenty-five years later, newspapers published the photo on the right, showing children running from a napalm strike by U.S. planes in South Vietnam. The girl in the middle of the picture had ripped the flaming clothes from her body. This photo increased the strength of the social movement against the war in Vietnam.

Seeing Ourselves



National Map 23-1 Virtual March: Political Mobilization across the United States

In early 2007, the political action group MoveOn.org organized a “virtual march on Washington,” urging people across the country to call their representatives in Congress to express opposition to the U.S. buildup of troops in Iraq. The map shows the areas in which the most telephone calls were made. What can you say about the places where the mobilization was most and least effective?

SOURCE: MoveOn.org (2007).

various social movements. For example, Take Back the Night is an annual occasion for rallies at which people speak out in opposition to violence against women, children, and families. Using resources available online, even a small number of people can plan and carry out an effective political event (Passy & Giugni, 2001; Packer, 2003).

EVALUATE

Resource-mobilization theory recognizes that both resources and discontent are necessary to the success of a social movement. Research confirms the importance of forging alliances to gaining resources and notes that movements with few resources may, in desperation, turn to violence to call attention to their cause (Grant & Wallace, 1991; Jenkins, Jacobs, & Agone, 2003).

Critics of this theory counter that "outside" people and resources are not always needed to ensure a movement's success. They argue that even relatively powerless segments of a population can promote change if they are able to organize effectively and have strongly committed members (Donnelly & Majka, 1998). Aldon Morris (1981) adds that the success of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s was due to people of color who drew mostly on their own skills and resources. A second problem with this theory is that it overstates the extent to which powerful people are willing to challenge the status quo. Some rich white people did provide

valuable resources to the black civil rights movement, but probably more often, elites were indifferent or opposed to significant change (McAdam 1982, 1983; Pichardo 1995).

CHECK YOUR LEARNING State the basic idea of resource-mobilization theory. What are two criticisms of this theory?

STRUCTURAL-STRAIN THEORY One of the most influential theories about social movements was developed by Neil Smelser (1962). *Structural-strain theory* identifies six factors that encourage the development of social movements. Smelser's theory also suggests which factors encourage unorganized mobs or riots and which encourage highly organized social movements. The prodemocracy movement that transformed Eastern Europe during the late 1980s illustrates Smelser's theory.

- 1. Structural conduciveness.** Social movements begin to emerge when people come to think their society has some serious problems. In Eastern Europe, these problems included low living standards and political repression by national governments.
 - 2. Structural strain.** People begin to experience relative deprivation when society fails to meet

their expectations. Eastern Europeans joined the prodemocracy movement because they compared their living standards to the higher ones in Western Europe; they also knew that their standard of living was lower than what years of socialist propaganda had led them to expect.

- 3. Growth and spread of an explanation.** Forming a well-organized social movement requires a clear statement of not just the problem but also its causes and its solutions. If people are confused about why they are suffering, they will probably express their dissatisfaction in an unorganized way through rioting. In the case of Eastern Europe, intellectuals played a key role in the prodemocracy movement by pointing out economic and political flaws in the socialist system and proposing strategies to increase democracy.
- 4. Precipitating factors.** Discontent may exist for a long time before some specific event sparks collective action. Such an event occurred in 1985 when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union and began his program of *perestroika* (restructuring). As Moscow relaxed its rigid control over Eastern Europe, people there saw a historic opportunity to reorganize political and economic life and claim greater freedom.
- 5. Mobilization for action.** Once people share a concern about some issue, they are ready to take action—to distribute leaflets, stage rallies, and build alliances with sympathetic groups. The initial success of the Solidarity movement in Poland—supported by the Reagan administration in the United States and by Pope John Paul II in the Vatican—mobilized people throughout Eastern Europe to press for change. The rate of change became faster and faster: What had taken a decade in Poland required only months in Hungary and only weeks in other Eastern European nations.
- 6. Lack of social control.** The success of any social movement depends in large part on the response of political officials, police, and the military. Sometimes the state moves swiftly to crush a social movement, as happened in the case of prodemocracy forces in the People's Republic of China. But Gorbachev adopted a policy of nonintervention in Eastern Europe, opening the door for change. Ironically, the movements that began in Eastern Europe soon spread to the Soviet Union itself, ending the historical domination of the Communist party in 1991 and producing a new and much looser political confederation.

EVALUATE

Smelser's analysis explains how various factors help or hurt the development of social movements. Structural-strain theory also explains why people may respond to their problems either by forming organized social movements or through spontaneous mob action.

Yet Smelser's theory contains some of the same circularity of argument found in Kornhauser's analysis. A social movement is caused by strain, says Smelser, but the only evidence of underlying strain is often the social movement itself. What's more, structural-strain theory is incomplete, overlooking the important role that resources like the mass media or international alliances play in the success or failure of a social movement (Jenkins & Perrow, 1977; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Olzak & West, 1991).

CHECK YOUR LEARNING According to structural-strain theory, what six factors encourage the formation of social movements? What are two criticisms of this theory?

POLITICAL-ECONOMY THEORY Marxist *political-economy theory* also has something to say about social movements. From this point of view, social movements arise in capitalist societies because the capitalist economic system fails to meet the needs of the majority of people. During the recent recession, the government acted to rescue many banks that were considered “too big to fail,” but tens of millions of ordinary people who lost jobs and their savings were left to fend for themselves. Tens of millions also live without health insurance.

Social movements arise as a response to such conditions. Workers organize to demand higher wages, citizens rally for a health policy that will protect everyone, and communities come together to oppose police violence, making claims including “Black Lives Matter.”

EVALUATE

A strength of political-economy theory is its macro-level approach. Other theories explain the rise of social movements in terms of traits of individuals (such as weak social ties or a sense of relative deprivation) or traits of movements (such as their available resources), but this approach focuses on the institutional structures (the economy and political system) of society itself.

This approach explains social movements concerned with economic issues. But it is less helpful in accounting for the recent rise of social movements concerned with noneconomic issues such as obesity, animal rights, and the state of the natural environment.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING State the basic idea of the political-economy theory of social movements. What is the main criticism of this theory?

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS THEORY A final theoretical approach addresses what are often called “new social movements.” *New social movements theory* suggests that recent social movements in the postindustrial societies of North America and Western Europe have a new focus (Pakulski, 1993; McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996; Jenkins & Wallace, 1996).

First, older social movements, such as those led by labor organizations, are concerned mostly with economic issues,



Mobilization in support of accepting transgender is a recent example of a new social movement. Bruce Jenner's transformation into Caitlyn Jenner shows the effect that a highly visible celebrity can have to raise awareness of a social movement.

but new social movements tend to focus on improving our social and physical surroundings. The environmental movement, for example, is trying to stop global warming and address other environmental dangers such as nuclear safety and conservation of natural resources.

Second, most of today's social movements are international, focusing on global ecology, the social standing of women and gay people, animal rights, and opposition to

war. In other words, as the process of globalization links the world's nations, social movements are becoming global.

Third, most social movements of the past drew strong support from working-class people, but new social movements that focus on noneconomic issues usually draw support from the middle and upper-middle classes. As discussed in Chapter 17 ("Politics and Government"), more affluent people tend to be more conservative on economic issues (because they have wealth to protect) but more liberal on social issues (partly as a result of extensive education). In the United States and other rich nations, the number of highly educated professionals—the people most likely to support "new social movements"—is increasing, a fact suggesting that these movements will grow (Jenkins & Wallace, 1996; F. Rose, 1997).

EVALUATE

One strength of new social movements theory is recognizing that social movements have become international along with the global economy. This theory also highlights the power of the mass media and new information technology to unite people around the world in pursuit of political goals.

However, critics claim that this approach exaggerates the differences between past and present social movements. The women's movement, for example, focuses on many of the same issues—workplace conditions and pay—that have concerned labor organizations for decades. Similarly, many people protesting the use of U.S. military power consider economic equality around the world their primary goal.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING How do "new" social movements differ from "old" social movements? Each of the seven theories presented here offers some explanation of the emergence of social movements. The Summing Up table reviews them all.

SUMMING UP

Theories of Social Movements

Deprivation Theory	People experiencing relative deprivation begin social movements. The social movement is a means of seeking change that brings participants greater benefits. Social movements are especially likely when rising expectations are frustrated.
Mass-Society Theory	People who lack established social ties are mobilized into social movements. Periods of social breakdown are likely to spawn social movements. The social movement gives members a sense of belonging and social participation.
Culture Theory	People are drawn to a social movement by cultural symbols that define some cause as just. The movement itself tries to become a symbol of power and justice.
Resource-Mobilization Theory	People may join for all the reasons noted for the first three theories and also because of social ties to existing members. But the success or failure of a social movement depends largely on the resources available to it. Also important is the extent of opposition within the larger society.
Structural-Strain Theory	People come together because of their shared concern about the inability of society to operate as they believe it should. The growth of a social movement reflects many factors, including a belief in its legitimacy and some precipitating event that provokes action.
Political-Economy Theory	People unite to address the societal ills caused by capitalism, including unemployment, poverty, and lack of health care. Social movements are necessary because a capitalist economy inevitably fails to meet people's basic needs.
New Social Movements Theory	People who join social movements are motivated by quality-of-life issues, not necessarily economic concerns. Mobilization is national or international in scope. New social movements arise in response to the expansion of the mass media and new information technology.

Gender and Social Movements

Gender figures prominently in the operation of social movements. In keeping with traditional ideas about gender in the United States, more men than women tend to take part in public life, including spearheading social movements.

Investigating Freedom Summer, a 1964 voter registration project in Mississippi, Doug McAdam (1992) found that movement members considered the job of registering African American voters in a hostile white community dangerous and therefore defined it as “men’s work.” Many of the women in the movement, despite more years of activist experience, ended up working in clerical or teaching assignments behind the scenes. Only the most exceptionally talented and committed women, McAdam found, were able to overcome the movement’s gender barriers.

In short, women have played leading roles in many social movements (including the abolitionist and feminist movements in the United States), but male dominance has been the norm even in social movements that otherwise oppose the status quo. At the same time, the recent political movement that brought change to Egypt included women as well as men in the leadership, suggesting a trend toward greater gender equality (Herda-Rapp, 1998; MacFarquhar, 2011).

Stages in Social Movements

Despite the many differences that set one social movement apart from another, all unfold in roughly the same way, as shown in Figure 23–2. Researchers have identified four stages in the life of the typical social movement (Blumer, 1969; Mauss, 1975; Tilly, 1978):

STAGE 1: EMERGENCE Social movements are driven by the perception that all is not well. Some, such as the civil rights and women’s movements, are born of widespread dissatisfaction. Others emerge only as a small vanguard group increases public awareness of some issue. Gay activists, for example, helped raise public concern about the threat posed by AIDS.

STAGE 2: COALESCENCE After emerging, a social movement must define itself and develop a strategy for “going public.” Leaders must determine policies, decide on tactics to be used, build morale, and recruit new members. At this stage, the movement may engage in collective action, such as rallies or demonstrations, to attract the attention of the media and increase public awareness. The movement may also form alliances with other organizations to acquire necessary resources.

STAGE 3: BUREAUCRATIZATION To become a political force, a social movement must become an established, bureaucratic organization, as described in Chapter 7 (“Groups and Organizations”). As this happens, the movement relies less on the charisma and talents of a few leaders and more on a capable staff. When social movements do not become established in this way, they risk dissolving if the leader steps down, as is the case with many organizations of college activists. By contrast, the National Organization for Women (NOW) is well established and can be counted on to speak for feminists despite its changing leadership.

But becoming more bureaucratic can also hurt a social movement. Surveying the fate of various social movements in U.S. history, Piven and Cloward (1977) found that leaders sometimes become so engrossed in building an organization that they neglect the need to keep people

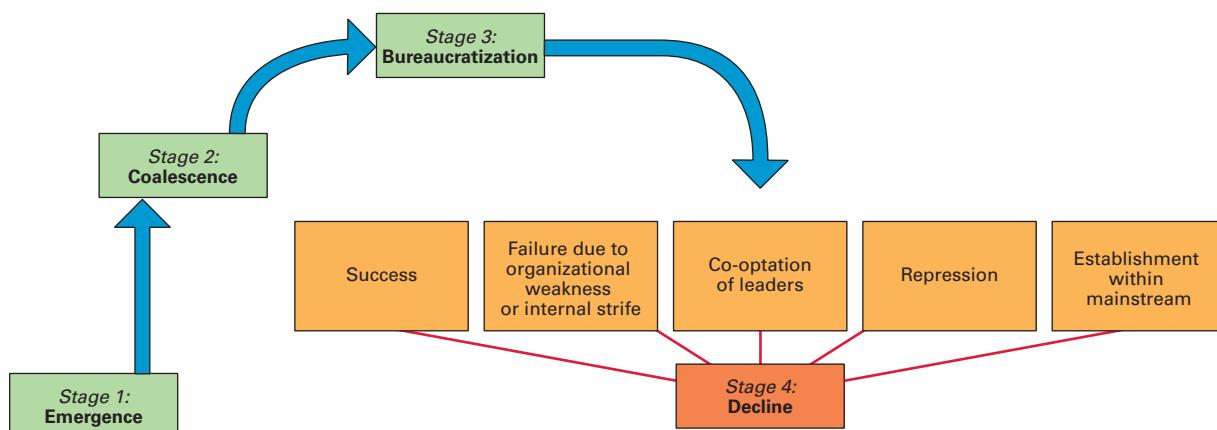


Figure 23–2 Stages in the Life of Social Movements

Social movements typically go through four stages. The last is decline, which may occur for any of five reasons.

"fired up" for change. In such cases, the radical edge of protest is lost.

STAGE 4: DECLINE Eventually, most social movements begin to decline. Frederick Miller (1983) suggests four reasons this can occur.

First, if members have met their goals, decline may simply signal success. For example, the women's suffrage movement disbanded after it won the right for women to vote. But as is the case with the modern women's movement, winning one victory leads to the setting of new goals.

Second, a social movement may fold because of organizational failures, such as poor leadership, loss of interest among members, insufficient funds, or repression by authorities. Some people lose interest when the excitement of early efforts is replaced by day-to-day routine. Fragmentation due to internal conflicts over goals and strategies is another common problem. Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a student movement opposing the Vietnam War, splintered into several small factions by the end of the 1960s as members disagreed over goals and strategies for change.

Third, a social movement can fall apart if leaders are attracted by offers of money, prestige, or power from within the "system." This type of "selling out" is one example of the iron law of oligarchy, discussed in Chapter 7 ("Groups and Organizations"): Organizational leaders can use their position to serve their own interests. For example, Vernon Jordan, once head of the activist National Urban League, became a close adviser to President Clinton and a rich and powerful Washington insider. But this process can also work the other way: Some people give up high-paying careers to become activists. Cat Stevens, a rock star of the 1970s, became a Muslim, changed his name to Yusuf Islam, and since then has devoted his life to the spread of his religion.

Fourth and finally, a social movement can be crushed by repression. Officials may destroy a social movement by frightening away participants, discouraging new recruits, and even imprisoning leaders. In general, the more revolutionary the social movement is, the more officials try to repress it. Until 1990, the government of South Africa banned the African National Congress (ANC), a political organization seeking to overthrow the state-supported system of apartheid. Even suspected members of the ANC were subject to arrest. Only after 1990, when the government lifted the decades-old ban and released from prison ANC leader Nelson Mandela (who was elected the country's president in 1994) did South Africa begin the journey away from apartheid.

Beyond the reasons noted by Miller, a fifth cause of decline is that a social movement may "go mainstream." Some movements become an accepted part of the system—typically, after realizing some of their goals—so that they continue to flourish but no longer challenge the status quo. The U.S. labor movement, for example, is now well

established; its leaders control vast sums of money and, according to some critics, now have more in common with the business tycoons they opposed in the past than with rank-and-file workers.

Social Movements and Social Change

Social movements exist to encourage or to resist social change. The political life of our society is based largely on the claims and counterclaims of social movements about what the problems are and which are the right solutions.

But there is little doubt that social movements have changed our way of life. Sometimes we overlook the success of past social movements and take for granted the changes that other people struggled so hard to win. Beginning a century ago, workers' movements in the United States fought to end child labor in factories, limit working hours, make the workplace safer, and establish workers' right to bargain collectively with employers. Today's laws protecting the environment are another product of successful social movements. In addition, women now enjoy greater legal rights and economic opportunities because of the battles won by earlier generations of women.

As the Controversy & Debate box explains, some college students become part of movements seeking social and political goals. What about you? Keeping in mind the importance of social movements to the future direction of society, are you willing to take a stand?

Social Movements: Looking Ahead

Especially since the turbulent 1960s—a decade marked by widespread social protests—U.S. society has been pushed and pulled by many social movements and countermovements calling attention to issues from abortion to financing political campaigns to medical care to war. Of course, different people define the problems in different ways, just as they are likely to settle on different policies as solutions. In short, social movements and the problems they address are always *political* (Macionis, 2013).

For three reasons, the scope of social movements is likely to increase. First, protest should increase as women, African Americans, gay people, and other historically marginalized categories of our population gain a greater political voice. Second, at a global level, the technology made available by the Information Revolution means that anyone with a television, a personal computer, or a cell phone can be well informed about political events, often as soon as they happen. Third, because of new technology and the emerging global economy, social movements are now uniting people throughout the entire world. Because many problems are global in scope, we can expect the formation of international social movements seeking to solve them.

Controversy & Debate

Are You Willing to Take a Stand?

Myisha: Why don't more students on this campus get involved?

Deanna: I have more to do now than I can handle. Who's got time to save the world?

Justin: Somebody had better care. The world needs a lot of help!

Are you satisfied with our society as it is? Surely, everyone would change some things about our way of life. Indeed, surveys show that if they could, a lot of people would change plenty! There is considerable pessimism about the state of U.S. society, as shown in the responses to this question: "All in all, are you satisfied with the way things are going in this country?" (Pew Research Center, 2015). Just 31 percent of a representative sample of U.S. adults said "yes" and 64 percent said they were dissatisfied (the remaining 5 percent were unsure).

In light of such widespread dissatisfaction, you might think that most people would be willing to do something about it. You'd be wrong. Survey results show that just 23 percent report giving money to some organization seeking social change, and just 14 percent of U.S. adults say they have ever joined a rally or other demonstration (NORC, 2013:1527–28; World Values Survey, 2015).

