

## NSCC Introduction to Sociology

# NSCC INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

NSCC and William Little

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**NSCC**

**Halifax**



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## About the Book

This version is modified and adapted for use at NSCC in the School of Access. Connie McPherson adapted the textbook, *Introduction to Sociology – 2nd Canadian Edition*, to more closely match the outcomes taught at NSCC with input from other instructors who teach in the School of Access.

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## An Introduction to Sociology



Figure 1.1. Sociologists study how society affects people and how people affect society. How does being in a crowd affect people's behaviour? (Photo courtesy of PDerek Hatfield/Wikimedia Commons)

## Learning Objectives

### 1.1. What Is Sociology?

- Explain the concepts central to sociology.
- Describe the different levels of analysis in sociology: micro-level sociology, macro-level sociology, and global-level sociology.
- Define the sociological imagination.

### 1.2. Theoretical Perspectives

- Explain what sociological theories and paradigms are and how they are used.
- Describe sociology as a multi-perspectival social science divided into positivist, interpretive and critical paradigms.
- Define the similarities and differences between quantitative sociology, structural functionalism, historical materialism, feminism, and symbolic interactionism.

### 1.3. Why Study Sociology?

- Explain why it is worthwhile to study sociology.
- Identify ways sociology is applied in the real world.

## Introduction to Sociology

Concerts, sporting matches and political rallies can have very large crowds. At such an event, you may feel connected to the group. You are one of the crowd. You cheer and clap when everyone else does. You boo and yell with them. You move out of the way when someone needs to get by. You know how to behave in this kind of crowd.

It can be a very different in an unfamiliar situation. For example, imagine that you are travelling in a foreign country and find yourself in a crowd. You may have trouble figuring out what's happening. Is the crowd the usual morning rush? Is it a political protest? Perhaps there was an accident or disaster. Is it safe in this crowd, or should you try to get away? How can you find out what is going on? Although you are *in* it, you may not feel like you are *part* of this crowd. You may not know what to do.

Even within one type of crowd, different groups and behaviours exist. At a rock concert, for example, some enjoy singing along; others prefer to sit and watch. Others join a mosh pit or try crowd-surfing. On February 28, 2010, Team Canada won the gold medal hockey at the Vancouver Winter Olympics. Two hundred thousand happy people filled downtown Vancouver streets to celebrate. Just over a year later, on June 5, 2011, the Vancouver Canucks lost the Stanley Cup to the Boston Bruins. Many people had been watching the game on outdoor screens. Eventually 155,000 people filled the downtown streets. Rioting and looting led to hundreds of injuries, burnt cars, trashed stores. Property damage totaled \$4.2 million. Why was the crowd response to the two events so different?



Figure 1.2. People's experiences of the post-Stanley Cup riot in Vancouver were very different. (Photo courtesy of Pasquale Borriello/Flickr)

Sociology understands that being in a group changes behaviour. The group is more than the sum of its parts. Why do we feel and act differently in different types of groups? Why might people in a group behave differently in the same situation? These are some questions sociologists ask.

## 1.1. What Is Sociology?

Sociology is one of the social sciences. Just as natural sciences such as chemistry and geology study the natural world, social sciences study the social world. Other examples of social sciences include economics, political science and anthropology. Sociology studies all aspects of social life using scientific methods.

**Sociology** is the systematic study of society and social interaction. The word “sociology” comes from the Latin word *socius* (companion) and the Greek word *logos* (speech or reason). Together these mean “speech or discourse about companionship”. How can we explain companionship or togetherness?

Social life doesn't just happen; it is an organized process. Social life can be a brief everyday interaction — moving to the right to let someone pass on a busy sidewalk, for example. Social life can also be larger and ongoing — such as the billions of daily exchanges in the economic system. If there are at least two people involved, there is a social interaction.

- What group processes lead to the decision that moving to the right rather than the left is normal?
- What exchanges and social relationships connect your T-shirt to exploited factory workers in China or Bangladesh?



Figure 1.3. Sociologists learn about society as a whole while studying one-to-one and group interactions. (Photo courtesy of Robert S. Donovan/Flickr)

Sociologists try to answer such questions through research. Sociology uses many theories and research methods to design studies. They apply study results to the real world.

## What are Society and Culture? Micro, Macro and Global Perspectives

Sociologists study all aspects and levels of society.

- A society is a group of people whose members interact, live in a definable area, and share a culture.
- A culture includes the group's shared practices, values, beliefs, norms, and artifacts.

Examples of what sociologists might study:

- analyze videos of people from different societies to understand the rules of polite conversation in different cultures.
- interview people to see how email and instant messaging have changed how they work.
- study the history of international agencies like the United Nations to understand how the world became divided into a First World and a Third World

These examples show how society is studied at different *levels of analysis*.

- A small-scale example: the detailed study of face-to-face interactions.
- A large-scale example: historical processes affecting entire civilizations.

Sociologists breakdown the study of society into different levels of analysis including **micro-level sociology**, **macro-level sociology** and **global-level sociology**.

**Micro**-level sociology studies the social dynamics of intimate, face-to-face interactions. An example of micro-level sociology: the study of cultural rules for politeness. Research is conducted with a small group such as family members, work colleagues, or friends. Sociologists might try to understand how people from different cultures interpret each other's behaviour to see how different rules for politeness lead to misunderstandings. If the same misunderstandings occur many times, the sociologists can suggest ideas about politeness rules to reduce tensions in mixed groups (such as during staff meetings or international negotiations).

**Macro**-level sociology focuses on large-scale, society-wide social interactions. For example, how does migration affect language use? This is a macro-level sociology because it studies social interaction larger than a small group. These include economic, political, and other circumstances that cause migration; educational, media, and other communication structures that spread of language; class, racial, or ethnic divisions that create slangs or cultures of language; isolation or integration of different communities.

Other examples of macro-level research include examining why women are less likely than men to reach powerful positions in society, or why fundamentalist religious movements are more important in American politics than in Canadian politics. The analysis is not micro-level detail of interpersonal life but larger, macro-level patterns.

**Global**-level sociology focuses on structures and processes larger than countries or societies: Climate change, introduction of new technologies, investment of capital, cross-cultural conflict,

With the boom and bust of oil, for example, daily life in Fort McMurray is affected not only by relationships with friends and neighbours, not only by provincial and national policies, but also by global markets that determine the price of oil. The *context* is a global scale of analysis.

The relationship between the micro, macro, and global structures and processes is part of sociology.

The size and methods of sociological studies differ, but sociologists all have two things in common:

- Sociological imagination
- Strict rules about how to do sociological research

## The Sociological Imagination

A sociologist looks at society using her **sociological imagination**. Pioneer sociologist C. Wright Mills (1916-1962) suggested this name for the "sociological lens" or "sociological perspective".

Mills definition of sociological imagination: how individuals understand their own and others' lives in relation to history and social structure (1959/2000). Sociological imagination is the capacity to see an individual's private troubles in the context of the broader social processes that affect them. This allows sociologists to examine "personal troubles" as part of "public issues of social structure" (1959).

Private troubles like unemployment, marital difficulties or addiction can be viewed as only personal, psychological. In an individualistic society like ours, many people will see issues that way: "He has an addictive personality." "I can't get a break in the job market." "My husband is unsupportive" etc. However, widely shared private troubles indicate a common social problem. Common social problems can be caused by how social life is structured. The issues are not understood as simply private troubles. They are best understood as public issues requiring a collective solution. You need sociological imagination to understand them.

Obesity, for example, is recognized as a problem in North America. Michael Pollan says that three out of five Americans are overweight and one out of five is obese (2006). In Canada in 2012, just under one in five adults (18.4%) were obese, an increase from 2003 (Statistics Canada, 2013). Obesity is therefore not simply a private concern related to individual diet or exercise. It is a widely shared social issue that puts people at risk for chronic diseases. It also creates social costs for the medical system.

Pollan argues that obesity is partly caused by the inactive and stressful lifestyle of modern, capitalist society. More importantly, however, it is caused by industrialization of the food chain. Since the 1970s our food chain has produced increasingly cheap and abundant food with many more calories. Cheap additives like corn syrup led to super-sized fast foods and soft drinks in the 1980s. Finding food in the supermarket without a cheap, calorie-rich, corn-based additive is a challenge. The sociological imagination in this example sees the private troubles and attitudes associated with being overweight as a result of the industrialized food chain. This industrialization changed the human/environment relationship — in particular, the types of food we eat and the way we eat them.

By looking at individuals and societies and how they interact, sociologists examine what influences behaviour, attitudes, and culture. Sociologists use the sociological imagination. By applying scientific methods to this process, sociologists can do this without letting their own biases influence their conclusions.

## Studying Patterns: How Sociologists View Society

Sociologists are interested in

- the experiences of individuals and
- how those experiences are shaped by interactions with social groups.

To a sociologist, the personal decisions don't exist in a vacuum. Cultural patterns and social forces put pressure on people to make one choice over another. Sociologists try to identify these general patterns by examining the behaviour of large groups of people who experience the same social pressures. When social patterns persist and become habits, they are referred to as **social structures**. Persistent social patterns at macro or global levels of interaction are also described as *institutionalized*.

One problem for sociologists: Sometimes the relationship between the individual and society is thought of in a moral framework involving individual responsibility and individual choice. Individuals are morally responsible for their behaviours and decisions. Often in this framework, suggesting that an individual's behaviour needs to be understood in its social context is dismissed as "letting the individual off the hook".

Social sciences like sociology are neutral on these types of moral questions. Sociologists see the relationship of the individual and society as more complex than the moral framework suggests. Problems need to be studied through evidence-based, not morality-based, research. Sociologists try to see the individual as both a social being and a being who has free choice. Individuals do have responsibilities in everyday social roles. There are social consequences when they fail. But there is always a social context for individual choice and action.

In sociology, the individual and society are inseparable. We can't study one without the other. German sociologist Norbert Elias (1887-1990) described this through a metaphor of dancing. There can be no dance without the dancers, but there can be no dancers without the dance. Without the dancers, a dance is just an idea about motions in a choreographer's head. Without a dance, there is just a group of people moving around a floor. Similarly, there is no society without the individuals that make it up, and there are also no individuals who are not affected by the society in which they live (Elias, 1978).



## Making Connections: Sociology or Psychology

### What's the Difference?

You might be wondering: If sociologists and psychologists are both interested in people and their behaviour, how are these two disciplines different? What do they agree on, and where do they differ? The answers are complicated but important.

While both disciplines are interested in human behaviour,

- Psychologists focus on how the mind influences that behaviour. Sociologists study how society shapes both behaviour and the mind.
- Psychologists are interested in people's mental development and how their minds interpret their world. Sociologists are more likely to focus on how different aspects of society contribute to an individual's relationship with the world.
- Psychologists study inward qualities of individuals (mental health, emotional processes, cognitive processing). Sociologists look outward to qualities of social context (social institutions, cultural norms, interactions with others) to understand human behaviour.

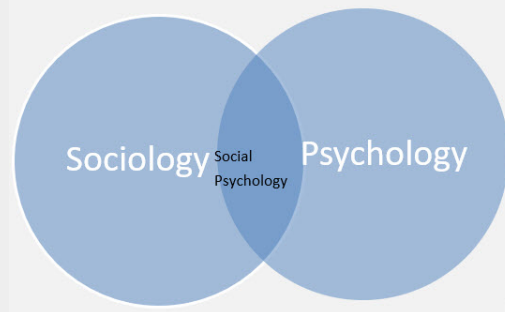


Figure 1.4. Social psychology: The overlap between sociology and psychology

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) was the first to make this distinction, when he attributed differences in suicide rates among people to social causes (religious differences) rather than to psychological causes (like their mental well-being) (Durkheim, 1897).

Today, we see this same distinction. For example, a sociologist studying how a couple gets to their first kiss on a date might focus on cultural norms for dating, social patterns of romantic activity, or the influence of social background on romantic partner selection. How is this process different for seniors than for teens, for example? A psychologist would more likely be interested in the person's romantic history, psychological type, or the mental processing of sexual desire.

A sociologist would say that analysis of individuals at the psychological level cannot adequately account for social variability in behaviour: For example, the difference in suicide rates of Catholics and Protestants, or the difference in dating rituals across cultures or historical periods. Sometimes sociology and psychology can combine in interesting ways, however.



## 1.2. Theoretical Perspectives



Figure 1.5. People holding posters and waving flags at a protest rally. (Photo courtesy of Steve Herman/Wikimedia Commons)

Sociologists study social events, interactions, and patterns. Then they develop theories to explain why these occur and what can result from them. In sociology, a **theory** is a way to explain different aspects of social interactions. Theories also create testable ideas about society (Allan, 2006).

In sociology different approaches and *paradigms* may offer different explanations. **Paradigms** are like lenses we look through to see the world. They are philosophical and theoretical frameworks used to make theories, generalizations, and design research. (pronounced “pair a dimes”, like two ten cent coins)

Sociologists use different approaches to knowledge, too. The variety of terms used to describe approaches and paradigms can be confusing. The parable of the wise blind men and the elephant may help. (This parable is adapted from multiple traditional sources including Saxe, 1868 and “Blind men and an elephant,” 2015)

## Blind Men and the Elephant

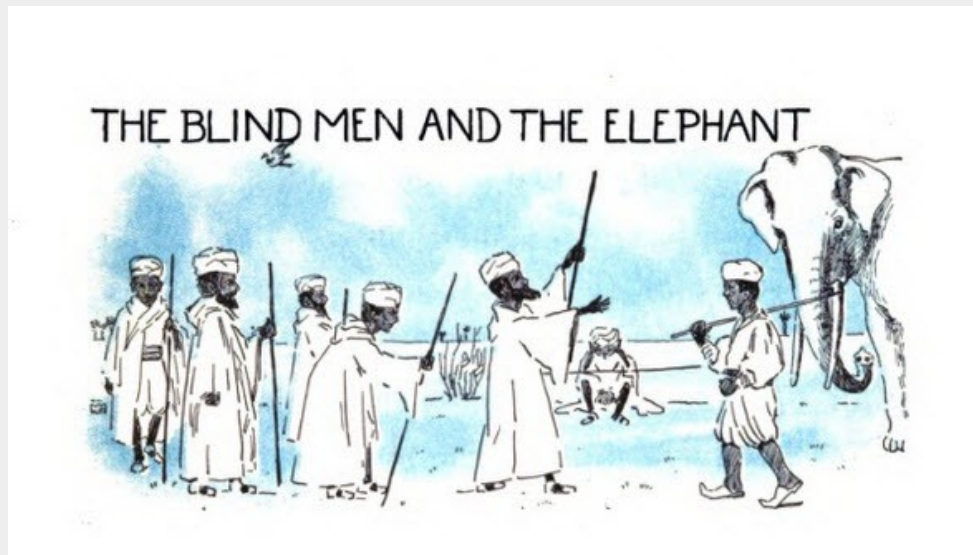


Figure 1.6 Illustration of the Blind Men and the Elephant by Herbert E. Martini in Golden Treasury Readers: Second Reader

Four wise blind men came across an elephant for the first time in their lives.

The first blind man reached out and touched the elephant's trunk. "The elephant," he described, "is like a large flexible tube with a tough hide."

The second man reached out and found the elephant's ear. He agreed that the elephant had a tough hide but argued that the first man was wrong. "The elephant is NOT like a long flexible tube but rather like a large, thick leaf." But he agreed that it had a tough exterior.

The third man approached the elephant's side and told the first two they were wrong. "Clearly," the elephant is some huge beast for it goes on beyond my reach in all directions," he pontificated.

The fourth and final wise man approached the elephant, stretched out his hand, and touched the elephant's tail. He concluded: "This is like a flexible stick with a tuft of hair on its end, not too different than a large paintbrush."

Which blind man truly saw the elephant? Did they all, with their different approaches and methods of exploration, see PART of the elephant? What would they need to do to get a complete picture of the elephant? They would need to collaborate about *how they looked at the elephant* and *how they went about measuring* the elephant to draw an accurate picture of the elephant.

So it is with sociology and our social world. Different sociologists see our social world from different *perspectives* (**paradigms** and **approaches to knowledge**). Only through collaboration and further scientific study (**research methods**) can we all come to a clearer picture of our social world.

Sometimes the outcome of research will be different depending on the researcher's paradigm. Each wise blind man makes a logical description of the elephant, based on their assumptions and experience, but each differs from the others'. Together they describe the whole elephant. Different schools of sociology can explain the same reality in different ways. Together they describe our social world.

Despite sociology's different perspectives and methodologies, all social research is systematic and rigorous. Sociology is based on scientific research with two key ideas: accurate observation of reality and logical construction of theories.

## Three Approaches to Knowledge and Five Paradigms

Sociology is divided into three types of sociological knowledge, each with its own strengths, limitations, purposes, and paradigms (ways of looking at the world):

- **Positivist sociology** focuses on generating knowledge useful for administering social life
- **Interpretive sociology** focuses on knowledge useful greater mutual understanding among members of society.
- **Critical sociology** focuses on knowledge useful for changing and improving the world.

Within these three types of sociological knowledge, there are different paradigms. This book looks at five sociological paradigms: **quantitative sociology**, **structural functionalism**, **symbolic interactionism**, **conflict theories**, and **feminism**.

Positivist Approaches	Interpretive Approaches	Critical Approaches
Quantitative paradigm	Symbolic interactionist paradigm	Conflict theory paradigms
Structural-functionalist paradigm		Feminist paradigm

### 1. *Positivist sociology*

The **positivist perspective** in sociology is like natural sciences such as chemistry and physics. The **positivist approach to knowledge** emphasizes

- empirical observation (observation through the senses) and measurement
- value neutrality
- the search for law-like statements about the social world (like Newton's laws of gravity for the natural world)

Just as natural sciences use math and statistics for support, positivism tries to translate human experience into quantifiable units of measurement. Positivism tries to develop knowledge useful for managing social life. Here are two kinds of positivism: **quantitative sociology** and **structural functionalism**.

Quantify means to describe in numbers. **Quantitative sociology** uses statistical methods such as surveys to quantify relationships between social variables. Quantitative sociologists argue that elements of human life can be measured and quantified in essentially the same way natural scientists measure and quantify the natural world. Natural sciences are disciplines like physics, biology, or chemistry.

Researchers analyze data using statistical techniques to uncover patterns or "laws" of human behaviour. For example, the degree of religiosity of an individual in Canada, measured by the frequency of attendance at religious ceremonies, can be predicted by a combination of different independent variables such as age, gender, income, immigrant status, and region (Bibby, 2012).

**Structural Functionalism** is also a positivist paradigm. Structural functionalism sees society as composed of **structures** and **functions**. Structures are regular patterns of behaviour and social arrangements (like the institutions of the family or education). These structures serve functions: the biological and social needs of individuals who make up that society. Society is like a human with different organs. Just like body organs work together to keep the whole system functioning, the various parts of society work together to keep the entire society functioning. *Parts of society* mean social institutions like the economy, political systems, health care, education, media, and religion.

According to structural functionalism, different social structures perform specific functions to maintain society. These structures define roles and interactions in the family, workplace, church, etc. Functions refer to how the needs of a society (properly socialized children, the distribution of food and resources, or a belief system, etc.) are satisfied.

Different societies have the same basic functional requirements, but they meet them using different kinds of social structures (example: different types of family, economy, or religious practice). So society is seen as a *system* like the human body or an automobile engine.

For example, the family structure functions to raise new members of society (children), the economic structure functions to adapt to distribute resources, the religious structure functions to provide common beliefs to unify society, etc.

Each social structure provides a specific and necessary function to maintain the whole. If the family fails to effectively raise children, or the economic system fails to distribute resources fairly, or religion fails to provide a good belief system, consequences are felt throughout the system. The other structures need to adapt, causing further change. *In a system, when one structure changes, the others change as well.*

One structural functionalist, Robert Merton (1910–2003), pointed out that social processes can have more than one function. **Manifest functions** are the consequences of a social process that intended, while **latent functions** are the unintended consequences of a social process. Manifest functions of college education, for example, include gaining knowledge, preparing for a career, and finding a good job. Latent functions of college years include meeting new people, participating in extracurricular activities, or finding a spouse or partner. Latent functions can be beneficial, neutral, or harmful.

### ***Criticisms of Positivism***

This is the main criticisms of quantitative sociology and structural functionalism: Can social phenomena be studied like the natural phenomena of the physical sciences? Can sociologists study people like chemists study chemicals in a test tube?

Interpretive sociologists say quantification reduces complex of social life to a set of numbers. This loses the meaning social life has for individuals. Measuring religious belief or “religiosity” by the number of times someone attends church explains very little about religious experience. Similarly, interpretive sociology argues that structural functionalism reduces the individual to a sociological robot, without capacity to act or create.

Critical sociologists challenge the conservatism of quantitative sociology and structural functionalism. Both types of positivist approaches say they are objective, or value-neutral. But critical sociology says that the social world is defined by struggles for social justice. Critical sociologists say sociology cannot be neutral or objective.

## 2. Interpretive Sociology

The interpretive perspective in sociology is a little like literature, philosophy, and history. Interpretative sociology focuses on understanding the meanings humans give to their activity. It is sometimes referred to as *social constructivism* to describe how individuals *construct* a world of meaning. This world of meaning affects the way people experience the world. It affects how they behave.

Interpretive sociology promotes the goal of mutual understanding and consensus among members of society.

**Symbolic interactionism** is one of the main kinds of interpretive sociology. It examines how relationships between individuals in society are based shared understandings. Communication— the exchange of meaning through language and symbols—is how people make sense of their social worlds. This viewpoint sees people shaping their world, rather than as entities who are acted upon by society (Herman and Reynolds, 1994). Symbolic interactionism is a micro-level perspective.

The self develops only through social interaction with others. We *learn* to be ourselves by interacting with others.

With shared meanings, people find a common course of action. People decide how to help a friend diagnosed with cancer, how to divide up responsibilities at work, or how to resolve conflict. The passport officer at the airport makes a gesture with her hand which you interpret as a signal to step forward pass her your passport. You create a joint action—“checking the passport”— which is just one symbolic interaction in a series for travelers when they arrive at an airport

Social life is seen as the stringing together of many such joint actions. Symbolic interactionism emphasizes that groups of individuals have the freedom and agency to define their situations.

Symbolic-interactionists look for patterns of interaction between individuals. Their studies often involve observation of one-on-one interactions. For example, Howard Becker (1953) studied cannabis users. He argued that the effects of cannabis have less to do with its physical qualities in the body than with the process of communication (or symbolic interaction) about the effects. New cannabis users need to go through three stages to become a regular user: they need to learn from experienced smokers how to identify the effects, how to enjoy them, and how to attach meaning to them (i.e., that the experience is funny, strange or euphoric, etc.). Becker said that smoking cannabis is a social process. The experience of “being high” is as much a product of interactions as it is a bio-chemical process.

Symbolic interactionism has also been important in education about people who are excluded. Howard Becker’s *Outsiders* (1963), for example, described the process of **labelling**. Labelling means individuals become labelled as deviants (like criminals) by authorities. A young person, for example, is picked up by police for an offense, defined by police and other authorities as a “young offender,” processed by the criminal justice system, and then introduced to criminal subcultures through contact with experienced offenders. Labelling theory shows that individuals are not born deviant or criminal, but become criminal through symbolic interaction with authorities in institutions. Becker says that deviance is not simply a social fact but the product of a process of definition by authorities and other privileged members of society. Symbolic interactionists prefer qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews or participant observation, rather than quantitative methods. They want to understand the symbolic worlds in which research subjects live.

### *Criticisms of Interpretive Sociology*

It can be difficult to make scientific claims about the nature of society from what is learned from small situations, involving very few individuals. While the rich texture of face-to-face social life can be examined in detail, the results will remain descriptive without being able to explain anything. Can we use a particular observation to a general claim about an entire society?

### *3. Critical Sociology*

The critical perspective in sociology comes from social activism, social justice movements, and revolutionary struggles. Karl Marx said its focus was the “ruthless critique of everything existing” (Marx, 1843). The key elements of this critical sociology

- critique of power relations
- understanding society as historical — subject to change, struggle, contradiction, instability, social movement, and radical transformation.

Sometimes critical sociology is called **conflict theory**. Critical sociology looks at developing knowledge and political action to change power relations. Historical materialism, feminism, environmentalism, anti-racism, and queer studies are examples of critical sociology.

Critical sociology wants to do more than understand or describe the world. It also wants to use sociological knowledge to improve the world and free people from servitude.

The critical tradition in sociology is not about complaining or being “negative.” It’s not about judging people. Sociologist Herbert Marcuse (1964) says critical sociology involves two value judgments:

- Human life is worth living, or that it should be worth living; and
- Possibilities exist to better human life.

Critical sociology does not try to be objective or neutral. Critical sociology promotes social change by using objective knowledge gathered by research. Can you see the difference?

## Making Connections: Sociology in the Real World

### “Wanna go for a coffee?”

An example of using sociology in everyday life: Think about all the social relationships involved in meeting a friend for coffee. A sociologist could study the social aspects of this event at a micro- level: conversation analysis, dynamics of friend relationships, addiction issues with caffeine, consumer preferences for different beverages, beliefs about caffeine and mental alertness, etc.

A symbolic interactionist might ask: Why is drinking coffee at the center of this interaction? What does coffee *mean* for you and your friend who meet to drink it?

Critical sociology would note how having coffee involves a series of relationships with others the environment that are not obvious if the activity is viewed in isolation (Swift, Davies, Clarke and Czerny, 2004).

When buy a coffee, we are involved with

- the growers in Central and South America. We are involved with their working conditions and the global structures of private ownership and distribution that make selling coffee profitable.
- the server who works in the coffee shop;
- changes in supply, demand, competition, and market speculation that determine the price of coffee;
- marketing strategies that lead us to identify with beverage choices and brands;
- modifications to the natural environment where the coffee is grown, through which it is transported, and where, finally, the paper cups and other waste are disposed of, etc.
- Ultimately, over our cup of coffee, we find ourselves in a long political and historical process:
- low wage or subsistence farming in Central and South America,
- the transfer of wealth to North America,
- resistance to this process like the fair-trade movement.

Although we are unaware of the web of relationships that we have entered into when we have coffee with a friend, a systematic analysis would see that our casual chat over coffee as the tip of the iceberg. Our relationships involve economic and political structures every time we have a cup of coffee.



Figure 1.7. According to a 2010 study, 65% of Canadians drink coffee daily. The average coffee drinker drinks 2.8 cups of coffee per day. Source: Coffee Association of Canada, 2010. (Photo courtesy of Duncan C/Flickr)

## ***Feminism***

**Feminism** is another important kind of critical sociology. Feminist sociology focuses on the power relationships and inequalities between women and men. **Patriarchy** refers to social structures based on the belief that men and women are different and unequal. Patriarchy has affected property rights, access to positions of power, access to income and many other social structures.

**Gender** refers to how a society defines attitudes and behaviour considered “proper” for women and men. Gender is different from biological differences between women and men.

Patriarchy has this attitude: physical sex differences between males and females are related to differences in their character, behaviour, and ability. These differences are used to justify a **gendered** division of social roles and inequality in access to rewards, power and privilege.

Feminist sociology asks: How does giving different qualities to women and men continue the inequality between the sexes? How is the family, law, jobs, religious institutions, etc. organized based in inequality between the genders?

There are many kinds of feminism. Despite the differences, feminist approaches have four things in common:

1. Gender differences are the central focus.
2. Gender relations are viewed as a social problem. There are social inequalities and stress.
3. Gender relations can be changed. They are sociological and historical in nature, so there can be change and progress.
4. Feminism wants to change the conditions of life that are oppressive for women.

## ***Criticisms of Critical Sociology***

The radical nature of critical sociology is criticized. Critical sociology wants revolutionary transformation of society, and not everybody agrees.

Critical sociology is also criticized for exaggerating the power of dominant groups to manipulate groups with less power. For example, media representations of women are said to portray unrealistic beauty standards and make women sex objects. This suggests that women are controlled by media images and have little ability to interpret media images for themselves. Similarly, interpretive sociology challenges critical sociology for implying that people are products of large historical forces rather than individuals who can act to help themselves.

Because social reality is complex, different sociological approaches can see the social world differently. Is society characterized by conflict or agreement? Is human practice determined by external social structures or is it the product of human choice and action? Is human experience unique because of social interaction, or can it be studied like the physical world of chemistry? The answer to each question is: Both answers are correct! Different sociological perspectives allow better insights into social experience.



## Making Connections: Sociological Research

### Farming and Locavores: How Sociological Perspectives Might View Food Consumption

Eating is a daily activity, but it can also be associated with important moments in our lives. Eating can be an individual or a group action, and culture influences eating habits and customs. In the context of society, social movements, political issues, and economic debates address our food system. Any of these might become a topic of sociological study.

A structural-functional approach to food consumption might be interested in the role of the agriculture industry within the nation's economy. Or how human systems adapt to environmental systems. The structural-functionalist might be interested in disequilibrium in the human/environment relationship caused by population increases and the industrialized agriculture. — from the early days of manual-labour farming to modern mechanized agribusiness. The idea of sustainable agriculture, promoted by Michael Pollan (2006) and others, shows changes needed to return interaction between humans and the natural environment to equilibrium.

A symbolic interactionist would be more interested in micro-level topics: the shared meaning of food, like as symbolic use of food in religious ceremonies, attitudes towards food in fast food restaurants, the role of food in the social interaction of a family dinner. This perspective might also study group interactions of those who identify themselves based on a diet, such as vegans (people who do not eat meat or dairy products) or locavores (people who try to eat locally-produced food).

A critical sociologist might be interested in the power differentials in the regulation of the food industry. They might explore where people's right to information intersects with corporations' drive for profit and how the government mediates this. Critical sociologists might also be interested in the power and powerlessness experienced by local farmers versus large farming corporations. In the documentary *Food Inc.*, the plight of farmers resulting from Monsanto's patenting of seed technology is depicted as a product of the corporatization of the food industry. Another topic of study might be how nutrition and diet vary between different social classes. The industrialization of the food chain has created cheaper foods than ever. However, this may result in the poorest people eating food with the least nutrition.

## 1.3 Why Study Sociology?

### How has sociology affected Canadian society?

Think of the Canadian health care system. The Nova Scotia health care plan has many problems, but can you imagine life without MSI? Can you imagine paying for every appointment, test and service – or what would happen if you couldn't pay?

Tommy Douglas introduced the first publicly funded health care plan in Canada in 1961 in Saskatchewan. Many criticized the idea, and doctors went on strike. The Royal Commission on Health Services studied the

legislation and its effects. They decided it could work. Sociologist Bernard Blishen (b. 1919) was research director for the Commission. Blishen designed Canada's national Medicare program in 1964.

Blishen went on to work in the field of medical sociology and created an index to measure socioeconomic status (the Blishen scale). He received the Order of Canada in 2011 for his contributions to the creation of public health care in Canada.

Many sociologists try to understand society, Others see sociology as a way not only to understand, but also to improve society. Besides the creation of public health care in Canada, sociology has contributed to many important social reforms such as

- equal opportunity for women in the workplace,
- improved treatment for individuals with mental and learning disabilities
- increased recognition and accommodation for people from different ethnic backgrounds
- creation of hate crime legislation
- recognition of Aboriginal rights
- prison reform

Sociologist Peter Berger (b. 1929) describes a sociologist as “someone concerned with understanding society in a disciplined way.” Sociologists are interested in the important moments of people's lives as well as everyday occurrences. Berger also describes the “aha” moment when a sociological theory becomes understood:

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

Sociology can be exciting because it teaches people how they fit into the world and how others see them. Sociology helps people understand how they connect to groups based on the many ways groups classify themselves and how society classifies the groups. Sociology raises awareness of how those classifications—such as economic and status levels, education, ethnicity, or sexual orientation—affect perceptions and decisions.

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

## Sociology in the Workplace

Employers want people with “transferable skills.” This means that they want to hire people whose knowledge, skills and education can be applied in a variety of settings and tasks. Studying sociology can provide people with transferable knowledge and skills, including:

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

Sociology prepares people for many careers. Besides conducting social research or becoming sociology teachers, sociologists are hired to work in government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, social services, counselling agencies (such as family planning, career, substance abuse), design and evaluate social policies and programs, health services, market research, independent research and polling. Even a small amount of training in sociology is useful in careers like sales, public relations, journalism, teaching, law, nursing, and criminal justice.

## Chapter Summary

### What Is Sociology?

Sociology is the systematic study of society and social interaction. In order to carry out their studies, sociologists identify cultural patterns and social forces and determine how they affect individuals and groups. They also develop ways to apply their findings to the real world.

### Theoretical Perspectives

Sociologists develop theories to explain social events, interactions, and patterns. A theory is a proposed explanation of those patterns. Theories have different scales. Macro-level theories, such as structural functionalism and conflict theory, try to explain how societies operate as a whole. Micro-level theories, such as symbolic interactionism, focus on interactions between individuals.

### Why Study Sociology?

Studying sociology helps both individuals and society. Sociology prepares students for careers in an increasingly diverse world. Sociology helps students understand their role in the social world. Sociology teaches us to think critically about social issues. Sociological research helps solve social problems.

## Key Terms

**capitalism:** an economic system. Capitalism favors private or corporate ownership and production/sale of goods in a competitive market.

**critical sociology:** A theoretical perspective that focuses on inequality and power relations in society. Critical sociology works for social justice.

**culture:** Includes a group's shared practices, values, beliefs, norms and artifacts.

**feminism:** The critical analysis of the way gender differences in society structure social inequality.

**functionalism (structural-functionalism):** An approach that sees society as a structure with interrelated parts. These parts work together to meet the biological and social needs of individuals.

**gender:** a society's definition for attitudes and behaviour considered "proper" for women and men. Gender is different from biological differences.

**global-level sociology:** The study of structures and processes beyond the boundaries of countries or specific societies.

**interpretive sociology:** A theoretical perspective that explains human behaviour in terms of the meaning humans give to it.

**latent functions:** Unintended consequences of a social process.

**macro-level sociology:** The study of society-wide social structures and processes.

**manifest functions:** Intended consequences of a social process.

**micro-level sociology:** The study of specific relationships between individuals or small groups.

**paradigms:** Philosophical and theoretical frameworks used to make theories, generalizations, and design research.

**patriarchy:** social structures in which men have most of the power

**positivism (or positivist sociology):** The scientific study of social patterns based on methods of the natural sciences.

**quantitative sociology:** Statistical methods such as surveys with large numbers of participants.

**society:** A group of people whose members interact, reside in a definable area, and share a culture.

**sociological imagination:** The ability to understand how your own unique circumstances relate to that of other people, as well as to history in general and societal structures.

**sociology:** The systematic study of society and social interaction.

**structural functionalism:** see functionalism.

**structure:** General patterns that persist through time. They become habits at micro-levels of interaction, or institutionalized at macro or global levels.

**symbolic interactionism:** A theoretical perspective that examine the relationship of individuals in their society by studying communication (language and symbols).

**theory:** A proposed explanation about social interactions or society

## Chapter Quiz

### 1.1. What Is Sociology?

1. Which of the following best describes sociology as a subject?
  - a. the study of individual behaviour
  - b. the study of cultures
  - c. the study of society and social interaction
  - d. the study of economics
2. Wright Mills once said that sociologists need to develop a sociological \_\_\_\_\_ to study how society affects individuals.
  - a. culture
  - b. imagination
  - c. method
  - d. tool
3. A sociologist defines society as a group of people who reside in a defined area, share a culture, and who:
  - a. interact.
  - b. work in the same industry.
  - c. speak different languages.
  - d. practise a recognized religion.
4. Seeing patterns means that a sociologist needs to be able to:
  - a. compare the behaviour of individuals from different societies.
  - b. compare one society to another.
  - c. identify similarities in how social groups respond to social pressure.
  - d. compare individuals to groups.

5. The difference between positivism and interpretive sociology relates to:
  - a. whether individuals like or dislike their society.
  - b. whether research methods use statistical data or person-to-person research.
  - c. whether sociological studies can predict or improve society.
  - d. all of the above.
6. Which would a quantitative sociologists use to gather data?
  - a. a large survey
  - b. a literature search
  - c. an in-depth interview
  - d. a review of television programs

### **1.2. Theoretical Perspectives**

7. Which of these theories is most likely to look at the social world on a micro-level?
  - a. structural functionalism
  - b. conflict theory
  - c. positivism
  - d. symbolic interactionism
8. A symbolic interactionist may compare social interactions to:
  - a. behaviours.
  - b. conflicts.
  - c. human organs.
  - d. theatrical roles.
9. Which research technique would most likely be used by a symbolic interactionist?
  - a. surveys
  - b. participant observation
  - c. quantitative data analysis
  - d. none of the above

### 1.3. Why Study Sociology?

10. Studying Sociology helps people analyze data because they learn:

- a. interview techniques.
- b. to apply statistics.
- c. to generate theories.
- d. all of the above.

11. Berger describes sociologists as concerned with:

- a. monumental moments in people's lives.
- b. common everyday life events.
- c. both a and b.
- d. none of the above.

[Quiz answers at the end of the chapter]

## Short Answer

### 1.1. What Is Sociology?

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

### 1.2. Theoretical Perspectives

1. Which theory do you think better explains how societies operate — structural functionalism or conflict theory? Why?
2. Do you think the way people behave in social interactions is more due to the cause and effect of external social constraints or more like actors playing a role in a theatrical production? Why?

### 1.3. Why Study Sociology?

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

## Further Research

### 1.1. What Is Sociology?

Sociology is a broad discipline. Different kinds of sociologists employ various methods for exploring the relationship between individuals and society. Check out more about sociology: <http://www.sociologyguide.com/questions/sociological-approach.php>.

### 1.2. Theoretical Perspectives

People often think of all conflict as violent, but many conflicts can be resolved nonviolently. To learn more about nonviolent methods of conflict resolution check out the Albert Einstein Institution: <http://openstaxcollege.org/l/ae-institution>.

### 1.3. Why Study Sociology?

For a nominal fee, the Canadian Sociological Association has produced an informative pamphlet “Opportunities in Sociology” which includes sections on: (1) The unique skills that set sociology apart as a discipline; (2) An overview of the Canadian labour market and the types of jobs available to Sociology BA graduates; (3) An examination of how sociology students can best prepare themselves for the labour market; (4) An introduction, based on sociological research, of the most fruitful ways to conduct a job search: <https://www.fedcan-association.ca/event/en/33/91>.

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## Image Attributions

**Figure 1.1.** Canada Day National Capital by Derek Hatfield ([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Canada\\_Day\\_National\\_Capital.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Canada_Day_National_Capital.jpg)) used under CC BY 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en>)

**Figure 1.2.** Il (secondo?) bacio più famoso della storia: Vancouver Riot Kiss by Pasquale Borriello (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/pazca/5844049845/in/photostream/>) used under CC BY 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)

**Figure 1.3** Sociologists learn about society as a whole while studying one-to-one and group interactions. (Photo courtesy of Robert S. Donovan/Flickr)

**Figure 1.5.** People holding posters and waving flags at a protest rally. (Photo courtesy of Steve Herman/Wikimedia Commons)

**Figure 1.6.** Martini, H.E. (1909). The Blind Men and the Elephant [illustration] (p.87). In Charles M. Stebbins & Mary H. Coolidge (Eds.), *Golden treasury readers: Second reader* (pp. 87-93). New York: American Book Company. Open Domain Image.

**Figure 1.7.** Coffee Association of Canada, 2010. (Photo courtesy of Duncan C/Flickr)

Long Description

Figure 1.\_: Sociologists are placed into quadrants based on whether they privilege structure over agency or see society governed by normative vs. conflictual means.

	Normative	Conflictual
Structure	Comte’s Positivism and Durkheim’s Structural Functionalism	Foucault’s Poststructuralism
Agency	Weber’s Interpretive Sociology and Mead’s Symbolic Interactionism	Martineau’s Feminism and Marx’s Critical Sociology

Solutions to Chapter Quiz

1 c, | 2 b, | 3 a, | 4 c, | 5 b, | 6 a, | 7 d, | 8 d, | 9 b, | 10 d, | 11 c

[2]

## Sociological Research

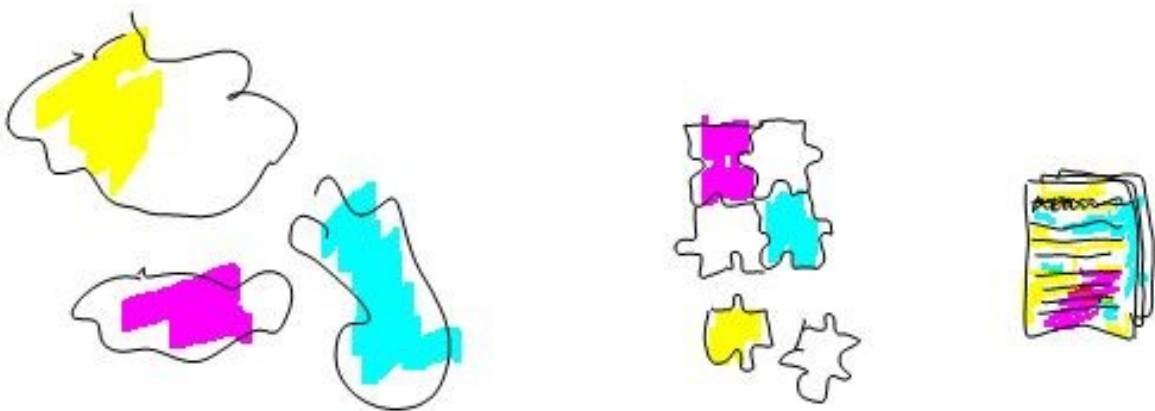


Figure 2.1 Research process. Photo courtesy of Lilia Efimova/Flickr CC 2.0

### Learning Objectives

#### 2.1. Approaches to Sociological Research

- Define and describe the scientific method.
- Explain how the scientific method is used in sociological research.
- Understand the difference between positivist and interpretive approaches to the scientific method in sociology.
- Define what reliability and validity mean in a research study.

#### 2.2. Research Methods

- Differentiate between four kinds of research methods: surveys, experiments, field research, and secondary data or textual analysis.
- Understand why certain topics are better suited to different research approaches.

#### 2.3. Ethical Concerns

- Understand why ethical standards exist.
- Demonstrate awareness of the Canadian Sociological Association's Code of Ethics.
- Define value neutrality, and outline some of the issues of value neutrality in sociology.

# INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

After the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said, “this is not a time to commit sociology.” He thought we should condemn the violence, not discuss sociological research about causes of political violence. Harper’s statement suggests that talking about social causes of violence can weaken a stand against terrorism.

Behind statements like Harper’s are beliefs about the nature of a “terrorist”. In this view, the terrorist is a person beyond reason and morality. Therefore, sociological analysis is not useful. Sociology would interfere with our determination to prevent terrorism.

However, Robert Pape’s (2005) research shows a different picture of terrorists. Pape studied 462 suicide bombers. They were **not** mentally imbalanced or blindly motivated by religious zeal or unconcerned by morality. They were ordinary individuals caught up in extraordinary circumstances. Other studies of suicide bombers confirm this. How would this understanding affect public policy and public responses to terrorism?

Sociological research is important for public policy. For example, what’s the most effective way to respond to terrorism or violent crime? Often, the news talks about terrorism and violence in moral terms. Then the solutions are narrowed to either being “tough” or “soft” on crime. Tough and soft are moral categories. A question framed by moral categories cannot be solved using evidence-based procedures. Narrow moral categories can prevent asking about responses to crime that actually work.

The sociological approach differs. Sociology examines the effectiveness of strategies for preventing violent behaviour. Sociologists ask who commits violent acts and why. Sociologists rely on systematic research rather than opinion.

Sociological researchers use **empirical evidence** (evidence gathered by direct experience and observation) combined with the **scientific method**. Scientific sociological study of the social causes of crime or terrorism would involve careful steps:

1. defining a research question that can be answered through empirical observation
2. gathering information through detailed observation
3. forming a hypothesis
4. testing the hypothesis
5. analyzing data and drawing conclusions from the data
6. publishing the results and thinking about future research on the topic.

A starting point might be the question “What are the social conditions of individuals who commit terrorist acts?”

Unwillingness to “commit sociology” and think about the roots of political violence might lead to moral outrage, but not to violence prevention. Events like the Boston Marathon bombing are precisely the moment to commit sociology to find causes.

## 2.1. Approaches to Sociological Research

Sociologists study the social world created by humans. They notice patterns of behaviour as people move through the world. Sociological research methods are based on the scientific method rather than casual observation.

There are three basic approaches to sociological knowledge:

- **positivist** interest in quantitative evidence: This evidence can be used to make good social policy decisions.
- **interpretive** interest in understanding the meanings of human behaviour. This can help greater mutual understanding.
- **critical** interest in knowledge useful for challenging power relations and liberating people.

Sociologists often begin the research process by asking a question about how or why things happen. A sociologist then goes through a scientific process to answer the question. Sociologists can choose from different research methods. Choice of method depends on the topic and goals of the research.

The researcher may use a **positivist methodology** or an **interpretive methodology**. Both methods can be used by **critical research**. The following sections describe these approaches.



Figure 2.2. Sherlock Holmes, known for his keen observational skills (Photo courtesy of Special Collections Toronto Public Library/ Wikimedia Commons)

## Science vs. Non-Science

Sometimes we need to be skeptical about science: for example, when technologies based on science destroy the natural environment. But skepticism can be dangerous: for example, when epidemics like measles occur because of low vaccination rates. Skepticism is important to both natural and social sciences, but a skeptical attitude needs to be combined with systematic research. The scientific method allows sociologists to distinguish between everyday opinions and ideas supported by evidence.

Here is one distinction between scientific and non-scientific claims about the world: In science “seeing is believing” but in everyday life “believing is seeing” (Brym, Roberts, Lie, & Rytina, 2013). Science is based on systematic observation. Only by observation (or “seeing”) can a scientist believe that an idea about the world is correct. Research methodologies reduce the chance that conclusions will be made in error. In everyday life, people often “see” what they already expect to see or what they already believe to be true.

Many people know things about the social world without having a background in sociology. Sometimes their knowledge is valid; sometimes it is not. Think about how people know what they know, and compare this to the scientific way of knowing. Four types of non-scientific reasoning are common in everyday life:

- knowledge based on casual observation,
- knowledge based on selective evidence,
- knowledge based on overgeneralization,
- knowledge based on authority or tradition.

## Ways of Knowing

Table 2.1. *Scientific and Non-Scientific Ways of Knowing* (Source: Amy Blackstone, *Sociological Inquiry Principles: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. Creative Commons by-nc-sa 3.0 License)

Way of Knowing	Description
Casual Observation	Occurs when we make observations without any systematic process for observing or assessing the accuracy of what we observed.
Selective Observation	Occurs when we see only those patterns that we want to see, or when we assume that only the patterns we have experienced directly exist.
Overgeneralization	Occurs when we assume that broad patterns exist even when our observations have been limited.
Authority/Tradition	A socially defined source of knowledge that might shape our beliefs about what is true and what is not true.
Scientific Research Methods	An organized, logical way of learning and knowing about our social world.

## Science and Research Methods

Scientific Research Methods are organized, logical ways of learning and knowing about our social world. Many people know things because they experienced them directly. If you grew up in Manitoba, you may have observed what some kids learn each winter: it is true that tongues will stick to metal when it's very cold outside. Direct experience may get us accurate information, but only if we are lucky. We are not very careful observers. In this example, the observation process is not really deliberate or formal. Instead, you would come to know what you believe to be true through **casual observation**. Sometimes casual observation is right, and sometimes it's wrong. Without a systematic process for observing and judging the accuracy of observations, we can't be sure if informal observations are accurate.

Many people overlook contrary evidence. Suppose a friend insists that all men are liars shortly after she had learned that her boyfriend cheated. One man's lies started to represent a quality of all men to her. But do *all* men really lie *all* the time? Probably not. If you asked your friend to think about her experiences with men, she would probably admit that she knew many men who had never lied to her. Maybe even her boyfriend did not habitually lie. This friend committed what social scientists refer to as **selective observation**: She notices only the pattern that she wanted to find. She ignored contrary evidence. If, on the other hand, your friend's experience with her boyfriend had been her only experience with any man, then she would have been committing what social scientists call **overgeneralization**, assuming that patterns exist based on very limited observations.

Another way that people claim to "know" is believing what they hear. An urban legend claims a woman used to cut both ends off a ham before putting it in the oven (Mikkelsen, 2005). She baked ham that way for years because that's the way her mother did it, so clearly that was the way it was supposed to be done. She based her knowledge on a family tradition (**traditional knowledge**). After years of tossing perfectly good ham into the trash, she learned that her mother cut the ends off ham only because she did not have a pan large enough for the ham.

Without questioning what we *think* we know is true, we can believe false statements. This is more likely when an **authority** tells us that something is true (**authoritative knowledge**). Sometimes we might need to rely on authorities like government, school or churches. This way of knowing differs from the sociological way of knowing, however. Whether quantitative, qualitative, or critical, sociological research is based on the scientific method.

The last three paragraphs on the four types of non-scientific reasoning adapted from Amy Blackstone, *Sociological Inquiry Principles: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods (V. 1.0)*. Used under Creative Commons by-nc-sa 3.0 License.

## The Scientific Method

Sociologists use research methods such as experiments, surveys, field research, and secondary data analysis.

Social interactions are complicated. They can seem impossible to measure and explain. This is sociology uses scientific methods to study human behaviour. Scientific research establishes rules to help ensure results are as objective and accurate as possible. Scientific methods focus a study and organize results.

- Positivist quantitative methodologies seek to translate observable phenomena into numerical data.
- Interpretive qualitative methodologies seek to translate observable phenomena into units of meaning.

The social scientific method in both cases involves developing and testing theories about the world based on empirical (observable) evidence. The social scientific method commits to systematic observation of the social world. It strives to be objective, skeptical, and logical. It involves a series of established steps known as the **research process**.

No matter what research approach is used, researchers want studies to have **reliability** (how likely research results are to be the same if the study conducted again). Reliability increases the likelihood that what is true of one person will be true of all people in a group.

Researchers also want to maximize the study's **validity** (how well the study measures what it was designed to measure).

Sociologists use the scientific method to be as objective and consistent as possible. The scientific method steps provide the means for accuracy, reliability, and validity.

Typically, the scientific method starts with these steps:

1. ask a question
2. research existing sources
3. formulate a hypothesis.

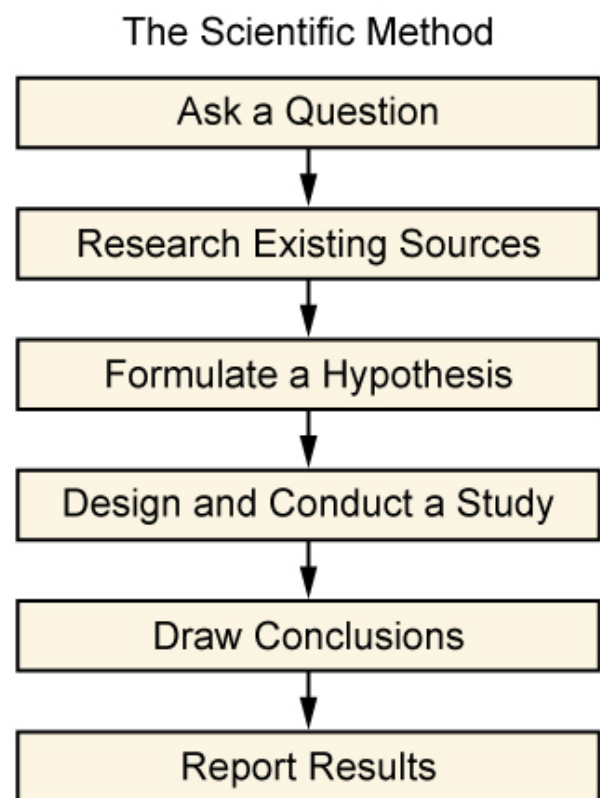


Figure 2.3. The research cycle passes through a series of steps. The conclusions and reporting typically generate a new set of questions, which renews the cycle. [Long Description at the end of the chapter]



### *Ask a Question*

The first step of the scientific method: ask a question, describe a problem, and identify the specific area of interest. The topic should be narrow enough to study within a geography and period. “Are societies capable of sustained happiness?” would be too vague. The question should also be broad enough to have wide interest. “What do personal hygiene habits reveal about the values of students at Scuzi High School?” might be too narrow.

Next, ideas need to be clearly defined or *operationalized*. In a hygiene study, for instance, hygiene could be defined as “personal habits to maintain physical appearance.” A researcher might ask, “How do differing personal hygiene habits reflect the cultural value placed on appearance?” When forming research questions, sociologists develop an **operational definition**; they define a concept by the concrete steps needed to measure it. The concept is translated into an observable **variable**, a measure that has different values. An operational definition identifies an observable condition.

Operationalizing variables allows researchers to collect data systematically. The operational definition must be a meaningful measure. It must also be reliable, meaning that results will be similar when tested on more than one person. For example, good drivers might be defined in many ways: Those who use their turn signals; those who do not speed; or those who allow others to merge. But these driving behaviours could be interpreted differently by different researchers, so they could be difficult to measure. Alternatively, “a driver who has never received a traffic violation” is a specific description that will lead researchers to obtain the same information, so it is a good operational definition. Asking the question, “how many traffic violations a driver has received?” turns the concepts of “good drivers” and “bad drivers” into variables which might be measured by the number of traffic violations.

Sociologists need to be careful how they operationalize variables. In this example we know that Black drivers receive much higher levels of police scrutiny than white drivers, so the number of traffic violations a driver has received might reflect less on their driving ability and more on the crime of “driving while Black.”

### *Research Existing Sources*

Next researchers conduct background research through a **literature review**. The researcher reads similar and related studies. This lets them build on prior knowledge. They focus their research question and avoid duplicating previous research. Researchers—including student researchers—are responsible for correctly citing all existing sources they use.

### *Formulate a Hypothesis*

A **hypothesis** is an assumption about how two or more variables are related; A hypothesis makes a statement about the relationship between those variables. It’s sometimes called an educated guess because it’s based on theory, observations or the existing literature. The hypothesis puts this guess in the form of a testable statement. In positivist sociology, the hypothesis predicts how one form of human behaviour influences another.

Positivist approaches operationalize variables as **quantitative data**: They translate a social phenomenon like health into numerically measurable variable like “number of visits to the hospital.” This permits sociologists to make predictions using math. They can perform statistical techniques to demonstrate the validity of relationships.

Variables are examined to see if there is a **correlation** between them. When a change in one variable coincides with a change in another variable, there is a correlation. This does not necessarily mean that one variable causes another variable, however; just that changes in the variables are associated.

The difference between independent and dependent variables is important. In research, **independent variables** are the cause of the change. The **dependent variable** is the effect or thing that is changed. For example, how does gender (the independent variable) affect income (the dependent variable)? How does religion (the independent variable) affect family size (the dependent variable)? How is social class (the dependent variable) affected by level of education (the independent variable)? (Why is the third example different?)

To claim **causation**, three criteria must be satisfied:

- There must be a correlation between the independent and dependent variables.
- The independent variable must happen before the dependent variable.
- There must be no other **intervening variable** responsible for the causal relationship.

While there needs to be a correlation between variables for a causal relationship, correlation does not necessarily mean causation. The relationship between variables can be the result of a third, intervening variable.

For example, there might be a positive relationship between wearing bikinis and eating ice cream. But wearing bikinis does not cause eating ice cream. It is more likely that the heat of summer causes both an increase in bikini wearing and an increase in the consumption of ice cream.