Many college students probably suspect that age has something to do with such apathy. That is, young people have the interest and idealism to challenge the status quo, but older adults worry only about their families and their jobs. That sentiment was certainly expressed back in one of the

popular sayings of the activist 1960s: "You can't trust anyone over thirty."

But the evidence suggests that it is the times that have changed: Students entering college in 2014 expressed less interest in political issues than their counterparts in the 1960s and 1970s.

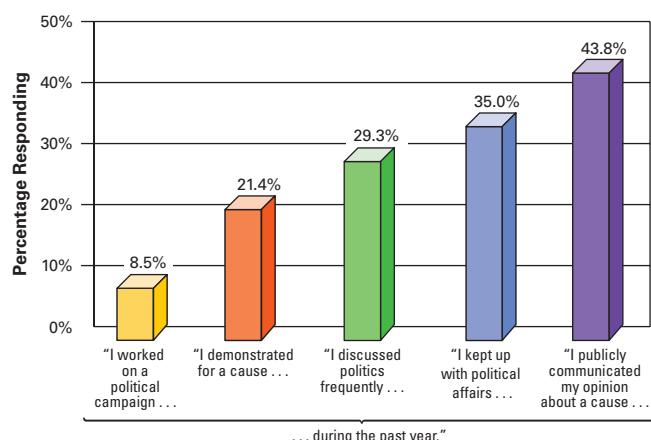
As the figure shows, when asked about their activities during the past year, just 35.0 percent of first-year students included "keeping up to date with political affairs." In addition, just 21.4 percent of students reported participating in a boycott, rally, or protest in support of a cause, 29.3 percent of students claimed that they had discussed politics frequently during the past year, and just 8.5 percent reported working on a local, state, or national political campaign. The only item that was endorsed by anything approaching half of all students (43.8 percent) was publicly stating their opinion by using e-mail, signing a petition, or joining a blog (Eagan et al., 2014).

Certainly, people cite some good reasons to avoid political controversy. Anytime we challenge the system—whether on campus or in the national political arena—we risk being criticized and perhaps even making enemies.

But the most important reason that people in the United States avoid joining in social movements may have to do with cultural norms about how change should occur. In our individualistic culture, people favor taking personal responsibility over collective action as a means of addressing social problems. For example, when asked about the best way to deal with problems of inequality linked to race, class, and gender, most U.S. adults say that individuals should rely on hard work and their own efforts, and only a few point to social movements and political activism as the best way to bring about change. This individualistic orientation may be the reason that adults in this country are less likely to join in lawful demonstrations as people living in European countries including Germany and Sweden (World Values Survey, 2015).

Sociology, of course, poses a counterpoint to our cultural individualism. As C. Wright Mills (1959) explained decades ago, many of the problems we encounter as individuals are caused by the structure of society. As a result, said Mills, solutions to many of life's problems depend on collective effort—that is, on people willing to take a stand for what they believe.

Student Snapshot



Political Involvement of Students Entering College in 2014: A Survey

First-year college students are mostly younger people who express limited interest in politics.

SOURCE: Eagan et al. (2014).

What Do You Think?

1. Have you ever participated in a political demonstration? What were its goals? What did it accomplish?
2. What about the fact that most eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds in the United States do not bother to vote? How do you explain such political apathy?
3. What are the most visible political organizations on your campus? Have you considered finding out more about their goals and activities?

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

CHAPTER 23 Collective Behavior and Social Movements

What is the scope of today's social movements?

Social movements are about trying to create or resist change. Some movements have a local focus, others are

national in scope, and still others tackle international or global issues.

These residents of a Florida town came together in support of more affordable housing for their community. They are speaking out against the process of "gentrification," by which affordable housing is lost to commercial and residential development that serves mostly well-to-do people. What groups or interests might oppose this demonstration? Why?



A recent example of a national social movement is the effort to establish a \$15-an-hour minimum wage for all workers. What categories of people and organizations are likely to support this effort? What categories of people and organizations are likely to oppose it?





One example of a global social movement is the effort to provide women around the world with schooling. This movement was inspired by Malala Yousafzai, an eighteen-year-old Pakistani woman whose desire to go to school provoked members of the Taliban to shoot her. She survived and became the youngest person ever to be awarded a Nobel prize. Why did the Taliban find her example so threatening? Why is education denied to so many women, especially in lower-income nations?

Hint Every social movement makes a claim about how the world should be. In just about every case, some people disagree, perhaps giving rise to a countermovement. Certainly, many people may agree that we need more affordable housing, but people may also think that developers have the right to build new stores and houses for affluent people, if they wish to do that. Likewise, many people support a higher minimum wage, while others claim that efforts to ensure a “livable” wage will only serve to reduce demand for labor and put many people out of work. Finally, it may seem obvious to us that women have as much right to education as men, but in many countries schooling for women is seen as threatening time-honored traditions.

Seeing Sociology in Your Everyday Life

1. What social movements are represented by organizations on your campus? Invite several leaders to describe their group's goals and strategies to your class.
2. To what extent are you engaged with social movements on your campus or in your local community?
3. Go to www.sociologyinfofocus.com to access the Sociology in Focus blog, where you can read the latest posts by a team of young sociologists who apply the sociological perspective to topics of popular culture.

Making the Grade

CHAPTER 23 Collective Behavior and Social Movements

Studying Collective Behavior

23.1 Distinguish various types of collective behavior. (pages 622–23)

Collective behavior differs from group behavior:

- Collectivities contain people who have little or no social interaction.
- Collectivities have no clear social boundaries.
- Collectivities generate weak and unconventional norms.

collective behavior activity involving a large number of people that is unplanned, often controversial, and sometimes dangerous
collectivity a large number of people whose minimal interaction occurs in the absence of well-defined and conventional norms

Localized Collectivities: Crowds

23.2 Identify five types of crowds and three explanations of crowd behavior. (pages 623–26)

Crowds, an important type of collective behavior, take various forms:

- casual crowds
- conventional crowds
- expressive crowds
- acting crowds
- protest crowds

Mobs and Riots

Crowds that become emotionally intense can create violent mobs and riots.

- **Mobs** pursue a specific goal; **rioting** involves unfocused destruction.
- Crowd behavior can threaten the status quo, which is why crowds have figured heavily in social change throughout history.

Theories of Crowd Behavior

Social scientists have developed several explanations of crowd behavior:

- **Contagion theory** views crowds as anonymous, suggestible, and swayed by rising emotions.

crowd a temporary gathering of people who share a common focus of attention and who influence one another

mob a highly emotional crowd that pursues a violent or destructive goal

riot a social eruption that is highly emotional, violent, and undirected

- **Convergence theory** states that crowd behavior reflects the desires people bring to them.
- **Emergent-norm theory** suggests that crowds develop their own behavior as events unfold.

Dispersed Collectivities: Mass Behavior

23.3 Describe rumor, disasters, and other types of mass behavior. (pages 626–31)

Rumor and Gossip

Rumor—unconfirmed information that people spread informally—thrives in a climate of uncertainty and is difficult to stop.

- Rumor, which involves public issues, can trigger the formation of crowds or other collective behavior.
- Gossip is rumor about people's personal affairs.

Public Opinion and Propaganda

Public opinion consists of people's positions on important, controversial issues.

- Public attitudes change over time, and at any time on any given issue, a small share of people will hold no opinion at all.
- Special-interest groups and political leaders try to shape public attitudes by using **propaganda**.

Fashions and Fads

People living in industrial societies use **fashion** as a source of social prestige.

- **Fads** are more unconventional than fashions; although people may follow a fad with enthusiasm, it usually goes away in a short time.
- Fashions reflect basic cultural values, which make them more enduring.

Panic and Mass Hysteria

A **panic** (in a local area) and **mass hysteria** (across an entire society) are types of collective behavior in which people respond to a significant event, real or imagined, with irrational, frantic, and often self-destructive behavior.

Disasters

Disasters are generally unexpected events that cause great harm to many people. Disasters are of three types:

- *natural disasters* (Example: the 2015 earthquake in Nepal)
- *technological disasters* (Example: the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico)
- *intentional disasters* (Examples: Syria's recent conflict; plight of refugees who die trying to flee war-torn countries)

mass behavior collective behavior among people spread over a wide geographic area

rumor unconfirmed information that people spread informally, often by word of mouth or by using electronic devices

gossip rumor about people's personal affairs

public opinion widespread attitudes about controversial issues

propaganda information presented with the intention of shaping public opinion

fashion a social pattern favored by a large number of people

fad an unconventional social pattern that people embrace briefly but enthusiastically

panic a form of collective behavior in which people in one place react to a threat or other stimulus with irrational, frantic, and often self-destructive behavior

mass hysteria (moral panic) a form of dispersed collective behavior in which people react to a real or imagined event with irrational and even frantic fear

disaster an event, generally unexpected, that causes extensive harm to people and damage to property

Social Movements

23.4 Analyze the causes and consequences of social movements. (pages 631–41)

Social movements are an important type of collective behavior.

- Social movements try to promote or discourage change, and they often have a lasting effect on society.

Types of Social Movements

Sociologists classify social movements according to the range of people they try to involve and the extent of change they try to accomplish:

- *Alterative social movements* seek limited change in specific individuals. (Example: Promise Keepers)
- *Redemptive social movements* seek radical change in specific individuals. (Example: Alcoholics Anonymous)
- *Reformative social movements* seek limited change in the whole society. (Example: the environmental movement)
- *Revolutionary social movements* seek radical change in the whole society. (Example: the Communist party)

Explaining Social Movements

- **Deprivation theory:** Social movements arise among people who feel deprived of something, such as income, safe working conditions, or political rights.
- **Mass-society theory:** Social movements attract socially isolated people who join a movement in order to gain a sense of identity and purpose.
- **Culture theory:** Social movements depend not only on money and resources but also on cultural symbols that motivate people.
- **Resource-mobilization theory:** Success of a social movement is linked to available resources, including money, labor, and the mass media.
- **Structural-strain theory:** A social movement develops as the result of six factors. Clearly stated grievances encourage the formation of social movements; undirected anger, by contrast, promotes rioting.
- **Political-economy theory:** Social movements arise within capitalist societies that fail to meet the needs of a majority of people.
- **New social movements theory:** Social movements in postindustrial societies are typically international in scope and focus on quality-of-life issues.

Stages in Social Movements

A typical social movement proceeds through consecutive stages:

- *emergence* (defining the public issue)
- *coalescence* (entering the public arena)
- *bureaucratization* (becoming formally organized)
- *decline* (due to failure or, sometimes, success)

social movement an organized activity that encourages or discourages social change

claims making the process of trying to convince the public and public officials of the importance of joining a social movement to address a particular issue

relative deprivation a perceived disadvantage arising from some specific comparison

Chapter 24

Social Change: Traditional, Modern, and Postmodern Societies



Learning Objectives

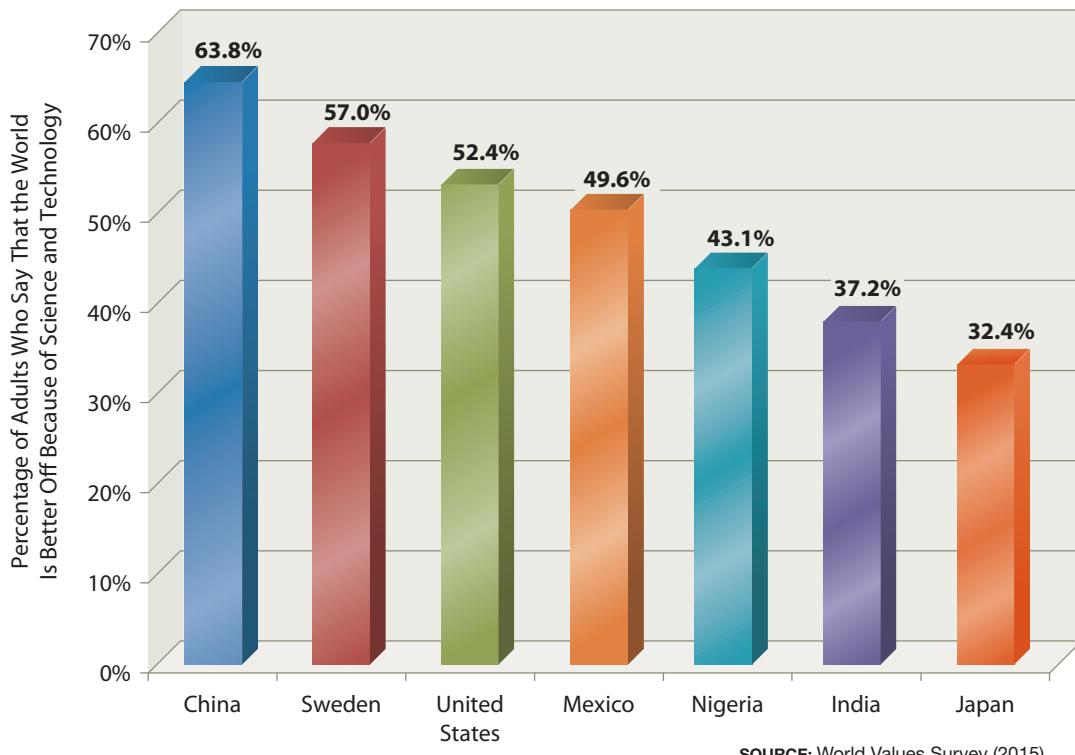
- 24.1** State four defining characteristics of social change.
- 24.2** Explain how culture, conflict, ideas, and population patterns direct social change.
- 24.3** Apply the ideas of Tönnies, Durkheim, Weber, and Marx to our understanding of modernity.
- 24.4** Contrast analysis of modernity as mass society and as class society.
- 24.5** Discuss postmodernism as one type of social criticism.
- 24.6** Evaluate possible directions of future social change.



The Power of Society

to shape our view of science

Survey Question: "All things considered, would you say that the world is better off, or worse off, because of science and technology?"



Doesn't everyone agree that science is useful to humanity? You would probably think so, but even in the United States just 52 percent of adults made this claim in a recent survey. China is a nation where a larger share of people have a favorable view of science and technology. In some countries, only a minority of people share this view. One such case is Japan, the only nation to directly experience the horrors of the atomic bomb. Clearly, attitudes about scientific advances and other dimensions of change are not simply personal; they also reflect the society in which people live.

Chapter Overview

This chapter explores social change, explaining how modern societies differ from earlier traditional societies. It begins by describing the process of social change and identifying many of its causes.

The five-story, red brick apartment building at 253 East Tenth Street in New York City has been standing for more than a century. In 1900, one of the twenty small apartments in the building was occupied by thirty-nine-year-old Julius Streicher; Christine Streicher, age thirty-three; and their four young children. The Streichers were immigrants, having come in 1885 from their native Germany to New York, where they met and married.

The Streichers probably considered themselves successful. Julius operated a small clothing shop a few blocks from his apartment; Christine stayed at home, raised the children, and did the housework. Like most people in the country at that time, neither Julius nor Christine had graduated from high school, and they worked ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week. Their income—which was average for that time—was about \$35 a month, or roughly \$425 a year. (In today's dollars, that would be about \$12,200, which would put the family below even half of the current poverty line.) They spent almost half of their income for food; most of the rest went for rent.

Today, Dorothy Sabo resides at 253 East Tenth Street, living alone in the same apartment where the Streichers spent much of their lives. Now eighty-seven, she is retired from a career teaching art at a nearby museum. In many respects, Sabo's life has been far easier than the life the Streichers knew. For one thing, when the Streichers lived there, the building had no electricity (people used kerosene lamps and candles) and no running water (Christine Streicher spent most of every Monday doing laundry using water she carried from a public fountain at the end of the block). There were no telephones, no television, and of course no computers. Today, Dorothy Sabo takes all these conveniences for granted. Although she is hardly rich, her pension and Social Security amount to several times as much (in constant dollars) as the Streichers earned.

But Sabo has her own worries. She is concerned about the environment and often speaks out about global warming. A century ago, if the Streichers and their neighbors complained about “the environment,” they probably would have meant the smell coming up from the street. At a time when motor vehicles were just beginning to appear in New York City, most carriages, trucks, and trolleys were pulled by horses—thousands of them. These animals dumped 60,000 gallons of urine and 2.5 million pounds of manure on the streets each and every day (Simon & Cannon, 2001).



It is difficult for most people today to imagine how different life was a century ago. Not only was life much harder back then, but also it was much shorter. Statistical records show that a century ago, life expectancy was just forty-six years for men and forty-eight years for women, compared to about seventy-six and eighty-one years today (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014).

Over the past 100 years, much has changed for the better. Yet as this chapter explains, social change is not all positive. Even changes for the better can have negative consequences, creating unexpected new problems. Early sociologists were mixed in their assessment of *modernity*, changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. Likewise, today's sociologists point to both good and bad aspects of *postmodernity*, the recent transformations of society caused by the Information Revolution and the postindustrial economy. One thing is clear: For better and worse, the rate of change has never been faster than it is now.

What Is Social Change?

24.1 State four defining characteristics of social change.

In earlier chapters, we examined relatively fixed or *static* social patterns, including status and role, social stratification, and social institutions. We also looked at the *dynamic* forces that have shaped our way of life, ranging from innovations in technology to the growth of bureaucracy and the expansion of cities. These are all dimensions of **social change**, *the transformation of culture and social institutions over time*. The process of social change has four major characteristics:

- 1. Social change happens all the time.** “Nothing is constant except death and taxes” goes the old saying. Yet our thoughts about death have changed dramatically as life expectancy in the United States has doubled over the past 100 or so years. And back in the Streichers’

day, people in the United States paid no taxes on their earnings; taxation increased dramatically over the course of the twentieth century, along with the size and scope of government. In short, even the things that seem constant are subject to the twists and turns of change.

Still, some societies change faster than others. As Chapter 4 ("Society") explained, hunting and gathering societies change quite slowly; members of today's high-income societies, by contrast, experience significant change within a single lifetime.

It is also true that in a given society, some cultural elements change faster than others. William Ogburn's theory of *cultural lag* (1964; see Chapter 3, "Culture") states that material culture (that is, things) usually changes faster than nonmaterial culture (ideas and attitudes). For example, the genetic technology that allows scientists to alter and perhaps even create life has developed more rapidly than our ethical standards for deciding when and how to use the technology.

2. Social change is sometimes intentional but often it is unplanned. Industrial societies actively promote many kinds of change. For example, scientists seek more efficient forms of energy, and advertisers try to convince us that life is incomplete without a 4G cell phone or the latest electronic gadget. Yet rarely can anyone envision all the consequences of the changes that are set in motion.