*Table 2.2. Examples of Dependent and Independent Variables. Typically, the Independent Variable Causes the Dependent Variable to Change in Some Way.*

Hypothesis	Variable	Dependent Variable
The greater the availability of affordable housing, the lower the homeless rate.	Affordable Housing	Homeless Rate
The greater the availability of math tutoring, the higher the math grades.	Math Tutoring	Math Grades
The greater the police patrol presence, the safer the neighbourhood.	Police Patrol Presence	Safer Neighbourhood
The greater the factory lighting, the higher the productivity.	Factory Lighting	Productivity
The greater the amount of public auditing, the lower the amount of political dishonesty.	Auditing	Political Dishonesty

The distinction between causation and correlation can have significant consequences. For example, Indigenous Canadians are overrepresented in prisons. In 2013, Indigenous people made up about 4 percent of the Canadian population, but they made up 23.2 percent of the federal penitentiary population (Correctional Investigator Canada, 2013). There is a positive correlation between being an Indigenous person in Canada and being in jail. Is this because Indigenous people are predisposed to crime? No. There are at least four intervening variables that explain the higher imprisonment of Indigenous people (Hartnagel, 2004):

- Indigenous people are more likely to live in poverty, and poverty is associated with higher arrest and incarceration rates
- Indigenous lawbreakers tend to commit more detectable “street” crimes than the less detectable “white collar” crimes
- the criminal justice system profiles and discriminates against Indigenous people
- the legacy of colonization disrupted and weakened traditional Indigenous communities.

**Operational definitions** help measure variables reliably. In a study asking how tutoring improves grades, for instance, one researcher might define “good” grades as a C or better, while another uses a B+ as a starting point for good. Another operational definition might describe “tutoring” as “one-on-one assistance by an expert in the field, hired by an educational institution.” Those definitions set limits and establish cut-off points, ensuring consistency and replicability in a study.

Simply identifying two topics, or variables, is not enough: Their relationship must be part of the hypothesis.

A sociologist makes a hypothesis, but that doesn’t mean data contradicting the hypothesis are not welcome. Sociologists analyze general patterns, but they are equally interested in exceptions to patterns.

In a study of education, a researcher might predict that high school dropouts have a hard time finding a rewarding career. While many assume the higher the education, the higher the salary and degree of career happiness, there are many exceptions. People with little education have had stunning careers, and people with advanced degrees have had trouble finding work. A sociologist prepares a hypothesis knowing that results will vary.

### *Hypothesis Formation in Qualitative Research*

While many sociologists rely on positivist methods in their research, others operate from an **interpretive approach**. While still systematic, this interpretive approach does not follow the hypothesis-testing model using quantitative variables. Instead, an interpretive framework wants to understand social worlds from the point of view of participants. This leads to in-depth knowledge. The interpretive approach focuses on **qualitative data**, or the meanings that guide people. Rather than relying on quantitative instruments, like fixed questionnaires or experiments, the interpretive approach tries to find ways to get closer to the lived experience. Interpretive research is usually more descriptive than positivist research.

## Next Steps

Once the hypothesis defined, it is time for the next research steps:

- choosing a research methodology,
- conducting a study,
- and drawing conclusions.

## 2.2. Sociological Research Methods

Sociologists examine the world, see a problem or interesting pattern, and study it. They use research methods to design a study. Planning the **research design** is very important in any sociological study.

When entering a social environment, a researcher must be careful. There are times to remain anonymous and times to be open. There are times to conduct interviews and times to just observe. Some participants need to be thoroughly informed; others should not know that they are being observed. A researcher would not stroll into a high crime neighbourhood at midnight, calling out, “Any gang members around?” And if a researcher walked into a coffee shop and told the employees they would be observed as part of a study on work efficiency, the self-conscious servers might not behave naturally. Human research subjects can react to the researcher and change their behaviour under observation.

In planning a study's design, sociologists generally choose from four widely used methods of social investigation:

1. survey
2. experiment
3. field research
4. secondary data analysis (or use of existing sources).

The topic of study influences which method is used. Every research method comes with advantages and disadvantages.

## 1. Surveys and Interviews

A **survey** collects data from subjects who answer questions about opinions or behaviour. Surveys are often written questionnaires. Surveys are one of the most widely used sociological research methods. The standard survey format allows individuals to express personal ideas anonymously.

The Statistics Canada census is an excellent example of a large-scale survey. Customers also fill out questionnaires at stores and events, responding to questions such as “How did you hear about the event?” and “Were the staff helpful?” Telephone surveys ask for participation in a political poll or a survey: “Do you eat hot dogs? If yes, how many per month?”

Not all surveys are sociological research. Marketing polls help companies with marketing goals and strategies; they are generally not conducted as part of a scientific study, meaning they are not designed to test a hypothesis or to contribute knowledge to the field of sociology. The results are not published in a scholarly journal where design, methodology, results, and analyses are examined.

TV polls do not represent the general population, but are merely answers from a specific show's audience. Polls conducted by programs such as *Canadian Idol* represent the opinions of fans but are not scientific. A good contrast to these are Numeris ratings, which determine the popularity of television programming in Canada through scientific market research. Researchers ask a large random sample of Canadians to fill out a television diary for one week, noting the times and the broadcasters they listened to or viewed. Based on this methodology they are able to generate an accurate description of consumer preferences.

While surveys are not great at capturing the ways people *really* behave in social situations, they are a good method for discovering how people feel and think—or at least how they say they feel and think. Surveys can track attitudes and opinions, political preferences, individual behaviours such as sleeping, driving, dietary, or texting habits, or factual information such as employment status, income, and education levels. A survey targets a specific **population**, people who are the focus of a study, such as university athletes, international students, or teenagers living with type 1 (juvenile-onset) diabetes.

Most researchers choose to survey a small sector of the population, or a sample: A sample is a smaller number of subjects who represent a larger population. The success of a study depends on how well a sample represents a population. In a random sample, every person in a population has an equal chance of being chosen for the study.

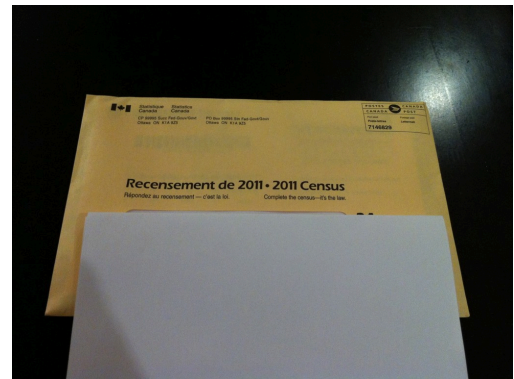


Figure 2.4. Questionnaires are a common research method. The Statistics Canada census is a well-known example. (Photo courtesy of Khosrow Ebrahimpour/ Flickr)

According to the laws of probability, random samples represent the population as a whole. The larger the sample size, the more accurate the results will be in characterizing the population being studied. For practical purposes, however, a sample size of 1,500 people will give acceptably accurate results even if the population being researched was the entire adult population of Canada. For instance, an Ipsos Reid poll, if conducted as a nationwide random sampling, should be able to provide an accurate estimate of public opinion whether it contacts 1,500 or 10,000 people.

Typically, surveys include a figure that gives the margin of error of the survey results. Based on probabilities, this gives a range of values within which the true value of the population characteristic can be. This figure also depends on the size of a sample. A political poll based on a sample of 1,500 respondents might state that if an election were called tomorrow the Conservative Party would get 30% of the vote, plus or minus 2.5%, based on a confidence interval of 95%. That is, there is a 5% chance that the true vote would fall outside of the range of 27.5% to 32.5%, or. If the poll was based on a sample of 1,000 respondents, the margin of error would be higher.

Problems with accuracy or *validity* can result if sample sizes are too small because there is a stronger chance the sample size will not represent the whole population. In small samples, the characteristics of unusual individuals have a greater chance of influencing the results. The validity of surveys is damaged when part of the population is inadvertently excluded from the sample (e.g., telephone surveys that rely on landlines exclude people that use only cell phones) or when there is a low response rate.

After selecting subjects, the researcher develops a plan to ask a list of standardized questions and record responses. Researchers must inform subjects of the nature and purpose of a study in advance. Researchers thank the subjects and offer them a chance to see the results of the study if they are interested. The researchers present the subjects with an instrument for gathering the information. A common instrument is a structured written questionnaire in which subjects answer a series of questions. For some topics, the researcher might ask yes-or-no or multiple-choice questions, allowing subjects to choose possible responses to each question.

This kind of **quantitative data**—research collected in numerical form that can be counted— is easy to tabulate. Just count the number of “yes” and “no” answers or count the “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” etc. responses and chart them into percentages. This is also the chief drawback of questionnaires, however: they are artificial. In real life, there are rarely any unambiguous yes or no answers.

Some topics are impossible to observe directly. Sometimes they can be sensitive and difficult to discuss honestly in a public or with a stranger. People are more likely to share honest answers if they can respond to questions anonymously. This type of information is **qualitative data**—results are subjective and often based on what is experienced in a natural setting. Qualitative information is harder to organize and tabulate. The researcher will end up with a wide range of responses, and some may be unexpected.

An **interview** is a one-on-one conversation between the researcher and the subject. Interviews are similar to short answer questions on surveys because the researcher asks questions. They can be quantitative if the questions are standardized and have numerically quantifiable answers: Are you employed? (Yes=0, No=1); On a scale of 1 to 5 how would you describe your level of optimism?

Interviews can also be qualitative if participants are free to respond as they wish. In the back-and-forth conversation of an interview, a researcher can ask for clarification, spend more time on a subtopic, or ask additional questions. In an interview, a subject will ideally feel free to open up and answer questions that are more complex. There are no right or wrong answers. The subject might not even know how to answer the questions honestly. Questions such as “How did society’s view of alcohol consumption influence your decision whether or not to take your first sip of alcohol?” or “Did you feel that the divorce of your parents would put a social stigma on your family?” involve so many factors that the answers are difficult to categorize. A researcher needs to avoid steering or prompting the subject to respond in a specific way; otherwise, the results will prove to be unreliable.

## 2. Experiments

You have probably tested personal social theories. “If I study at night and review in the morning, I’ll improve my marks.” Or, “If I stop drinking soda, I’ll feel better.” When you test “if this, then that” you are looking for cause and effect. When you test a theory, your results either prove or disprove your hypothesis. One way researchers test social theories is by conducting an **experiment**, meaning they investigate relationships to test a hypothesis. There are two main types of experiments: lab-based experiments, and natural or field experiments.

In a lab setting, the research can be controlled. In field-based experiment, the data cannot be controlled, but the information might be considered more accurate since it was collected without interference by the researcher. As a research method, either type of sociological experiment is useful for testing if-then statements: *if* a particular thing happens, *then* another particular thing will result.

To set up a lab-based experiment, sociologists create artificial situations that allow them to manipulate variables. The sociologist selects a set of people with similar characteristics, such as age, class, race, or education. Those people are divided into two groups. One is the experimental group and the other is the **control group**. The experimental group is exposed to the independent variable(s) and the control group is not. This is similar to pharmaceutical drug trials in which the experimental group is given the test drug and the control group is given a placebo or sugar pill.

To test the benefits of tutoring, for example, a researcher might arrange tutoring for an experimental group of students, while the control group does not receive tutoring. Then both groups would be tested for differences in grades to see if tutoring influenced the experimental group. The researcher would not want to jeopardize either group of students, so the setting would be artificial. The test would not be for a grade on their transcript, for example.

The Stanford Prison Experiment is one of the most famous social science experiments. In 1971, 24 healthy, middle-class male university students were selected to take part in a simulated jail environment. The purpose: to examine the effects of social setting and social roles on individual psychology and behaviour. They were randomly divided into 12 guards and 12 prisoners. The prisoner subjects were arrested at home and taken blindfolded to the simulated prison in the basement of a Stanford University building. Within a day of arriving, the prisoners and the guards began to display signs of trauma and sadism, respectively.

After some prisoners revolted by blockading themselves in their cells, the guards resorted to using increasingly humiliating and degrading tactics to control the prisoners through psychological manipulation. The experiment had to be abandoned after only six days because the abuse had grown out of hand (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973). While the insights into the social dynamics of authoritarianism are fascinating, the Stanford Prison Experiment also serves as an example of the ethical issues when experimenting on human subjects.

### 3. Field Research



Figure 2.5. Sociological researchers travel across countries and cultures to interact with and observe subjects in their natural environments. (Photo courtesy of Patrick/Flickr)

Sociologists seldom study subjects in laboratories. Sociologists go out into the world. They meet subjects where they live, work, and play. Field research is doing research in a natural environment without doing a lab experiment or a survey. It is an interpretive approach rather than a positivist approach. The researcher interacts with or observes people, gathering data along the way. Field research takes place in the subject's natural environment, whether it's a coffee shop or tribal village, a homeless shelter or a care home, a hospital, airport, mall, or beach resort.

Fieldwork is useful for observing *how* people behave. It is less useful, however, for developing causal explanations of *why* they behave that way. From the small size of the groups studied in fieldwork, it is difficult to make predictions to a larger population. Similarly, it can be difficult to know whether another researcher would see the same things or record the same data. We will look at two types of field research: participant observation and the case study.

#### *Participant Observation*

In **participant observation**, researchers join people and participate in a group's routine to observe in their natural context. This method lets researchers study a naturally occurring social activity without imposing artificial or intrusive research devices, like fixed questionnaire questions. A researcher might work as a waitress in a diner, or live as a homeless person for several weeks, or ride with police officers on patrol. Often, these researchers try to blend in with the population they study, and they may not tell their true identity if that would interfere with the research results.

At the beginning of a field study, researchers might have a question: "What really goes on in the kitchen of the most popular diner in town?" or "What is it like to be homeless?" Participant observation can help explore an environment from the inside. In such a setting, the researcher will be alert and open minded to whatever happens, recording all observations. Soon, as patterns emerge, questions will become more specific, observations will lead to hypotheses, and hypotheses will guide the researcher in shaping data into results.

Researchers must pretend to be something they are not. The process could involve role playing, making contacts, networking, or applying for a job. Once inside a group, some researchers spend months or even years pretending to be one of the people they are observing. However, as observers, they cannot get too involved. They must keep their purpose in mind and apply the sociological perspective. That way, they



illuminate social patterns that are often unrecognized. Because information gathered during participant observation is mostly qualitative, rather than quantitative, the results are often descriptive or interpretive. The researcher might present findings in an article or book, describing what he or she witnessed and experienced.



Figure 2.6. Is she a working waitress or a sociologist conducting a study using participant observation? (Photo courtesy of Zoetnet/Flickr)

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

Ehrenreich joined the low-wage service sector. For several months, she left her comfortable home, lived, and worked with people who lacked higher education and job skills. Undercover, she worked minimum wage jobs as a waitress, a cleaning woman, a nursing home aide, and a retail chain employee. During her participant observation, she used only her income from those jobs to pay for food, clothing, transportation, and shelter. She discovered the obvious: In the United States, it’s almost impossible to get by on minimum wage work.

She also experienced and observed the treatment of service work employees. She saw the extreme measures people take to make ends meet and to survive. She described fellow employees who held two or three jobs, worked seven days a week, lived in cars, could not pay to treat illnesses, got randomly fired, submitted to drug tests, and moved in and out of homeless shelters. She described difficult working conditions and the poor treatment that low-wage workers suffer in her book.

### *The Case Study*

Sometimes a researcher wants to study one specific person or event. A **case study** is an in-depth analysis of a single event, situation, or individual. A researcher examines existing documents, conducts interviews, engages in direct observation, and even participant observation. Researchers might use this method to study a single case of, for example, a foster child, drug lord, cancer patient, criminal, or rape victim.

While a case study gathers in-depth information, it does not provide enough evidence to make a generalized conclusion. Researchers can’t make universal claims based on just one person. One person does not verify a pattern. This is why most sociologists do not use case studies.



## 4. Secondary Data or Textual Analysis

Sociologists use **secondary data analysis**. Secondary data do not result from firsthand research but come from previous work of others. Sociologists might study texts written by historians, economists, or teachers. They might search through newspapers or magazines from any period in history. Using available information not only saves time and money, but it can add depth to a study.

Sociologists often interpret findings in a new way, a way that was not part of an author's original purpose. To study how women were encouraged to behave in the 1960s, for example, a researcher might watch movies and television shows from that period.

One kind of secondary data analysis is **content analysis**. Content analysis is a quantitative approach to textual research that selects an item of textual content ( a variable) that can be reliably and consistently observed and coded. Content analysis counts the frequency of that item in a sample of text.

For example, Gilens (1996) wanted to understand why survey research shows that the American public exaggerates the percentage of African Americans among the poor. He examined whether media representations influence public perception. He did content analysis of photographs of poor people in American news magazines. He coded and then recorded incidences of three variables: (1) race: white, black, indeterminate; (2) employed: working, not working; and (3) age.

Gilens discovered that not only were African Americans overrepresented in news magazine photographs of poverty, but that the photos also tended to under-represent other subgroups of the poor—the elderly and working poor—while over-representing less sympathetic groups—unemployed, working age adults. Gilens concluded that through a distorted representation of poverty, U.S. news magazines “reinforce negative stereotypes of blacks as mired in poverty and contribute to the belief that poverty is primarily a ‘black problem’” (1996).

Social scientists also learn by analyzing the research of a variety of agencies like government departments, public research groups, and organizations like Statistics Canada and the World Health Organization. These all publish studies useful to sociologists. Statistics that measure income inequality are useful understanding who benefited or lost as a result of federal budget, for example.

Secondary data analysis is not always easy. Public records are sometimes not easy to access. Sometimes there is no way to check their accuracy. It is easy, for example, to count how many drunk drivers are pulled over by the police. But how many are not? While it's possible to discover the percentage of teenage students who drop out of high school, it might be more challenging to determine the number who return to school or get their high school diplomas later.

Secondary data analysis must consider the publication date of sources. Attitudes and common cultural ideas may have influenced the research.

## Summary

### Research Methods: Summary

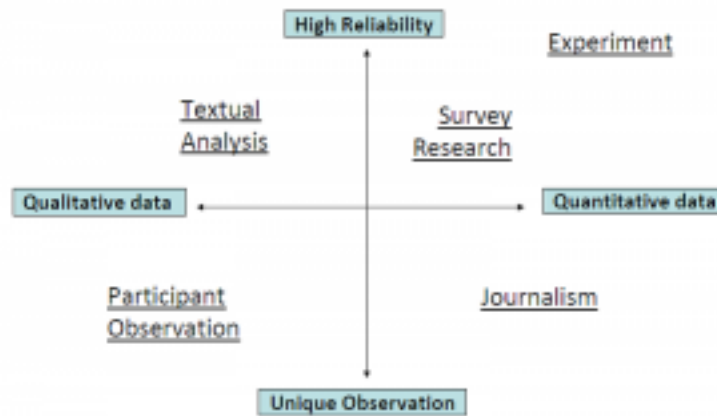


Figure 2.7. Research methods summary. [Long Description at the end of the chapter]  
(Source: William Little)

There are not only several theoretical perspectives in sociology, but also many research methodologies. The choice of research methodology depends on the research question. The choice of the research question depends on:

- the sociology perspective of the researcher
- the nature of the social phenomenon being studied
- and the purpose of the research.

Table 2.4. Main Sociological Research Methods. Sociological research methods have advantages and disadvantages.

Method	Implementation	Advantages	Challenges
Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yields many responses</li> <li>• Can survey a large sample</li> <li>• Data generalizable</li> <li>• Quantitative data are easy to chart</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be time consuming</li> <li>• Can be difficult to encourage participant response</li> <li>• Captures what people think and believe, but not necessarily how they behave in real life</li> </ul>
Field Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• Participant observation</li> <li>• Ethnography</li> <li>• Case study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yields detailed, accurate, real-life information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time consuming</li> <li>• Data are often descriptive and not conducive to generalization</li> <li>• Researcher bias is difficult to control for</li> <li>• Qualitative data are difficult to organize</li> </ul>
Experiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliberate manipulation of social customs and mores</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tests cause and effect relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hawthorne effect</li> <li>• Artificial conditions of research</li> <li>• Ethical concerns about people's wellbeing</li> </ul>
Secondary Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of government data (census, health, crime statistics)</li> <li>• Research of historic documents</li> <li>• Content analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes good use of previous sociological information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data could be focused on a purpose other than yours</li> <li>• Data can be hard to find</li> <li>• Taking into account the historical or cultural context of texts</li> </ul>

## 2.3. Ethical Concerns

Sociologists conduct studies to understand human behaviour. Many also use sociological studies to improve people's lives. Conducting a sociological study comes with much responsibility. Sociologists must consider their ethical duty to avoid harming people while conducting research.

The Canadian Sociological Association (CSA) has a **code of ethics**—formal guidelines for conducting sociological research — consisting of principles and ethical standards to be used in the discipline. It also describes procedures for filing, investigating, and resolving complaints of unethical conduct.

Some of the guidelines state that researchers must try to be skillful and fair-minded in their work, especially as it relates to human subjects. Researchers must obtain participants' informed consent, and before participants agree to participate, researchers must inform subjects of the responsibilities and risks. During a study, sociologists must ensure the safety of participants and immediately stop work if a subject is potentially

endangered.

Researchers are required to protect the privacy of participants. Even if pressured by authorities, such as police or courts, researchers are not ethically allowed to release confidential information. Researchers must make results available to other sociologists, must make public all sources of financial support, and must not accept funding from any organization that might seek to influence the research results for its own purposes. The CSA's ethical considerations shape not only the study but also the publication of results.

Although some aspects of research design might be influenced by personal values, it's inappropriate to allow personal values to shape the interpretation of results. Sociologists must establish **value neutrality**, a practice of remaining impartial, without bias or judgement, during the course of a study and in publishing results (Weber 1949). Sociologists must disclose research findings without omitting or changing significant data.

Value neutrality does not mean having no opinions. It means striving to overcome personal biases when analyzing data. It means avoiding spinning data to match a desired outcome, such as a political or moral point of view. Investigators are ethically obligated to report results, even when they contradict personal views, predicted outcomes, or widely accepted beliefs. Is value neutrality possible?

Many sociologists believe it is impossible to set aside personal values and retain complete objectivity. Individuals inevitably see the world from a partial perspective. Their interests affect topics they choose, the types of questions they ask, the way they frame their research, and the research methodologies they select to pursue it. Moreover, facts, however objective, do not exist in a vacuum.

Positivist sociology researches knowledge useful for controlling and administering social life. Interpretive sociology pursues knowledge to promote greater mutual understanding. Critical sociology pursues knowledge to liberate people. Readers need to know the perspective of the research to judge its validity and applicability.

## Making Connections: Sociological Research

### The Hawthorne Effect

In the 1920s, leaders of a Chicago factory called Hawthorne Works commissioned a study to determine whether or not changing certain aspects of working conditions could increase or decrease worker productivity. Sociologists were surprised when the productivity of a test group increased when the lighting of their workspace was improved. They were even more surprised when productivity improved when the lighting of the workspace was dimmed. In fact almost every change of independent variable — lighting, breaks, work hours — resulted in an improvement of productivity. But when the study was over, productivity dropped again.



Figure 2.8. Hawthorne Works factory of the Western Electric Company, 1925.

Why did this happen? In 1953, Henry A. Landsberger analyzed the study results to answer this question. He realized that employees' productivity increased because sociologists were paying attention to them. The sociologists' presence influenced the study results. Worker behaviours were altered not by the lighting but by the study itself. From this, sociologists learned the importance of carefully planning their roles as part of their research design (Franke & Kaul, 1978). Landsberger called the workers' response the **Hawthorne effect** — people changing their behaviour because they know they are being watched as part of a study.

The Hawthorne effect is unavoidable in some research. In many cases, sociologists have to make the purpose of the study known for ethical reasons. Subjects must be aware that they are being observed, and a certain amount of artificiality may result (Sonnenfeld, 1985). Making sociologists' presence invisible is not always realistic for other reasons. That option is not available to a researcher studying prison behaviours, early education, or the Ku Klux Klan. Researchers cannot just stroll into prisons, kindergarten classrooms, or Ku Klux Klan meetings and unobtrusively observe behaviours. In situations like these, other methods are needed. All studies shape the research design, while research design simultaneously shapes the study. Researchers choose methods that best suit their study topic and that fit with their overall goal for the research.

## Making Connections: Sociological Research

### An Experiment in Action: Mincome



Figure 2.9. Mincome was a large-scale experiment conducted in Dauphin, Manitoba, between 1974 and 1979 to explore the effect of having a universal guaranteed annual income on the incentive to work and other social indicators. (Photo courtesy of Bobak Ha'Eri/Wikimedia commons)

A real-life example will help illustrate the experimental process in sociology. Between 1974 and 1979 an experiment was conducted in the small town of Dauphin, Manitoba (the “garden capital of Manitoba”). Each family received a modest monthly guaranteed income — a “mincome” — equivalent to a maximum of 60 percent of the “low-income cut-off figure” (a Statistics Canada measure of poverty, which varies with family size). The income was 50 cents per dollar less for families who had incomes from other sources. Families earning over a certain income level did not receive mincome. Families that were already collecting welfare or unemployment insurance were also excluded. The test families in Dauphin were compared with control groups in other rural Manitoba communities on a range of indicators such as number of hours worked per week, school performance, high school drop out rates, and hospital visits (Forget, 2011). A guaranteed annual income was seen at the time as a less costly, less bureaucratic public alternative for addressing poverty than the existing employment insurance and welfare programs. Today it is an active proposal being considered in Switzerland (Lowrey, 2013).

Intuitively, it seems logical that lack of income is the cause of poverty and poverty-related issues. One of the main concerns, however, was whether a guaranteed income would create a disincentive to work. The concept appears to challenge the principles of the Protestant work ethic (see the discussion of Max Weber in Chapter 1). The study did find very small decreases in hours worked per week: about 1 percent for men, 3 percent for married women, and 5 percent for unmarried women. Forget (2011) argues this was because the income provided an opportunity for people to spend more time with family and school, especially for young mothers and teenage girls. There were also significant social benefits from the experiment, including better test scores in school, lower high school drop out rates, fewer visits to hospital, fewer accidents and injuries, and fewer mental health issues.

Ironically, due to lack of guaranteed funding (and lack of political interest by the late 1970s), the data and results of the study were not analyzed or published until 2011. The data were archived

and sat gathering dust in boxes. The mincome experiment demonstrated the benefits that even a modest guaranteed annual income supplement could have on health and social outcomes in communities. People seem to live healthier lives and get a better education when they do not need to worry about poverty. In her summary of the research, Forget notes that the impact of the income supplement was surprisingly large given that at any one time only about a third of the families were receiving the income and, for some families, the income amount would have been very small. The income benefit was largest for low-income working families, but the research showed that the entire community profited. The improvement in overall health outcomes for the community suggest that a guaranteed income would also result in savings for the public health system.

## Making Connections: Sociology in the Real World

### When Is Sharing Not Such a Good Idea?

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



Figure 2.10. Crack cocaine users in downtown Vancouver. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

This approach has been used by researchers studying InSite in Vancouver (Marshall et al., 2011; Wood et al., 2006). InSite is a supervised safe-injection site where heroin addicts and other intravenous drug users can go to inject drugs in a safe, clean environment. Clean needles are provided and health care professionals are on hand to intervene in the case of overdoses or other medical emergency. It is a controversial program both because heroin use is against the law (the facility operates through a federal ministerial exemption) and because the heroin users are not obliged to quit using or seek therapy. To assess the effectiveness of the program, researchers compared the risky usage of drugs in populations before and after the opening of the facility

and geographically near and distant to the facility. The results from the studies have shown that InSite has reduced both deaths from overdose and risky behaviours, such as the sharing of needles, without increasing the levels of crime associated with drug use and addiction.



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

## Chapter Summary

### Approaches to Sociological Research

Using the scientific method, a researcher conducts a study in five phases: asking a question, researching existing sources, formulating a hypothesis, conducting a study, and drawing conclusions. The scientific method provides a clear method of organizing a study. Some sociologists conduct scientific research through a positivist framework utilizing a hypothesis as a research question. Other sociologists conduct scientific research using an interpretive framework that is often inductive in nature. Scientific sociological studies often observe relationships between variables. Researchers study how one variable changes another. Prior to conducting a study, researchers are careful to apply operational definitions to their terms and to establish dependent and independent variables.

### Research Methods

Even a simple research design involves much work and planning. The scientific method provides a system of organization to help researchers plan and conduct a study. The scientific method ensured that data and results are reliable, valid, and objective. The many methods available to researchers—including experiments, surveys, field studies, and secondary data analysis—all have advantages and disadvantages. Depending on the topic, a study might use a single method or a combination of methods. The study design should provide a solid framework in which to analyze predicted and unpredicted data.

### Ethical Concerns

Sociologists and sociology students must take ethical responsibility for their research.

- They must first and foremost guarantee the safety of their participants.
- Whenever possible, they must ensure that participants have been fully informed before consenting

to be part of a study.

The Canadian Sociological Association (CSA) maintains ethical guidelines for research. The guidelines address conducting studies, properly using existing sources, accepting funding, and publishing results. Sociologists must try to maintain value neutrality. They must gather and analyze data objectively, setting aside their personal preferences, beliefs, and opinions. They must report findings accurately, even if they contradict personal convictions.

## Key Terms

**authoritative knowledge:** Knowledge based on the accepted authority of the source.

**case study:** In-depth analysis of a single event, situation, or individual.

**casual observation:** Knowledge based on observations without any systematic process for observing or assessing the accuracy of observations.

**code of ethics:** A set of guidelines that the Canadian Sociological Association has established to foster ethical research and professionally responsible scholarship in sociology.

**content analysis:** A quantitative approach to textual research that selects an item of textual content that can be reliably and consistently observed and coded, and surveys the prevalence of that item in a sample of textual output.

**contingency table:** A statistical table that provides a frequency distribution of at least two variables.

**control group:** An experimental group that is not exposed to the independent variable.

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

**dependent variable:** Variable changed by another variable.

**empirical evidence:** Evidence corroborated by direct experience and/or observation.

**ethnography:** Observing a complete social setting and all that it entails.

**experiment:** The testing of a hypothesis under controlled conditions.

**field research:** Gathering data from a natural environment without doing a lab experiment or a survey.

**Hawthorne effect:** When study subjects behave in a certain manner due to their awareness of being observed by a researcher.

**hypothesis:** An educated guess with predicted outcomes about the relationship between two or more variables.

**hypothetico-deductive methodologies:** Methodologies based on deducing a prediction from a hypothesis and testing the validity of the hypothesis by whether it correctly predicts observations.

**independent variable:** Variable that causes change in a dependent variable.

**inductive approach:** Methodologies that derive a general statement from a series of empirical observations.

**institutional ethnography:** The study of the way everyday life is coordinated through institutional, textually mediated practices.

**interpretive approach:** A sociological research approach that seeks in-depth understanding of a topic or

subject through observation or interaction.

**intervening variable:** An underlying variable that explains the correlation between two other variables.

**interview:** A one-on-one conversation between a researcher and a subject.

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

**nonreactive:** Unobtrusive research that does not include direct contact with subjects and will not alter or influence people's behaviours.

**operational definitions:** Specific explanations of abstract concepts that a researcher plans to study.

**overgeneralization:** Knowledge that draws general conclusions from limited observations.

**participant observation:** Immersion by a researcher in a group or social setting in order to make observations from an "insider" perspective.

**population:** A defined group serving as the subject of a study.

**positivist approach:** A research approach based on the natural science model of knowledge utilizing a hypothetico-deductive formulation of the research question and quantitative data.

**primary data:** Data collected directly from firsthand experience.

**qualitative data:** Information based on interpretations of meaning.

**quantitative data:** Information from research collected in numerical form that can be counted.

**random sample:** A study's participants being randomly selected to serve as a representation of a larger population

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

**research design:** a detailed, systematic method for conducting research and obtaining data.

**sample:** Small, manageable number of subjects that represent the population.

**scientific method:** A systematic research method that involves asking a question, researching existing sources, forming a hypothesis, designing and conducting a study, and drawing conclusions.

**secondary data analysis:** Using data collected by others but applying new interpretations.

**selective observation:** Knowledge based on observations that only confirm what the observer expects or wants to see.

**surveys:** Data collections from subjects who respond to a series of questions about behaviours and opinions, often in the form of a questionnaire.

**textually mediated communication:** Institutional forms of communication that rely on written documents, texts, and paperwork.

**traditional knowledge:** Knowledge based on received beliefs or the way things have always been done.

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

**value neutrality:** A practice of remaining impartial, without bias or judgment, during the course of a study and in publishing results.

**variable:** A characteristic or measure of a social phenomenon that can take different values.

## Chapter Quiz

### 2.1. Approaches to Sociological Research

1. A measurement is considered \_\_\_\_\_ if it actually measures what it is intended to measure, according to the topic of the study.
  - a. reliable
  - b. sociological
  - c. valid
  - d. quantitative
2. Sociological studies test relationships in which change in one \_\_\_\_\_ causes change in another.
  - a. test subject
  - b. behaviour
  - c. variable
  - d. operational definition
3. In a study, a group of 10-year-old boys are fed doughnuts every morning for a week and then weighed to see how much weight they gained. Which factor is the dependent variable?
  - a. the doughnuts
  - b. the boys
  - c. the duration of a week
  - d. the weight gained
4. Which statement provides the best operational definition of “childhood obesity”?
  - a. children who eat unhealthy foods and spend too much time watching television and playing video games
  - b. a distressing trend that can lead to health issues including type 2 diabetes and heart disease
  - c. body weight at least 20 percent higher than a healthy weight for a child of that height
  - d. the tendency of children today to weigh more than children of earlier generations

## 2.2. Research Methods

5. Which materials are considered secondary data?
  - a. photos and letters given to you by another person
  - b. books and articles written by other authors about their studies
  - c. information that you have gathered and included in your results
  - d. responses from participants whom you both surveyed and interviewed
6. What method did Andrew Ivsins use to study crack cocaine users in Victoria?
  - a. survey
  - b. experiment
  - c. field research
  - d. content analysis
7. Why is choosing a random sample an effective way to select participants?
  - a. Participants do not know they are part of a study.
  - b. The researcher has no control over who is in the study.
  - c. It is larger than an ordinary sample.
  - d. Everyone has the same chance of being part of the study.
8. Which research approach is best suited to the positivist approach?
  - a. questionnaire
  - b. case study
  - c. ethnography
  - d. secondary data analysis
9. Which best describes the results of a case study?
  - a. It produces more reliable results than other methods because of its depth.
  - b. Its results are not generally applicable.
  - c. It relies solely on secondary data analysis.
  - d. All of the above.

### 2.3. Ethical Concerns

10. To study the effects of fast food on lifestyle, health, and culture, from which group would a researcher ethically be unable to accept funding?
  - a. a fast-food restaurant
  - b. a nonprofit health organization
  - c. a private hospital
  - d. a governmental agency like Health and Social Services

[Quiz answers at the end of the chapter]

## Short Answer

### 2.1. Approaches to Sociological Research

1. Write down the first three steps of the scientific method.
  - Think of a topic that would make a good sociological study—for example, ethnic diversity in a college, homecoming rituals, athletic scholarships, or teen driving.
  - Take that topic through the first steps of the process. For each step, write a few sentences or a paragraph:
  - Ask a question about the topic.
  - Do some research and write down the citations for articles or books you'd want to read about the topic.
  - Formulate a hypothesis.

### 2.2. Research Methods

1. What type of data do surveys gather? For what topics would surveys be the best research method? What drawbacks might you expect to encounter when using a survey?
2. Ask a research question and write a hypothesis.
  - Create a survey (six questions) for the topic. Provide a rationale for each question.
  - Define your population.
  - Create a plan for recruiting a random sample and administering the survey.
3. Imagine you are about to do field research in a specific place for a set time. Consider how you will have to prepare for the study. What personal, social, and physical sacrifices will you have to make? How will you manage your personal effects? What organizational equipment and systems will you need to collect the data?
4. Create a brief research design about a topic of interest. Write a letter to an organization requesting funding for your study. Describe your project in a convincing, realistic and objective way. Explain how the results of your study will contribute to sociology.

### 2.3. Ethical Concerns

1. Why do you think the CSA created such a detailed set of ethical principles? For reference, see the Canadian Sociological Association's *Statement of Professional Ethics* (2012) [PDF] at <https://www.csa-cs.ca/files/www/csa/documents/codeofethics/2012Ethics.pdf>.
2. What type of study could put participants at risk? Think of some examples of studies that might be harmful. Do you think that, in the name of sociology, some researchers might be tempted to cross boundaries that threaten human rights? Why?
3. Would you willingly participate in a sociological study that could put your health and safety at risk if the study also had the potential to help thousands of people? For example, would you participate in a study of a new drug that could cure diabetes or cancer, even if it meant great inconvenience, physical discomfort or possible permanent damage?

### Further Research

#### 2.1. Approaches to Sociological Research

For a historical perspective on the scientific method in sociology, read "The Elements of Scientific Method in Sociology" by F. Stuart Chapin (1914) in the *American Journal of Sociology*: <https://archive.org/details/jstor-2763363>

#### 2.2. Research Methods

Information on current real-world sociology experiments: <https://revisesociology.com/2016/08/12/field-experiments-examples/>

#### 2.3. Ethical Concerns

Founded in 1966, the CSA is a nonprofit organization located in Montreal, Quebec, with a membership of 900 researchers, faculty members, students, and practitioners of sociology. Its mission is to promote "research, publication and teaching in Sociology in Canada." Learn more about the Canadian Sociological Association at <http://www.csa-scs.ca/>.

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## Image Attributions

**Figure 2.4.** Didn't they abolish the mandatory census? Then what's this? by Khosrow Ebrahimpour (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/xosrow/5685345306/>) used under CC BY 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)

**Figure 2.5.** Punk Band by Patrick (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/lordkhan/181561343/in/photostream/>) used under CC BY 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)

**Figure 2.8.** Hawthorne Works factory of the Western Electric Company, 1925. By Western Electric Company (Western Electric Company Photograph Album, 1925.) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hawthorne,\\_Illinois\\_Works\\_of\\_the\\_Western\\_Electric\\_Company,\\_1925.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hawthorne,_Illinois_Works_of_the_Western_Electric_Company,_1925.jpg)

**Figure 2.9.** Dauphin Canadian Northern Railway Station by Bobak Ha'Eri (<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2009-0520-TrainStation-Dauphin.jpg>) used under CC BY 3.0 license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en>)

**Figure 2.10.** Crack Cocaine Smokers in Vancouver Alleyway ([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Crack\\_Cocaine\\_Smokers\\_in\\_Vancouver\\_Alleyway.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Crack_Cocaine_Smokers_in_Vancouver_Alleyway.jpg)) is in the public domain ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_domain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain))

**Figure 2.15.** Muncie, Indiana High School: 1917 by Don O'Brien (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dok1/3694125269/>) used under CC BY 2.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)

## Long Descriptions

**Figure 2.3:** The Scientific Method has a series of steps which can form a repeating cycle.

1. Ask a question.
2. Research existing sources
3. Formulate a hypothesis.
4. Design and conduct a study
5. Draw conclusions.
6. Report results.

**Figure 2.7:** Different Research Methods: Textual analysis uses qualitative data and is highly reliable. Participant observation uses qualitative data and is a unique observation. Experiments and survey research use quantitative data and are highly reliable. Journalism uses quantitative data and is a unique observation.

**Figure 2.:** A sociology for women would offer a knowledge of the social organization and determinations of the properties and events of our directly experienced world.

### Solutions to Section Quiz

1 c, | 2 c, | 3 d, | 4 c, | 5 b, | 6 c, | 7 d, | 8 c, | 9 a, | 10 a

[3]

## Culture



Figure 3.1. Mi'kmaq Artisan Project participant working on embroidery project, Photo courtesy of PEI Government /Flickr)

## Learning Objectives

### 3.1. What Is Culture?

- Differentiate between culture and society.
- Distinguish between biological and cultural explanations of human behaviour.
- Compare and contrast cultural universalism, cultural relativism, ethnocentrism, and androcentrism.
- Examine the policy of multiculturalism as a solution to the problem of diversity.

### 3.2. Elements of Culture

- Understand the basic elements of culture: values, beliefs, and norms.
- Explain the significance of symbols and language to a culture.
- Describe the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.
- Distinguish material and nonmaterial culture.

### 3.3. Culture as Innovation: Pop Culture, Subculture, and Global Culture

- Distinguish two modes of culture: innovation and restriction.
- Discuss the distinction between high culture, pop culture, and postmodern culture.
- Differentiate between subculture and counterculture.
- Understand the role of globalization in cultural change and local lived experience.

### 3.4. Culture as Restriction: Rationalization and Commodification

- Describe culture as a form of restriction on social life.
- Explain the implications of rationalization and consumerism.

### 3.5. Theoretical Perspectives on Culture

- Discuss the major theoretical approaches to cultural interpretation.

## Introduction to Culture

Are there rules for eating at McDonald's? Usually we don't think about rules in a fast food restaurant. But if you look around, you will see people acting as if they were trained for the role of fast food customer. They stand in line, pick their items from overhead menus before they order, swipe debit cards to pay, and stand to one side to collect trays of food. After a quick meal, customers dispose of their trash. This food system is highly organized. Customers' movement through this fast food routine is orderly and predictable, even if no rules are posted and no officials direct the process.

Think about what would happen if you behaved according to some other standards. (You would be doing what sociologists call a "breaching experiment": deliberately disrupting social norms to learn about them.) For example: call ahead for reservations; ask the cashier detailed questions about the food's ingredients; barter over the price of the burgers; or throw your trash on the ground as you leave. You would get hostile responses from the restaurant employees and your fellow customers. Although the rules are not written down, you would have violated deep seated norms that govern behaviour in fast food restaurants.

What are the rules that govern what, when, and how we eat? Michael Pollan, for example, contrasts the North American culture of fast food with the traditions of eating sit-down, family meals that still dominate in France and other European nations (2006). Despite eating foods that many North Americans think of as unhealthy—butter, wheat, triple-cream cheese, wine, etc.—the French overall remain healthier and thinner than North Americans.

The French eat all sorts of supposedly unhealthy foods, but they do it according to a strict and stable set of rules: They eat small portions and don't go back for seconds; they don't snack; they seldom eat alone; and communal meals are long, leisurely affairs. (Pollan, 2006)

Cultural rules govern what people consider as food and how people consume food. The national cuisine and eating habits of France are oriented to pleasure and tradition, and as Pollan argues, integrated into French cultural life.

In North America, on the other hand, fast food is just a small part of a larger diet crisis.

North America sees increasing levels of obesity and eating disorders along with an increasing number of health diets, weight reducing diets, and food fads. While an alarming number of North American meals are eaten in cars (19 percent, according to Pollan), a counter-trend is an obsession with nutritional science. Instead of considering food as cultural tradition and pleasure, people think of food's biochemical constituents (calories, proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, omega fatty acids, saturated and unsaturated fats, etc.). There are Atkins diets, zone diets, Mediterranean diets, paleolithic diets, vegan diets, gluten free diets, Weight Watchers diets, raw food



Figure 3.2. Fast food nation? (Photo, Late Night Fast Food, courtesy of Matt Hensa/ Flickr)



Figure 3.3. French dessert of raspberry crème brûlée. Does a nation's cuisine represent a rule-bound tradition, an innovative and inventive art, or both? (Photo courtesy of Йоана Петрова/ Flickr)

diets, etc. Pollan attributes this to fundamental anxiety about food and health among North Americans. While each type of diet claims (sometimes contradictory) scientific evidence, essentially the choice of diet revolves around the cultural meanings attributed to food:

that taste is not a true guide to what should be eaten; that one should not simply eat what one enjoys; that the important components of food cannot be seen or tasted but are discernible only in scientific laboratories; and that experimental science has produced rules of nutrition that will prevent illness and encourage longevity. (Levenstein as cited in Pollan, 2006)

In his documentary *Super-Size, Me* (2004), Morgan Spurlock conducted a version of the sociological participant observation study by eating only at McDonald's for 30 days. As a result, he gained 24 pounds, increased his cholesterol and fat accumulation in his liver, and experienced mood swings and sexual dysfunction. We can't survive on fast food alone, although many teenagers and university students have tried.

Sociologists argue that everything about food consumption habits reflects culture, the beliefs and behaviours shared by a social group. Diet is a product of culture. It is a product of the different meanings we attribute to food and to the relationship we have with our bodies. While diet is a response to the basic conditions of biological life, diet is also a site of innovation and diversity. Culture, in general, is a site of two opposing tendencies:

- cultures give sets of rules (norms) which restrict, habitualize and fix forms of life
- cultures also produce innovative and diverse solutions to problems like nutrition.



Figure 3.4. Food consumption habits reflects culture. Photo courtesy of constancemc/Flickr

## Cultures both constrain and go beyond constraints.

What's the difference between the terms "culture" and "society"? In everyday conversation, people rarely distinguish between these terms, but culture and society have different meanings for sociologists.

- Culture refers to the beliefs, artifacts, and ways of life shared by a social group.
- A society is a group that interacts within a common territory or region.

A culture consists of beliefs, practices and material artifacts (objects) of a group; society consists of the social structures, processes, and organization of the people who share those beliefs, practices, and material artifacts. Neither society nor culture could exist without the other, but we can separate them to think about them.

This chapter examines the relationship between culture and society, paying special attention to forces that shape culture, including diversity and cultural change.

### 3.1. What Is Culture?

Humans are social creatures. Since *Homo sapiens* nearly 200,000 years ago, people have grouped together into communities to survive. Living together, people developed forms of cooperation which created the common habits, behaviours, and ways of life known as culture—from specific methods of childrearing to techniques for obtaining food. Peter Berger (1967) argued that unlike other animals, humans lack biological programming to live on their own. Humans need an extended period of dependency to survive. The creation of culture makes this possible by providing a shield against the harshness of nature. Culture provides ongoing stability for human existence. This means, however, that the human environment is not nature but culture.



First, almost every human behaviour, from shopping to marriage to expressions of feelings, is learned. In Canada, people tend to view marriage as a choice between two people based on mutual feelings of love. In other nations and in other times, marriages were arranged through a complicated process of interviews and negotiations between entire families. To someone raised in Winnipeg, the marriage customs of a family from Nigeria may seem strange or even wrong. Conversely, someone from a traditional Kolkata family think strange the idea of romantic love as foundation for the lifelong commitment of marriage. The way people view marriage depends largely on what they have been taught.

Familiarity with these written and unwritten rules of culture help people feel secure and “normal.” Most people want to live their daily lives confident that their behaviour will not be challenged. Behaviour based on learned customs is not a bad thing, but it does raise the problem of how to respond to cultural differences.

Second, culture is innovative. Different cultural practices reveal how societies find different solutions to real life problems. Different forms of marriage are solutions to a common problem, the problem of organizing families in to raise children and reproduce the species. The basic problem is shared by the different societies, but the solutions are different. Culture is a means of solving problems. Culture is a tool to coordinate complex collective actions. Culture includes creative solutions and techniques for humans to confront the shared problems of human existence. Culture is key to humans successfully adapting to the environment. Different cultures show the different means humans used to free themselves from biological and environmental limitations.

Third, culture is also restraining. Cultures retain their distinctive patterns through time. In global capitalism, Canadian culture, French culture, Malaysian culture and Kazakhstani culture share features like commodification. But these cultures also have different languages, beliefs, diet, and other ways of life. They adapt and respond to capitalism in unique ways according to their own shared heritages. Local cultural forms can restrain changes produced by globalization. On the other hand, the diversity of local cultures is increasingly limited by the pressures of globalization. Economic practices inefficient in the global market disappear. The meanings of cultural practices change as they are turned into commodities for tourists. Globalization increasingly restrains cultural forms, practices, and possibilities.

There is a cultural dynamic of innovation and restriction. Shared meanings that allow individuals to make sense of the world can change after contact with other cultures. Shared meanings can also limit change. Many contemporary issues about identity and belonging, like multiculturalism or religious fundamentalism, can be explained by this dynamic of innovation and restriction. Similarly, the effects of social change, like use of new media and response to climate change, involve tension between innovation and restriction.



Figure 3.5. The cultural norms governing public transportation vary in Canada, Austria, Mumbai, and Tokyo. How would a visitor from a rural Canadian town act and feel on this crowded train in China? (Photo courtesy of Eric Chan/Flickr)

## Making Connections: Sociological Concepts

“Yes, but what does it mean?”

Culture is the source of shared meanings for humans. What parts of social life become visible if we focus on the social processes that produce meanings? Culture describes the meaningful collective existence. Culture refers to the shared symbols that people create to solve problems. Human social life is conducted through the meanings humans give to things, actions, others, and themselves. In a sense, people don't live in direct contact with the world and each other; instead, they live indirectly through the shared meanings provided by culture. This mediated experience is culture. The sociology of culture is concerned with how things and actions assume meanings, how these meanings orient human behaviour, and how social life is organized around meaning.



Figure 3.6. In the teaching of traditional Chinese acupuncture, meanings are literally written on the human body (Photo courtesy of Tomas Fano/Flickr)

What is the “meaning of meaning”? Max Weber (1968) notes that it is possible to imagine situations in which human experience is direct and unmediated; for example, someone taps your knee and your leg jerks forward, or you are riding your bike and get hit by a car. In these situations, experience seems purely physical, unmediated. Yet when we assimilate these experiences into our lives, we do so by making them meaningful events. By tapping your knee, the doctor is looking for signs about the functioning of your nervous system. She reads the reactions as symbolic events and assigns them meaning according to the modern biomedical understanding of the body.

While flying through the air during a car accident, you probably wouldn't attach meaning to your position in space. Later, while talking to a friend or police officer, you tell the story of the event and attach meaning to it in your story. The meaning changes depending on the cultural context. A doctor of traditional Chinese medicine would read the knee reflex differently than a graduate of the Dal medical program. The story and meaning of the car accident changes if it is told to a friend as opposed to a police officer or an insurance adjuster.

Sociologists try to learn how events or things acquire meaning (e.g., through the reading of symptoms or the telling of stories); how the true meanings are determined (e.g., through biomedically-based diagnoses or juridical procedures of determining responsibility); and how humans interpret and share meanings (e.g., through socialization into medical, legal, insurance, and traffic systems). Sociological research into culture studies these problems of meaning.



## Cultural Universals

Often, comparing one culture to another shows obvious differences. But all cultures share some common elements, too. **Cultural universals** are patterns common to all. The family unit is a cultural universal: Every human society has a family structure to regulate sexual reproduction and child care. How that family unit is defined, and how it functions varies. In many Asian cultures, for example, family members from all generations often live together in one household. In these cultures, young adults continue to live in the extended family until they marry and join their spouse's household. They may remain and raise their offspring within the extended family's home. In Canada, by contrast, individuals are expected to leave home and live independently for a period before forming a family unit.

Cultural universals often involve basic human survival, such as finding food, clothing, and shelter. They often involve shared human experiences, such as birth and death, or illness and healing. Other universals include language, the concept of personal names, and jokes. Humour is a universal way to release tension and create a unity among people (Murdock, 1949). Sociologists consider humour necessary to human interaction because it helps individuals navigate otherwise tense situations.

## Making Connections: Sociological Research

### Is Music a Cultural Universal?

Imagine that you are sitting in a theatre, watching a film. The movie opens with the hero sitting on a park bench with a grim expression on her face. Cue the music. The first slow and mournful notes are played in a minor key. As the melody continues, the hero turns her head and sees a man walking toward her. The music slowly gets louder, and the dissonance of the chords sends a prickle of fear running down your spine. You sense that she is in danger.

Now imagine that you are watching the same movie, but with a different soundtrack. As the scene opens, the music is soft and soothing with a hint of sadness. You see the hero sitting on the park bench and sense her loneliness.

Suddenly, the music swells. The woman looks up and sees a man walking toward her. The music grows fuller, and the pace picks up. You feel your heart rise in your chest. This is a happy moment.

Music can evoke emotional responses. In television shows, movies, and even commercials, music elicits laughter, sadness, or fear. Are these types of musical cues cultural universals?

In 2009, a team of psychologists, led by Thomas Fritz of the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Leipzig, Germany, studied people's reactions to music they'd never heard (Fritz et al., 2009). The research team travelled to Cameroon, Africa, and asked Mafa tribal members to listen to Western music. The tribe, isolated from Western culture, had never been exposed to Western culture and had no context or experience within which to interpret its music. Even so, as the tribal members listened to a Western piano piece, they were able to recognize three basic emotions: happiness, sadness, and fear. Music, it turns out, is a sort of universal language.

Researchers also found that music can foster a sense of wholeness within a group. Additionally, since music is largely nonverbal, the sounds of music can cross societal boundaries more easily than words. Music allows people to make connections where language might create obstacles. As Fritz and his team found, music and the emotions it conveys can be cultural universals.



Figure 3.7 Tuareg blues-rock band Tinariwen (Photo courtesy of Chris Goldberg/Flickr)

## Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

Despite how much humans have in common, cultural differences are more common than cultural universals. For example, while all cultures have language, languages and conversation rules can be very different. In some

Middle Eastern cultures, it is common to stand close to others in conversation. North Americans keep more distance, maintaining a larger personal space. Even something as simple as eating and drinking varies greatly from culture to culture. If your instructor comes into an early morning class holding a mug of liquid, what do you assume she is drinking? In Canada, it's most likely filled with coffee, not Earl Grey tea, a favourite in England, or yak butter tea, a staple in Tibet.

Some travelers enjoy trying unfamiliar foods. Others return home rejoicing in their own culture's food. Canadians might express disgust at other cultures' cuisine, thinking it gross to eat meat from a dog or guinea pig for example, while they do not question their own habit of eating cows or pigs. Such attitudes are an example of **ethnocentrism** or evaluating and judging another culture based on how it compares to one's own culture. Ethnocentrism involves believing that one's own culture is better than all others (Sumner, 1906). Almost everyone is a little bit ethnocentric. For example, Canadians tend to say that people from England drive on the "wrong" side of the road, rather than the "other" side. Someone from a country where dogs are considered dirty might find it disgusting to see a helper dog in a restaurant.

Appreciating one's own culture can be healthy; a shared sense of community pride, for example, connects people in a society. But ethnocentrism can lead to disrespect for other cultures, causing misunderstanding and conflict. People with good intentions sometimes travel to a society to "help" its people, seeing them as uneducated or backward, essentially inferior. These travellers are guilty of cultural imperialism — the deliberate imposition of one's own cultural values on another culture. Europe's colonial expansion, begun in the 16th century, included severe cultural imperialism. European colonizers often viewed the people in the lands they colonized as uncultured "savages" in need of European governance, dress, religion, and other cultural practices. Canada's residential school system shows how serious the consequences of ethnocentrism can be. Another example of **cultural imperialism** includes some work of international aid agencies. For example, these agencies sometimes introduced "modern" technological agricultural methods and plant species from developed countries but overlooked indigenous varieties and agricultural approaches better suited to the region.

Ethnocentrism can be so strong when people meet a new culture, they experience disorientation and frustration or **culture shock**. A traveller from Toronto might find the nightly silence of rural Alberta unsettling, not peaceful. An exchange student from China might be annoyed by the constant interruptions in class as other students ask questions—a practice that is considered rude in China. Perhaps the Toronto traveller was initially captivated with Alberta's quiet beauty, and the Chinese student was originally excited to see an Canadian-style classroom firsthand. But as they experience unanticipated differences from their own culture, their excitement gives way to discomfort and doubts about how to behave appropriately in the new situation. Eventually, as people learn more about a culture, they recover from culture shock.

**Cultural relativism** is the practice of assessing a culture by its own standards rather than viewing it through the lens of one's own culture. Many sociologists argue that each culture has an internally consistent pattern of thought and action, which alone could be the basis for judging the merits and morality of the culture's practices. Cultural relativism requires an open mind.

Cultural relativism is the basis of multiculturalism. However, embracing everything about a new culture is not always possible. Even the most culturally relativist people from egalitarian societies, such as Canada—societies in which women have political rights and control over their own bodies— would question whether the practice of female circumcision in countries such as Ethiopia and Sudan should be accepted as a part of a cultural tradition.

Cultural pride does not have to lead to imposing values on others. Appreciation for another culture does not prevent sociologists from studying it critically. In the case of female circumcision, for example, a *universal* right to life and liberty conflicts with the neutral stance of cultural relativism. It is not ethnocentric to be critical of practices that violate universal standards of human dignity. All cultures have universal standards of

human dignity, though they may not be followed in practice. Not every practice can be regarded as culturally relative. Cultural traditions can develop from power imbalances. Liberation movements seek to correct them.