Back in 1900, when the country still relied on horses for transportation, many people looked ahead to motorized vehicles that would carry them in a single day distances that used to take weeks or months. But no one could see how much the mobility provided by automobiles would alter everyday life in the United States, scattering family members, threatening the environment, and reshaping cities and suburbs. Nor could automotive pioneers have predicted the 33,000 deaths that occur in car accidents each year in the United States alone (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2015).

3. Social change is controversial. The history of the automobile shows that social change brings both good and bad consequences. Capitalists welcomed the Industrial Revolution because new technology increased productivity and swelled profits. However, workers feared that machines would make their skills obsolete and resisted the push toward "progress."

Today, as in the past, people disagree about how we ought to live and what we should welcome as "progress." We see this disagreement every day in the changing patterns of social interaction between black



In response to the accelerating pace of change in the nineteenth century, Paul Gauguin left his native France for the South Pacific, where he was captivated by a simpler and seemingly timeless way of life. He romanticized this environment in many paintings, including *Nave Nave Moe (Sacred Spring)*.

Paul Gauguin, French (1848–1903), *Nave Nave Moe (Sacred Spring)*, 1894. Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, Russia. Oil on canvas, 73 × 98 cm. © The Bridgeman Art Library International Ltd.

people and white people, women and men, and gays and heterosexuals that are welcomed by some people and opposed by others.

4. Some changes matter more than others. Some changes (such as clothing fads) have only passing significance; others (like the invention of computers) may change the world. Will the Information Revolution turn out to be as important as the Industrial Revolution? Like the automobile and television, the computer has both positive and negative effects, providing new kinds of jobs while eliminating old ones, linking people in global electronic networks while isolating people in offices, offering vast amounts of information while threatening personal privacy.

Causes of Social Change

24.2 Explain how culture, conflict, ideas, and population patterns direct social change.

Social change has many causes. In a world linked by sophisticated communication and transportation technology, change in one place often sets off change elsewhere.

Culture and Change

Chapter 3 ("Culture") identified three important sources of cultural change. First, *invention* produces new objects, ideas, and social patterns. Rocket propulsion research,



These young men are performing in a hip-hop dance marathon in Hong Kong. Hip-hop music, dress style, and dancing have become popular in Asia, a clear case of cultural diffusion. Social change occurs as cultural patterns move from place to place, but people in different societies don't always have the same understanding of what these patterns mean. How might Chinese youth understand hip-hop differently from the young African Americans in the United States who originated it?

which began in the 1940s, has produced spacecraft that reach toward the stars. Today we take such technology for granted; during this century, a significant number of people may well have an opportunity to travel in space.

Second, *discovery* occurs when people take note of existing elements of the world. For example, medical advances enhance understanding of the human body. Beyond the direct effects on human health, medical discoveries have stretched life expectancy, setting in motion the “graying” of U.S. society (see Chapter 15, “Aging and the Elderly”).

Third, *diffusion* creates change as products, people, and information spread from one society to another. Ralph Linton (1937a) recognized that many familiar elements of our culture came from other lands. For example, the cloth used to make our clothing was developed in Asia, the clocks we see all around us were invented in Europe, and the coins we carry in our pockets were devised in what is now Turkey.

In general, material things change more quickly than cultural ideas. That is, breakthroughs such as the science of altering and perhaps even creating life are taking place faster than our understanding of when—and even whether—they are morally desirable.

Conflict and Change

Inequality and conflict in a society also produce change. Karl Marx saw class conflict as the engine that drives societies from one historical era to another (see Chapter 4, “Society,” and Chapter 10, “Social Stratification”). In industrial-capitalist societies, he maintained, the struggle between capitalists and workers pushes society toward a socialist system of production.

In the 130 years since Marx's death, this model has proved simplistic. Yet Marx correctly foresaw that social conflict arising from inequality (involving not just class but also race and gender) would force changes in every society, including our own, to improve the lives of working people.

Ideas and Change

Max Weber also contributed to our understanding of social change. Although Weber agreed that conflict could bring about change, he traced the roots of most social change to ideas. For example, people with charisma (Martin Luther King Jr. is one example) can carry a message that changes the world.

Weber also highlighted the importance of ideas by showing how the religious beliefs of early Protestants set the stage for the spread of industrial capitalism (see Chapter 4, “Society”). The fact that industrial capitalism developed primarily in areas of Western Europe where the Protestant work ethic was strong proved to Weber (1958, orig. 1904–05) the power of ideas to bring about change.

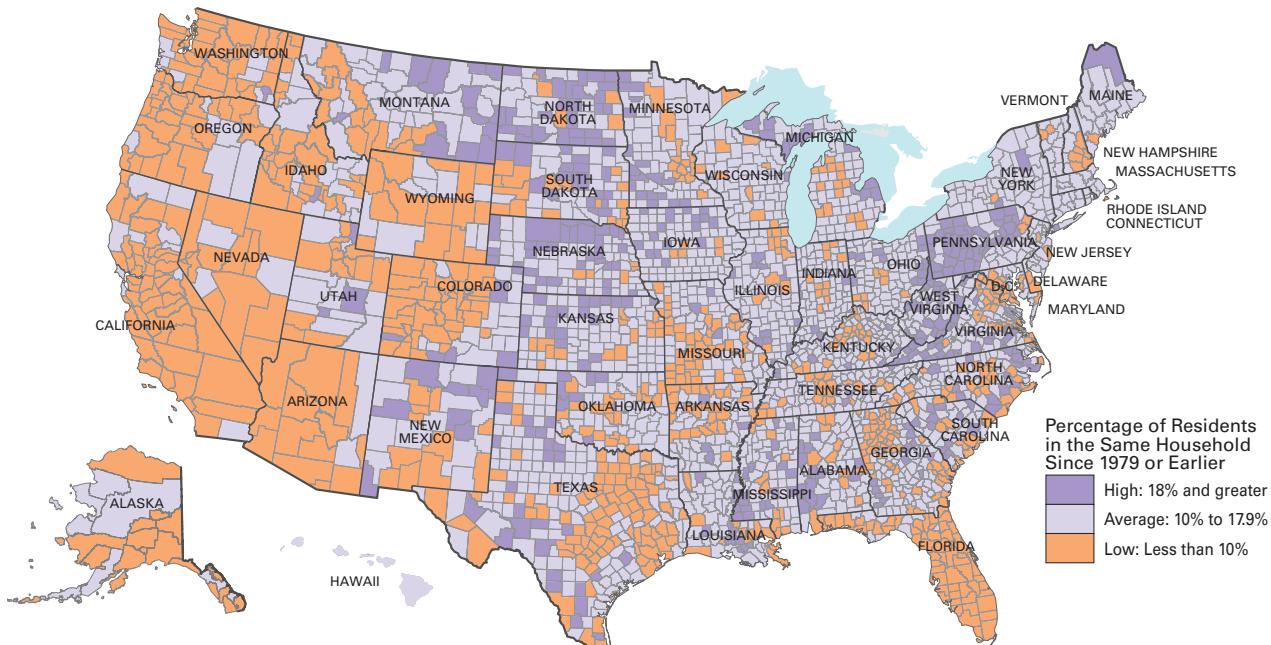
Ideas also direct social movements. Chapter 23 (“Collective Behavior and Social Movements”) explained how change occurs when people join together in the pursuit of a common goal, such as cleaning up the environment or improving the lives of oppressed people.

Demographic Change

Population patterns also play a part in social change. A century ago, as the chapter opening suggested, the typical household (4.8 people) was one and a half times as large as it is today (3.0 people). Women are having fewer children, and more people are living alone. In addition, change is taking place as our population grows older. As Chapter 15 (“Aging and the Elderly”) explained, 14.9 percent of the U.S. population was over age sixty-five in 2015, more than three times the proportion in 1900. By the year 2035, seniors will account for 21 percent of the U.S. population and their numbers will exceed the nation’s entire population in 1900 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Medical research and health care services already focus extensively on the elderly, and life will change in countless additional ways as homes and household products are redesigned to meet the needs of older consumers.

Migration within and among societies is another demographic factor that promotes change. Between 1870 and

Seeing Ourselves



National Map 24-1 Who Stays Put? Residential Stability across the United States

Overall, only about 10 percent of U.S. residents have not moved since 1979. Counties with a higher proportion of “long-termers” typically have experienced less change over recent decades: Many neighborhoods have been in place since before World War II, and some members of the same families live in them today. As you look at the map, what can you say about these stable areas? What accounts for the fact that most of these counties are rural and at some distance from the coasts?

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (2014).

1930, tens of millions of immigrants entered the industrial cities in the United States. Millions more from rural areas joined the rush. As a result, farm communities declined, cities expanded, and by 1920, the United States had for the first time become a mostly urban nation. Similar changes are taking place today as people move from the Snowbelt to the Sunbelt and mix with new immigrants from Latin America and Asia.

Where in the United States have demographic changes been greatest, and which areas have been least affected? National Map 24-1 provides one answer, showing counties where the largest numbers of people have lived in their present homes since 1979.

Visions of Modernity

24.3 Apply the ideas of Tönnies, Durkheim, Weber, and Marx to our understanding of modernity.

A central concept in the study of social change is **modernity**, *changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution*. In everyday usage, *modernity* (its Latin root means “lately”) refers to the present in relation to the past. Sociologists include in this catchall concept all of the social patterns that were set in motion by the Industrial Revolution, which

began in Western Europe in the 1750s. **Modernization**, then, is *the process of social change begun by industrialization*. The timeline highlights important events that mark the emergence of modernity. Table 24-1 on page 652 provides a snapshot of some of the changes that took place during the twentieth century.

Four Dimensions of Modernization

Peter Berger (1977) identified four major characteristics of modernization, described on the following pages.

1. **The decline of small, traditional communities.** Modernity involves “the progressive weakening, if not destruction, of the . . . relatively cohesive communities in which human beings have found solidarity and meaning throughout most of history” (1977:72). For thousands of years, in the camps of hunters and gatherers and in the rural villages of Europe and North America, people lived in small communities where social life

modernity changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution

modernization the process of social change begun by industrialization

Table 24–1 The United States: A Century of Change

	1910	2010
National population	92 million	309 million
Share living in cities	46%	84%
Life expectancy	48 years (men), 52 years (women)	76 years (men), 81 years (women)
Median age	24.1 years	37.2 years
Average household income	\$8,000 (in 2010 dollars)	\$60,395 (in 2010 dollars)
Share of income spent on food	43%	13%
Share of homes with flush toilets	10%	99.4%
Average number of cars	1 car for every 64 households	2.2 cars for every household
Divorce rate	about 1 in 20 marriages	about 6 in 20 marriages
Average gallons of petroleum products consumed	34 per person per year	1,100 per person per year

revolved around family and neighborhood. Such traditional worlds gave each person a well-defined place that, although limiting the range of choice, offered a strong sense of identity, belonging, and purpose.

Small, isolated communities still exist in remote corners of the United States, of course, but they are home to only a small percentage of our nation's people. These days, their isolation is only geographic: Except among those who are extremely poor or who reject modernity on religious grounds, cars, telephones, television, and the Internet give rural families the pulse of the larger society and connect them to the entire world.

2. The expansion of personal choice. Members of traditional, preindustrial societies view their lives as shaped by forces beyond human control—gods, spirits, fate. As the power of tradition weakens, people come to see their lives as an unending series of options, a process Berger calls *individualization*. Many people in the United States, for example, choose a “lifestyle” (sometimes adopting one after another), showing an openness to change. Indeed, a common belief in our modern culture is that people *should* take control of their lives.

Widespread support for greater personal choice has political consequences. A cultural orientation toward greater individualism means that modern, high-income societies (compared to traditional, low-income societies) are likely to be democratic (Inglehart & Welzel, 2010).

3. Increasing social diversity. In preindustrial societies, strong family ties and powerful religious beliefs enforce conformity and discourage diversity and change. Modernization promotes a more rational, scientific worldview as tradition loses its hold and people gain

more and more individual choice. The growth of cities, the expansion of impersonal bureaucracy, and the social mix of people from various backgrounds combine to encourage diverse beliefs and behavior.

4. Orientation toward the future and a growing awareness of time. Premodern people model their lives on the past, but people in modern societies think more about the future. Modern people are not only forward-looking but also optimistic that new inventions and discoveries will improve their lives.

Traditional people organize their lives around sunlight and seasons. With the introduction of clocks in the late Middle Ages, Europeans began to organize their lives in terms of hours and minutes. Focused on personal gain, modern people demand precise measurement of time and are likely to agree that “time is money.” Berger (inspired by Weber) points out that one good indicator of a society’s degree of modernization is the share of people who keep track of time by continually glancing at their wristwatches (or nowadays, their cell phones).

Recall that modernization touched off the development of sociology itself. As Chapter 1 (“The Sociological Perspective”) explained, the discipline originated in the wake of the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe, where social change was proceeding most rapidly. Early European and U.S. sociologists tried to analyze the rise of modern society and its consequences, both good and bad, for human beings.

Finally, in the process of comparing industrial societies with those that came before, we find it easy to assume that *everything* in our world is new. This is not the case, of course, as the Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life box explains with a historical look at a favorite form of modern clothing—jeans.

Ferdinand Tönnies: The Loss of Community

The German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1937) produced a lasting account of modernization in his theory of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (see Chapter 22, “Population, Urbanization, and Environment”). Like Peter Berger, whose work he influenced, Tönnies (1963, orig. 1887) viewed modernization as the progressive loss of *Gemeinschaft*, or human community. As Tönnies saw it, the Industrial Revolution weakened the social fabric of family and tradition by introducing a businesslike emphasis on facts, efficiency, and money. European and North American societies gradually became rootless and impersonal as people came to associate mostly on the basis of self-interest—the state Tönnies termed *Gesellschaft*.

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

Tradition and Modernity: The History of Jeans

Sociologists like to contrast “tradition” and “modernity.” Tönnies, Durkheim, Weber, and even Marx developed theories that contrasted social patterns that existed “then” with those that exist “now.” Such theories are enlightening. But thinking in terms of “tradition versus modernity” encourages us to think that the past and the present have little in common.

All the thinkers discussed in this chapter saw past and present as strikingly different. But it is also true that countless elements of today’s society—ranging from religion to warfare—have been part of human society for a very long time. It is also the case that many cultural elements that we think of as “modern” turn out to have been around much longer than many of us realize.

One element of culture that we think of as distinctly modern is jeans. This piece of clothing, common enough to be considered almost a “uniform” among young people, moved to the center of popular culture when it swept college campuses in the late 1960s.

But many people would be surprised to learn that jeans have been worn for centuries. The term *dungarees*, a common name for jeans before the 1960s, is derived from the Hindi word *dungri*, a district of the Indian city Mumbai (formerly Bombay) where the coarse cloth is thought to have originated. From there, the fabric spread westward into Europe. The term *jeans* can be traced back to the name of the Italian city of Genoa, where the cotton fabric was widely worn in the 1650s. Another word for the fabric, *denim*, refers to the French city of Nîmes, reflecting the fact that, somewhat later, people described the cloth as being “de Nîmes.”

Art historians have identified paintings from the sixteenth century that show people—typically the poor—wearing jeans. In the 1700s, British sailors used this fabric not only for making sails but also for constructing hammocks to sleep in and for fashioning shipboard clothing.



In art from the 1500s, we see poor people wearing denim. In the 1800s, jeans became the uniform for the western cowboy. By the 1960s, they were the clothing of choice on campus and, more recently, corporate executives (especially in tech companies) have made jeans acceptable in the workplace.

More than a century later, in 1853, U.S. clothing manufacturer Levi Strauss sold dungarees to miners who were digging for gold in the California gold rush. Strong and durable, jeans became the clothing of choice among people who had limited budgets and who did demanding physical labor.

Cowboys across the West quickly adopted the practical new style, and by the beginning of the twentieth century, jeans were worn by almost all working people. By the 1930s, most prisoners were also wearing denim.

This pattern made jeans a symbol of lower social standing, and many middle-class people looked down on them. As a result, especially in higher-income communities, public school officials banned the wearing of dungarees.

By the 1960s, however, a youth-based counterculture was emerging that rejected the older pattern of “looking upward” and copying the styles of the rich and famous. Instead, fashion began “looking downward,” adopting the look of working people and even the down and out. By the end of the 1960s, rock stars, Hollywood celebrities, and college students favored jeans as a way to make a statement that they identified with working people—part of the era’s more left-leaning political attitudes.

Of course, there was money to be made in this new trend. By the 1980s, the fashion industry was cashing in on the popularity of jeans by promoting “designer jeans” among more well-off people who probably had never entered a factory in their lives. A teenage Brooke Shields helped launch Calvin Klein jeans (1980) that became all the rage among people who were able to spend three and four times as much as the jeans worn by ordinary people.

By the beginning of this century, jeans had become an accepted form of dress not only in schools but also in the corporate world. Many CEOs of U.S. corporations—especially in the high-tech fields—now routinely wear jeans to work and even to public events.

As you can see, jeans turn out to have a very long history. The fact that jeans existed both “then” and “now,” all the while taking on new and different meanings, reveals the limitation of characterizing cultural elements as either “traditional” or “modern” in a world in which societies invent and reinvent their way of life all the time.

What Do You Think?

1. Is your attitude toward jeans different from that of your parents? If so, how and why?
2. Do you think the changing trend in the popularity of jeans suggests broader changes in our society before and after the 1960s? Explain.
3. How popular is wearing jeans on your campus? What about among your professors? Can you explain these patterns?

SOURCE: Based, in part, on Brazilian (2011).

Early in the twentieth century, at least some parts of the United States could be described using Tönnies's concept of *Gemeinschaft*. Families that had lived for generations in small villages and towns were bound together in a hardworking, slow-moving way of life. Telephones (invented in 1876) were rare; not until 1915 could a person place a coast-to-coast call. Living without television (introduced commercially in 1933 and not widespread until after 1950), families entertained themselves, often gathering with friends in the evening to share stories, sorrows, or song. Lacking rapid transportation (Henry Ford's assembly line began in 1908, but cars became common only after World War II), many people knew little of the world beyond their hometown.

Inevitable tensions and conflicts divided these communities of the past. But according to Tönnies, because of the traditional spirit of *Gemeinschaft*, people were "essentially united in spite of all separating factors" (1963:65, orig. 1887).

Modernity turns societies inside out so that, as Tönnies put it, people are "essentially separated in spite of uniting factors" (1963:65, orig. 1887). This is the world of *Gesellschaft*, where, especially in large cities, most people live among strangers and ignore the people they pass on the street. Trust is hard to come by in a mobile and anonymous society where people tend to put their personal needs ahead of group loyalty and an increasing majority of adults believe "you can't be too careful" in dealing with people (Smith et al., 2013:2386). No wonder researchers conclude that even as we become more affluent, the social health of modern societies has declined (Myers, 2000).

EVALUATE

Tönnies's theory of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* is the most widely cited model of modernization. The theory's strength lies in combining various dimensions of change: growing population, the rise of cities, and increasing impersonality in social interaction. But modern life, though often impersonal, still has some degree of *Gemeinschaft*. Even in a world of strangers, modern friendships can be strong and lasting. Some analysts also think that Tönnies favored—perhaps even romanticized—traditional societies while overlooking bonds of family, neighborhood, and friendship that continue to flourish in modern societies.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING As types of social organization, how do *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* differ?

Emile Durkheim: The Division of Labor

The French sociologist Emile Durkheim, whose work is discussed in Chapter 4 ("Society"), shared Tönnies's interest in the profound social changes that resulted from the Industrial Revolution. For Durkheim (1964a, orig. 1893), modernization is defined by an increasing **division of labor**, or *specialized economic activity*. Every member of a traditional society performs more or less the same daily round of activities; modern societies function by having people perform highly specific jobs.

Durkheim explained that preindustrial societies are held together by *mechanical solidarity*, or shared moral sentiments. In other words, members of preindustrial societies view everyone as basically alike, doing the same kind of work and belonging together. Durkheim's concept of mechanical solidarity is virtually the same as Tönnies's *Gemeinschaft*.

With modernization, the division of labor becomes more and more pronounced. To Durkheim, this change means less mechanical solidarity but more of another kind of tie: *organic solidarity*, or mutual dependency between people engaged in specialized work. Put simply, modern societies are held together not by likeness but by difference: All of us must depend on others to meet most of our needs. Organic solidarity corresponds to Tönnies's concept of *Gesellschaft*.

Despite obvious similarities in their thinking, Durkheim and Tönnies viewed modernity somewhat differently. To Tönnies, modern *Gesellschaft* amounts to the loss of social solidarity, because modern people lose the "natural" and "organic" bonds of the rural village, leaving only the "artificial" and



George Tooker's 1950 painting *The Subway* depicts a common problem of modern life: Weakening social ties and eroding traditions create a generic humanity in which everyone is alike yet each person is an anxious stranger in the midst of others.

SOURCE: George Tooker, *The Subway*, 1950, egg tempera on gesso panel, 18¹/₈ x 36¹/₈ inches, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Purchased with funds from the Juliana Force Purchase Award, 50.23. Photograph © Whitney Museum of American Art.

"mechanical" ties of the big, industrial city. Durkheim had a different view of modernity, even reversing Tönnies's language to bring home the point. Durkheim labeled modern society "organic," arguing that modern society is no less natural than any other, and he described traditional societies as "mechanical" because they are so regimented. Durkheim viewed modernization not as the loss of community but as a change from community based on bonds of likeness (kinship and neighborhood) to community based on economic interdependence (the division of labor). Durkheim's view of modernity is thus both more complex and more positive than Tönnies's view.

EVALUATE

Durkheim's work, which resembles that of Tönnies, is a highly influential analysis of modernity. Of the two, Durkheim was more optimistic; still, he feared that modern societies might become so diverse that they would collapse into **anomie**, a condition in which society provides little moral guidance to individuals. Living with weak moral norms and values, modern people can become egocentric, placing their own needs above those of others and, in their social isolation, find little purpose in life.

The suicide rate—which Durkheim considered a good index of anomie—did in fact increase in the United States over the course of the twentieth century, and the vast majority of U.S. adults report that they see moral questions not in clear terms of right and wrong but in confusing "shades of gray" (Smith et al., 2013:607). Yet shared

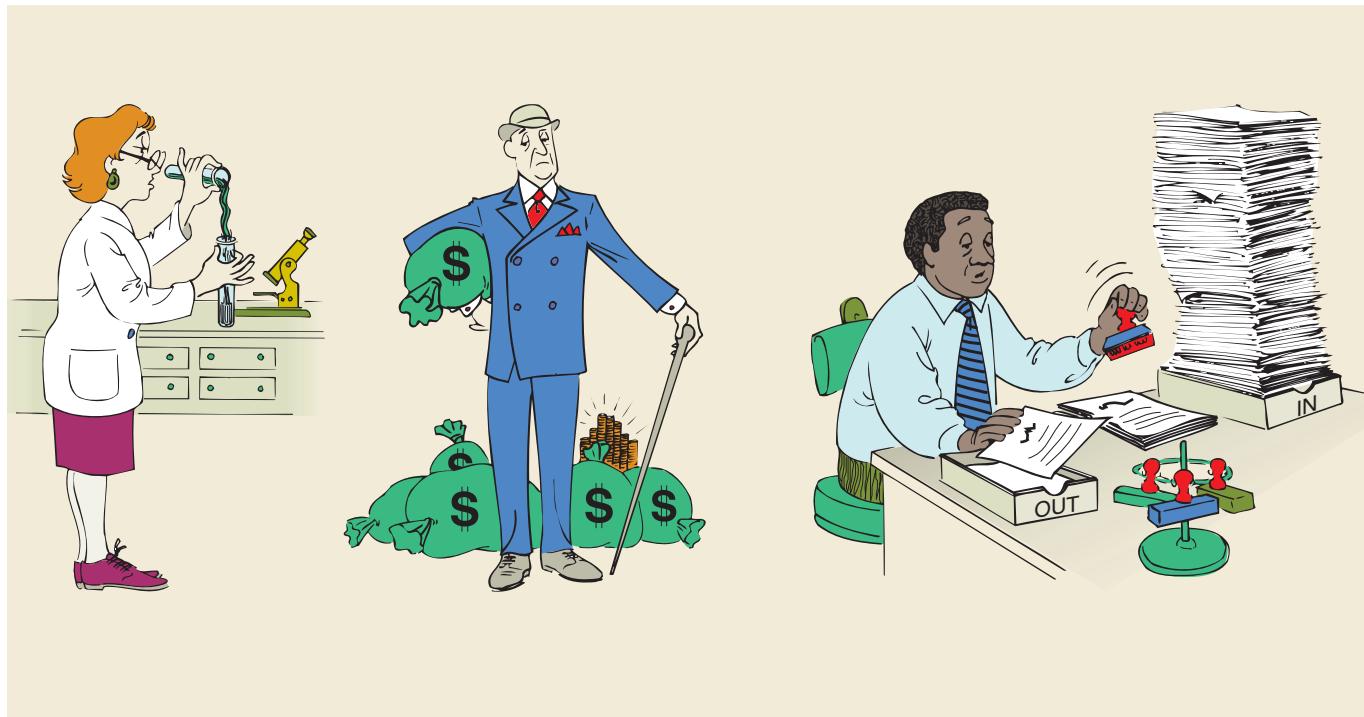
norms and values still seem strong enough to give most individuals some sense of meaning and purpose. Whatever the hazards of anomie, most people seem to value the personal freedom modern society gives them.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING Define mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. In his view of the modern world, what makes Durkheim more optimistic than Tönnies?

Max Weber: Rationalization

For Max Weber (also discussed in Chapter 4, "Society"), modernity meant replacing a traditional worldview with a rational way of thinking. In preindustrial societies, tradition acts as a constant brake on change. To traditional people, "truth" is roughly the same as "what has always been" (1978:36, orig. 1921). To modern people, however, "truth" is the result of rational calculation. Because they value efficiency and have little reverence for the past, modern people readily adopt new social patterns that allow them to achieve their goals.

Echoing Tönnies and Durkheim, who held that industrialization weakens tradition, Weber declared modern society to be "disenchanted." The unquestioned truths of an earlier time are challenged by rational thinking. In short, said Weber, modern society turns away from the gods just as it turns away from the past. Throughout his life, Weber



Max Weber maintained that the distinctive character of modern society was its rational worldview. Virtually all of Weber's work on modernity centered on types of people he considered typical of their age: the scientist, the capitalist, and the bureaucrat. Each is rational to the core: The scientist is committed to the orderly discovery of truth, the capitalist to the orderly pursuit of profit, and the bureaucrat to the orderly conformity to a system of rules.

studied various modern “types”—the capitalist, the scientist, the bureaucrat—all of whom share the forward-looking, rational, and detached worldview that Weber believed was coming to dominate humanity.

EVALUATE

Compared with Tönnies and especially Durkheim, Weber was very critical of modern society. He knew that science could produce technological and organizational wonders but worried that science was turning us away from more basic questions about the meaning and purpose of human existence. Weber feared that rationalization, especially in bureaucracies, would erode the human spirit with endless rules and regulations.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING How did Weber understand modernity? What does it mean to say that modern society (think of the scientists, capitalists, and bureaucrats) is “disenchanted”?

Some of Weber’s critics think that the alienation he attributed to bureaucracy actually stemmed from social inequality. That criticism leads us to the ideas of Karl Marx.

Karl Marx: Capitalism

For Karl Marx, modern society was synonymous with capitalism; he saw the Industrial Revolution as primarily a *capitalist revolution*. Marx traced the emergence of the bourgeoisie in medieval Europe to the expansion of commerce. The bourgeoisie gradually displaced the feudal aristocracy as the Industrial Revolution gave it a powerful new productive system.

Marx agreed that modernity weakened small communities (as described by Tönnies), increased the division of labor (as noted by Durkheim), and encouraged a rational worldview (as Weber claimed). But he saw these simply as conditions necessary for capitalism to flourish. Capitalism, according to Marx, draws population from farms and small towns into an ever-expanding market system centered in cities; specialization is needed for efficient factories; and rationality is exemplified by the capitalists’ endless pursuit of profit.

Earlier chapters have painted Marx as a spirited critic of capitalist society, but his vision of modernity also includes a good bit of optimism. Unlike Weber, who viewed modern society as an “iron cage” of bureaucracy, Marx believed that social conflict in capitalist societies would sow seeds of revolutionary change, leading to an egalitarian socialism. Such a society, as he saw it, would harness the wonders of industrial technology to enrich people’s lives and also rid the world of social classes, the source of social conflict and suffering. Although Marx’s evaluation of modern, capitalist society was highly negative, he imagined a future of human freedom, creativity, and community.

EVALUATE

Marx’s theory of modernization is a complex theory of capitalism. But he underestimated the dominance of bureaucracy in modern societies. In socialist societies in particular, the stifling effects of bureaucracy turned out to be as bad as, or even worse than, the dehumanizing aspects of capitalism. The upheavals in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s reveal the depth of popular opposition to oppressive state bureaucracies.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING How did Marx understand modern society? Of the four theorists just discussed—Tönnies, Durkheim, Weber, and Marx—who comes across as the most optimistic about modern society? Who was the most pessimistic? Explain your choices.

Theories of Modernity

24.4 Contrast analysis of modernity as mass society and as class society.

The rise of modernity is a complex process involving many dimensions of change, as described in earlier chapters and summarized in the Summing Up table. How can we make sense of so many changes going on all at once? Sociologists have developed two broad explanations of modern society, one guided by the structural-functional approach and the other based on social-conflict theory.

Structural-Functional Theory: Modernity as Mass Society

One broad approach—drawing on the ideas of Ferdinand Tönnies, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber—understands modernization as the emergence of *mass society* (Kornhauser, 1959; Nisbet, 1966; Berger, Berger, & Kellner, 1974; Pearson, 1993). A **mass society** is *a society in which prosperity and bureaucracy have weakened traditional social ties*. A mass society is highly productive; on average, people have more income than ever. At the same time, it is marked by weak kinship and impersonal neighborhoods, leaving individuals feeling socially isolated. Although many people have material plenty, they are spiritually weak and often experience moral uncertainty about how to live.

THE MASS SCALE OF MODERN LIFE

November 11, on Interstate 275. From the car window, we see BP and Sunoco gas stations, a Kmart and a Walmart, an AmeriSuites hotel, a Bob Evans, a Chi-Chi’s Mexican restaurant, and a McDonald’s—all big organizations. And it’s the same everywhere. This road happens to circle Cincinnati, Ohio. But it could be in Boston, Saint Louis, Denver, San Diego, or almost anywhere else in the United States.

Mass-society theory argues, first, that the scale of modern life has greatly increased. Before the Industrial

SUMMING UP

Traditional and Modern Societies: The Big Picture

Elements of Society	Traditional Societies	Modern Societies
Cultural Patterns		
Values	Homogeneous; sacred character; few subcultures and countercultures	Heterogeneous; secular character; many subcultures and countercultures
Norms	Great moral significance; little tolerance of diversity	Variable moral significance; high tolerance of diversity
Time orientation	Present linked to past	Present linked to future
Technology	Preindustrial; human and animal energy	Industrial; advanced energy sources
Social Structure		
Status and role	Few statuses, most ascribed; few specialized roles	Many statuses, some ascribed and some achieved; many specialized roles
Relationships	Typically primary; little anonymity or privacy	Typically secondary; much anonymity and privacy
Communication	Face to face	Face-to-face communication supplemented by mass media
Social control	Informal gossip	Formal police and legal system
Social stratification	Rigid patterns of social inequality; little mobility	Fluid patterns of social inequality; high mobility
Gender patterns	Pronounced patriarchy; women's lives centered on the home	Declining patriarchy; increasing number of women in the paid labor force
Settlement patterns	Small-scale; population typically small and widely dispersed in rural villages and small towns	Large-scale; population typically large and concentrated in cities
Social Institutions		
Economy	Based on agriculture; much manufacturing in the home; little white-collar work	Based on industrial mass production; factories become centers of production; increasing white-collar work
State	Small-scale government; little state intervention in society	Large-scale government; much state intervention in society
Family	Extended family as the primary means of socialization and economic production	Nuclear family retains some socialization functions but is more a unit of consumption than of production
Religion	Religion guides worldview; little religious pluralism	Religion weakens with the rise of science; extensive religious pluralism
Education	Formal schooling limited to elites	Basic schooling becomes universal, with growing proportion receiving advanced education
Health	High birth and death rates; short life expectancy because of low standard of living and simple medical technology	Low birth and death rates; longer life expectancy because of higher standard of living and sophisticated medical technology
Social Change	Slow; change evident over many generations	Rapid; change evident within a single generation

Revolution, Europe and North America formed a mosaic of rural villages and small towns. In these local communities, which inspired Tönnies's concept of *Gemeinschaft*, people lived out their lives surrounded by kin and guided by a shared heritage. Gossip was an informal yet highly effective way of ensuring conformity to community standards. These small communities, with their strong moral values and their low tolerance of social diversity, exemplified the state of mechanical solidarity described by Durkheim.

For example, before 1690, English law demanded that everyone participate regularly in the Christian ritual of Holy Communion (Laslett, 1984). On the North American continent, only Rhode Island among the New England colonies tolerated religious dissent. Because social differences were repressed in favor of conformity to established norms, subcultures and countercultures were few, and change proceeded slowly.

Increasing population, the growth of cities, and specialized economic activity driven by the Industrial Revolution gradually altered this pattern. People came to know one another by their jobs (for example, as "the doctor" or "the bank clerk") rather than by their kinship group or hometown. People looked on most others as strangers. The face-to-face communication of the village was eventually replaced by the impersonal mass media: newspapers, radio, television, and the computer-based social media that link people throughout the world. Large organizations steadily assumed more and more responsibility for seeing to the daily tasks that had once been carried out by family, friends, and neighbors; public education drew more and more people to schools; police, lawyers, and courts supervised a formal criminal justice system. Even charity became the work of faceless bureaucrats working for various social welfare organizations.

Geographic mobility, mass communication, and exposure to diverse ways of life all weaken traditional

values. People become more tolerant of social diversity, defending individual rights and freedom of choice. Treating people differently because of their race, sex, or religion comes to be defined as backward and unjust. In the process, minorities at the margins of society gain greater power and broader participation in public life. The election of Barack Obama—an African American—to the highest office in the United States is surely one indicator that ours is now a modern society (West, 2008).

The mass media give rise to a national culture that washes over traditional differences that used to set off one region from another. As one analyst put it, "Even in Baton Rouge, La., the local kids don't say 'y'all' anymore; they say 'you guys' just like on TV" (Gibbs, 2000:42). In this way, mass-society theorists fear, transforming people of various backgrounds into a generic mass provides greater moral freedom but it may also end up dehumanizing everyone.

THE EVER-EXPANDING STATE In the small-scale pre-industrial societies of Europe, government amounted to little more than a local noble. A royal family formally reigned over an entire nation, but without efficient transportation and efficient communication, even absolute monarchs had far less power than today's political leaders.

As technological innovation allowed government to expand, the centralized state grew in size and importance. At the time the United States gained independence from Great Britain, the federal government was a tiny organization with the main purpose of providing national defense. Since then, government has assumed responsibility for more and more areas of social life: schooling the population, regulating wages and working conditions, establishing standards for products of all sorts, providing financial assistance to the elderly, the ill, and the unemployed, providing loans to students, and recently, bailing out corporations facing economic ruin. To pay for such programs, taxes have soared: Today's average worker labors about four months each year to pay for the broad array of services that government provides.

In a mass society, power resides in large bureaucracies, leaving people in local communities with little control over their lives. For example, state officials mandate that local schools must have a standardized educational program, local products must be government-certified, and every citizen must maintain extensive tax records. Although such regulations may protect people and advance social equality, they also force us to deal more and more with nameless officials in distant and often unresponsive bureaucracies, and they undermine the autonomy of families and local communities.

EVALUATE

The growing scale of modern life certainly has positive aspects, but only at the price of losing some of our cultural heritage. Modern societies increase individual rights, have greater tolerance of social differences, and raise standards of living (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). But they are prone to what Weber feared most—excessive bureaucracy—as well as to Tönnies's self-centeredness and Durkheim's anomie. Modern society's size, complexity, and tolerance of diversity all but doom traditional values and family patterns, leaving individuals isolated, powerless, and materialistic. As Chapter 17 ("Politics and Government") notes, voter apathy is a serious problem in the United States. But should we be surprised that individuals in vast, impersonal societies think no one person can make much of a difference?