Feminist sociology studies the way that most cultures present a male-dominated view of the world. **Androcentricism** is a perspective in which male concerns, male attitudes, and male practices are presented as “normal” or define what is valued in a culture. Women’s experiences, activities, and contributions to society and history are ignored, devalued, or marginalized.

It is still common, for example, to read writing that uses the personal pronoun “he” or the word “man” to represent people in general or humanity. The overall effect is to establish masculine values and imagery as normal. A “policeman” suggests a man who is doing a “man’s job”, when in fact women have been involved in policing for several decades now.

## Making Connections: Social Policy and Debate

### Multiculturalism in Canada

One important aspect of Canadian cultural identity is multiculturalism. Canada was the first officially multicultural society. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau declared in 1971 that no culture would take precedence over any other.

Multiculturalism refers to both the diversity of cultures and to a way of thinking about and managing cultural diversity. Multiculturalism seeks to both promote and recognize cultural differences while addressing cultural tensions. In the 1988 Multiculturalism Act, the federal government officially acknowledged its role “in bringing about equal access and participation for all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of the nation” (Government of Canada, as cited in Angelini & Broderick, 2012).

However, multiculturalism has not always been so central to Canadian public discourse. Multiculturalism represents a relatively recent cultural development. Before World War II, Canadian authorities used the unscientific concept of biological race to differentiate the types of immigrants and Indigenous peoples in Canada. This led to fears about immigrant “stock” and the problems of how to manage the mixture of races.

Three different models for managing diversity emerged: (1) the American “melting pot” paradigm in which the mingling of races was thought to be able to produce a super race with the best qualities of all races combined, (2) strict exclusion or deportation of races seen to be “unsuited” to Canadian social and environmental conditions, or (3) the Canadian “mosaic”, separation and compartmentalization of races (Day, 2000).



Figure 3.8 Canada is a multicultural nation. Multilingual sign on University Blvd, Sydney, NS.: English, French, Mi'kmaq, Gaelic (Photo courtesy of constancemc/Flickr)

After World War II, the category of race was replaced by culture and ethnicity in public debate, but the mosaic model remained. New definitions of culture as a deep-seated emotional-psychological phenomenon emerged. In this view, to be deprived of culture through coercive assimilation would be cultural genocide. As a result, alternatives to cultural assimilation into the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture were debated, and the Canadian mosaic model was redefined as multiculturalism. Based on a new appreciation of culture, and with increased immigration from non-European countries, Canadian identity was re-imagined in the 1960s and 1970s as a happy cohabitation of cultures, with each encouraged to maintain cultural distinctiveness. So while the cultural identity of Canadians is diverse, multiculturalism has come to represent Canadian cultural identity.

However, problems of cultural difference persist. Multicultural policy sparked numerous controversies, from whether Sikh RCMP officers can wear turbans to whether Mormon sects can have legal polygamous marriages.

Critics of multiculturalism identify four related problems:

- Multiculturalism only superficially accepts the equality of all cultures while continuing to limit and prohibit actual equality, participation, and cultural expression. One key element of this criticism is that there are only two official languages in Canada — English and French — which limits the full participation of non-anglophone/francophone groups.
- Multiculturalism obliges minority individuals to assume the limited cultural identities of their ethnic group of origin, which leads to stereotyping minority groups, ghettoization, and feeling isolated from the national culture.
- Multiculturalism causes fragmentation and disunity in Canadian society. Minorities do not integrate into existing Canadian society but demand that Canadians adopt or accommodate their way of life, even when they espouse controversial values, laws, and customs (like polygamy or sharia law).
- Multiculturalism is based on recognizing group rights which undermines constitutional protections of individual rights.

On the other hand, proponents of multiculturalism like Will Kymlicka describe the Canadian experience with multiculturalism as a success story. Kymlicka argues that the evidence shows:

“Immigrants in Canada are more likely to become citizens, to vote and to run for office, and to be elected to office than immigrants in other Western democracies, in part because voters in Canada do not discriminate against such candidates. Compared to their counterparts in other Western democracies, the children of immigrants have better educational outcomes, and while immigrants in all Western societies suffer from an “ethnic penalty” in translating their skills into jobs, the size of this ethnic penalty is lowest in Canada. Compared to residents of other Western democracies, Canadians are more likely to say that immigration is beneficial and less likely to have prejudiced views of Muslims. And whereas ethnic diversity has been shown to erode levels of trust and social capital in other countries, there appears to be a “Canadian exceptionalism” in this regard.”(2012)

## 3.2. Elements of Culture

### Values and Beliefs

Values and beliefs are two important elements of culture. **Values** are a culture's standard for what is true, good, just, or beautiful. Values are deeply embedded and important for transmitting and teaching a culture's beliefs. **Beliefs** are the convictions people hold to be true. Individuals in a society believe certain things to be true, and they also share collective values. For example, North Americans often believe that anyone who works hard enough will be successful and wealthy. Underlying this belief is the value that wealth is good and desirable.

Values help shape a society by suggesting what is good and bad, beautiful and ugly, and what should be sought or avoided. Consider the value that North American culture places on youth. Children represent innocence and purity, while a youthful adult appearance signifies sexuality. Shaped by this value, North Americans spend millions of dollars each year on cosmetic products and surgeries to look young and beautiful.

Sometimes the values of Canada and the United States are contrasted. Americans are said to have an individualistic culture, meaning people place a high value on individuality and independence. In contrast, Canadian culture is said to be more collectivist, meaning the welfare of the group and group relationships are primary values.

Living up to a culture's values can be difficult. It's easy to value good health, but it's hard to quit smoking. Marital monogamy is valued, but many spouses are unfaithful. Cultural diversity and equal opportunities for all are valued in Canada, but the country's highest political offices have been dominated by white men.

Values often suggest how people should behave, but values often don't reflect how people actually behave. Values portray an **ideal culture**, the standards society would like to embrace and live up to. But ideal culture differs from **real culture**, the way society really is.

In an ideal culture, there would be no traffic accidents, murders, poverty, or ethnic tension. But in real culture, police officers, lawmakers, educators, and social workers constantly strive to prevent or repair those accidents, crimes, and injustices. Teenagers are encouraged to value celibacy. However, the number of unplanned teen pregnancies shows that not only is the ideal hard to live up to, but that the value alone is not enough to spare teenagers from the potential consequences of having sex.

Societies try to put values into action through rewards, sanctions, and punishments. When people observe the norms of society and uphold its values, they are often rewarded. A boy who helps an elderly woman board a bus may receive a smile and a "thank you." A business manager who raises profit margins may receive a quarterly bonus. People sanction certain behaviours by giving their support, approval, or permission, or by giving formal disapproval and non-support. **Sanctions** are a form of **social control**, a way to encourage conformity to cultural norms. Sometimes people conform to norms in anticipation or expectation of positive sanctions: Good grades, for instance, may mean praise from parents and teachers.

When people go against a society's values, they are punished. A boy who shoves an elderly woman aside to board the bus first may receive frowns or even a scolding from other passengers. A business manager who drives away customers will likely be fired. Breaking norms and rejecting values can lead to cultural sanctions such as earning a negative label— lazy, no-good bum —or to legal sanctions such as traffic tickets, fines, or imprisonment.

Values vary across time and between groups as people evaluate, debate, and change collective societal beliefs. Values also vary from culture to culture. For example, cultures differ in their values about what kinds of physical closeness are appropriate in public. It is rare to see two male friends or coworkers holding hands in Canada where that behaviour often symbolizes romantic feelings. But in many nations, masculine physical intimacy is considered natural in public. A simple gesture, such as hand-holding, carries great symbolic differences across cultures.

## Norms

The examples in this chapter have often described how people are expected to behave in certain situations— for example, when buying food or boarding a bus. These examples describe the visible and invisible rules of conduct through which societies are structured. Sociologists call these rules norms. While values and beliefs identify desirable states and convictions, a norm is a generally accepted way of doing things. Norms define how to behave according to what a society has defined as good, right, and important. Most members of the society respect norms because violation involves some degree of sanction. Norms define the rules that govern behaviour.

Formal norms are established, written rules. They are behaviours worked out and agreed upon to serve most people. Laws are formal norms, but so are employee manuals, college entrance requirements, and regulations such as “no running at swimming pools”. Formal norms are the most specific and clearly stated of the various types of norms, and the most strictly enforced. But even enforcement of formal norms reflects cultural values.

For example, money is highly valued in North America, so monetary crimes are punished. It is against the law to rob a bank, and banks go to great lengths to prevent such crimes. People guard valuable possessions and install anti-theft devices to protect homes and cars. Until recently, a less strictly enforced social norm was driving while intoxicated. Though there have been laws in Canada to punish drunk driving since 1921, there were few systems in place to prevent the crime until quite recently. These examples show a range of enforcement in formal norms.

While there are many formal norms, there are even more informal norms. Informal norms are casual behaviours that are generally conformed to. People learn informal norms by observation, imitation, and general socialization. Some informal norms are taught directly: “kiss your Aunt Edna” or “use your napkin.” Other informal norms are learned by observation, including observations of consequences when someone else violates a norm. Children learn quickly that picking your nose is subject to ridicule when they see someone shamed for it by other children.

Although informal norms define personal interactions, they extend into larger systems too. Think back to the discussion of fast food restaurants at the beginning of this chapter. In Canada, there are informal norms about behaviour at these restaurants. Customers line up to order their food and leave when they are done. They do not sit down at a table with strangers, sing loudly as they prepare their condiments, or nap in a booth. Most people do not commit even benign breaches of informal norms. Informal norms dictate appropriate behaviours without the need of written rules.



Figure 3.9. In many parts of Africa and the Middle East, it is considered normal for men to hold hands in friendship. How would Canadians react to these two soldiers? (Photo courtesy of Georgie Mott/Wikimedia Commons)



## Making Connections: Sociological Research

### Breaching Experiments

Sociologist Harold Garfinkel studied people's customs to learn how often unconscious and norms influence behaviour and enabled the social order to exist (Weber, 2011). Like the symbolic interactionists, he believed that people together create a social order. He noted, however, that people often draw on unspoken agreements to do so. He discusses the underlying assumptions people use to create "accounts" or stories to let them make sense of the world.

One of his research methods was known as a breaching experiment. His breaching experiments tested sociological ideas about norms and conformity. In a breaching experiment, the researcher purposely breaks a social norm. The participants are not aware an experiment is in progress.



Figure 3.10. Harold Garfinkel, founder of ethnomethodology in sociology (Image courtesy of Arlene Garfinkel/Wikimedia Commons).

If the breach is successful, however, these innocent bystanders will respond in some way. For example, he had his students go into shops and barter with the sales clerks: "This says \$14.99, but I'll give you \$10 for it." Often the clerks were shocked or flustered. This breach reveals the unspoken convention in North America that the amount given on the price tag is the price. It also breaks other conventions which seek to make commercial transactions as efficient and impersonal as possible.

In another example, he had his students respond to the casual greeting, "How are you?" with a detailed description of their state of health and well-being. The point of

the experiments was not that the experimenter would simply act obnoxiously or weird in public. Rather, the point is to deviate from a social norm in a small way to and see what happens.

Garfinkel deliberately imposed strange behaviours on unknowing people. Then he would observe their responses.

There are many rules about speaking with strangers in public. It is okay to tell a woman you like her shoes. It is not okay to ask if you can try them on. It is okay to stand in line behind someone at the ATM. It is not okay to look over their shoulder as they make the transaction. It is okay to sit beside someone on a crowded bus. It is "weird" to sit beside a stranger in a half-empty bus.

For some breaches, the researcher directly engaged with innocent bystanders. An experimenter might strike up a conversation in a public bathroom, where it's common to respect each other's privacy so much that we can ignore another's presence. In a grocery store, an experimenter might take a food item out of another person's grocery cart, saying, "That looks good! I think I'll try it." An experimenter might sit down at a table with others in a fast food restaurant, or



follow someone around a museum, studying the same paintings. In those cases, the bystanders are pressured to respond, and their discomfort illustrates how much we depend on social norms.

These cultural norms play an important role. They let us know how to behave around each other and how to feel comfortable in our community, but they are not necessarily rational. Why should we not talk to someone in a public bathroom, or haggle over the price of a good in a store? Breaching experiments uncover and explore the many unwritten social rules we live by. They indicate the degree to which the world we live in is fragile, arbitrary and ritualistic; socially structured by deep, silent agreements with others. Frequently we are not really aware of them.

## Symbols and Language

Humans, consciously and subconsciously, are always trying to make sense of their surrounding world. Symbols—such as gestures, signs, objects, signals, and words—stand in for or represent something else. Symbols provide clues to understanding the underlying experiences, statuses, states, and ideas they express. They convey recognizable meanings shared by societies.

The world is filled with symbols. Sports uniforms, company logos and traffic signs are symbols. In some cultures, a gold ring is a symbol of marriage. Some symbols are highly functional: stop signs, for instance, provide useful instruction. As physical objects they belong to material culture, but because they function as symbols, they also convey nonmaterial cultural meanings. Some symbols are only valuable in what they represent. Trophies, blue ribbons, or gold medals, for example, serve no purpose other than to represent accomplishments. Many objects have both material and nonmaterial symbolic value.

A police officer's badge and uniform are symbols of authority and law enforcement. The sight of a police officer in uniform or in a police car triggers reassurance in some citizens but annoyance, fear, or anger in others.

Symbols are often noticed when they are used out of context. Used unconventionally, symbols can send strong messages. A stop sign on the door of a corporation makes a political statement. A camouflage military jacket worn in an antiwar protest makes a statement. Internet memes—images that spread from person to person through reposting—often adopt these tactics for fun or as a political statement. An image of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper in a folksy sweater holding a cute cat was altered to show him holding an oily duck instead: this was a detournement with a political message.

Even the destruction of symbols is symbolic. Effigies representing public figures are burned to demonstrate anger at certain leaders. In 1989, crowds tore down the Berlin Wall, a decades-old symbol of the division between East and West Germany, or between communism and capitalism.

While different cultures have varying systems of symbols, there is one that is common to all: the use of language. Language is a symbolic system through which people communicate and through which culture is



Figure 3.11. Stop sign at intersection of College Way and University Blvd in Sydney, N.S. Photo courtesy of constancemc/Flickr

transmitted. Some languages contain a system of symbols used for written communication, while others rely only on spoken communication and nonverbal actions.

Rules for speaking and writing vary even within cultures, often by region. Do you refer to a can of carbonated liquid as a soda, pop, or soft drink? Is a household entertainment room a family room, rec room, or den? When leaving a restaurant, do you ask your server for the cheque or the bill?

Language constantly evolves as societies create new ideas. With technology, people adapt almost instantly to new nouns such as email and internet, and verbs such as download, text, and blog. Thirty years ago, the general public would have considered these nonsense words.

## Material and Nonmaterial Culture

Even an action as simple as getting to work contains a great deal of cultural meaning. Think about using public transportation. Whether commuting in Dublin, Cairo, Mumbai, or Vancouver, many behaviours will be the same in all locations, but there will also be significant differences. Typically, in Canada, a passenger finds a marked bus stop or station, waits for the bus or train, pays an agent before or after boarding, and quietly takes a seat if one is available. But when boarding a bus in Cairo, passengers might need to run, because buses often do not come to a full stop to take on patrons. Dublin bus riders are expected to extend an arm to indicate that they want the bus to stop. When boarding a commuter train in Mumbai, passengers must squeeze into overstuffed cars with a lot of pushing and shoving on the crowded platforms. That kind of behaviour would be considered the very rude in Canada, but in Mumbai it reflects the daily challenges of getting around on an overcrowded train system.

The commuting example shows different cultural responses to a common problem, the problem of public transportation. The problem is shared, but the solutions are different. Cultural solutions consist of two components: thoughts (expectations about personal space, for example) and tangible things (bus stops, trains, and seating capacity). Culture includes both material and non-material elements. Material culture refers to the artifacts, technologies, and products of a group of people. Bus passes and bus tickets are part of material culture. Automobiles, stores, and the physical structures where people worship are part of material culture. Nonmaterial culture, in contrast, consists of knowledge and beliefs, forms of communication, and norms of behaviour of a society. Cultures use both material and nonmaterial components to adapt and respond to the tasks of life.

Material and nonmaterial aspects of culture are linked, and physical objects often symbolize cultural ideas. A bus pass is a material object, but it represents part of nonmaterial culture, capitalism, and the acceptance of paying for transportation. Clothing, hairstyles, and jewelry are part of material culture, but the appropriateness of wearing certain clothing for specific events reflects nonmaterial culture. A school building belongs to material culture, but the teaching methods and educational standards are part of education's nonmaterial culture. These material and nonmaterial aspects of culture can vary subtly from region to region.

As people travel farther, moving from different regions to entirely different parts of the world, some material and nonmaterial aspects of culture become dramatically unfamiliar. We notice this when we encounter different cultures. As we interact with cultures other than our own, we become more aware of the differences and commonalities between others' worlds and our own.

### 3.3. Culture as Innovation: Pop Culture, Subculture, Global Culture

Culture is the source of the shared meanings through which we interpret the world. While cultural practices are in some ways a response to biology or economy, they are not totally determined by these factors. Culture is innovative; it expresses the human imagination to solve problems, to produce innovations — new objects, ideas, or ways of being. At the same time, we are born into cultures that shape us: Languages, ways of thinking, ways of doing things, and artifacts we inherit and fit ourselves into. Culture can, therefore, also be restrictive, imposing forms of life, beliefs, and practices on people, and limiting the possibilities of what we can think and do.



Figure 3.12. Pop culture heroes from the early days of pulp fiction. The term “pulp” refers to the cheap and disposable wood-pulp paper the books and magazines were published on (Image courtesy of Terry McCombs/ Flickr)

The next two sections of this chapter examine aspects of culture which are innovative—high culture and popular culture, subculture, and global culture — and aspects of culture which are restrictive — rationalization and consumerism.

#### High Culture and Popular Culture

Do you prefer listening to opera or hip-hop music? Do you like watching horse jumping or NASCAR? Do you read books of poetry or magazines about celebrities?

Sociologists use the term high culture to describe cultural experience characterized by formal complexity, eternal values, or intrinsic authenticity such as is provided by the Greek classics, Beethoven’s symphonies, Sergei Diaghilev’s ballets, or James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. People often associate high culture with intellectualism, elitism, wealth, and prestige. Pierre Bourdieu (1984) argues high culture is not only a symbol of distinction, but a means of maintaining status and power distinctions through the transfer of cultural capital: the knowledge, skills, tastes, mannerisms, speaking style, posture, material possessions, credentials, etc. that a person acquires from family background. Events considered high culture can be expensive and formal — attending a ballet, seeing a play, or listening to a live symphony performance — and the people who appreciate these events are often those who have enjoyed the benefits of an enriched and exclusive cultural background.

The term popular culture refers to the pattern of cultural experiences and attitudes that exist in mainstream society: cultural experiences well-liked by “the people.” Popular culture events might include a parade, a baseball game, or a rock concert. Rock and pop music — “pop” is short for “popular” — are part of popular culture. Popular culture is often expressed and spread by commercial media such as radio, television, movies, the music industry, publishers, and corporate-run websites. Unlike high culture, popular culture is accessible to most people. You can share a discussion of favourite hockey teams with a new coworker, or comment on the TV show *Game of Thrones* when making small talk at the grocery store. But if you tried to launch into a deep discussion on the classical Greek play *Antigone*, few members of Canadian society would be familiar.

The labels of high culture and popular culture vary over time and place. Shakespearean plays, considered pop culture when they were written, are now among Western society’s high culture. Television programming has gone from typical low brow situation comedies, soap operas, and crime dramas to the development of series with increasingly sophisticated characters, narratives, and themes (e.g., *The Sopranos*, *True Blood*, *Dexter*, *Breaking Bad*, *Mad Men*, and *Game of Thrones*).

Contemporary popular culture is frequently referred to as a postmodern culture. In postmodern culture — the form of culture that came after modern culture — it's more common to find various sorts of mash-ups of high and low: Serious literature combined with zombie themes; pop music constructed from recycled samples; symphony orchestras performing the soundtracks of cartoons; architecture that playfully borrows and blends historical styles; etc. Rock music is the subject of many highbrow histories and academic analyses, just as the common objects of popular culture are transformed and represented as high art. Andy Warhol's Campbell's Soup Cans are one example. Postmodern popular culture is both playful and ironic, as if the blending and mixing of cultural references, like in the television show *The Simpsons*, is one big in-joke. recycles and remixes elements of previous cultural production.

In postmodern culture, everyone with computer access and editing software can be a cultural producer: Everyone has an important voice. Access to knowledge is simply a matter of crowd-sourcing.

Postmoderns no longer really believe in the big stories (metanarratives) and social projects of modernity. Postmoderns are skeptical of the claims that scientific knowledge leads to progress, that political change creates human emancipation, that Truth sets us free. Some see this erosion of authority and decline in consensus around core values as a relativism of values. In relativism, no standard exists to judge one thing more significant than another. Everyone will make up their own little stories, each as valid as the next, as we see when creationists seek to debunk the “myths” of evolutionary theory, for example. Others argue that the outcome leads to a necessary critique of the unexamined assumptions of power and authority in modern culture— for example, the rhetoric of “family values” or “scientific progress” lampooned in *The Simpsons*. Instead of the privileged truths of elites and authorities, postmodernity features a plurality of different voices that had been kept at the margins. Culture moves away from homogeneous sameness to heterogeneous diversity.

## Subculture and Counterculture

A subculture is just as it sounds—a smaller cultural group within a larger culture. People of a subculture are part of the larger culture, but also share an identity in a smaller group. Thousands of subcultures exist in Canada. Ethnic groups share the language, food, and customs of their heritage. Other subcultures are defined by shared experiences. For example, biker culture revolves around a dedication to motorcycles. Some subcultures are formed by members who possess traits or preferences that differ from the majority of a society's population. Alcoholics Anonymous offers support to those suffering from alcoholism. The body modification community embraces tattoos, piercings, and certain forms of plastic surgery. But although members of a subculture form around a distinct identity, they still identify with and participate in the larger society.

Sociologists distinguish subcultures from countercultures. Countercultures are a type of subculture that rejects the larger culture's norms and values. In contrast to subcultures, which operate within the larger society, countercultures might actively defy larger society by developing their own set of rules and norms. Sometimes countercultures even create communities that operate outside of greater society.

The period after World War II saw a series of “spectacular” youth cultures — teddy boys, beatniks, mods, hippies, bikers, skinheads, rastas, punks, new wavers, ravers, hip-hoppers, and hipsters — who in various ways sought to reject the values of their parents' generation. The hippies, for example, were a subculture that became a counterculture. They blended protest against the Vietnam War, technocracy and consumer culture with a back to the land movement, non-Western forms of spirituality, and the practice of voluntary simplicity. Counterculture, in this example, refers to the cultural forms of life taken by a political and social protest movement.

Cults are also considered countercultural groups. They are usually informal, transient religious groups that deviate from orthodox beliefs. Cults often involve intense emotional commitment to the group and allegiance to a charismatic leader.

However, sometimes the dominant society judges a cult's challenge to laws and norms as going too far. For example, the group Yearning for Zion (YFZ) in Eldorado, Texas existed quietly until its leader was accused of statutory rape and underage marriage. The sect's formal norms clashed too severely to be tolerated by U.S. law. In 2008 authorities raided the compound, removing more than 200 women and children from the property.

How much countercultures reject the larger culture is sometimes questionable, however. Phil Cohen (1972) analyzed British working-class youth subcultures like the teddy boys, mods, and skinheads. He noted that the style and concerns of the groups could be a "compromise solution between two contradictory needs: the need to create and express autonomy and difference from parents...and the need to maintain parental identifications" (as cited in Hebdige, 1979).

In the 1960s and 70s, for example, skinheads shaved their heads, listened to ska music from Jamaica, participated in racist chants at soccer games, and wore highly polished Doc Marten boots in a manner that deliberately alienated their parents while expressing their own alienation as working-class youth with few job prospects in deindustrialized England. At the same time their subcultural outfit was a "caricature of the model worker" their parents aspired to. Their attitudes simply exaggerated the proletarian, puritanical, and chauvinist traits of their parents' generation. On one hand the invention of skinhead culture was an innovative cultural creation; on the other hand, it just exaggerated the already existing contradictions of the skinheads' class situation and that of their parents.



Figure 3. 13. Charlie Parker (known as Bird) was an icon of Hipster or hepcat, culture in the 1940s and 1950s. Photo from the William P. Gottlieb collection at the Library of Congress.

## Making Connections: Sociology in the Real World

### The Evolution of North American Hipster Subculture

Skinny jeans, chunky glasses, ironic moustaches, retro-style single speed bicycles and T-shirts with vintage logos—the hipster is a recognizable figure in contemporary North American culture. Mostly found in metropolitan areas, hipsters seek to define themselves by a rejection of mainstream norms and fashion styles. As a subculture, hipsters reject many values and beliefs of North American society, tending to prefer a bohemian lifestyle over one defined by the accumulation of power and wealth. At the same time they are very concerned with the pedigree of the music, styles, and objects that identify them.

When did hipster subculture begin? While commonly viewed as a recent trend among middle-class youth, the history of the group stretches back to the early decades of the 1900s.

In the 1940s, black American jazz music was on the rise in the United States. Musicians were known as hepcats and had a smooth, relaxed style that contrasted with more conservative and mainstream expressions of cultural taste. Norman Mailer (1923 – 2007), in his essay *The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster* (1957), defined those who were “hep” or “hip” as largely white youth living by a black jazz-inspired code of resistance, while those who were “square” lived according to society’s rules and conventions.

As hipster attitudes spread and young people were increasingly drawn to alternative music and fashion, attitudes and language derived from the culture of jazz were adopted. Hipster slang was purposefully ambiguous. When hipsters said, “It’s cool, man,” they meant not that everything was good, but that it was the way it was.

By the 1950s, another variation on the subculture emerged. Quebecois-American writer Jack Kerouac (1922 – 1969) called it the beat generation. Beats were defined as a generation that was nonconformist and anti-materialistic. Prominent in this movement were writers and poets who listened to jazz, studied Eastern religions, experimented with different states of experience, and embraced radical politics of personal liberation. They bummed around, hitchhiked the country and lived marginally. While the beat was focused on inner experience, the hipster was focused on the external style.

By the end of the 1950s, the influence diminished and many traits of hepcat culture became mainstream. College students, questioning the relevance of the American dream after World War II, clutched copies of Kerouac’s *On the Road*, dressed in berets, black turtlenecks, and black-rimmed glasses. Women wore black leotards and grew their hair long. The subculture became



Figure 3.14. In the 1940s, American hipsters were associated with the “cool” culture of jazz. (Photo courtesy of William P. Gottlieb/Ira and Leonore S. Gershwin Fund Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress)

visible and was covered in Life magazine, Esquire, Playboy, and other mainstream media.



Figure 3.15. Beatgirl by Pepe Robies. By the late 1950s and early 1960s beatnik subculture was being parodied. [Long Description at the end of the chapter] (Image courtesy of Sarah/Flickr)

Herb Caen (1916 – 1997), a San Francisco journalist, used the suffix from Sputnik 1, the Russian satellite that orbited Earth in 1957, to dub the movement's followers as "beatniks." They were subsequently lampooned as lazy in television shows like *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* (1959 – 1963) or dangerous, drug-abusing delinquents in movies like *High School Confidential* (1958). As the beat generation faded, a new related movement began. It too focused on breaking social boundaries, but also advocated freedom of expression, philosophy, and love. It took its name from the generations before; in fact, some theorists claim that the beats themselves coined the term to describe their children. Over time, the "little hipsters" of the 1960s and 70s became known simply as hippies. Others think that hippie was a derogatory label invented by the mainstream press to discredit and stereotype the movement and its non-materialist aspirations. Contemporary expressions of the hipster rose out of the hippie movement in the same way that hippies evolved from the beats and beats from hepcats. Although today's hipster may not seem to have much in common with the jazz-inspired youth of the 1940s, or the long-haired back to the land movement of the 1960s, an emphasis on nonconformity persists. Sociologist Mark Greif investigated the hipster subculture of the United States and found that much of what tied the group together was not a specific set of fashion or music choices, nor a specific point of contention with the mainstream. What has emerged, rather, is an appropriation of consumer capitalism that seeks authenticity. In his New York Times article "The Hipster in the Mirror" Greif wrote, "All hipsters play at being the inventors or first adopters of novelties: pride comes from knowing, and deciding, what's cool in advance of the rest of the world" (2010). What tends to be cool is an ironic pastiche of borrowed styles or tastes

that signify other identities or histories: alternative music (sometimes very obscure), used vintage clothing, organic and artisanal foods and products, single gear bikes, and countercultural values and lifestyles. Young people are often drawn to oppose mainstream conventions. Much as the hepcats of the jazz era opposed common culture with carefully crafted appearances of coolness and relaxation, modern hipsters reject mainstream values with a purposeful apathy. Ironic, cool to the point of non-caring, and intellectual, hipsters continue to embody a subculture while simultaneously impacting mainstream culture.