Critics sometimes say that mass-society theory romanticizes the past. They remind us that many people in the small towns of our past were actually eager to set out for a better standard of living in cities. This approach also ignores problems of social inequality. Critics say this theory attracts conservatives who defend conventional morality and overlook the historical inequality of women and other minorities.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING In your own words, state the mass-society theory of modernity. What are two criticisms of it?

Social-Conflict Theory: Modernity as Class Society

The second interpretation of modernity derives largely from the ideas of Karl Marx. From a social-conflict perspective, modernity takes the form of a **class society**, a capitalist society with pronounced social stratification. While agreeing that modern societies have expanded to a mass scale, this approach views the heart of modernization as an expanding capitalist economy, marked by inequality (Habermas, 1970; Harrington, 1984; Buechler, 2000).

CAPITALISM Class-society theory follows Marx in claiming that the increasing scale of social life in modern society results from the growth and greed unleashed by capitalism. Because a capitalist economy pursues ever-greater profits, both production and consumption steadily increase.

According to Marx, capitalism rests on "naked self-interest" (Marx & Engels, 1972:337, orig. 1848). This self-centeredness weakens the social ties that once united small communities. Under capitalism, people are transformed into commodities: a source of labor and a market for capitalist products.

Capitalism supports science, not just as the key to greater productivity but also as an ideology that justifies the status quo. Modern societies encourage people to view human well-being as a technical puzzle to be solved

mass society a society in which prosperity and bureaucracy have weakened traditional social ties

class society a capitalist society with pronounced social stratification

by engineers and other experts rather than through the pursuit of social justice. For example, a capitalist culture seeks to improve health through advances in scientific medicine rather than by eliminating poverty, despite the fact that poverty is a core cause of poor health.

Business also raises the banner of scientific logic, trying to increase profits through greater efficiency. As Chapter 16 ("The Economy and Work") explains, today's capitalist corporations have reached enormous size and control unimaginable wealth as a result of global expansion. From the class-society point of view, the expanding scale of life is less a function of *Gesellschaft* than the inevitable and destructive consequence of capitalism.

PERSISTENT INEQUALITY Modernity has gradually worn away the rigid categories that set nobles apart from commoners in preindustrial societies. But class-society theory points out elites are still with us, not as the nobles of an earlier era but in the form of capitalist millionaires. In short, a few people are still born to wealth and power. The United States may have no hereditary monarchy, but the richest 1 percent of the population controls about 37 percent of all privately held property (Wolff, 2014).

What of the state? Mass-society theorists argue that the state works to increase equality and fight social problems. Marx disagreed; he doubted that the state could accomplish more than minor reforms because as he saw it, real power lies in the hands of capitalists, who control the economy. Other class-society theorists add that to the extent that working people and minorities do enjoy greater political rights and a higher standard of living today, these changes were the result of political struggle, not government goodwill. Despite our pretensions of democracy, they conclude, our political economy leaves most people powerless in the face of wealthy elites.

EVALUATE

Class-society theory dismisses Durkheim's argument that people in modern societies suffer from anomie, claiming instead that they suffer from alienation and powerlessness. Not surprisingly, the class-society interpretation of modernity enjoys widespread support among liberals and radicals who favor greater equality and call for extensive regulation (or abolition) of the capitalist marketplace.

A basic criticism of class-society theory is that it overlooks the long-term increasing prosperity of modern societies and the fact that discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, and gender is now illegal and is widely regarded as a social problem. In addition, most people in the United States do not want an egalitarian society; they prefer a system of unequal rewards that reflects personal differences in talent and effort.

Based on socialism's failure to generate a high standard of living, few observers think that a centralized economy would cure the ills of modernity. The United States may face a number of social problems—from unemployment to hunger and industrial pollution to war—but these problems are also found in socialist nations.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING In your own words, state the class-society theory of modernity. What are several criticisms of it?

The Summing Up table on page 660 contrasts the two interpretations of modernity. Mass-society theory focuses on the increasing impersonality of social life and the growth of government; class-society theory stresses the expansion of capitalism and the persistence of inequality.

Modernity and the Individual

Both mass- and class-society theories look at the broad patterns of change since the Industrial Revolution. But from these macro-level approaches we can also draw micro-level insights into how modernity shapes individual lives.

MASS SOCIETY: PROBLEMS OF IDENTITY Modernity freed individuals from the small, tightly knit communities of the past. Most people in modern societies have the privacy and freedom to express their individuality. However, mass-society theory suggests that so much social diversity, widespread isolation, and rapid social change make it difficult for many people to establish any coherent identity at all (Wheelis, 1958; Berger, Berger, & Kellner, 1974).

As Chapter 5 ("Socialization") explains, people's personalities are largely a product of their social experiences.



Social-conflict theory sees modernity not as an impersonal mass society but as an unequal class society in which some categories of people are second-class citizens. This Native American family lives on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, where poverty is widespread and many homes do not have electricity or running water.

SUMMING UP

Two Interpretations of Modernity

	Mass Society	Class Society
Process of modernization	Industrialization; growth of bureaucracy	Rise of capitalism
Effects of modernization	Increasing scale of life; rise of the state and other formal organizations	Expansion of the capitalist economy; persistence of social inequality

The small, homogeneous, and slowly changing societies of the past provided a firm, if narrow, foundation for building a personal identity. Even today, the Amish communities that flourish in the United States and Canada teach young men and women “correct” ways to think and behave. Not everyone born into an Amish community can tolerate such rigid demands for conformity, but most members establish a well-integrated and satisfying personal identity (Kraybill & Olshan, 1994; Kraybill & Hurd, 2006).

Mass societies are quite another story. Socially diverse and rapidly changing, they offer only shifting sands on which to build a personal identity. Left to make many life decisions on their own, many people—especially those with greater wealth—face a bewildering array of options. The freedom to choose has little value without standards to help us make good choices, and in a tolerant mass society, people may find little reason to choose one path over another. As a result, many people shuttle from one identity to another, changing their lifestyles, relationships, and even religions in search of an elusive “true self.” Given the widespread “relativism” of modern societies, people without a moral compass lack the security and certainty once provided by tradition.

To David Riesman (1970, orig. 1950), modernization brings changes in **social character**, *personality patterns common to members of a particular society*. Preindustrial societies promote what Riesman calls **tradition-directedness**, *rigid conformity to time-honored ways of living*. Members of traditional societies model their lives on those of their ancestors, so that “living a good life” amounts to “doing what our people have always done.”

Tradition-directedness corresponds to Tönnies’s *Gemeinschaft* and Durkheim’s mechanical solidarity. Culturally conservative, tradition-directed people think and act alike. Unlike the conformity sometimes found in modern societies, the uniformity of tradition-directedness is not an effort to imitate a popular celebrity or follow the latest fashions. Instead, people are alike because they all draw on the same solid cultural foundation. Amish women and men exemplify tradition-directedness; in Amish culture, tradition ties everyone to ancestors and descendants in an unbroken chain of righteous living.

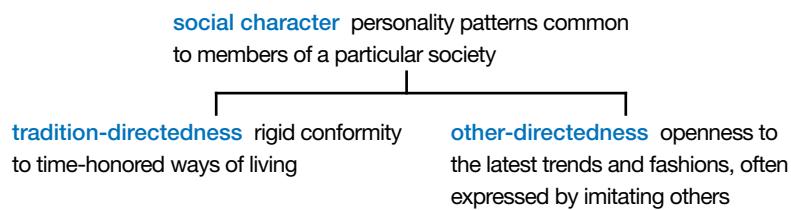
Today, members of diverse and rapidly changing societies are likely to view a tradition-directed personality deviant because it seems so

rigid. Modern people prize personal flexibility, the capacity to adapt, and sensitivity to others. Riesman calls this type of social character **other-directedness**, *openness to the latest trends and fashions, often expressed by imitating others*. Because their socialization occurs in societies that are continuously in flux, other-directed people develop fluid identities marked by superficiality, inconsistency, and change. They try on different “selves” almost like new clothing, seek out role models, and engage in varied performances as they move from setting to setting (Goffman, 1959). In a traditional society, such “shiftiness” marks a person as untrustworthy, but in a changing, modern society, the ability to fit in virtually anywhere—like a chameleon changing its colors to match its environment—is very useful.

In societies that value the up-to-date rather than the traditional, people look to others for approval, using members of their own generation rather than elders as role models. Peer pressure can be irresistible to people without strong standards to guide them. Our society urges individuals to be true to themselves, but when social surroundings change so rapidly, how can people develop the self to which they should be true? This problem lies at the root of the identity crisis so widespread in industrial societies today. “Who am I?” is a nagging question that many of us struggle to answer. In truth, this problem is not so much us as the inherently unstable mass society in which we live.

CLASS SOCIETY: PROBLEMS OF POWERLESSNESS
Class-society theory paints a different picture of modernity’s effects on individuals. This approach maintains that persistent social inequality undermines modern society’s promise of individual freedom. For some people, modernity serves up great privilege, but for many, everyday life means coping with economic uncertainty and a growing sense of powerlessness (Newman, 1993; Ehrenreich, 2001).

For racial and ethnic minorities, the problem of relative disadvantage looms even larger. Similarly, although women participate more broadly in modern societies, they





Mass-society theory relates feelings of anxiety and lack of meaning in the modern world to rapid social change that washes away tradition. This notion of modern emptiness and isolation is captured in the photo at the left. Class-society theory, by contrast, ties such feelings to social inequality, by which some categories of people are made into second-class citizens (or not made citizens at all), an idea expressed in the photo at the right.



continue to run up against traditional barriers of sexism. This approach rejects mass-society theory's claim that people suffer from too much freedom. According to class-society theory, our society still denies a majority of people full participation in social life.

As Chapter 12 ("Global Stratification") explains, the expanding scope of world capitalism has placed more of Earth's population under the influence of multinational corporations. As a result, 59 percent of the world's income is concentrated in the high-income nations, where just 24 percent of its people live. Is it any wonder, class-society theorists ask, that people in poor nations seek greater power to shape their own lives?

The problem of widespread powerlessness led Herbert Marcuse (1964) to challenge Max Weber's statement that modern society is rational. Marcuse condemned modern society as irrational for failing to meet the needs of so many people. Although modern capitalist societies produce unparalleled wealth, poverty remains the daily plight of more than 1 billion people. Marcuse adds that technological advances further reduce people's control over their own lives. High technology gives a great deal of power to a small core of specialists—not the majority of people—who now dominate the discussion of when to go to war, what our energy policy should be, and how people should pay for health care. Countering the common view that technology *solves* the world's problems, Marcuse believed that science *causes* them. In sum, class-society theory asserts that people suffer because modern societies concentrate knowledge, wealth, and power in the hands of a privileged few.

Modernity and Progress

In modern societies, most people expect, and applaud, social change. We link modernity to the idea of *progress*

(from the Latin, meaning "moving forward"), a state of continual improvement. We see stability as stagnation.

Given our bias in favor of change, our society tends to regard traditional cultures as backward. But change, particularly toward material affluence, is a mixed blessing. As the Thinking Globally box on page 662 shows, social change is too complex simply to equate with progress.

Even getting rich has both advantages and disadvantages, as the cases of the Kaiapo and the Gullah show. Historically, in the United States, a rising standard of living has made lives longer and more comfortable. At the same time, many people wonder whether today's routines are too stressful, with families often having little time to relax or simply be together. Perhaps this is why, in the United States, measures of happiness over the last twenty-five years have actually gone down (Myers, 2000; Inglehart, Welzel, & Foa, 2009).

Science, too, has its pluses and minuses. As the Power of Society figure at the beginning of this chapter points out, people in the United States are more confident than people in many other nations that the world is better off because of science and technology (World Values Survey, 2015). But surveys also show that many adults in the United States also see a downside to scientific advances—particularly, that science "makes our way of life change too fast" (Smith et al., 2013:1727).

New technology has always sparked controversy. A century ago, the introduction of automobiles and telephones allowed more rapid transportation and more efficient communication. But at the same time, such technology weakened traditional attachments to local neighborhoods and even to families. Today, people might well wonder whether smart phones and tablet computers will do the same thing, giving us access to people around the world but shielding us from the community right outside

Thinking Globally

Does “Modernity” Mean “Progress”? The Kaiapo of the Amazon and the Gullah of Georgia

The firelight flickers in the gathering darkness. Chief Kanhon sits cross-legged, as he has done at the end of the day for decades, and gathers his thoughts for an evening of animated storytelling (Simons, 2007). This is the hour when the Kaiapo, a small society in Brazil's lush Amazon region, celebrate their heritage. Because the Kaiapo are a traditional people with no written language, the elders rely on evenings by the fire to pass on their culture to their children and grandchildren. In the past, evenings like this have been filled with tales of brave Kaiapo warriors fighting off Portuguese traders who were in pursuit of slaves and gold.

But as the minutes pass, only a few older villagers assemble for the evening ritual. “It is the Big Ghost,” one man grumbles, explaining the poor turnout. The “Big Ghost” has indeed descended on them; its bluish glow spills through the windows throughout the village. The Kaiapo children—and many adults as well—are watching reality shows on television. The installation of a satellite dish in the village several years ago has had consequences far greater than anyone imagined. In the end, what their enemies failed to do with guns, the Kaiapo may well do to themselves with prime-time programming.

The Kaiapo are among the 230,000 native peoples who inhabit Brazil. They stand out because of their striking body paint and ornate ceremonial dress. During the 1980s, they became rich from gold mining and harvesting mahogany trees. Now they must decide whether their newfound fortune is a blessing or a curse.

To some, material wealth means the opportunity to learn about the outside world through travel and television. Others, like Chief Kanhon, are not so sure. Bathed in the firelight, he thinks aloud: “I have been saying that people must buy useful things like knives and fishing hooks. Television does not fill the stomach. It only shows our children and grandchildren white people’s things.” Bebtopup, the oldest priest, nods in agreement: “The night is the time the old people teach the young people. Television has stolen the night” (Simons, 2007:522).



Far to the north, in the United States, half an hour by ferry from the coast of Georgia, lies the community of Hog Hammock on swampy Sapelo Island. The seventy African American residents of the island today trace their ancestry back to the first slaves who settled there in 1802.

Walking past the colorful houses nestled among pine trees draped with Spanish moss, visitors feel transported back in time. The local people, known as Gullahs (or in some places, Geechees), speak creole, a mixture of English and West African languages. They fish, living much as they have for hundreds of years in a region that is an important environmental ecosystem (Dewan, 2010).

But the future of this way of life is now in doubt. The young people who grow up in Hog Hammock can find no work other than fishing and making traditional crafts. “We have been here nine generations and we are still here,” says one local. Then, referring to the island’s nineteen children, she adds, “It’s not that they don’t want to be here, it’s that there’s nothing here for them—they need to have jobs” (Curry, 2001:41).

Just as important, with people on the mainland looking to build luxurious waterside homes, the island has become prime real estate, and property taxes have sky-rocketed. Edna Holmes, whose family has lived on Hog Hammock for four generations, had long paid about \$200 a year in taxes on her house; in recent years, the bill shot up to \$2,000. Says Holmes, “The county is trying to tax us out” (Brown, 2013). If this pattern continues, the natural beauty of Hog Hammock is likely to be paved over so that the area becomes another Hilton Head, once a Gullah community on the South Carolina coast that is now home to well-to-do people from the mainland.

It is probably only a matter of time until the people of Hog Hammock sell their homes and move inland. But Edna Holmes and most other residents are unhappy at the thought of selling out, even for a good price. After all, moving away will mean the end of their cultural heritage.

The stories of both the Kaiapo and the people of Hog Hammock show us that change is not a simple path toward “progress.” These people may be moving toward modernity, but this process will have both positive and negative consequences. In the end, both groups of people may enjoy a higher standard of living with better homes, more schooling, and new technology. But their newfound affluence will come at the price of their traditions. The drama of these people is now being played out around the world as traditional cultures are being lured away from their heritage by the affluence and materialism of rich societies.

What Do You Think?

1. Why is social change both a winning and a losing proposition for traditional peoples?
2. Do the changes described here improve the lives of the Kaiapo? What about the Gullah community?
3. Do traditional people have any choice about becoming modern? Explain your answer.

our doors; providing more information than ever before but in the process threatening personal privacy. In short, we all realize that social change comes faster all the time, but we may disagree about whether a particular change is good or bad for society.

Modernity: Global Variation

October 1, Kobe, Japan. Riding the computer-controlled monorail high above the streets of Kobe or the 200-mile-per-hour bullet train to Tokyo, we see Japan as the society of the future; its people are in love with high technology. But in other ways, the Japanese remain strikingly traditional: Few corporate executives and almost no senior politicians are women, young people still show seniors great respect, and public orderliness contrasts with the relative chaos of many U.S. cities.

Japan is a nation at once traditional and modern. This contradiction reminds us that although it is useful to contrast traditional and modern societies, the old and the new often coexist in unexpected ways. In the People's Republic of China, ancient Confucian principles are mixed with contemporary socialist thinking. In Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the embrace of modern technology is mixed with respect for the ancient principles of Islam. Likewise, in Mexico and much of Latin America, people observe centuries-old Christian rituals even as they struggle to move ahead economically. In short, although we may think of tradition and modernity as opposites, combinations of traditional and modern are far from unusual; rather, they are found throughout the world.



Based on everything you have read in this chapter, do you think that, on balance, our society is changing for better or worse? Why?

1. In important respects, modernity has failed. The promise of modernity was a life free from want. As postmodernist critics see it, however, the twentieth century was unsuccessful in solving social problems like poverty. This fact is evident in today's high poverty rates, increasing economic inequality, and the widespread sense of financial insecurity.

2. The bright light of "progress" is fading. Modern people look to the future, expecting that their lives will improve in significant ways. Members (and even leaders) of postmodern societies, however, are less confident about what the future holds. The strong optimism that carried society into the modern era more than a century ago has given way to widespread pessimism; almost half of U.S. adults do not expect their children's lives to be better than their own (Smith et al., 2013:402).

3. Science no longer holds the answers. The defining trait of the modern era was a scientific outlook and a confident belief that technology would make life better. But postmodern critics argue that science has failed to solve many old problems (such as poor health) and has even created new problems (such as environmental pollution and global warming).

Postmodernist thinkers discredit science, claiming that it implies a singular truth. On the contrary, they maintain, different people see different "realities," and there are many ways to socially construct the world.

4. Cultural debates are intensifying. Now that the world is capable of producing material abundance, ideas are taking on more importance. In this sense, postmodernity is also a postmaterialist era, in which more careers involve

Postmodernity

24.5 Discuss postmodernism as one type of social criticism.

If modernity was the product of the Industrial Revolution, is the Information Revolution creating a postmodern era? A number of scholars think so, and they use the term **postmodernity** to refer to *the transformations caused by the Information Revolution and the postindustrial economy*.

Precisely what postmodernism is remains a matter of debate. The term *postmodernism* has been used for decades in literary, philosophical, and even architectural circles. It moved into sociology on a wave of social criticism that has been building since the spread of left-leaning politics in the 1960s. Although there are many variants of postmodern thinking, all share the following five themes (Hall & Neitz, 1993; Inglehart, 1997; Rudel & Gerson, 1999):

working with symbols and in which issues such as social justice, the state of the natural environment, and animal rights command more and more public attention.

5. Social institutions are changing. Just as industrialization brought a sweeping transformation to social institutions, the rise of a postindustrial society is remaking society again. For example, the postmodern family no longer conforms to any single pattern; on the contrary, individuals are choosing among many new family forms.

EVALUATE

Analysts who claim that the United States and other high-income societies are entering a postmodern era criticize modernity for failing to meet human needs. In defense of modernity, there have been marked increases in longevity and living standards over the course of the past century. If we take the postmodernist view and reject science as bankrupt and progress as a sham, what are the alternatives?

CHECK YOUR LEARNING In your own words, state the characteristics of a postmodern society.

Modernization and Our Global Future

24.6 Evaluate possible directions of future social change.

Imagine the entire world reduced to a village of 1,000 people. About 90 residents of this “global village” come from high-income countries and they earn half of all income. Another 113 people are so poor that their lives are at risk.

The tragic plight of the world’s poor shows that the planet is in desperate need of change. Chapter 12 (“Global Stratification”) presented two competing views of why more than 1 billion people around the world are so poor. *Modernization theory* claims that in the past, the entire world was poor and that technological change, especially the Industrial Revolution, enhanced human productivity and raised living standards in many nations. From this point of view, the solution to global poverty is to promote technological development and market economies around the world.

For reasons suggested earlier, however, global modernization may be difficult. Recall that David Riesman portrayed preindustrial people as *tradition-directed* and likely to resist change. So modernization theorists claim that the world’s rich societies help poor countries grow economically. Industrial nations can speed development by exporting technology to poor regions, welcoming students from these countries, and providing foreign aid to stimulate economic growth.

A review of modernization theory in Chapter 12 points to some success with policies in Latin America and more dramatic results in the small Asian countries of Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong (since 1997 part of the People’s Republic of China). But jump-starting development in the poorest countries of the world poses greater challenges. And even where dramatic change has occurred, modernization involves a trade-off. Traditional people, such as Brazil’s Kaiapo, may gain wealth through economic development, but they lose their cultural identity and values as they are drawn into a global “McCulture” based on Western materialism, pop music, trendy clothes, and fast food. One Brazilian anthropologist expressed hope about the future of the Kaiapo: “At least they quickly understood the consequences of watching television. . . . Now [they] can make a choice” (Simons, 2007:523).

But not everyone thinks that modernization is really an option. According to a second approach to global stratification, *dependency theory*, today’s poor societies have little ability to modernize, even if they want to. From this point of view, the major barrier to economic development is not traditionalism but domination of the global economy by rich capitalist societies.

Dependency theory asserts that rich nations achieved modernization at the expense of poor ones, by taking poor nations’ natural resources and exploiting their human labor. Even today, the world’s poorest countries remain locked in a disadvantageous economic relationship with rich nations, dependent on wealthy countries to buy their raw materials and in return provide them with whatever manufactured products they can afford. According to this view, continuing ties with rich societies only perpetuates current patterns of global inequality.

Whichever of these two approaches you find more convincing, keep in mind that change in the United States is no longer separate from change in the rest of the world. At the beginning of the twentieth century, most people in today’s high-income countries lived in relatively small settlements with limited awareness of the larger world. Today, the world has become one huge village because the lives of all people are increasingly interconnected.

The twentieth century witnessed unprecedented human achievement. Yet solutions to many problems of human existence—including finding meaning in life, resolving conflicts between nations, and eliminating poverty—have eluded us. To this list of pressing matters have been added new concerns, such as controlling population growth and establishing an environmentally sustainable society. In the coming years, we must be prepared to tackle such problems with imagination, compassion, and determination. Our growing understanding of human society gives us reason to be hopeful that we can get the job done.

Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life

CHAPTER 24 Social Change: Traditional, Modern, and Postmodern Societies

Is tradition the opposite of modernity?

Conceptually, this may be true. But as this chapter explains, traditional and modern social patterns combine in all sorts of interesting ways in our everyday lives. Look

at the photographs shown here, and identify elements of tradition and modernity operating together. Do they seem to go together, or are they in conflict? Why?

These young girls live in the city of Istanbul in Turkey, a country that has long debated the merits of traditional and modern life. What sets off traditional and modern ways of dressing? Do you think such differences are likely to affect patterns of friendship? Would the same be true in the United States?





When the first McDonald's restaurant opened in the city of Kiev in Ukraine, many people stopped by to taste a hamburger and see what "fast food" was all about. As large corporations expand their operations around the world, do they tip the balance away from tradition in favor of modernity? If so, how?

In Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, this young couple lives in a world framed by both ancient traditions and the latest technology. Does such modern technology threaten a society's traditions?



Hint Although sociologists analyze tradition and modernity as conceptual opposites, every society combines these elements in various ways. People may debate the virtues of traditional and modern life, but the two patterns are found almost everywhere. Technological change always has social consequences—for example, the use of cell phones changes people's social networks and economic opportunities; similarly, the spread of McDonald's changes not only what people eat but also where and with whom they share meals.

Seeing Sociology in Your Everyday Life

1. How do tradition and modernity combine in your life? Point to several ways in which you are traditional and several ways in which you are thoroughly modern.
2. What do you see as the advantages of living in a modern society? What are the drawbacks?
3. Go to www.sociologyinfocus.com to access the Sociology in Focus blog, where you can read the latest posts by a team of young sociologists who apply the sociological perspective to topics of popular culture.

Making the Grade

CHAPTER 24 Social Change: Traditional, Modern, and Postmodern Societies

What Is Social Change?

24.1 State four defining characteristics of social change. (pages 648–49)

Social change is the transformation of culture and social institutions over time. Every society changes all the time, sometimes faster, sometimes more slowly. Social change often generates controversy.

social change the transformation of culture and social institutions over time

Causes of Social Change

24.2 Explain how culture, conflict, ideas, and population patterns direct social change. (pages 649–51)

Culture and Change

- *Invention* produces new objects, ideas, and social patterns.
- *Discovery* occurs when people take notice of existing elements of the world.
- *Diffusion* creates change as products, people, and information spread from one society to another.

Conflict and Change

- Karl Marx claimed that class conflict between capitalists and workers pushes society toward a socialist system of production.
- Social conflict arising from class, race, and gender inequality has resulted in social changes that have improved the lives of working people.

Ideas and Change

Max Weber traced the roots of most social changes to ideas:

- The fact that industrial capitalism developed first in areas of Western Europe where the Protestant work ethic was strong demonstrates the power of ideas to bring about change.

Demographic Change

Population patterns play a part in social change:

- The aging of U.S. society has resulted in changes to family life and the development of consumer products to meet the needs of the elderly.
- Migration within and between societies promotes change.

Visions of Modernity

24.3 Apply the ideas of Tönnies, Durkheim, Weber, and Marx to our understanding of modernity. (pages 651–56)

Modernity refers to the social consequences of industrialization, which include

- the decline of traditional communities
- the expansion of personal choice
- increasing social diversity
- focus on the future

Ferdinand Tönnies described modernization as the transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, a process characterized by the loss of traditional community and the rise of individualism.

Emile Durkheim saw modernization as a society's expanding division of labor. *Mechanical solidarity*, based on shared activities and beliefs, is gradually replaced by *organic solidarity*, in which specialization makes people interdependent.

Max Weber saw modernity as the decline of a traditional worldview and the rise of rationality. Weber feared the dehumanizing effects of modern rational organization.

Karl Marx saw modernity as the triumph of capitalism over feudalism. Capitalism creates social conflict, which Marx claimed would bring about revolutionary change leading to an egalitarian socialist society.

modernity changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution

modernization the process of social change begun by industrialization

division of labor specialized economic activity

anomie Durkheim's term for a condition in which society provides little moral guidance to individuals

Theories of Modernity

24.4 Contrast analysis of modernity as mass society and as class society. (pages 656–63)

Structural-Functional Theory: Modernity as Mass Society

- According to **mass-society theory**, modernity increases the scale of life, enlarging the role of government and other formal organizations in carrying out tasks previously performed by families in local communities.
- Cultural diversity and rapid social change make it difficult for people in modern societies to develop stable identities and to find meaning in their lives.

Social-Conflict Theory: Modernity as Class Society

- According to **class-society theory**, modernity involves the rise of capitalism into a global economic system resulting in persistent social inequality.
- By concentrating wealth in the hands of a few, modern capitalist societies generate widespread feelings of alienation and powerlessness.

Modernity and the Individual

Both mass-society theory and class-society theory are macro-level approaches; from them, however, we can also draw micro-level insights into how modernity shapes individual lives.

Mass Society: Problems of Identity

- Mass-society theory suggests that the great social diversity, widespread isolation, and rapid social change of modern societies make it difficult for individuals to establish a stable social identity.

David Riesman described the changes in social character that modernity causes:

- Preindustrial societies exhibit **tradition-directedness**: Everyone in society draws on the same solid cultural foundation, and people model their lives on those of their ancestors.
- Modern societies exhibit **other-directedness**: Because their socialization occurs in societies that are continuously in flux, other-directed people develop fluid identities marked by superficiality, inconsistency, and change.

Class Society: Problems of Powerlessness

- Class-society theory claims that the problem facing most people today is economic uncertainty and powerlessness.
- Herbert Marcuse claimed that modern society is irrational because it fails to meet the needs of so many people.
- Marcuse also believed that technological advances further reduce people's control over their own lives.
- People suffer because modern societies have concentrated both wealth and power in the hands of a privileged few.

Modernity and Progress

Social change is too complex and controversial simply to be equated with progress:

- A rising standard of living has made lives longer and materially more comfortable; at the same time, many people are stressed and have little time to relax with their families; there have been no

increases in measures of personal happiness over recent decades.

- Science and technology have brought many conveniences to our everyday lives, yet many people are concerned that life is changing too fast; the introduction of automobiles and advanced communications technology has weakened traditional attachments to hometowns and even to families.

mass society a society in which prosperity and bureaucracy have weakened traditional social ties

class society a capitalist society with pronounced social stratification

social character personality patterns common to members of a particular society

tradition-directedness rigid conformity to time-honored ways of living

other-directedness openness to the latest trends and fashions, often expressed by imitating others

Postmodernity

24.5 Discuss postmodernism as one type of social criticism. (pages 663–64)

Postmodernity refers to the cultural traits of postindustrial societies. Postmodern criticism of society centers on the failure of modernity, and specifically science, to fulfill its promise of prosperity and well-being.

postmodernity the transformations caused by the Information Revolution and the postindustrial economy

Modernization and Our Global Future

24.6 Evaluate possible directions of future social change. (page 664)

- *Modernization theory* links global poverty to the power of tradition. Rich nations can help poor countries develop their economies.
- *Dependency theory* explains global poverty as the product of the world economic system. The operation of multinational corporations makes poor nations economically dependent on rich nations.

Glossary

- abortion** the deliberate termination of a pregnancy
- absolute poverty** a lack of resources that is life-threatening
- achieved status** a social position a person takes on voluntarily that reflects personal ability and effort
- activity theory** the idea that a high level of activity increases personal satisfaction in old age
- Afrocentrism** emphasizing and promoting African cultural patterns
- ageism** prejudice and discrimination against older people
- age stratification** the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and privilege among people at different stages of the life course
- age-sex pyramid** a graphic representation of the age and sex of a population
- agriculture** large-scale cultivation using plows harnessed to animals or more powerful energy sources
- alienation** the experience of isolation and misery resulting from powerlessness
- animism** the belief that elements of the natural world are conscious life forms that affect humanity
- anomie** Durkheim's term for a condition in which society provides little moral guidance to individuals
- anticipatory socialization** learning that helps a person achieve a desired position
- ascribed status** a social position a person receives at birth or takes on involuntarily later in life
- asexuality** a lack of sexual attraction to people of either sex
- assimilation** the process by which minorities gradually adopt patterns of the dominant culture
- authoritarianism** a political system that denies the people participation in government
- authority** power that people perceive as legitimate rather than coercive
- beliefs** specific ideas that people hold to be true
- bilateral descent** a system tracing kinship through both men and women
- bisexuality** sexual attraction to people of both sexes
- blue-collar occupations** lower-prestige jobs that involve mostly manual labor
- bureaucracy** an organizational model rationally designed to perform tasks efficiently
- bureaucratic inertia** the tendency of bureaucratic organizations to perpetuate themselves
- bureaucratic ritualism** a focus on rules and regulations to the point of undermining an organization's goals
- capitalism** an economic system in which natural resources and the means of producing goods and services are privately owned
- capitalists** people who own and operate factories and other businesses in pursuit of profits
- caregiving** informal and unpaid care provided to a dependent person by family members, other relatives, or friends
- caste system** social stratification based on ascription, or birth
- cause and effect** a relationship in which change in one variable (the independent variable) causes change in another (the dependent variable)
- charisma** extraordinary personal qualities that can infuse people with emotion and turn them into followers
- charismatic authority** power legitimized by extraordinary personal abilities that inspire devotion and obedience
- church** a type of religious organization that is well integrated into the larger society
- civil religion** a quasi-religious loyalty linking individuals in a basically secular society
- claims making** the process of trying to convince the public and public officials of the importance of joining a social movement to address a particular issue
- class conflict** conflict between entire classes over the distribution of a society's wealth and power
- class consciousness** Marx's term for workers' recognition of themselves as a class unified in opposition to capitalists and ultimately to capitalism itself
- class society** a capitalist society with pronounced social stratification
- class system** social stratification based on both birth and individual achievement
- cohabitation** the sharing of a household by an unmarried couple
- cohort** a category of people with something in common, usually their age
- collective behavior** activity involving a large number of people that is unplanned, often controversial, and sometimes dangerous
- collectivity** a large number of people whose minimal interaction occurs in the absence of well-defined and conventional norms
- colonialism** the process by which some nations enrich themselves through political and economic control of other nations
- communism** a hypothetical economic and political system in which all members of a society are socially equal
- community-based corrections** correctional programs operating within society at large rather than behind prison walls
- concept** a mental construct that represents some aspect of the world in a simplified form
- concrete operational stage** Piaget's term for the level of human development at which individuals first see causal connections in their surroundings
- conglomerate** a giant corporation composed of many smaller corporations
- conspicuous consumption** buying and using products because of the "statement" they make about social position
- control** holding constant all variables except one in order to see clearly the effect of that variable
- corporate crime** the illegal actions of a corporation or people acting on its behalf
- corporation** an organization with a legal existence, including rights and liabilities, separate from that of its members
- correlation** a relationship in which two (or more) variables change together
- counterculture** cultural patterns that strongly oppose those widely accepted within a society
- crime** the violation of a society's formally enacted criminal law
- crimes against property** crimes that involve theft of property belonging to others; also known as *property crimes*
- crimes against the person** crimes that direct violence or the threat of violence against others; also known as *violent crimes*
- criminal justice system** the organizations—police, courts, and prison officials—that respond to alleged violations of the law
- criminal recidivism** later offenses by people previously convicted of crimes
- critical sociology** the study of society that focuses on the need for social change
- crowd** a temporary gathering of people who share a common focus of attention and who influence one another

- crude birth rate** the number of live births in a given year for every 1,000 people in a population
- crude death rate** the number of deaths in a given year for every 1,000 people in a population
- cult** a religious organization that is largely outside a society's cultural traditions
- cultural integration** the close relationships among various elements of a cultural system
- cultural lag** the fact that some cultural elements change more quickly than others, disrupting a cultural system
- cultural relativism** the practice of judging a culture by its own standards
- cultural transmission** the process by which one generation passes culture to the next
- cultural universals** traits that are part of every known culture
- culture** the ways of thinking, the ways of acting, and the material objects that together form a people's way of life
- culture shock** personal disorientation when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life
- Davis-Moore thesis** the functional analysis claiming that social stratification has beneficial consequences for the operation of society
- deductive logical thought** reasoning that transforms general theory into specific hypotheses suitable for testing
- democracy** political system that gives power to the people as a whole
- demographic transition theory** a thesis that links population patterns to a society's level of technological development
- demography** the study of human population
- denomination** a church, independent of the state, that recognizes religious pluralism
- dependency theory** a model of economic and social development that explains global inequality in terms of the historical exploitation of poor nations by rich ones
- dependent variable** the variable that changes
- descent** the system by which members of a society trace kinship over generations
- deterrence** the attempt to discourage criminality through the use of punishment
- deviance** the recognized violation of cultural norms
- direct-fee system** a medical care system in which patients pay directly for the services of physicians and hospitals
- disaster** an event, generally unexpected, that causes extensive harm to people and damage to property
- discrimination** unequal treatment of various categories of people
- disengagement theory** the idea that society functions in an orderly way by removing people from positions of responsibility as they reach old age
- division of labor** specialized economic activity
- dramaturgical analysis** Erving Goffman's term for the study of social interaction in terms of theatrical performance
- dyad** a social group with two members
- eating disorder** a physical and mental disorder that involves an intense form of dieting or other unhealthy method of weight control driven by the desire to be very thin
- ecologically sustainable culture** a way of life that meets the needs of the present generation without threatening the environmental legacy of future generations
- ecology** the study of the interaction of living organisms and the natural environment
- economy** the social institution that organizes a society's production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services
- ecosystem** a system composed of the interaction of all living organisms and their natural environment
- education** the social institution through which society provides its members with important knowledge, including basic facts, job skills, and cultural norms and values
- ego** Freud's term for a person's conscious efforts to balance innate pleasure-seeking drives with the demands of society
- empirical evidence** information we can verify with our senses
- endogamy** marriage between people of the same social category
- environmental deficit** profound long-term harm to the natural environment caused by humanity's focus on short-term material affluence
- environmental racism** patterns of development that expose poor people, especially minorities, to environmental hazards
- ethnicity** a shared cultural heritage
- ethnocentrism** the practice of judging another culture by the standards of one's own culture
- ethnomethodology** Harold Garfinkel's term for the study of the way people make sense of their everyday surroundings
- Eurocentrism** the dominance of European (especially English) cultural patterns
- euthanasia** assisting in the death of a person suffering from an incurable disease; also known as *mercy killing*
- exogamy** marriage between people of different social categories
- experiment** a research method for investigating cause and effect under highly controlled conditions
- expressive leadership** group leadership that focuses on the group's well-being
- extended family** a family consisting of parents and children as well as other kin; also known as a *consanguine family*
- fad** an unconventional social pattern that people embrace briefly but enthusiastically
- faith** belief based on conviction rather than on scientific evidence
- false consciousness** Marx's term for explanations of social problems as the shortcomings of individuals rather than as the flaws of society
- family** a social institution found in all societies that unites people in cooperative groups to care for one another, including any children
- family violence** emotional, physical, or sexual abuse of one family member by another
- fashion** a social pattern favored by a large number of people
- feminism** support of social equality for women and men, in opposition to patriarchy and sexism
- feminization of poverty** the trend of women making up an increasing proportion of the poor
- fertility** the incidence of childbearing in a country's population
- folkways** norms for routine or casual interaction
- formal operational stage** Piaget's term for the level of human development at which individuals think abstractly and critically
- formal organization** a large secondary group organized to achieve its goals efficiently
- functional illiteracy** a lack of the reading and writing skills needed for everyday living
- fundamentalism** a conservative religious doctrine that opposes intellectualism and worldly accommodation in favor of restoring traditional, otherworldly religion
- Gemeinschaft** a type of social organization in which people are closely tied by kinship and tradition
- gender** the personal traits and social positions that members of a society attach to being female or male
- gender roles** (also known as sex roles) attitudes and activities that a society links to each sex
- gender stratification** the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and privilege between men and women
- gender-conflict theory (feminist theory)** the study of society that focuses on inequality and conflict between women and men
- generalized other** George Herbert Mead's term for widespread cultural norms and values we use as references in evaluating ourselves
- genocide** the systematic killing of one category of people by another