## Global Culture

Beginning in the 1970s, Western governments began to deregulate social services while granting greater freedom to private businesses. World markets became dominated by unregulated, international capital and new multinational corporations. A global economy replaced nationally based economies. We refer to this integration of international trade and finance as **globalization**.

Global communications and air travel also increase the international flow not only of goods but also of information and people (Scheuerman, 2010). Today, many Canadian companies set up offices in other nations where the costs of resources and labour are cheaper. When a person in Canada calls to get information about banking, insurance, or computer services, the person taking that call may be working in India or Indonesia.

With globalization is **diffusion**, the spread of material and nonmaterial culture. While globalization refers to the integration of markets, diffusion refers to the integration of cultures. Middle-class North Americans can fly overseas and return with a new appreciation of Thai noodles or Italian gelato. Access to television and the internet has brought the lifestyles and values portrayed in Hollywood sitcoms the globe. Twitter feeds from public demonstrations in one nation have encouraged political protesters in other countries. When this kind of diffusion occurs, material objects and ideas from one culture are introduced into another.

Global migration also facilitates cultural diffusion. Ideas and artifacts spread out as people move from their original homeland. As Arjun Appadurai (1996) suggests, “More people than ever before seem to imagine the possibility that they or their children will live and work in places other than where they were born: this is the wellspring of the increased rates of migration at every level of social, national, and global life.” This likelihood of movement, whether actual or imagined, changes the cultural coordinates of how people see themselves in the world.

All migrants, refugees, temporary foreign workers, or travellers bring their beliefs, attitudes, languages, cuisines, music, religious practices when they move, and they meet new cultures where they arrive. Electronic media allows global migrants and travellers to keep in touch with friends, family and culture from home. Electronic media also give migrants access to the culture of their new homes. Media allows people to imagine future homes elsewhere in the world. With globalization, culture is increasingly separated from location. The ways people imagine themselves and define their attachments, interests, and aspirations dissolve the divisions between cultures formerly set by national boundaries.

Culture has two opposing tendencies: One is the way that cultures around the world set norms which constrain, restrict, habitualize and fix forms of life; the other is the way that cultures produce innovative and diverse solutions to problems like nutrition. Cultures both constrain and continually go beyond constraints.

## Chapter Summary

### What Is Culture?

“Society” and “culture” have different meanings in sociology. A society is a group of people sharing a community and culture. Culture describes the shared behaviours and beliefs of these people, and includes material and nonmaterial elements. Our experience of cultural difference is influenced by our ethnocentrism.

### Elements of Culture

A culture consists of many elements, including values and beliefs. Culture is also governed by norms, including laws. The symbols and language of a society develop and transmit culture.

### Pop Culture, Subculture, and Cultural Change

Sociologists recognize high culture and popular culture. Societies also have many subcultures—smaller groups that share an identity. Countercultures reject mainstream values and create their own cultural rules and norms. Through invention or discovery, cultures evolve with new ideas and ways of thinking. Technology is also responsible for the spread of both material and nonmaterial culture and contributes to globalization.



## Key Terms

**beliefs:** convictions that people hold to be true.

**counterculture:** A group that rejects and opposes society's widely accepted cultural patterns.

**cultural imperialism:** The deliberate imposition of one's own cultural values on another culture.

**cultural relativism:** The practice of assessing a culture by its own standards, and not in comparison to another culture.

**cultural universals:** Patterns or traits that are globally common to all societies.

**culture:** Shared beliefs, values, and practices.

**culture shock:** An experience of personal disorientation when confronted with an unfamiliar way of life.

**diffusion:** The spread of material and nonmaterial culture from one culture to another.

**ethnocentrism:** Evaluating another culture according to the standards of one's own culture.

**formal norms:** Established, written rules for behaviour, from codes of conduct to laws.

**globalization:** The integration of international trade and finance markets.

**high culture:** Forms of cultural experience characterized by formal complexity, eternal values, or intrinsic authenticity.

**ideal culture:** The standards a society would like to embrace and live up to.

**informal norms:** Casual behaviours that are generally and widely conformed to.

**innovation:** New objects or ideas introduced to a culture for the first time.

**language:** A symbolic system of communication.

**material culture:** The objects or belongings of a group of people.

**nonmaterial culture:** The ideas, attitudes, and beliefs of a society.

**norms:** The visible and invisible rules of conduct through which societies are structured.

**popular culture:** Mainstream, widespread patterns among a society's population.

**postmodern culture:** The form of culture that comes after modern culture, characterized by the playful mixture of forms and "incredulity towards metanarratives".

**sanctions:** A way to authorize or formally disapprove of certain behaviours.

**social control:** A way to encourage conformity to cultural norms.

**society:** The structure of a social group of people who interact within a definable territory and who share a culture.

**subculture:** A group that shares a specific identity apart from a society's majority, even as the members exist within a larger society.

**symbol:** Gestures or objects that have meanings associated with them that are recognized by people who share a culture.

**values:** A culture's standard for discerning desirable states in society (what is true, good, just, or beautiful).

## Chapter Quiz

### 3.1. What Is Culture?

1. The terms \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are often used interchangeably, but have nuances that differentiate them.
  - a. imperialism and relativism
  - b. culture and society
  - c. society and ethnocentrism
  - d. ethnocentrism and xenocentrism
2. The American flag is a material object that denotes the United States of America; however, there are certain connotations that many associate with the flag, like bravery and freedom. In this example, what are bravery and freedom?
  - a. symbols
  - b. language
  - c. material culture
  - d. nonmaterial culture
3. The belief that one's culture is inferior to another culture is called?
  - a. ethnocentrism
  - b. nationalism
  - c. xenocentrism
  - d. imperialism
4. Rodney and Elise are American students studying abroad in Italy. When they are introduced to their host families, the families kiss them on both cheeks. When Rodney's host brother introduces himself and kisses Rodney on both cheeks, Rodney pulls back in surprise. Where he is from, unless they are romantically involved, men do not kiss one another. This is an example of:
  - a. culture shock
  - b. imperialism
  - c. ethnocentrism
  - d. xenocentrism

5. Most cultures have been found to identify laughter as a sign of humour, joy, or pleasure. Likewise, most cultures recognize music in some form. Music and laughter are examples of:
- a. relativism
  - b. ethnocentrism
  - c. xenocentrism
  - d. universalism

### 3.2. Elements of Culture

6. A nation's flag is:
- a. a symbol
  - b. a value
  - c. a culture
  - d. a folkway
7. The existence of social norms, both formal and informal, is one of the main things that inform \_\_\_\_\_, otherwise known as a way to encourage social conformity.
- a. values
  - b. sanctions
  - c. social control
  - d. mores
8. Norms are:
- a. the visible and invisible rules of conduct through which societies are structured.
  - b. mainstream, widespread patterns among a society's population.
  - c. the form of culture that comes after modern culture
  - d. a way to authorize or formally disapprove of certain cultures

9. A symbol is:

- a. the structure of a social group of people who interact within a definable territory
- b. a group that shares a specific identity apart from a society's majority, even as the members exist within a larger society.
- c. gestures or object that has associated meanings, recognized by people who share a culture.
- d. a culture's standard for discerning desirable states in society

10. Cultural sanctions can also be viewed as ways that society:

- a. establishes leaders
- b. determines language
- c. regulates behaviour
- d. determines laws

### 3.3. Pop Culture, Subculture, and Cultural Change

11. An example of high culture is \_\_\_\_\_, whereas an example of popular culture would be \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Dostoevsky style in film; American Idol winners
- b. medical marijuana; film noir
- c. country music; pop music
- d. political theory; sociological theory

12. The Ku Klux Klan is an example of what part of culture?

- a. Counterculture
- b. Subculture
- c. Multiculturalism
- d. Afrocentricity

13. Modern-day hipsters are an example of:
- a. ethnocentricity
  - b. counterculture
  - c. subculture
  - d. high culture
14. Some jobs today advertise in multinational markets and permit telecommuting in lieu of working from a primary location. This broadening of the job market and the way that jobs are performed can be attributed to:
- a. cultural lag
  - b. innovation
  - c. discovery
  - d. globalization
15. That McDonald's is found in almost every country around the world is an example of:
- a. globalization
  - b. diffusion
  - c. culture lag
  - d. xenocentrism

[Quiz answers at end of chapter]

## Short Answer

### 3.1. What Is Culture?

1. Examine the difference between material and nonmaterial culture in your world. Identify ten objects that are part of your regular cultural experience. For each, then identify what aspects of nonmaterial culture (values and beliefs) that these objects represent. What has this exercise revealed to you about your culture?
2. Do you feel that feelings of ethnocentricity or xenocentricity are more prevalent in Canadian culture? Why do you believe this? What issues or events might inform this?

### 3.2. Elements of Culture

1. How do you think your culture function if there were no such thing as a social “norm”?
2. Do you think chaos would ensue or relative peace could be kept? Explain.

### 3.3. Pop Culture, Subculture, and Cultural Change

1. Identify several examples of popular culture and describe how they inform larger culture. How prevalent is the effect of these examples in your everyday life?
2. Consider some of the specific concerns of your generation. Are any ideas countercultural? What subcultures have emerged from your generation? How have the issues of your generation expressed themselves culturally? How has your generation made its mark on society’s collective culture?

## Further Research

### 3.1. What Is Culture?

In January 2011, a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America presented evidence indicating that the hormone oxytocin could regulate and manage instances of ethnocentrism. [PDF]: <http://openstaxcollege.org/l/oxytocin>

### 3.2. Elements of Culture

The science-fiction novel, *Babel-17*, by Samuel R. Delaney was based upon the principles of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Read an excerpt from *Babel-17*: <http://openstaxcollege.org/l/Babel-17>

### 3.3. Pop Culture, Subculture, and Cultural Change

The Beats were a counterculture that birthed an entire movement of art, music, and literature—much of which is still highly regarded and studied today. The man responsible for naming the generation was Jack Kerouac; however, the man responsible for introducing the world to that generation was John Clellon Holmes, a writer often lumped in with the group. In 1952 he penned an article for the *New York Times Magazine* titled “This Is the Beat Generation.” Read that article and learn more about Clellon Holmes and the Beats: <http://openstaxcollege.org/l/The-Beats>

Popular culture meets counterculture as Oprah Winfrey interacts with members of the Yearning for Zion cult.: <http://openstaxcollege.org/l/Oprah>

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**Figure 3.\_.** Multilingual City by Michael Gil (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/13907834@N00/4414065031>) used under CC-BY 2.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)



## Long Descriptions

**Figure 3.15:** Betty the Beatnik with a collection of fashion choices including black, long sleeve shirts and turtlenecks, black pants, and long black dresses.

**Figure 3.25:** A young woman leans against an old-style blue bike. She wears bright clothes, large glasses, knee high socks and an owl backpack.”

**Figure 3.32:** One man in an ill-fitting suit holds a sign ductaped together that says, “cobble, together, assorted software, to do music, movies and websites.”; The other man is dressed casually and holds a simple sign that says, “I come with iLife.”

### Solutions to Chapter Quiz

1 b, | 2 d, | 3 a, | 4 a, | 5 d, | 6 a, | 7 c, | 8 a, | 9 c, | 10 c, | 11 a, |  
12 a, | 13 c, | 14 d, | 15 a

[4]

## Socialization



Figure 4.1. Kid's Mural Open Hearth Park, Sydney, N.S. Photo courtesy of constancemc/Flickr

## Learning Objectives

### 4.1. Why Socialization Matters

- Analyze the importance of socialization for individuals and society.
- Explain the nature versus nurture debate.
- Describe both the conformity of behaviour in society and the existence of individual uniqueness.

### 4.2. Agents of Socialization

- Learn the roles of families and peer groups in socialization.
- Understand how we are socialized through formal institutions like schools, workplaces, and the government.

### 4.3. Socialization Across the Life Course

- Explain how people are socialized into new roles at age-related transition points.
- Describe when and how resocialization occurs.

## Introduction to Socialization

In 2005, police detective Mark Holste followed an investigator from the Department of Children and Families into a Florida home. They were following up a statement from a neighbour. A small girl was reported peering from a broken window. This seemed odd because no one had seen a young child around the residence before. Neighbours believed only woman, her boyfriend and two adult sons lived there.

### Who Was the Mysterious Girl in the Window?

Detective Holste and his team were shocked when they entered the house. It was the worst mess they had ever seen: infested with cockroaches, smeared with feces and urine from both people and pets, and filled with dilapidated furniture and ragged window coverings.

Detective Holste found a little girl with vacant eyes staring into the darkness. A newspaper report later described the detective's first encounter with the child:

She lay on a torn, moldy mattress on the floor. She was curled on her side ... her ribs and collarbone jutting out ... her black hair was matted, crawling with lice. Insect bites, rashes and sores pocked her skin.... She was naked — except for a swollen diaper.... Her name, her mother said, was Danielle. She was almost seven years old. (DeGregory, 2008)



Figure 4.2. Ramshackle House. Photo courtesy of Chris Hunkeler/ Flickr.

Danielle was rushed to hospital for medical treatment and evaluation. Through extensive testing, doctors determined that, although she was severely malnourished, Danielle was able to see, hear, and vocalize normally. However, she would not look anyone in the eyes, did not know how to chew or swallow solid food, did not cry, did not respond to stimuli that would typically cause pain, and did not know how to communicate either with words or simple gestures such as nodding “yes” or “no.” Likewise, although tests showed she had no chronic diseases or genetic abnormalities, the only way she could stand was with someone holding onto her hands, and she “walked sideways on her toes, like a crab” (DeGregory, 2008).

What had happened to Danielle? Beyond the basic requirements for survival, she had been neglected. Based on their investigation, social workers concluded that she had been left almost entirely alone in rooms like the one where she was found. Without regular interaction—the holding, hugging, talking, the explanations and demonstrations given to most young children—she had not learned to walk, speak, eat, interact, play or even understand the world around her. From a sociological point of view, Danielle had not had been socialized.

**Socialization** is the process through which people are taught to be members of a society. Socialization describes the ways that people come to understand society’s norms and expectations, to accept society’s beliefs, and to be aware of societal values. It also describes how people become aware of themselves and reflect on the suitability of their behaviour in their interactions. Socialization occurs as people engage and disengage in a series of roles throughout life. Each **role**, like the role of son or daughter, student, friend, employee, etc., is defined by the behaviour expected of the person.

Socialization is not the same as socializing (interacting with others, like family, friends, and coworkers). Socialization occurs *through* socializing. As Danielle’s story illustrates, even the most basic of human activities are learned. Even physical tasks like sitting, standing and walking had not automatically developed for Danielle as she grew. Without socialization, Danielle had not learned about the material culture of her society (the physical used by a culture): For example, she could not hold a spoon, bounce a ball or use a chair for sitting. She also had not learned nonmaterial culture, such as its beliefs, values, and norms. She had no understanding of the concept of family, did not know cultural expectations for using a bathroom, and had no sense of modesty. Most importantly, she hadn’t learned to use the symbols that make up language. And through language we learn who we are, how we fit with other people, and our natural and social worlds.

The complex process of socialization takes place through interaction with many individuals, groups, and social institutions. Socialization is not only critical to children. Socialization is a lifelong process that prepares us for new social environments and expectations we encounter.

## Making Connections: Sociology in the Real World

### What a Pretty Little Lady!

Peggy Orenstein on “princess culture”:

“Within a month [of starting preschool], Daisy threw a tantrum when I tried to wrestle her into pants. As if by osmosis she had learned the names and gown colors of every Disney Princess—I didn’t even know what a Disney Princess was. She gazed longingly into the tulle-draped windows of the local toy stores and for her third birthday begged for a “real princess dress” with matching plastic high heels” (Orenstein, 2012).

“What a cute dress!” “I like the ribbons in your hair.” “Wow, you look so pretty today.” According to Lisa Bloom, author of *Think: Straight Talk for Women to Stay Smart in a Dumbed Down World*, most of us use pleasantries like these when we first meet little girls. “So what?” you might ask. Bloom asserts that we are too focused on the appearance of young girls, and as a result our society is socializing them to believe that how they look is of vital importance.

Bloom may be on to something. How often do you tell a little boy how attractive his outfit is, how nice looking his shoes are, or how handsome he looks today? To support her assertions, Bloom cites, as one example, that about 50 percent of girls ages three to six worry about being fat (Bloom, 2011). We’re talking about kindergarteners who are concerned about their body image.

Sociologists are acutely interested in of this type of gender socialization, where societal expectations of how boys and girls should *be* — how they should behave, what toys and colours they should like, and how important their attire is — are reinforced. One solution to this type of gender socialization is being experimented with at the Egalia preschool in Sweden, where children develop in a genderless environment. All of the children at Egalia are referred to with neutral terms like “friend” instead of he or she. Play areas and toys are consciously set up to eliminate any reinforcement of gender expectations (Haney, 2011). Egalia strives to eliminate all societal gender norms from these children’s preschool world.

Extreme? Perhaps. So what is the middle ground? Bloom suggests that we start with simple steps: When introduced to a young girl, ask about her favourite book or what she likes. In short, engage her mind not her outward appearance (Bloom, 2011).



Figure 4.3 Princess. Photo courtesy of Andi Smith/ Flickr



## 4.1. Why Socialization Matters

Socialization is critical both to individuals and to societies. Socialization shows how humans are interconnected with their social world. First, through teaching culture to new members that a society perpetuates itself. If new generations of a society do not learn its way of life, it ceases to exist. Whatever is distinctive about a culture must be transmitted to those who join it in order for a society to survive.

For Canadian culture to continue, for example, children in Canada must learn about cultural values related to democracy: They have to learn the norms of voting, as well as how to use material objects such as a ballot. Children learn the etiquette of eating in a restaurant. There are many ideas and objects that Canadians teach children in hopes of keeping the society's way of life going.

Socialization is just as important to us as individuals. Through social interaction we gradually become able to see ourselves through the eyes of others, learn who we are and how we fit into the world. In addition, to function successfully in society, we need to learn the basics of both material and nonmaterial culture: everything from how to dress to what is suitable attire for a specific occasion; from when we sleep to what we sleep on; and from what is considered appropriate to eat for dinner to how to use the stove to prepare it. Most importantly, we must learn language—whether it is verbal or through signs—to communicate and to think. As Danielle's tragic situation demonstrates, without socialization, we literally have no self. We are unable to function socially.

### Nature versus Nurture

Some believe who we are is a result of **nurture**—the relationships and caring that surround us. Others argue that who we are is based entirely in genetics. According to this **nature** perspective, our personality, interests, and talents are set before birth. Who we are depends on **nature**.

One way researchers try to prove the impact of nature is by studying twins. Some studies followed identical twins who were raised separately. These twins shared the same genetics but were socialized in different ways. Studying how identical twins raised apart are the same or different can give insight into how we are shaped by our genetic makeup versus our social environment.

For example, in 1968, twin girls born to a mentally ill mother were put up for adoption. However, they were also separated and raised in different households. They became one of five pairs of twins who were made subjects of a scientific study (Flam, 2007).

In 2003, the two women, then aged 35, were reunited. Elyse Schein and Paula Bernstein sat together in awe, feeling like they were looking into a mirror. Not only did they look alike, but they behaved alike, using the same hand gestures and facial expressions (Spratling, 2007). Studies like this point to the genetic roots of our temperament and behaviour.



Figure 4.4. Identical twins may look alike, but their differences can give us clues to the effects of socialization. Image 4.3 Identical Twin Fencing. Photo courtesy of Luis Minor/Flickr.

On the other hand, studies of identical twins have difficulty accounting for differences in the development of inherited diseases. In the case of schizophrenia, studies show a strong biological component to the disease. The closer our family connection to someone with schizophrenia, the more likely we will develop

it. However, even if our identical twin develops schizophrenia, we are less than 50 percent likely to develop it ourselves. Why is it not 100 percent? What occurs to produce the difference between genetically identical twins (Carey, 2012)?

Though genetics and hormones play an important role in human behaviour, biological explanations of human behaviour are incomplete from a sociological point of view. This is especially true when biology tries to explain complex aspects of human social life such as homosexuality, male aggressiveness, and female spatial skills. Biological explanation usually involves three components: the identification of a supposedly universal quality or trait of human behaviour, an attribution of a genetic source of the behavioural trait, and an argument why this behaviour makes it more likely that the genes will be passed to descendants. The conclusion of this reasoning is that this behaviour or quality is hard-wired and difficult to change (Lewontin, 1991).

However, the argument that males are naturally aggressive because of their hormonal structure does not consider the huge variations in the meaning or practice of aggression between cultures, nor the huge variations in definitions of aggression in different situations. Many men are not aggressive by any definition. And both men *and* women both have “male” hormones like testosterone. More interesting for the sociologist is that men who are not aggressive often get called sissies. This indicates that male aggression must be more about norms of male culture than genetic or hormonal.

Sociology is more concerned with the effect that socialization has on human behaviour: the nurture side of the nature versus nurture debate. Despite growing up apart, did Elyse Schein and Paula Bernstein share common ethnic, class or religious characteristics? What happens to people with schizophrenia in different societies? How does their social role integrate people with schizophrenia into a society (or not)? Whatever the role of genes or biology, genes are never expressed in a vacuum. Environmental influence always matters.

## Making Connections: Case Study

### The Life of Chris Langan, the Smartest Man You've Never Heard Of

Bouncer. Firefighter. Factory worker. Cowboy. Chris Langan (b. 1952) has spent the majority of his adult life just getting by with jobs like these. He has no college degree, few resources, and a past filled with much disappointment. Chris Langan also has an IQ of over 195, nearly 100 points higher than the average person (Brabham, 2001). So why didn't Chris become a neurosurgeon, professor, or aeronautical engineer? According to Macolm Gladwell in his book *Outliers: The Story of Success* (2008), Chris didn't possess the set of social skills necessary to succeed on such a high level — skills that aren't innate, but learned.



Figure 4.5. Christopher Michael Langan (left), stands with a relative during the 1950's, in San Francisco, CA. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Gladwell looked to a recent study conducted by sociologist Annette Lareau in which she closely shadowed 12 families from various economic backgrounds and examined their parenting techniques. Parents from lower-income families followed a strategy of “accomplishment of natural growth,” which is to say they let their children develop on their own with a large amount of independence; parents from higher-income families, however, “actively fostered and accessed a child’s talents, opinions, and skills” (Gladwell, 2008). These parents were more likely to engage in analytical conversation, encourage active questioning of the establishment, and foster development of negotiation skills. The parents were also able to introduce their children to a wide range of activities, from sports to music to accelerated academic programs. When one middle class child was denied entry to a gifted and talented program, the mother petitioned the school and arranged additional testing until her daughter was admitted. Lower-income parents, however, were more likely to unquestioningly obey authorities such as school boards. Their children were not being socialized to comfortably confront the system and speak up (Gladwell, 2008).

What does this have to do with Chris Langan, deemed by some as the smartest man in the world (Brabham, 2001)? Chris was born in severe poverty, and he was moved across the country with an abusive and alcoholic stepfather. Chris’s genius went greatly unnoticed. After accepting a full scholarship to Reed College, his funding was revoked after his mother failed to fill out necessary paperwork. Unable to successfully make his case to the administration, Chris, who had received straight A’s the previous semester, was given F’s on his transcript and forced to drop out. After enrolling in Montana State University, an administrator’s refusal to rearrange his class schedule left him unable to find the means necessary to travel the 16 miles to attend classes. What Chris has in brilliance, he lacks in practical intelligence, or what psychologist Robert Sternberg defines as “knowing what to say to whom, knowing when to say it, and knowing how to say it for maximum effect” (Sternberg et al., 2000). Such knowledge was never part of his socialization.



Chris gave up on school and began working an array of blue-collar jobs, pursuing his intellectual interests on the side. Though he's recently garnered attention from work on his "Cognitive Theoretic Model of the Universe," he remains weary and resistant of the educational system.

As Gladwell concluded, "He'd had to make his way alone, and no one—not rock stars, not professional athletes, not software billionaires, and not even geniuses—ever makes it alone" (2008).

## Individual and Society

How do sociologists explain conformity and individual uniqueness? How are individual differences, individual choice, or individuality possible if human development is about assuming socially defined roles? How can an individual have **agency**, the ability to choose and act independently of external constraints? Western society values individuality, being oneself or resisting peer pressure and other pressures to conform. Where society ends and where the individual begins is important in sociology.

Sociologists argue that individuals vary because their social environments vary. Socialization happens in different social environments—environments made up of the responses of others. Each environment imposes unique requirements. In one family, for example, children are permitted unlimited access to TV and video games; in another, there are no TV or video games. When growing up, children adapt and develop different play and recreation strategies. Parents and others respond to the child's choices, either by reinforcing them or encouraging different choices. Through differences in social environments and responses, children gradually develop consistent relationships to world. Each child is unique because each child occupies a unique place in society and social relationships.

Sociologists recognize the importance of socialization for healthy individual and societal development. But how do sociologists from different theoretical paradigms approach this topic?

Structural functionalists would say that socialization is essential to society, both because it trains members to operate successfully in society and because socialization transmits culture to new generations. Individuals learn different social roles as they age. The roles come with norms and social expectations. These allow for predictable interactions between people.

A critical sociologist might argue that socialization reproduces inequality from generation to generation. Socialization conveys different expectations and norms to those with different social characteristics. For example, individuals are socialized with different expectations about their place in society according to their gender, social class, and race. As in the life of Chris Langan, this creates different and unequal opportunities and, therefore, differences between unique individuals.

A symbolic interactionist might study face-to-face exchanges and symbolic communication. For example, dressing baby boys in blue and baby girls in pink is one small way that messages are conveyed about differences in gender roles. For the symbolic interactionist, though, how these messages are constructed and interpreted are defined by the specific situation.

## 4.2. Agents of Socialization

Socialization helps people learn to function successfully in their social worlds. How does socialization occur? How do we learn to use the objects of society's material culture? How do we adopt the beliefs, values, and norms of its nonmaterial culture? This learning takes place through interaction with various **agents of socialization**, like peer groups and families, plus both formal and informal social institutions.

### Social Group Agents

Social groups provide the first experiences of socialization. Families, and later peer groups, communicate expectations and reinforce norms. People first learn to use the objects of material culture in these settings. People are introduced to the beliefs and values of society in these social groups, too.

#### *Family*

Family is the first agent of socialization. Parents, siblings, grandparents, members of an extended family all teach a child. For example, they show the child

- how to use objects (such as clothes, computers, eating utensils, books, bikes);
- how to relate to others (some as “family,” others as “friends,” still others as “strangers” or “teachers” or “neighbours”); and
- how the world works (what is “real” and what is “imagined”).

Families do not socialize children in a vacuum, however. Many social factors affect how a family raises children. For example, we can use sociological imagination to recognize that individual behaviours are affected by the historical period. Sixty years ago, it would not have been considered strict for a father to hit his son with a belt for misbehaviour, but today that action might be considered child abuse.

Sociologists recognize that racialization, social class, religion, and other social factors play an important role in socialization. For example, poor families may emphasize obedience and conformity when raising children, while wealthy families may emphasize judgment and creativity (National Opinion Research Center, 2008). This may be because working-class parents have less education and more repetitive-task jobs for which the ability to follow rules and to conform helps. Wealthy parents tend to have more education and often work in careers that require creative problem solving, so they teach their children behaviours that would benefit these positions. This means that children are socialized to take the types of jobs their parents already have, reproducing the class system (Kohn, 1977). Likewise, children are socialized by gender norms, perceptions of race and ethnicity, and class-related behaviours.