- gerontocracy** a form of social organization in which the elderly have the most wealth, power, and prestige
- gerontology** the study of aging and the elderly
- Gesellschaft** a type of social organization in which people come together only on the basis of individual self-interest
- global economy** economic activity that crosses national borders
- global perspective** the study of the larger world and our society's place in it
- global stratification** patterns of social inequality in the world as a whole
- global warming** a rise in Earth's average temperature due to an increasing concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere
- gossip** rumor about people's personal affairs
- government** a formal organization that directs the political life of a society
- groupthink** the tendency of group members to conform, resulting in a narrow view of some issue
- hate crime** a criminal act against a person or a person's property by an offender motivated by racial or other bias
- Hawthorne effect** a change in a subject's behavior caused simply by the awareness of being studied
- health** a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being
- health maintenance organization (HMO)** an organization that provides comprehensive medical care to subscribers for a fixed fee
- heterosexism** a view that labels anyone who is not heterosexual as "queer"
- heterosexuality** sexual attraction to someone of the other sex
- high culture** cultural patterns that distinguish a society's elite
- high-income countries** nations with the highest overall standards of living
- holistic medicine** an approach to health care that emphasizes prevention of illness and takes into account a person's entire physical and social environment
- homogamy** marriage between people with the same social characteristics
- homophobia** discomfort over close personal interaction with people thought to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual
- homosexuality** sexual attraction to someone of the same sex
- horticulture** the use of hand tools to raise crops
- hunting and gathering** making use of simple tools to hunt animals and gather vegetation for food
- hypothesis** a statement of a possible relationship between two (or more) variables
- id** Freud's term for the human being's basic drives
- ideal type** an abstract statement of the essential characteristics of any social phenomenon
- ideology** cultural beliefs that justify particular social arrangements, including patterns of inequality
- incest taboo** a norm forbidding sexual relations or marriage between certain relatives
- income** earnings from work or investments
- independent variable** the variable that causes the change
- inductive logical thought** reasoning that transforms specific observations into general theory
- industrialism** the production of goods using advanced sources of energy to drive large machinery
- infant mortality rate** the number of deaths among infants under one year of age for each 1,000 live births in a given year
- infidelity** sexual activity outside one's marriage
- in-group** a social group toward which a member feels respect and loyalty
- institutional prejudice and discrimination** bias built into the operation of society's institutions
- instrumental leadership** group leadership that focuses on the completion of tasks
- intergenerational social mobility** upward or downward social mobility of children in relation to their parents
- interpretive sociology** the study of society that focuses on the meanings people attach to their social world
- intersection theory** analysis of the interplay of race, class, and gender, which often results in multiple dimensions of disadvantage
- intersexual people** people whose bodies (including genitals) have both female and male characteristics
- interview** a series of questions a researcher asks respondents in person
- intragenerational social mobility** a change in social position occurring during a person's lifetime
- kinship** a social bond based on common ancestry, marriage, or adoption
- labeling theory** the idea that deviance and conformity result not so much from what people do as from how others respond to those actions
- labor unions** organizations of workers that seek to improve wages and working conditions through various strategies, including negotiations and strikes
- language** a system of symbols that allows people to communicate with one another
- latent functions** the unrecognized and unintended consequences of any social pattern
- liberation theology** the combining of Christian principles with political activism, often Marxist in character
- life expectancy** the average life span of a country's population
- looking-glass self** Cooley's term for a self-image based on how we think others see us
- low-income countries** nations with a low standard of living in which most people are poor
- macro-level orientation** a broad focus on social structures that shape society as a whole
- mainstreaming** integrating students with disabilities or special needs into the overall educational program
- manifest functions** the recognized and intended consequences of any social pattern
- marriage** a legal relationship, usually involving economic cooperation, sexual activity, and childbearing
- Marxist political-economy model** an analysis that explains politics in terms of the operation of a society's economic system
- mass behavior** collective behavior among people spread over a wide geographic area
- mass hysteria (moral panic)** a form of dispersed collective behavior in which people react to a real or imagined event with irrational and even frantic fear
- mass media** the means for delivering impersonal communications to a vast audience
- mass society** a society in which prosperity and bureaucracy have weakened traditional social ties
- master status** a status that has special importance for social identity, often shaping a person's entire life
- material culture** the physical things created by members of a society
- matriarchy** a form of social organization in which females dominate males
- matrilineal descent** a system tracing kinship through women
- matrilocality** a residential pattern in which a married couple lives with or near the wife's family
- measurement** a procedure for determining the value of a variable in a specific case
- mechanical solidarity** Durkheim's term for social bonds, based on common sentiments and shared moral values, that are strong among members of preindustrial societies
- medicalization of deviance** the transformation of moral and legal deviance into a medical condition

- medicine** the social institution that focuses on fighting disease and improving health
- megalopolis** a vast urban region containing a number of cities and their surrounding suburbs
- meritocracy** social stratification based on personal merit
- metropolis** a large city that socially and economically dominates an urban area
- micro-level orientation** a close-up focus on social interaction in specific situations
- middle-income countries** nations with a standard of living about average for the world as a whole
- migration** the movement of people into and out of a specified territory
- military-industrial complex** the close association of the federal government, the military, and defense industries
- minority** any category of people distinguished by physical or cultural difference that a society sets apart and subordinates
- miscegenation** biological reproduction by partners of different racial categories
- mob** a highly emotional crowd that pursues a violent or destructive goal
- modernity** changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution
- modernization** the process of social change begun by industrialization
- modernization theory** a model of economic and social development that explains global inequality in terms of technological and cultural differences between nations
- monarchy** a political system in which a single family rules from generation to generation
- monogamy** marriage that unites two partners
- monopoly** the domination of a market by a single producer
- monotheism** belief in a single divine power
- mores** norms that are widely observed and have great moral significance
- mortality** the incidence of death in a country's population
- multiculturalism** a perspective recognizing the cultural diversity of the United States and promoting equal standing for all cultural traditions
- multinational corporation** a large business that operates in many countries
- natural environment** Earth's surface and atmosphere, including living organisms, air, water, soil, and other resources necessary to sustain life
- neocolonialism** a new form of global power relationships that involves not direct political control but economic exploitation by multinational corporations
- neolocality** a residential pattern in which a married couple lives apart from both sets of parents
- network** a web of weak social ties
- nonmaterial culture** the ideas created by members of a society
- nonverbal communication** communication using body movements, gestures, and facial expressions rather than speech
- norms** rules and expectations by which a society guides the behavior of its members
- nuclear family** a family composed of one or two parents and their children; also known as a *conjugal family*
- nuclear proliferation** the acquisition of nuclear weapons technology by more and more nations
- objectivity** personal neutrality in conducting research
- oligarchy** the rule of the many by the few
- oligopoly** the domination of a market by a few producers
- operationalize a variable** specifying exactly what is to be measured before assigning a value to a variable
- organic solidarity** Durkheim's term for social bonds, based on specialization and interdependence, that are strong among members of industrial societies
- organizational environment** factors outside an organization that affect its operation
- organized crime** a business supplying illegal goods or services
- other-directedness** openness to the latest trends and fashions, often expressed by imitating others
- out-group** a social group toward which a person feels a sense of competition or opposition
- panic** a form of collective behavior in which people in one place react to a threat or other stimulus with irrational, frantic, and often self-destructive behavior
- participant observation** a research method in which investigators systematically observe people while joining them in their routine activities
- pastoralism** the domestication of animals
- patriarchy** a form of social organization in which males dominate females
- patrilineal descent** a system tracing kinship through men
- patrilocality** a residential pattern in which a married couple lives with or near the husband's family
- peer group** a social group whose members have interests, social position, and age in common
- personal space** the surrounding area over which a person makes some claim to privacy
- personality** a person's fairly consistent patterns of acting, thinking, and feeling
- plea bargaining** a legal negotiation in which a prosecutor reduces a charge in exchange for a defendant's guilty plea
- pluralism** a state in which people of all races and ethnicities are distinct but have equal social standing
- pluralist model** an analysis of politics that sees power as spread among many competing interest groups
- political action committee (PAC)** an organization formed by a special-interest group, independent of political parties, to raise and spend money in support of political goals
- political revolution** the overthrow of one political system in order to establish another
- politics** the social institution that distributes power, sets a society's goals, and makes decisions
- Polyandry** marriage that unites one woman and two or more men
- Polygamy** marriage that unites a person with two or more spouses
- Polygyny** marriage that unites one man and two or more women
- Polytheism** belief in many gods
- popular culture** cultural patterns that are widespread among a society's population
- population** the people who are the focus of research
- pornography** sexually explicit material intended to cause sexual arousal
- positivism** a scientific approach to knowledge based on "positive" facts as opposed to mere speculation
- positivist sociology** the study of society based on systematic observation of social behavior
- postindustrial economy** a productive system based on service work and high technology
- postindustrialism** the production of information using computer technology
- postmodernity** the transformations caused by the Information Revolution and the postindustrial economy
- power** the ability to achieve desired ends despite resistance from others
- power-elite model** an analysis of politics that sees power as concentrated among the rich
- prejudice** a rigid and unfair generalization about an entire category of people
- preoperational stage** Piaget's term for the level of human development at which individuals first use language and other symbols

- presentation of self** Erving Goffman's term for a person's efforts to create specific impressions in the minds of others
- primary group** a small social group whose members share personal and lasting relationships
- primary labor market** jobs that provide extensive benefits to workers
- primary sector** the part of the economy that draws raw materials from the natural environment
- primary sex characteristics** the genitals, organs used for reproduction
- profane** included as an ordinary element of everyday life
- profession** a prestigious white-collar occupation that requires extensive formal education
- proletarians** people who sell their labor for wages
- propaganda** information presented with the intention of shaping public opinion
- prostitution** the selling of sexual services
- public opinion** widespread attitudes about controversial issues
- queer theory** a body of research findings that challenges the heterosexual bias in U.S. society
- questionnaire** a series of written questions a researcher presents to subjects
- race** a socially constructed category of people who share biologically transmitted traits that members of a society consider important
- race-conflict theory** the study of society that focuses on inequality and conflict between people of different racial and ethnic categories
- racism** the belief that one racial category is innately superior or inferior to another
- rain forests** regions of dense forestation, most of which circle the globe close to the equator
- rationality** a way of thinking that emphasizes deliberate, matter-of-fact calculation of the most efficient way to accomplish a particular task
- rationalization of society** Weber's term for the historical change from tradition to rationality as the main type of human thought
- rational-legal authority** power legitimized by legally enacted rules and regulations; also known as *bureaucratic authority*
- reference group** a social group that serves as a point of reference in making evaluations and decisions
- rehabilitation** a program for reforming the offender to prevent later offenses
- relative deprivation** a perceived disadvantage arising from some specific comparison
- relative poverty** the lack of resources of some people in relation to those who have more
- reliability** consistency in measurement
- religion** a social institution involving beliefs and practices based on recognizing the sacred
- religiosity** the importance of religion in a person's life
- replication** repetition of research by other investigators
- research method** a systematic plan for doing research
- resocialization** radically changing an inmate's personality by carefully controlling the environment
- retribution** an act of moral vengeance by which society makes the offender suffer as much as the suffering caused by the crime
- riot** a social eruption that is highly emotional, violent, and undirected
- ritual** formal, ceremonial behavior
- role** behavior expected of someone who holds a particular status
- role conflict** conflict among the roles connected to two or more statuses
- role set** a number of roles attached to a single status
- role strain** tension among the roles connected to a single status
- routinization of charisma** the transformation of charismatic authority into some combination of traditional and bureaucratic authority
- rumor** unconfirmed information that people spread informally, often by word of mouth or by using electronic devices
- sacred** set apart as extraordinary, inspiring awe and reverence
- sample** a part of a population that represents the whole
- Sapir-Whorf thesis** the idea that people see and understand the world through the cultural lens of language
- scapegoat** a person or category of people, typically with little power, whom people unfairly blame for their own troubles
- schooling** formal instruction under the direction of specially trained teachers
- science** a logical system that bases knowledge on direct, systematic observation
- scientific management** Frederick Taylor's term for the application of scientific principles to the operation of a business or other large organization
- secondary group** a large and impersonal social group whose members pursue a specific goal or activity
- secondary labor market** jobs that provide minimal benefits to workers
- secondary sector** the part of the economy that transforms raw materials into manufactured goods
- secondary sex characteristics** bodily development, apart from the genitals, that distinguishes biologically mature females and males
- sect** a type of religious organization that stands apart from the larger society
- secularization** the historical decline in the importance of the supernatural and the sacred
- segregation** the physical and social separation of categories of people
- self** George Herbert Mead's term for the part of an individual's personality composed of self-awareness and self-image
- sensorimotor stage** Piaget's term for the level of human development at which individuals experience the world only through their senses
- sex** the biological distinction between females and males
- sex ratio** the number of males for every 100 females in a nation's population
- sexism** the belief that one sex is innately superior to the other
- sexual harassment** comments, gestures, or physical contacts of a sexual nature that are deliberate, repeated, and unwelcome
- sexual orientation** a person's romantic and emotional attraction to another person
- sick role** patterns of behavior defined as appropriate for people who are ill
- significant others** people, such as parents, who have special importance for socialization
- social change** the transformation of culture and social institutions over time
- social character** personality patterns common to members of a particular society
- social conflict** the struggle between segments of society over valued resources
- social construction of reality** the process by which people creatively shape reality through social interaction
- social control** attempts by society to regulate people's thoughts and behavior
- social dysfunction** any social pattern that may disrupt the operation of society
- social epidemiology** the study of how health and disease are distributed throughout a society's population
- social functions** the consequences of a social pattern for the operation of society as a whole
- social group** two or more people who identify with and interact with one another
- social institutions** the major spheres of social life, or societal subsystems, organized to meet human needs

- social interaction** the process by which people act and react in relation to others
- social media** technology that links people in social activity
- social mobility** a change in position within the social hierarchy
- social movement** an organized activity that encourages or discourages social change
- social stratification** a system by which a society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy
- social structure** any relatively stable pattern of social behavior
- social-conflict approach** a framework for building theory that sees society as an arena of inequality that generates conflict and change
- socialism** an economic system in which natural resources and the means of producing goods and services are collectively owned
- socialization** the lifelong social experience by which people develop their human potential and learn culture
- socialized medicine** a medical care system in which the government owns and operates most medical facilities and employs most physicians
- societal protection** rendering an offender incapable of further offenses temporarily through imprisonment or permanently by execution
- society** people who interact in a defined territory and share a culture
- sociobiology** a theoretical approach that explores ways in which human biology affects how we create culture
- sociocultural evolution** Lenski's term for the changes that occur as a society gains new technology
- socioeconomic status (SES)** a composite ranking based on various dimensions of social inequality
- sociological perspective** sociology's special point of view that sees general patterns of society in the lives of particular people
- sociology** the systematic study of human society
- special-interest group** people organized to address some economic or social issue
- spurious correlation** an apparent but false relationship between two (or more) variables that is caused by some other variable
- state capitalism** an economic and political system in which companies are privately owned but cooperate closely with the government
- state church** a church formally allied with the state
- status** a social position that a person holds
- status consistency** the degree of uniformity in a person's social standing across various dimensions of social inequality
- status set** all the statuses a person holds at a given time
- stereotype** a simplified description applied to every person in some category
- stigma** a powerfully negative label that greatly changes a person's self-concept and social identity
- structural-functional approach** a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability
- structural social mobility** a shift in the social position of large numbers of people due more to changes in society itself than to individual efforts
- subculture** cultural patterns that set apart some segment of a society's population
- suburbs** urban areas beyond the political boundaries of a city
- superego** Freud's term for the cultural values and norms internalized by an individual
- survey** a research method in which subjects respond to a series of statements or questions on a questionnaire or in an interview
- symbol** anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by people who share a culture
- symbolic-interaction approach** a framework for building theory that sees society as the product of the everyday interactions of individuals
- technology** knowledge that people use to make a way of life in their surroundings
- terrorism** acts of violence or the threat of violence used as a political strategy by an individual or a group
- tertiary sector** the part of the economy that involves services rather than goods
- theoretical approach** a basic image of society that guides thinking and research
- theory** a statement of how and why specific facts are related
- Thomas theorem** W. I. Thomas's claim that situations defined as real are real in their consequences
- total institution** a setting in which people are isolated from the rest of society and manipulated by an administrative staff
- totalitarianism** a highly centralized political system that extensively regulates people's lives
- totem** an object in the natural world collectively defined as sacred
- tracking** assigning students to different types of educational programs
- tradition** behavior, values, and beliefs passed from generation to generation
- tradition-directedness** rigid conformity to time-honored ways of living
- traditional authority** power legitimized by respect for long-established cultural patterns
- transgender** appearing or behaving in ways that challenge conventional cultural norms concerning how females and males should look and act
- transsexuals** people who feel they are one sex even though biologically they are the other
- triad** a social group with three members
- underground economy** economic activity involving income not reported to the government as required by law
- urban ecology** the study of the link between the physical and social dimensions of cities
- urbanization** the concentration of population into cities
- validity** actually measuring exactly what you intend to measure
- values** culturally defined standards that people use to decide what is desirable, good, and beautiful and that serve as broad guidelines for social living
- variable** a concept whose value changes from case to case
- victimless crimes** violations of law in which there are no obvious victims
- war** organized, armed conflict among the people of two or more nations, directed by their governments
- wealth** the total value of money and other assets, minus outstanding debts
- welfare capitalism** an economic and political system that combines a mostly market-based economy with extensive social welfare programs
- welfare state** a system of government agencies and programs that provides benefits to the population
- white-collar crime** crime committed by people of high social position in the course of their occupations
- white-collar occupations** higher-prestige jobs that involve mostly mental activity
- zero population growth** the rate of reproduction that maintains population at a steady level