In Sweden, for instance, stay-at-home fathers are common. Government provides subsidized time off work—68 weeks for families with newborns at 80 percent of regular earnings—with the option of 52 of those weeks shared between both parents, with eight additional weeks for each parent. This encourages fathers to spend at least eight weeks at home with their newborns (Marshall, 2008). As one stay-at-home dad said, being home to take care of his baby son “is a real fatherly thing to do. I think that’s very masculine” (Associated Press, 2011). Overall, 90 percent of Swedish men participate in the paid leave program.

Canada allows for fewer weeks of paid parental leave at a smaller percent of regular earnings. Fewer fathers participate.

Researchers note that a father's involvement in child raising has a positive effect on the parents' relationship, the father's personal growth, and the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children (Marshall, 2008). How will this differ in Sweden and Canada because of the different paternal leave policies?



Figure 4.6. The socialized roles of dads and moms vary by society. (Photo courtesy of Nate Grigg/Flickr)

### *Peer Groups*

A **peer group** is made up of people who are not necessarily friends but who are similar in age and social status and who share interests. Peer group socialization begins in the earliest years: for example, when kids on a playground teach younger children the norms about taking turns or the rules of a game.

Peer groups become more important to adolescents as they become more independent and develop an identity separate from parents. This is often a period of parental-child conflict when parental values conflict with those of peer groups. Peer groups provide adolescents' first major socialization experience outside the families. They are especially influential for preferences in music, style, clothing, for sharing common social activities, and for learning to engage in romantic relationships. Adolescents experiment with new experiences outside the control of parents: sexual relationships, drug and alcohol use, political stances, hair and clothing choices, and so forth.

Studies have shown, however, that parental influence balances peer group influence. Conflict between parents and teenagers is usually temporary. Families exert more influence over educational choices and political, social, and religious attitudes.

Peer groups remain important agents of social integration. The way that youth divide themselves into cliques with varying degrees of status prepares them for the way the adult world is divided into status groups. The racialized, gender, intelligence, and wealth characteristics that lead to being accepted in adolescent cliques are the same characteristics that divide people into status groups in adulthood.

## **Institutional Agents**

The social institutions of our culture also inform our socialization. Formal institutions — like schools, workplaces, and the government — teach people how to behave in and navigate these systems. Other institutions, like the media, contribute to socialization by inundating us with messages about norms and expectations.

### *School*

Most Canadian children spend about seven hours a day and 180 days a year in school, making school important in socialization. In elementary and junior high, compulsory education amounts to over 8,000 hours in the classroom (OECD, 2013). Students are in school not only to study math, reading, science, and other subjects—the manifest function of this system. Schools also serve a latent function in society by socializing children into behaviours like teamwork, following a schedule, and using textbooks.

School and classroom rituals, led by teachers serving as role models and leaders, regularly reinforce what society expects from children. Sociologists describe this aspect of schools as the **hidden curriculum**, the informal teaching done by schools.

For example, North American schools have built competition into the way grades are awarded. Students learn to evaluate themselves within a hierarchical system of A, B, C, etc. students (Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

Different lessons can be taught by different instructional techniques. When children participate in a relay race or a math contest, they learn that there are winners and losers in society. When children are required to work together on a project, they practice teamwork with other people in cooperative situations. Bowles and Gintis argue that the hidden curriculum prepares children for a life of conformity in the adult world. Children learn how to deal with bureaucracy, rules, expectations, to wait their turn, and to sit still for hours during the day. The latent functions of competition, teamwork, classroom discipline, time awareness, and dealing with bureaucracy are features of the hidden curriculum.

Schools also socialize children by teaching them overtly about citizenship and nationalism. In the United States, children are taught to say the Pledge of Allegiance. Most school districts require classes about U.S. history and geography. In Canada, on the other hand, critics complain that students do not learn enough about national history, which undermines the development of a sense of shared national identity (Granatstein, 1998).

Textbooks in Canada are also continually scrutinized and revised to update attitudes toward different cultures in Canada as well as changing perspectives on historical events. Later generations are socialized to a different national or world history. For example, recent textbook editions include information about the mistreatment of First Nations, more accurately reflecting those events than textbooks of the past. Schools educate students explicitly about aspects of citizenship important for participation in a modern, heterogeneous culture.



Figure 4.7. Lockers. Students do not just learn to read and write at school; they are socialized to norms like taking turns, respecting private property, standing in line, and singing the national anthem.. Photo courtesy of constancemc/Flickr

## Making Connections: Sociology in the Real World

### Controversial Textbooks



Figure 4.8. Sea of Japan Map.  
CC BY-SA 3.0 by Chris 73 / Wikimedia Commons

On August 13, 2001, 20 South Korean men gathered in Seoul. Each chopped off one of his own fingers because of textbooks. These men took drastic measures to protest eight middle school textbooks approved by Tokyo for use in Japanese middle schools. According to the Korean government (and other East Asian nations), the textbooks glossed over negative events in Japan's history at the expense of other Asian countries (The Telegraph, 2001).

In the early 1900s, Japan was one of Asia's more aggressive nations. Korea was held as a colony by the Japanese between 1910 and 1945. Today, Koreans argue that the Japanese are whitewashing that colonial history through these textbooks. One major criticism is that they do not mention that, during World War II, the Japanese forced Korean women into sexual slavery. The textbooks describe the women as having been "drafted" to work, a euphemism that downplays the brutality of what actually occurred. Some Japanese textbooks dismiss an important Korean independence demonstration in 1919 as a "riot." In reality, Japanese soldiers attacked peaceful demonstrators, leaving roughly 6,000 dead and 15,000 wounded (Crampton, 2002).

Although it may seem extreme that these people were so enraged about how events are described in a textbook that they would resort to dismemberment, the protest affirms that textbooks are a significant tool of socialization in state-run education systems.

## *The Workplace*

Just as children spend much of their day at school, most Canadian adults spend a significant amount of time at a workplace. Although socialized into their culture since birth, workers require new socialization both in terms of material culture (such as how to operate the copy machine) and nonmaterial culture (such as whether it is okay to speak directly to the boss, or how to share refrigerator space).

Different jobs require different types of socialization. In the past, many people worked a single job until retirement. Today, people can switch jobs at least once a decade. Between the ages of 18 and 44, the average younger baby boomer held 11 different jobs (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). People must now be socialized by a variety of work environments.

## *Religion*

While some religious practice is informal, this section focuses on practices related to formal institutions.

Religion remains an important agent of socialization for many. Canada has many synagogues, temples, churches, mosques, and similar religious sites where people gather to worship and learn. Like other institutions, these teach participants how to interact with their material culture (like a mezuzah, a prayer rug, or a communion wafer). For some people, important ceremonies related to family structure—like marriage and birth—are connected to religious celebrations. Many religious institutions contribute to reinforcement of gender norms. From ceremonial rites of passage that reinforce the family unit, to power dynamics which reinforce gender roles, religion fosters a shared set of socialized values that are passed on through society.



## Making Connections: Sociology in the Real World

### Girls and Movies



Figure 4.9. Little girls dressed up as princesses.  
CC0 open domain image.

Pixar is one of the largest producers of children's movies in the world and has released large box office draws, such as *Toy Story*, *Cars*, *The Incredibles*, and *Up*. What Pixar has never before produced is a movie with a female lead role. This changed with Pixar's movie *Brave* in 2012. Before *Brave*, women in Pixar served as supporting characters and love interests. In *Up*, for example, the only human female character dies within the first ten minutes of the film. For the millions of girls watching Pixar films, there are few strong characters or roles for them to relate to. If they do not see possible versions of themselves, they may come to view women as secondary to the lives of men.

The animated films of Pixar's parent company, Disney, have many female lead roles. Disney is well known for films with female leads, such as *Snow White*, *Cinderella*, *The Little Mermaid*, and *Mulan*. Many of Disney's movies star a female, and she is nearly always a princess figure. If she is not a princess to begin with, she typically ends the movie by marrying a prince or, in the case of *Mulan*, a military general. Although not all "princesses" in Disney movies play a passive role

relative to male characters, they typically find themselves needing to be rescued by a man, and the happy ending they all search for includes marriage.

Alongside this prevalence of princesses, many parents express concern about the culture of princesses that Disney has created. Peggy Orenstein addresses this problem in her popular book, *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*. Orenstein wonders why every little girl is expected to be a “princess” and why pink has become an all-consuming obsession for many young girls. Another mother wondered what she did wrong when her three-year-old daughter refused to do “non-princessy” things, including running and jumping. The effects of this princess culture can have negative consequences for girls throughout life. An early emphasis on beauty and sexiness can lead to eating disorders, low self-esteem, and risky sexual behaviour among older girls.

What should we expect from Pixar’s *Brave*, the company’s first film to star a female character? Although *Brave* features a female lead, she is still a princess. Will this film offer any new type of role model for young girls? (Barnes, 2010; O’Connor, 2011; Rose, 2011).

### *Government*

To be defined as an “adult” usually means being 18 years old, the age at which a person becomes legally responsible for themselves. And 65 is the start of “old age” since most people become eligible for senior benefits then. Many rites of passage today are based on age norms established by the government.

When we enter one these new categories—adult, taxpayer, senior—we must be socialized into this new role. Seniors, for example, must learn the ropes of obtaining pension benefits. This government program marks the point at which we require socialization into a new category.

### *Mass Media*

**Mass media** refers to the distribution of information to a wide audience via television, newspapers, radio, and the internet. With the average person spending over four hours a day in front of the TV (and children averaging even more screen time), media greatly influences social norms (Roberts, Foehr, & Rideout, 2005; Oliveira, 2013). In a 2010 survey about time use, Statistics Canada report that 73 percent of respondents said they watched 2 hours 52 minutes of television daily (see the Participants column in Table 4.1 below).

Television continues to be the mass medium that occupies much free time of the average Canadian, but the internet is the fastest growing mass medium. In the Statistics Canada survey, daily television use declined from 77 percent to 73 percent between 1998 and 2010, but computer use increased in all age groups from 5 percent to 24 percent, and averaging 1 hour 23 minutes a day. People who played video games doubled from 3 percent to 6 percent between 1998 and 2010, and the average daily use increased from 1 hour 48 minutes to 2 hours 20 minutes (Statistics Canada, 2013). People learn about objects of material culture (like new technology, transportation, and consumer options), as well as nonmaterial culture—what is true (beliefs), what is important (values), and what is expected (norms) through mass media.



Table 4.1. Average time per day spent on various activities for participants aged 15 and over, grouped by sex, Canada, 2010

Activity group	Population			Participants			Participation rate		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	hours and minutes			hours and minutes			percentage		
<b>1. Television, reading, and other passive leisure</b>	<b>02:29</b>	<b>02:39</b>	<b>02:20</b>	<b>03:08</b>	<b>03:19</b>	<b>02:58</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>
Watching television	02:06	02:17	01:55	02:52	03:03	02:41	73	75	71
Reading books, magazines, newspapers	00:20	00:18	00:23	01:26	01:29	01:25	24	20	27
Other passive leisure	00:03	00:03	00:02	01:04	01:16	00:52	4	4	4
<b>2. Active leisure</b>	<b>01:13</b>	<b>01:27</b>	<b>00:59</b>	<b>02:22</b>	<b>02:42</b>	<b>02:01</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>49</b>
Active sports	00:30	00:37	00:23	01:54	02:12	01:34	26	28	25
Computer use	00:20	00:23	00:17	01:23	01:32	01:14	24	25	23
Video games	00:09	00:14	00:04	02:20	02:40	01:38	6	9	4
Other active leisure	00:14	00:13	00:15	02:05	02:06	02:04	11	10	12

**Note:** Average time spent is the average over a 7-day week.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2010 (Statistics Canada, 2011). Note: this survey asked approximately 15,400 Canadians aged 15 and over to report in a daily journal details of the time they spent on various activities on a given day. Because they were reporting about a given day, the figures cited about the average use of television and other media differ from reports provided by BBM and other groups on the average weekly usage, like the figure of 4 hours per day of TV cited in Roberts, Foehr, and Rideout (2005) above.

### 4.3. Socialization Across the Life Course

Socialization isn't a one-time or short-term event. Socialization is a lifelong process. Human development follows a pattern of engaging and disengaging from a series of roles throughout life.

In Canada, age norms and "time-related rules and regulations" influence lifelong socialization (Setterson, 2002). As we age, we encounter age-related transition points requiring socialization into a new role, such as becoming school age, entering the workforce, or retiring. At each point in life, we shed previous roles and assume new ones. The institutions and situations require both learning and revising self-definition: You are no longer living at home; you have a job! You are no longer a child; you're in the army! You are no longer single; you are going to have a child! You are no longer free; you are going to jail! You are no longer in mid-life; it's retirement time!

Many of life's social expectations are clear and enforced on a cultural level. Through interacting with others and watching others interact, roles become clear. While in elementary school, having a boyfriend or girlfriend may have been considered undesirable. The socialization in high school changes the expectation. By observing the excitement and importance attached to dating and relationships in high school, it becomes apparent that in addition to being a child and a student, there's an expectation of being a significant other as well.

**Adolescence** (puberty to about 18 years old) is characterized by the role adjustment from childhood to adulthood. The self is redefined through a process of "socialized anxiety" (Davis, 1944), re-examination and reorientation. As Jean Piaget described it, adolescence is a "decisive turning point ... at which the individual

rejects, or at least revises his estimate of everything that has been inculcated in him and acquires a personal point of view and a personal place in life” (1947). Adolescence involves a fundamental “growth process” according to Edgar Friedenberg “to define the self through the clarification of experience and to establish self-esteem” (1959).

## Making Connections: Sociology in the Real World

### Gap Year: How Different Societies Socialize Young Adults



Figure 4.10. Prince William, who took a gap year after secondary school. (Photo courtesy of Alexandre Goulet/Wikimedia Commons)

Have you ever heard of a gap year? It’s a common custom in British society. When teens finish their secondary schooling (i.e., high school), they often take a year “off” before entering college. Frequently, they might take a job, travel, or find other ways to experience another culture. Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge, spent his gap year practising survival skills in Belize, teaching English in Chile, and working on a dairy farm in the United Kingdom (Prince of Wales, 2012a). His brother, Prince Harry, advocated for AIDS orphans in Africa and worked as a jackeroo (a novice ranch hand) in Australia (Prince of Wales, 2012b).

In Canada, this life transition point is socialized quite differently, and taking a year off is generally frowned upon. Instead, Canadian youth are encouraged to pick career paths by their mid-teens, to select a university or college and a major by their late teens, and to have completed all university schooling or technical training for their career by their early 20s.

In other nations, this phase of the life course is tied into conscription, a term that describes compulsory military service. Egypt, Austria, Switzerland, Turkey, and Singapore all have this system in place. Youth in these nations (often only males) are expected to undergo a number of months or years of military training and service.

How might your life be different if you lived in one of these countries? Can you think of similar social norms — related to life age-transition points — that vary from country to country?

In some cultures, adolescence is marked by a clear **rite of passage**, a formal ritual that marks a life cycle transition from a previous status to a new status. In modern North American society, the rites of passage are not so clear cut or socially recognized, although graduation from formal education—high school or college—involves a formal, ceremonial rite of passage and socialization into a new set of expectations.

Educational expectations vary not only from culture to culture, but from social class to social class. While middle- or upper-class families may expect a child to attend a four-year university after graduating from high school, other families may expect their child to immediately begin working full-time, as other family members may have done.

Adulthood brings a new set of socialization challenges, expectations, and new roles to fill. Social roles continue to evolve as we age. Wild nights out and serial dating of youth culture become less acceptable. Responsibility and commitment are emphasized as pillars of adulthood. Men and women are expected to “settle down.” During this period, many people enter marriage or a civil union, bring children into their families, and focus on a career path. They become partners or parents instead of students or significant others.

Just as young children pretend to be doctors or lawyers, play house, and dress up, adults also engage **anticipatory socialization**, the preparation for future life roles. Examples include a couple who cohabitate before marriage, or soon-to-be parents who read infant care books and prepare their home for a baby. University students volunteer take internships, or enter co-op programs to explore chosen careers. Adults begin planning for their retirement, saving money if possible, and looking into future health care options. The transition into any new life role, despite the social structure that supports it, can be difficult.

Socialization is ongoing throughout adulthood in another way. Contemporary society features a fluidity of roles, compared to earlier times when people often married only once, lived in one location, or had one career.

In previous times, role transitions were more predictable —from school to work to retirement, from single to married to parenting to empty nest, etc. Today’s roles are more fluid. As a result, social identities have become more flexible, more adaptable to unpredictable transitions, more open to taking on new roles or choosing from a globalized range of cultural values and practices.

Bauman (2004) observes that this fluidity changes transition stages of the adult life cycle. In the absence of any clear, permanent, institutional structures for transition, people must rely on themselves to provide their own continuity. Jobs disappear overnight, marriages end, friends and family move, and online communities emerge. Life choices may be seen as temporary and tradeoff between maximizing flexibility or commitment. Individuals may enter jobs while thinking about leaving them, take opportunities to continually retrain, upgrade skills, and make contacts to be prepared should a better job appear. They enter into romantic relationships as “a relationship that lasts only as long as, and not a moment longer than, the satisfaction it brings to both partners” (2004). In love, dumping the partner is a normal event. People may now cultivate a wider network of “weak ties” rather than committing to deep friendships.

## Making Connections: Sociology in the Real World

### The Long Road to Adulthood for Millennials

Millennials, sometimes also called Gen Y, is a term that describes the generation born during the early 1980s to early 1990s. They are the generation that is currently between the ages of 18 and 33. While the recession was in full swing, many were in the process of entering, attending, or graduating from high school and college. With employment prospects at historical lows, large numbers of graduates were unable to find work, sometimes moving back in with their parents and struggling to pay back student loans.

According to *The New York Times*, this economic stall is causing the Millennials to postpone what most North Americans consider to be adulthood: “The traditional cycle seems to have gone off course, as young people remain untethered to romantic partners or to permanent homes, going back to school for lack of better options, traveling, avoiding commitments, competing ferociously for unpaid internships or temporary ... jobs, forestalling the beginning of adult life” (Henig, 2010).

In Canada:

- 30 percent of Millennials find it difficult to support themselves on their low wages
- 44 percent find it difficult to pay for their education
- 38 percent are strapped by loan payments
- 51 percent still live with their parents
- 90 percent feel overwhelmed and experience excessive stress (Tsintziras, 2013)

The five milestones, Henig writes, that define adulthood, are “completing school, leaving home, becoming financially independent, marrying, and having a child” (2010). These social milestones are taking longer for Millennials to attain, if they are attained at all.

Sociologists wonder what long-term impact this generation’s situation may have on society as a whole. It is possible that adulthood will need to be redefined with new milestones. Meanwhile, preliminary survey research on Generation Z, born after 2000, suggests that these children of the post-boomer Generation X are both completely fluent in digital technology and raised to be more self-reliant. It is also estimated that for each Generation Z member to enter the workforce, three baby boomers will be retiring. However, the world they confront is characterized by monumental global risks such as climate change, geopolitical insecurity and increasing inequality (Bland, 2016).



Figure 4.11. Generation Y. (Image courtesy of Patrick Marione/Flickr)

## Resocialization

In the process of **resocialization**, old behaviours helpful in a previous role are removed because they are no longer useful. Resocialization becomes necessary when a person moves to a senior care centre, goes to boarding school, or serves time in jail. In the new environment, the old rules no longer apply. The process of resocialization is typically more stressful than normal socialization because people have to unlearn their usual behaviour.

The most common way resocialization occurs is in a **total institution** where people are isolated from society and forced to follow new rules. A ship at sea is a total institution, as are religious convents, prisons, and some cults. They are places cut off from larger society. The 15,000 Canadians who lived in federal prisons or penitentiaries at the end of 2012 are also members of a total institution (Sapers, 2013). The military is another total institution.



Figure 4.12. Cameron Highlanders Marching in Ottawa – 11 September 2004  
Public domain via Wikipedia

Many are socialized into an institution through a two-part process. First, members entering an institution must leave behind their old identity through a degradation ceremony. In a **degradation ceremony**, new members lose the aspects of their old identity and are given new identities. The process can be gentle. To enter a senior care home, the elderly must leave a family home and give up many belongings, part of their long-standing identity. Though caretakers guide the elderly compassionately, the process can still be one of loss. In many cults, this process is also gentle and happens in a supportive and caring environment.

In other situations, however, the degradation ceremony can be extreme. Erving Goffman referred to the process of being stripped of external identity as a “mortification of the self” (1961). New prisoners lose freedom, rights (including the right to privacy), and personal belongings. When entering the army, soldiers have their hair cut short. Their old clothes are removed and they wear matching uniforms. These individuals must give up any markers of their former identity to be resocialized into identity as a soldier.

After new members of an institution are stripped of their old identity, they build a new to match the institution. In the military, soldiers learn new rules and bond with one another through basic training. They follow structured schedules set by their leaders. Soldiers must keep their areas clean for inspection, march in correct formations, and salute when in the presence of superior officers, etc.

Learning to deal with life after living in a total institution requires yet another process of resocialization. In the Canadian military, soldiers learn discipline and a capacity for hard work. They set aside personal goals to achieve a mission, and they take pride in the accomplishments of their units. Many soldiers who leave the military transition these skills into excellent careers. Others find themselves lost upon leaving, uncertain about the outside world, and what to do next. The process of resocialization to civilian life can be complicated, especially for soldiers who served in war zones.

## **Chapter Summary**

### **Why Socialization Matters**

Socialization is important because it allows societies and cultures to continue; it is also a key part of individual development. Who we are is affected by both nature (our genetic and hormonal makeup) and nurture (the social environment in which we are raised). Sociology is most concerned with the way that society influences our behaviour patterns. This influence can be seen by the way behaviour varies across class and gender, for example.

### **Agents of Socialization**

Our interactions with social groups, like families and peers, teach us how others expect us to behave. Likewise, a society's formal and informal institutions socialize us. Schools, workplaces, and the media communicate and reinforce cultural norms and values.

### **Socialization Across the Life Course**

Socialization is a lifelong process as we enter new phases of life, such as adulthood or old age. Resocialization is a process that removes the socialization we acquired over time and replaces it with new rules and roles. Because it involves removing old habits, resocialization can be a stressful and difficult process.

## Key Terms

**adolescence:** A period stretching from puberty to about 18-years-old characterized by the role adjustment from childhood to adulthood.

**agency:** The ability to choose and act independently of external constraints.

**anticipatory socialization:** When we prepare for future life roles.

**degradation ceremony:** The process by which new members of a total institution lose aspects of their old identity and are given new ones.

**hidden curriculum:** The informal teaching done in schools that socializes children to societal norms.

**mass media:** The distribution of impersonal information to a wide audience via television, newspapers, radio, and the internet.

**nature:** The influence of our genetic makeup on self-development.

**nurture:** The role that our social environment plays in self-development.

**peer group:** A group made up of people who are similar in age and social status and who share interests.

**resocialization:** The process by which old behaviours are removed and new behaviours are learned in their place.

**rite of passage:** A ritual that marks a life cycle transition from a previous status to a new status.

**role:** The behaviour expected of a person who occupies a particular position.

**self:** A person's distinct sense of identity as developed through social interaction.

**socialization:** The process wherein people come to understand societal norms and expectations, to accept society's beliefs, and to be aware of societal values.

**total institution:** An institution in which members are required to live in isolation from the rest of society.

## Chapter Quiz

### 4. Introduction to Socialization

1. Socialization describes:
  - a. How people interact during social situations.
  - b. How people learn societal norms, beliefs, and values.
  - c. A person's internal mental state when in a group setting.
  - d. The difference between introverts and extroverts..
2. How did nearly complete isolation as a child affect Danielle's verbal abilities?
  - a. She could not communicate at all.
  - b. She never learned words, but she did learn signs.
  - c. She could not understand much, but she could use gestures.
  - d. She could understand and use basic language like "yes" and "no."

### 4.1. Why Socialization Matters

3. Why do sociologists need to be careful when drawing conclusions from twin studies?
  - a. The results do not apply to singletons.
  - b. The twins were often raised in different ways.
  - c. The twins may turn out to actually be fraternal.
  - d. The sample sizes are often small.
4. From a sociological perspective, which factor does not greatly influence a person's socialization?
  - a. Gender
  - b. Class
  - c. Blood type
  - d. Race



5. Chris Langan's story illustrates that:
- a. Children raised in one-parent households tend to have higher IQs.
  - b. Intelligence is more important than socialization.
  - c. Socialization can be more important than intelligence.
  - d. Neither socialization nor intelligence affects college admissions.

#### 4.2. Agents of Socialization

6. Why are wealthy parents more likely than poor parents to socialize their children toward creativity and problem solving?
- a. Wealthy parents are socializing their children toward the skills of white-collar employment.
  - b. Wealthy parents are not concerned about their children rebelling against their rules.
  - c. Wealthy parents never engage in repetitive tasks.
  - d. Wealthy parents are more concerned with money than with a good education.
7. How do schools prepare children to one day enter the workforce?
- a. With a standardized curriculum
  - b. Through the hidden curriculum
  - c. By socializing them in teamwork
  - d. All of the above
8. Which one of the following is not a way people are socialized by religion?
- a. People learn the material culture of their religion.
  - b. Life stages and roles are connected to religious celebrations.
  - c. An individual's personal, internal experience of a divine being leads to their faith.
  - d. Places of worship provide a space for shared group experiences.
9. Which of the following is a manifest function of schools?
- a. Understanding when to speak up and when to be silent
  - b. Learning to read and write
  - c. Following a schedule

d. Knowing locker room etiquette

10. Which of the following is typically the earliest agent of socialization?

- a. School
- b. Family
- c. Mass media
- d. Workplace

#### **4.3. Socialization Across the Life Course**

11. Which of the following is not an age-related transition point when Canadians must be socialized to new roles?

- a. Infancy
- b. School age
- c. Adulthood
- d. Senior citizen

12. Which of the following is true regarding Canadian socialization of recent high school graduates?

- a. They are expected to take a year off before college.
- b. They are required to serve in the military for one year.
- c. They are expected to enter college, trade school, or the workforce shortly after graduation.
- d. They are required to move away from their parents.

[Quiz answers at the end of chapter]

## Short Answer

### 4.1. Why Socialization Matters

1. Why are twin studies an important way to learn about the relative effects of genetics and socialization on children? What questions about human development do you believe twin studies are best for answering? What types of questions would twin studies not be as helpful?
2. Why do you think that people like Chris Langan continue to have difficulty even after they are helped through societal systems? What is it they've missed that prevents them from functioning successfully in the social world?

### 4.2. Agents of Socialization

1. Do you think it is important that parents discuss gender roles with their young children, or is gender a topic better left for later? How do parents consider gender norms when buying their children books, movies, and toys? How do you believe they should consider it?
2. Based on your observations, when are adolescents more likely to listen to their parents or to their peer groups when making decisions? What types of dilemmas lend themselves toward one social agent over another?

### 4.3. Socialization Across the Life Course

1. Consider a person who is moving into a university residence, or attending university or boarding school, or even a child beginning kindergarten. How is the process the student goes through a form of socialization? What new cultural behaviours must the student adapt to?
2. Do you think resocialization requires a total institution? Why or why not? Can you think of any other ways someone could be resocialized?

## Further Research

### 4. Introduction to Socialization

Lawrence Kohlberg was most famous for his research using moral dilemmas. He presented dilemmas to boys and asked them how they would judge the situations. Read about Kohlberg's most famous moral dilemma, known as the Heinz dilemma: <http://www.simplypsychology.org/kohlberg.html>.

#### 4.1. Why Socialization Matters

Learn more about five other sets of twins who grew up apart and discovered each other later in life: <https://lornareiko.wordpress.com/2009/10/08/identical-twins-who-were-separated-at-birth-what-are-they-like/>.

#### 4.2. Agents of Socialization

See the controversy surrounding one Canadian couple's refusal to socialize their child into gender norms: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1389593/Kathy-Witterick-David-Stocker-raising-genderless-baby.html>.