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SOCIETY IN HISTORY: A TIMELINE

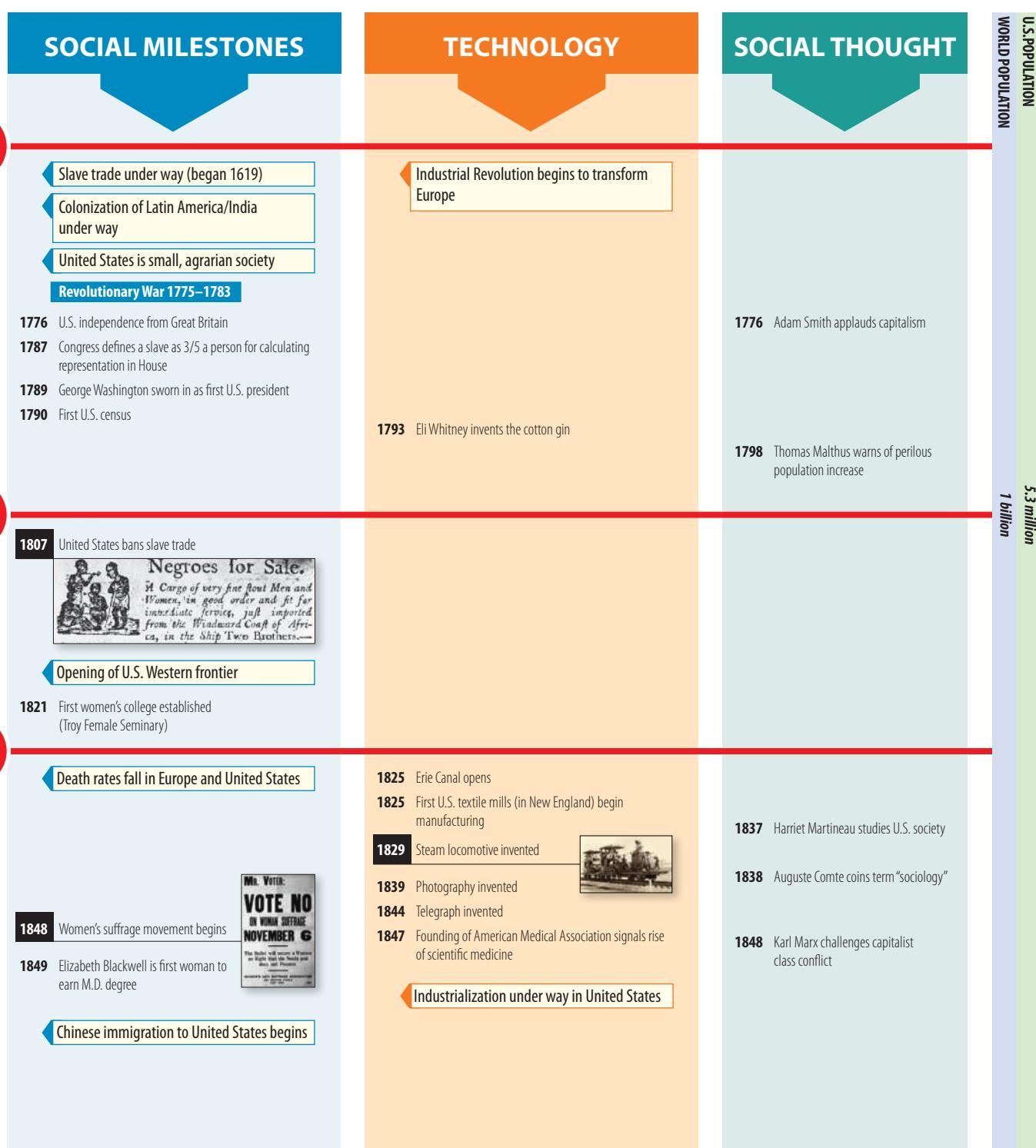
A timeline is a visual device that helps us understand historical change. The timeline found below shows the history of the United States and much of the Western world since the onset of the Industrial Revolution—the event that led to the development of sociology.

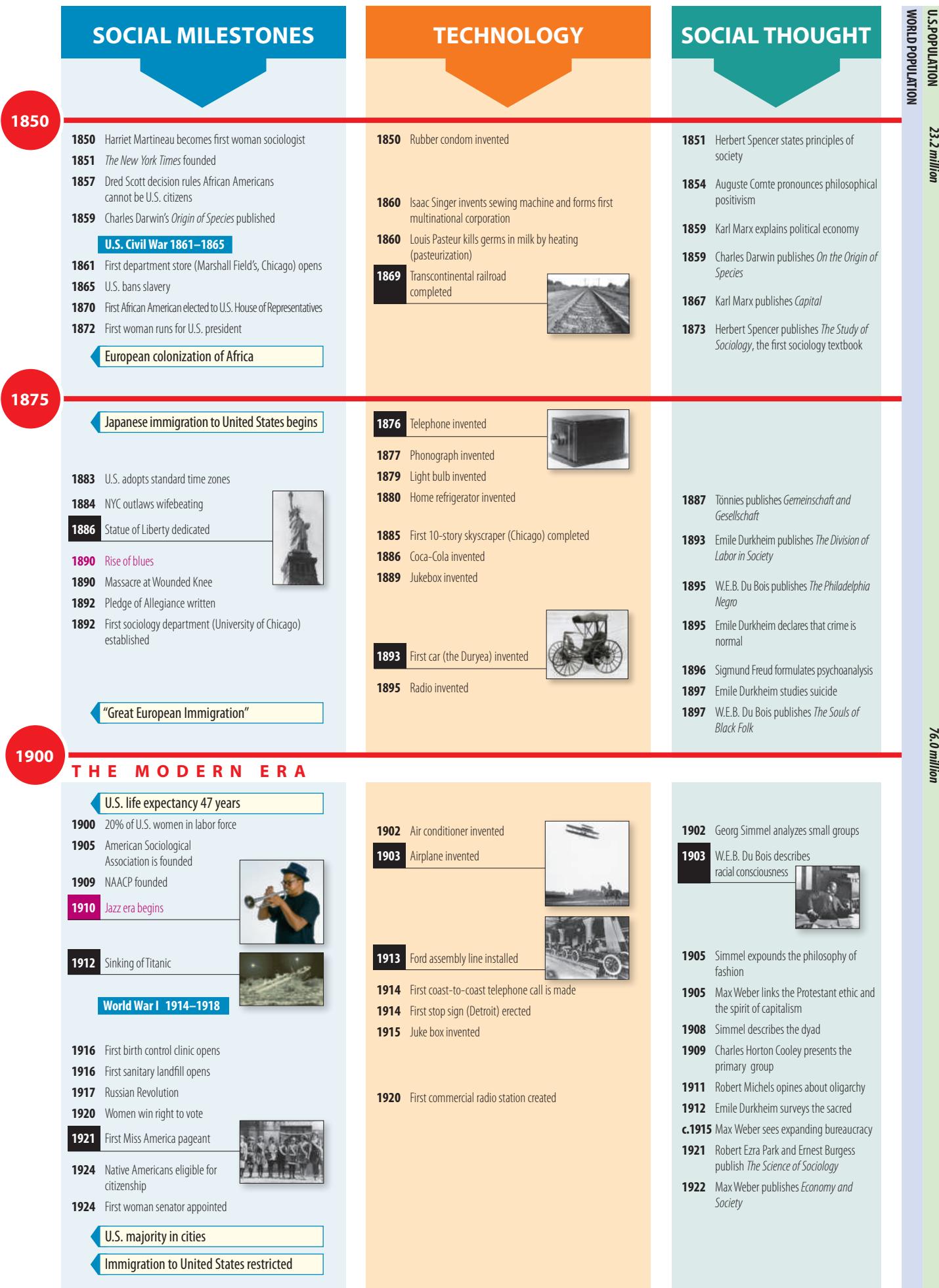
Our planet, of course, is far older with a history that stretches back some 5 billion years. About one billion years passed before the earliest forms of life appeared. Plants and animals continued to evolve for billions more years until, approximately 12 million years before the present (B.P.), our earliest human ancestors came onto the scene. About 250,000 years ago, *Homo sapiens* walked Earth. What we call civilization is quite recent indeed, with the first permanent settlements occurring in the Middle East a scant 12,000 years ago. The written record of our species' existence extends back only half this long—some

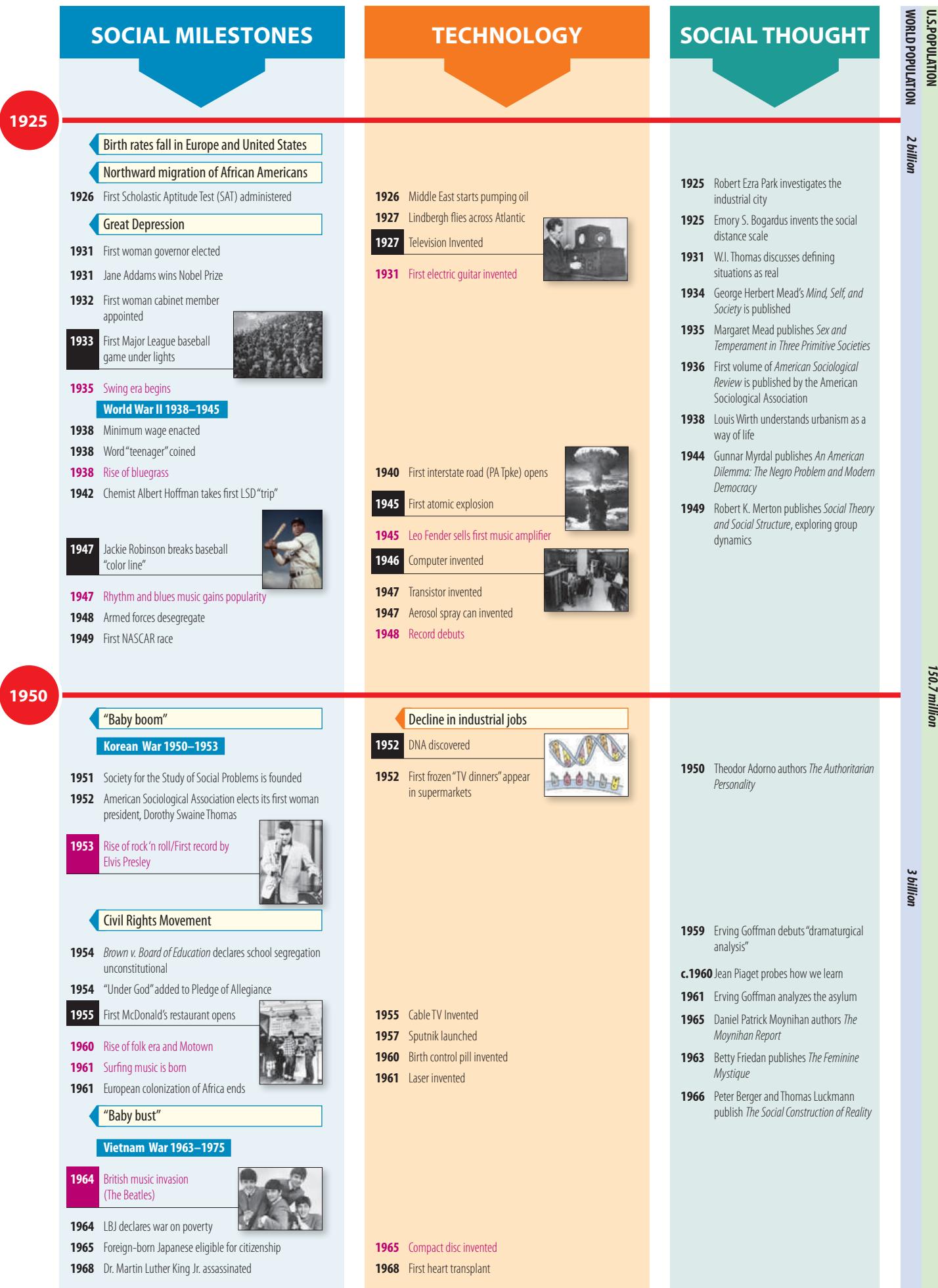
5,000 years B.P.—to the time humans invented writing and first farmed with animal-driven plows.

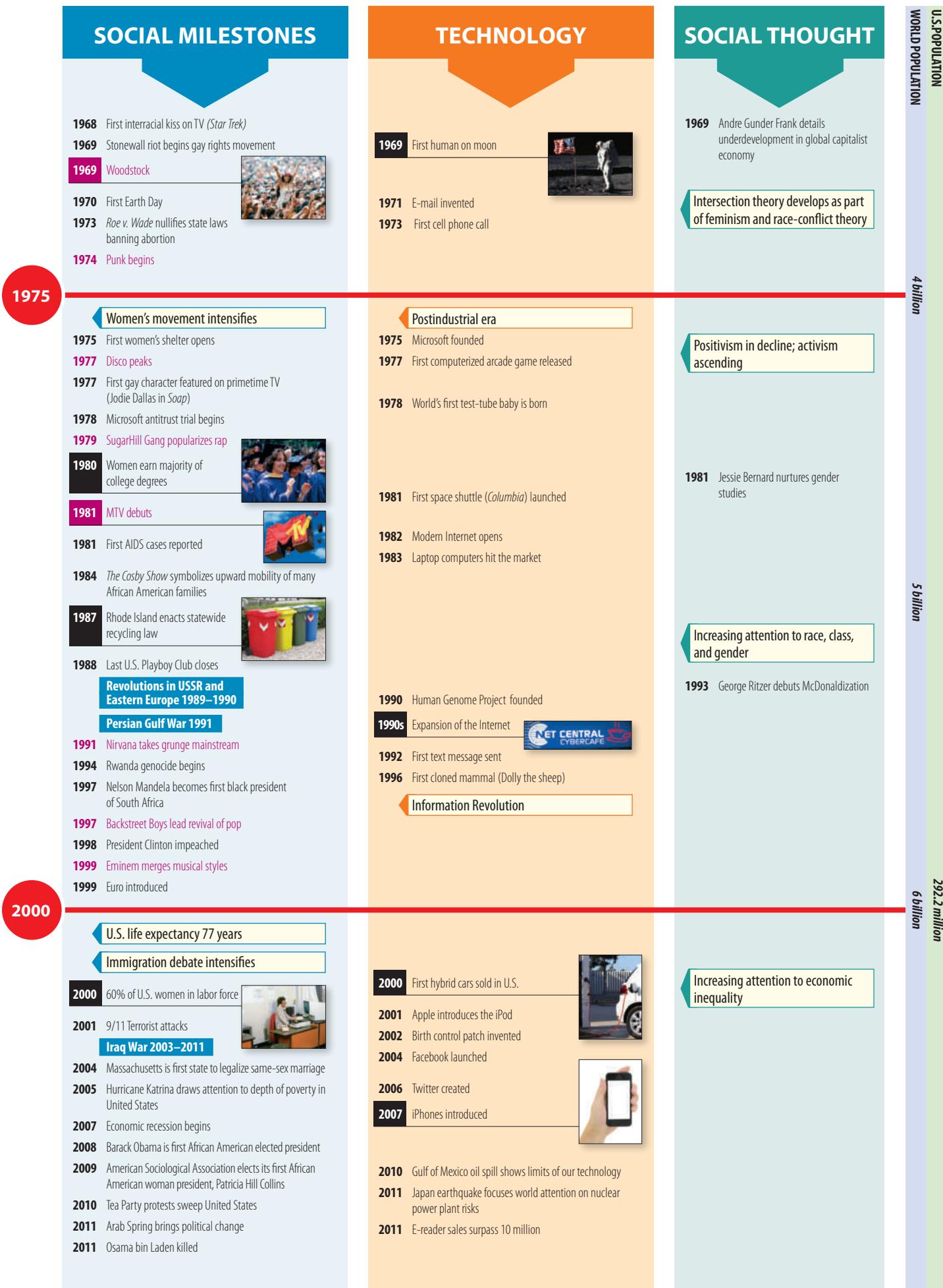
Only during the past few centuries (just the blink of an eye in evolutionary perspective) did sociology come into being. The development of our discipline was one consequence of the many changes to society wrought by the Industrial Revolution that began about 1775.

The three threads below present events and trends that have defined the modern era, most of which are discussed in this text. **Social Milestones** are presented to the left, tracking important events in the development of society. **Technology** is the focus of the middle thread, highlighting inventions and achievements that changed life in important ways. The **Social Thought** thread traces major contributions to the development of sociological thinking.











SOCIAL MILESTONES

TECHNOLOGY

SOCIAL THOUGHT

2011 Occupy Movement calls attention to income inequality in the U.S.



2012 Jobless recovery under way with unemployment remaining high

2012 Superstorm Sandy awakens public to global warming



2013 Record number of women in Congress

2014 Use of drones raises questions about consequences of new technology

2013 U.S. military lifts ban on women in combat roles

2013 First transgender character featured on TV (Sophia Burset in *Orange Is the New Black*)

2015

2015 U.S. Supreme Court legalizes same-sex marriage

2015 Development of autonomous cars accelerates

2015 Refugees displaced by war in Syria surpass 4 million