#### 4.3. Socialization Across the Life Course

Homelessness is an endemic problem among veterans. Many soldiers leave the military or return from war and have difficulty resocializing into civilian life. Learn more about this problem of homeless veterans: <http://openstaxcollege.org/l/NCHV>

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## Image Attributions

**Figure 4.10.** Prince William by Alexandre Goulet ([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2007\\_WSJ\\_Prince\\_William.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2007_WSJ_Prince_William.jpg)) used Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>)

## Long Descriptions

**Figure 4.\_:** Psychology and sociology have some overlap. Sociological social psychology (SSP) emphasizes a subject's location in social order, their socialized roles, and historical social context. Psychological social psychology (PSP) emphasizes a subject's mental processes, dispositions, experiences, and immediate social situation.

**Figure 4.\_:** A girl wears a sweater and jeans and looks into a mirror. The mirror represents Facebook and shows her reflection wearing a long, professional dress.

### Solutions to Chapter Quiz

1 b, | 2 a, | 3 d, | 4 c, | 5 c, | 6 a, | 7 d, | 8 c, | 9 b, | 10 a, | 11 a, |  
12 c



[5]

## Groups and Organizations



Figure 5.1. Students, environmentalists, union members, and Aboriginal people showed up to protest at the Occupy movement in Victoria, B.C. (Photo courtesy of rpaterso/flickr)

## Learning Objectives

### 5.1 Groups

- Analyze the operation of a group as more than the sum of its parts.
- Understand primary and secondary groups as two key sociological groups.
- Recognize in-groups, out-groups, and reference groups as subtypes of primary and secondary groups.
- Distinguish between different styles of leadership.
- Explain how conformity is impacted by group membership.

### Networks

- Distinguish between groups, social networks, and formal organizations.
- Analyze the dynamics of dyads, triads, and larger social networks.

### 5.2. Formal Organizations

- Categorize the different types of formal organizations.
- Define the characteristics of bureaucracies.
- Analyze the opposing tendencies of bureaucracy toward efficiency and inefficiency.
- Identify the concepts of the McDonaldisation of society and the McJob as aspects of the process of rationalization.
- Apply the sociological study of groups and bureaucracies to analyze the social conditions of the Holocaust.

## Introduction to Groups and Organizations

A punk band is playing outside. The music is loud, the crowd excited. But neither the lyrics nor the people in the audience are what you might expect. Mixed in with the punks and young rebel students are members of local unions, from well-dressed teachers to casually dressed labour leaders. The band's lyrics are not published anywhere but are available on YouTube: "We're here to represent/The 99 percent/Occupy, occupy, occupy." The song: "Wouldn't It Be Nice If Every Movement Had a Theme Song" (Cabrel, 2011).

The Occupy movement slogan, "We are the 99%," refers to the distribution of wealth, with the upper class (the "one percenters") owning most wealth. Even during the severe economic crisis in 2008, the personal income, bonuses, and wealth of the 1% increased. The people responsible for the crisis were paying themselves bonuses, while they were receiving billions of dollars in bailouts from governments.

Occupy protests occurred in many Canadian cities as well, including Victoria and Montreal. A similar movement, Idle No More, emerged to advocate for Indigenous justice. Idle No More organized according to Indigenous principles of decentralized leadership.

Simply having a grievance does not explain the ways in which movements take form as groups, however. Numerous groups made up the Occupy movement, yet there was no central movement leader. What makes a group something more than just a collection of people? How are leadership functions and styles established in a group? What unites the people protesting from New York City to Victoria, B.C.? Are homeless people truly aligned with law school students? How does a non-hierarchical organization work? How is the social order of a diverse group maintained when there are no formal regulations? What are the stated or unstated rules in such groups? How do members come to share a common set of meanings concerning their movement?



Figure 5.2. 2013 Idle No More demonstration in Ottawa. Image courtesy of Michelle Caron/ Wikimedia Commons

## 5.1. Groups

What does it mean to be part of a group? The concept of a group is important to society. Society exists in groups. In a group, individuals behave differently than they would if they were alone. They conform, they resist, they cooperate, they betray, they organize, they defer gratification, they show respect, they expect obedience, they share, they manipulate, etc. Being in a group can change behaviour. An important insight of sociology: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The group has characteristics over and above the characteristics of its individual members. But how exactly does the whole come to be greater?

### Defining a Group

In sociology, a group refers to a collection of

- at least two people
- who interact with some frequency and
- who share a sense identity.

Every gathering is not necessarily a group. An audience watching a busker is a one-time random gathering. People who exist in the same place at the same time, but who do not interact or share a sense of identity — such as a bunch of people standing in line at Tim Horton's—are a crowd. People who share similar characteristics but are not otherwise tied to one another are considered a **category**.

An example of a category would be Millennials, the term given to people born from approximately 1980 to 2000. Why are Millennials a category and not a group? Because while some of them share a sense of identity, they do not all interact frequently with each other.

A crowd or category can become a group. During disasters, people in a neighbourhood (a crowd) who did not know each other might become friendly and depend on each other at a local shelter. After the disaster ends, the cohesiveness may last because they all shared an experience. They might remain a group, practising emergency readiness, coordinating supplies for the next emergency, or taking turns caring for neighbours in need. There may be many groups within a single category. Consider teachers, for example. Within this category, groups may exist like teachers' unions, teachers who coach, or a faculty committee.

## Types of Groups

Sociologist Charles Horton Cooley divided groups into two categories: **primary groups** and **secondary groups** (Cooley, 1909/1963). Primary groups play the most critical role in our lives. The primary group is usually small. Primary groups consist of individuals who generally engage face-to-face in long-term, emotional ways. This group serves emotional needs: **expressive functions** rather than pragmatic ones. The primary group is usually made up of significant others—individuals who have the most impact on our socialization. The best example of a primary group is the family.

Secondary groups are usually larger and impersonal. They may be task-focused and time-limited. These groups serve an **instrumental function** rather than an expressive one, meaning that their role is more goal- or task- oriented than emotional. A classroom or office can be an example of a secondary group.

How are our needs for primary group intimacy altered in the age of electronic media?

### Making Connections: Case Study

#### Best Friends She's Never Met

Writer Allison Levy worked alone. While she liked the flexibility, she sometimes missed having a community of coworkers, both for the practical purpose of brainstorming and the more social “water cooler” aspect. Levy did what many do in the internet age: she found a group of other writers online. While writers in general represent all genders, ages, and interests, it ended up being a collection of 20- and 30-something women who all wrote fiction for children and young adults.

At first, the writers’ forum was clearly a secondary group united by the members’ professions and work situations. As Levy explained, “On the internet, you can be present or absent as often as you want. No one is expecting you to show up.” It was a useful place to research information about different publishers, find out who had recently sold what, and track industry trends. But as time passed, Levy found it served a different purpose. Since the group shared other characteristics beyond their writing (such as age and gender), the online conversation naturally turned to matters such as childrearing, aging parents, health, and exercise. Levy found it was a sympathetic place to talk about any number of subjects, not just writing. Further, when people didn’t post for several days, others expressed concern, asking whether anyone had heard from the missing writers. It reached a point where most members would tell the group if they were travelling or needed to be offline for a while.

The group continued to share. One member on the site who was going through a difficult family illness wrote, “I don’t know where I’d be without you women. It is so great to have a place to vent that I know isn’t hurting anyone.” Others shared similar sentiments.

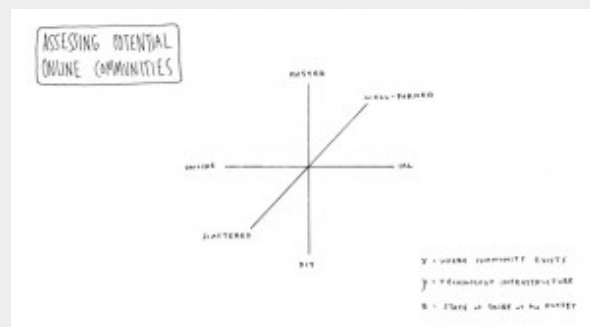


Figure 5.3. What are the parameters of online communities?  
[Long Description at the end of the chapter] (Image courtesy of 10ch/Flickr)



On the other hand, Zygmunt Bauman (2004) discusses the way electronically mediated groups like this online web forum tend to be frail communities, “easy to enter and easy to abandon.” They do not substitute for the more tangible and solid “we” feeling of face to face forms of togetherness, which require commitment and risk. Virtual communities “create only an illusion of intimacy and a pretense of community. They are not valid substitutes for ‘getting your knees under the table, seeing people’s faces, and having real conversation.’” They are a version of what Bauman calls cloakroom communities, places where one can hang one’s identity like a cloak for the duration of the “show”— i.e., one’s interest in the group’s theme and interactions — and then collect it again when it’s time to move on.

Is this online writers’ forum a primary group? Most of these people have never met each other. They live in Hawaii, Australia, Minnesota, and across the world. They may never meet. Levy wrote recently to the group, saying, “Most of my ‘real-life’ friends and even my husband don’t really get the writing thing. I don’t know what I’d do without you.” Despite the distance and the lack of physical contact, the group clearly fills an expressive need.

## In-Groups and Out-Groups

One of the ways that groups can be powerful is through inclusion, and its opposite, exclusion. In-groups and out-groups are subcategories of primary and secondary groups that include and exclude. Primary groups consist of both in-groups and out-groups, as do secondary groups. The feeling of belonging to a group can be exciting, while the feeling of not being allowed in can be motivating in a different way. Sociologist William Sumner (1840–1910) developed the concepts of **in-group** and **out-group** to explain this phenomenon (Sumner, 1906/1959). An individual feels membership to an in-group, and believes it to be an important part of identity. An out-group, conversely, is a group someone doesn’t belong to; often there may be a feeling of dislike or competition with an out-group. Sports teams, unions, and secret societies are examples of in-groups and out-groups; people may belong to or be an outsider.



Figure 5.4. Engineering and construction students gather around a job site. How do your academic interests define your in- and out-groups? (Photo courtesy of USACEpublicaffairs/flickr)

In-groups and out-groups can explain some negative human behaviour, such as white supremacist movements like the Ku Klux Klan or the bullying of gay or lesbian students. By defining others as “not like us” and inferior, in-groups can practice ethnocentrism, racism, sexism, ageism, and heterosexism—judging others negatively based on their culture, race, sex, age, or sexuality.

Often, in-groups form within a secondary group. For instance, a workplace can have cliques of people, from senior executives who play golf together to young singles who socialize after hours. These in-groups might show favouritism for other in-group members, and the overall organization may be unable or unwilling to acknowledge it. The politics of in-groups may exclude others as a form of gaining status within the group.

## Making Connections: Social Policy and Debate

### Bullying and Cyberbullying: How Technology Has Changed the Game

Most of us know that “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” is inaccurate. Words can hurt, and that is very apparent in bullying. Bullying has always existed, often reaching extreme levels of cruelty in children and young adults. People at these stages of life are especially vulnerable to others’ opinions of them, and they’re deeply invested in their peer groups.

Today, technology deepens this dynamic. Cyberbullying is the use of interactive media by one person to torment another, and it’s increasing. Cyberbullying can mean sending threatening texts, harassing someone in a public forum (such as Facebook), hacking someone’s account or identity, posting embarrassing images online, and so on.



Figure 5.5. Cyberbullying is a 21st century problem. (Image courtesy of Brice Pinson/Flickr)

The Cyberbullying Research Center found that 20% of middle-school students admitted to “seriously thinking about committing suicide” because of online bullying (Hinduja and Patchin, 2010). While bullying face-to-face requires willingness to interact with your victim, cyberbullying allows bullies to harass others from the privacy of their homes without witnessing the damage firsthand. This form of bullying is particularly dangerous because it’s widely accessible and easier to accomplish.

Cyberbullying made international headlines in 2012 when a 15-year-old girl, Amanda Todd, in Port Coquitlam, B.C., committed suicide after years of bullying by her peers, and internet sexual exploitation. A month before her suicide, she told her story in a YouTube video. Bullying began in grade 7 when she had been lured to reveal her breasts in a webcam photo. A year later, when she refused to give an anonymous male “a show,” the picture was circulated to her friends, family, and contacts on Facebook.

Statistics Canada reported that 7% of internet users aged 18 and over have been cyberbullied, most commonly (73%) by receiving threatening or aggressive emails or text messages. Nine percent of adults who had a child at home aged 8 to 17 reported that at least one of their children had been cyberbullied. Two percent reported that their child had been lured or sexually solicited online (Perreault, 2011).

After Amanda Todd’s death, most provinces enacted strict guidelines obliging schools to respond to cyberbullying and encouraging students to come forward to report victimization. In 2013, the federal government proposed Bill C-13—the Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act—which would make it illegal to share an intimate image of a person without that person’s consent. (Critics, however, note that the anti-cyberbullying provision in the bill is only a minor measure among many others that expand police powers to surveil all internet activity.) Will these measures change the behaviour of would-be cyberbullies? That remains to be seen. But

hopefully communities can work to protect victims before they feel they must resort to extreme measures.

## Large Groups

It is difficult to define exactly when a small group becomes a large group. One step might be when there are too many people to join in a simultaneous discussion. Another might be when a group joins with other groups as part of a movement that unites them. These larger groups may share a geographic space, such as Occupy Montreal or the People's Assembly of Victoria, or they might be spread out around the globe. The larger the group, the more attention it can garner, and the more pressure members can put toward whatever goal they wish to achieve. At the same time, the larger the group becomes, the more the risk grows for division and lack of cohesion.

One can think of three main social *forms* by which the *content* or activity of a group might be organized to prevent division and lack of cohesion: domination, cooperation, and competition. No matter what the organization is — a hockey franchise, a workplace, or a social movement — the choice of one form of organization over the others has consequences in terms of the loyalty of members and the efficiency and effectiveness of the group in achieving its goals. In the form of **domination**, power is concentrated in the hands of leaders while the power of subordinates is severely restricted or constrained. In extreme versions of domination, like slavery, loyalty and efficiency are low because fear of coercion is the only motivation. In the form of **cooperation** on the other hand, power is distributed relatively equally and loyalty and efficiency are high because the group is based on mutual trust and high levels of commitment. In the form of **competition**, power is distributed unequally but there is latitude for movement based on the outcome of competition for prestige or money. Loyalty and efficiency are relatively high but only as long as the pay-offs are high.

In a Star Trek episode from the 1960s, "Patterns of Force," the crew of the Enterprise discover that a rogue historian has gone against the Prime Directive and reorganized a planet's culture on the basis of Nazi Germany. In order to address the planet's condition of chaos, he appealed to the "efficiency" of Nazism only to unleash a systematic persecution of one native group by the other. The ensuing drama in the episode reveals that the historian mistook domination for efficiency. As Spock puts it at the end of the episode, how could such a noted historian make the logical error of emulating the Nazis? Captain Kirk responds by saying that the failure was in putting so much power in the hands of a dictator, to which Dr. McCoy adds that power corrupts. In fact, as historians point out, Nazi Germany was startlingly *inefficient*, if only because all major decisions were filtered through Hitler himself who was notoriously unpredictable, hard to get the attention of, and lacked any form of personal routine (Kershaw, 1998). The irony of the Star Trek episode is of course that the Starship Enterprise itself is organized on the formal basis of domination. It is only the *leadership style* that differs.

## Group Leadership

Often, larger groups require formal leadership. Small, primary groups tend to have informal leadership. After all, most families don't take a vote on who will rule the group, nor do most groups of friends. Leaders do not emerge, but formal leadership is rare.

In a series of small group studies at Harvard in the 1950s, Robert Bales (1970) studied the group processes that emerged around solving problems. No matter what the specific tasks were, he discovered that in all

the successful groups—the groups that were able to see complete tasks without breaking up—three types of informal leader emerged: a task leader, an emotional leader, and a joker.

The task leader organized the group to solve the problem by setting goals and distributing tasks. The emotional leader helped the group resolve disagreements and frustrations when strong feelings emerged. The joker made fun but also made jokes had to release group tension. These leadership roles emerged spontaneously in the small groups without planning or awareness. They appear to be characteristics of task-oriented, face-to-face groups.

In secondary groups, leadership is usually more formal. There are often clearly outlined roles and responsibilities, with a chain of command. Some secondary groups, like the army, have highly structured and clearly understood chains of command, and many lives depend on those. How well could soldiers function in a battle if different people were calling out orders? Other secondary groups, like a workplace or a classroom, also have formal leaders, but the styles and functions of leadership vary significantly.

**Leadership function** refers to the main focus or goal of the leader. An instrumental leader is goal-oriented and largely concerned with accomplishing set tasks. An army general or a company CEO would be an instrumental leader. In contrast, expressive leaders are more concerned with promoting emotional strength and health, and ensuring that people feel supported. Social and religious leaders—rabbis, priests, imams, and directors of youth homes and social service programs—are often perceived as expressive leaders.

There is a stereotype that men are more instrumental leaders and women are more expressive leaders. Although gender roles have changed, even today, many women and men who exhibit the opposite-gender manner are seen as deviants and may encounter resistance. Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton provides an example of how society reacts to a high-profile woman as an instrumental leader. Despite stereotypes, however, Boatwright and Forrest (2000) have found that both men and women prefer leaders who use a combination of expressive and instrumental leadership.

In addition to these leadership functions, there are three different **leadership styles**.

**Democratic leaders** encourage group participation in all decision making. These leaders work hard to build consensus before choosing a course of action. This type of leader is common, for example, in a club where the members vote on which activities to pursue. These leaders can be well-liked, but sometimes work will proceed slowly because consensus building is time-consuming. A further risk is that group members might pick sides in opposing factions rather than reaching a solution.

In contrast, a **laissez-faire leader** (French for “leave it alone”) is hands-off, allowing group members to make their own decisions. An example of this kind of leader might be an art teacher who opens the art cupboard, leaves materials on the shelves, and tells students to help themselves and make some art. While this style can work well with highly motivated and mature participants who have clear goals and guidelines, it risks group confusion and a lack of progress.

**Authoritarian leaders** give orders and assign tasks. These leaders are instrumental leaders with a strong focus on meeting goals. Often, entrepreneurs fall into this mould, like Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. Not surprisingly, this type of leader risks alienating the workers. There are times, however, when this style of leadership can be required.

In different circumstances, each leadership style can be effective and successful. Consider what leadership style you prefer. Why? Do you like the same style in different areas of your life, such as a classroom, a workplace, and a sports team?



## Making Connections: Case Study

### Women Leaders and the Glass Ceiling



Figure 5.6. Green Party leader Elizabeth May stands out for her gender and her leadership style among federal party leaders. (Photo courtesy Itzafineday/flickr)

Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party, was voted best parliamentarian of the year in 2012 and hardest-working parliamentarian in 2013. She stands out among national party leaders as both the only woman and the only leader focused on changing leadership style.

She wants to change leadership by reducing centralization and hierarchical control of party leaders, allowing MPs to vote freely, decreasing political partisanship, increasing collaboration, and restoring respect and decorum to House of Commons debates. The focus on collaborative, non-conflictual approach to politics is a component of her expressive leadership style, typically associated with female leadership qualities.

According to some political analysts, women candidates face a paradox: they must be as tough as their male opponents on issues, such as foreign or economic policy, or risk appearing weak (Weeks, 2011). However, the stereotypical expectation of women as expressive leaders is still common.

Many believed Elizabeth May won the 2008 election leaders debate by being firm in her criticism of government policy and being both intelligent and clear in her statements. The idea of winning debates and defeating opponents in a hostile environment is regarded as a masculine virtue. At the same time, May is subject to criticisms that have to do with her femininity, in a way that male politicians are not subject to similar criticisms about their masculinity.

Media tycoon Conrad Black called her “a frumpy, noisy, ill-favoured, half-deranged windbag” to which, May quipped, “He’s right on one point: I certainly am frumpy. I don’t have anything like Barbara Amiel’s [Black’s well-known journalist wife] sense of style. But overall, I figure being attacked by Conrad Black is in its own way an accolade in this country” (Allemang, 2009).

Despite the cleverness of May's retort, her situation as a female leader reflect broader issues women confront in assuming leadership roles. Even though women have been closing the gap with men in terms of workforce participation and education over the last decades, their average income has remained at approximately 70% of men's, and men are twice as likely as women to attain leadership roles. In terms of the representation of women in Parliament, cabinet, and political leadership, the figures are much lower at 15% (even though several provinces have had women as premiers) (McInturff, 2013).

One concept for describing women's access to leadership positions is the glass ceiling. While most of the explicit barriers to women's achievement have been removed through legislation, norms of gender equality, and affirmative action policies, women still often get stuck at middle management. There is a glass ceiling or invisible barrier that prevents them from achieving leadership positions (Tannen, 1994). This is also reflected in gender inequality in income over time. Early in their careers men's and women's incomes are equal but at mid-career, the gap increases significantly (McInturff, 2013).

Tannen argues that this barrier exists in part because of the different work and conversational-style differences styles of men and women. While men are very aggressive in their conversational style and their self-promotion, women are typically consensus builders who seek to avoid appearing bossy and arrogant. As a linguistic strategy of office politics, it is common for men to say "I" and claim personal credit in situations where women would be more likely to use "we" and emphasize teamwork. Since men are often in the positions to make promotion decisions, they interpret women's style of communication "as showing indecisiveness, inability to assume authority, and even incompetence" (Tannen, 1994).

Women's expressive leadership, which in many cases is more effective, their skills, merits, and achievements go unrecognized. In terms of political leadership, one political analyst said bluntly, "women don't succeed in politics—or other professions—unless they act like men. The standard for running for national office remains distinctly male" (Weeks, 2011).

## Conformity

We all like to fit in. Likewise, when we want to stand out, we want to choose how we stand out and for what reasons. For example, a woman who loves cutting-edge dresses in new styles likely wants to be known for high fashion. She would not want people to think she was too poor to find proper clothes.

**Conformity** is the extent to which an individual complies with group norms or expectations. We look to groups to assess and understand how we should act, dress, and behave. Not surprisingly, young people are particularly aware of who conforms and who does not. A high school boy whose mother makes him wear ironed, button-down shirts might protest that he will look stupid—that everyone else wears T-shirts. Another high school boy might like wearing those ironed shirts to stand out. This is the contradictory dynamics of fashion: it represents both the need to conform and the need to stand out. How much do you enjoy being noticed? Do you consciously prefer to conform to group norms so as not to be singled out? Are there people in your class or peer group who immediately come to mind when you think about those who do, and do not, want to conform?

Several famous experiments in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s tested the tendency of individuals to conform to authority. Chapter 2 examined the Stanford Prison experiment. Within days of beginning the simulated

prison experiment, the random sample of university students proved themselves capable of conforming to the roles of prison guards and prisoners to an extreme degree (Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo, 1973).

Stanley Milgram conducted experiments in the 1960s to determine how authority figures made individuals obedient (Milgram, 1963). This was shortly after the Adolf Eichmann war crime trial in which Eichmann claimed that he was just a bureaucrat following orders when he helped to organize the Holocaust.

Milgram asked experimental subjects to give (what they were thought) were electric shocks to others who answered questions incorrectly. Each time a wrong answer was given, the experimental subject was told to increase the intensity of the shock. The experiment was supposed to be testing the relationship between punishment and learning, but the person receiving the shocks was an actor, part of the experiment. As the experimental subjects increased the amount of voltage to “punish” wrong answers, the actor began to show distress, eventually begging the questioning to stop.

When the subjects became reluctant to administer more shocks, Milgram (wearing a white lab coat to underline his authority as a scientist) assured them that the shocked person would be OK. He would explain that the results of the experiment would be compromised if the subject did not continue the “punishments”. Seventy-one percent of the experimental subjects were willing to continue administering shocks, despite the actor crying out in pain, and a voltage dial labelled with warnings like “Danger: Severe shock.”

## Making Connections: Sociological Research

### Groupthink: Conforming to Expectations

Psychologist Solomon Asch conducted experiments to show the strength of pressure to conform, specifically within a small group (1956). In 1951, he sat a small group of eight people around a table. Only one was the true experimental subject; the rest were actors or associates of the experimenter. However, the subject was led to believe that the others were all, like him, brought in for an experiment in visual judgment. The group was shown two cards: the first card with a single vertical line, and the second card with three vertical lines differing in length. The experimenter asked each participant, one at a time, which line on the second card matched up with the line on the first card.

However, this was not really a test of visual judgment. Rather, it was Asch's study on the pressures of conformity. He was curious to see what the effect of multiple wrong answers would be on the subject, who presumably was able to tell which lines matched. To test this, Asch had each planted respondent answer in a specific way. The real subject could hear everyone else's answers before it was his turn. The actor participants would often choose an answer that was clearly wrong.

Asch found that 37 out of 50 test subjects responded with an obviously incorrect answer at least once. Asch revised the study and repeated it. The subject still heard the staged wrong answers but was allowed to write down his answer rather than speak it aloud. In this version, the number of examples of conformity—giving an incorrect answer to not contradict the group—fell by two-thirds. He also found that group size had an impact on how much pressure the subject felt to conform.

The results showed that conforming to an incorrect answer was much more common when five or six people gave the incorrect answer than when only one other person gave an incorrect answer. Finally, Asch discovered that people were far more likely to give the correct answer in the face of near-unanimous consent if they had a single ally. If even one person in the group also dissented, the subject conformed only a quarter as often. Clearly, it was easier to be a minority of two than a minority of one.

Asch concluded that there are two main causes for conformity: people want to be liked by the group or they believe the group is better informed than they are. He found his results disturbing. To him, they revealed that intelligent, well-educated people would, with very little coaxing, go along with an untruth. This phenomenon is known as groupthink, the tendency to conform

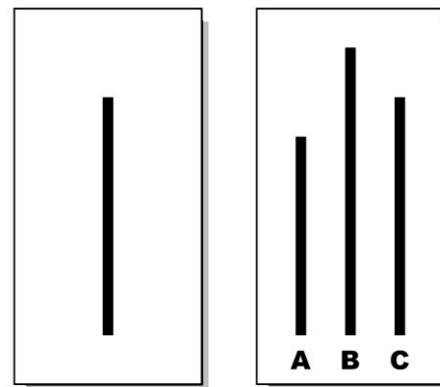


Figure 5.7. In the Asch conformity experiments, a subject had to determine which of the three lines on the left matched the length of the line on the right. (Photo courtesy of Nyenyec/Wikimedia Commons). [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Asch\\_experiment.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Asch_experiment.png)

to the attitudes and beliefs of the group despite individual misgivings. He believed this result highlighted real problems with the education system and values in our society (Asch, 1956).

## 5.2. Formal Organizations

Many complain that large and impersonal secondary organizations dominate society. These organization—such as schools, businesses, health care and government—are referred to as formal organizations. A **formal organization** is a large secondary group deliberately organized to achieve goals efficiently.

Typically, formal organizations are bureaucracies. A bureaucracy refers to what Max Weber termed “an ideal type” of formal organization (1946). In sociology, “ideal” does not mean “best”; it refers to a general model that could be used to describe most examples. For example, if your instructor told the class to picture a car in their minds, most students would picture a car that shares a set of characteristics: four wheels, a windshield, and so on. Everyone’s car could be different, however. Some might picture a two-door sports car while others might picture an SUV. The general shared idea of a car is the ideal type. Bureaucracies are similar. While each bureaucracy has its own individual features, the way each is deliberately organized to achieve its goals shares certain characteristics.

### Types of Formal Organizations



Figure 5.8. Cub and Guide troops and correctional facilities are both formal organizations. (Photo (a) courtesy of Paul Hourigan/Hamilton Spectator, 1983; Photo (b) courtesy of CxOxS/flickr)

### *Bureaucracies*

Bureaucracies are an ideal type of formal organization. This does not mean that they are ideal (“best”) in an ethical sense but that they are organized by idealized model, like the example of the car above. People often complain about bureaucracies. People see bureaucracies as slow, rule-bound, difficult to navigate, and

unfriendly.

Pioneer sociologist Max Weber described bureaucracy as having

- a hierarchy of authority,
- a clear division of labour,
- explicit rules, and
- impersonality.

**Hierarchy of authority:** Bureaucracy places one individual in charge of another. For example, if you are an employee at Walmart, your shift manager assigns you tasks. Your shift manager answers to the store manager, who must answer to the regional manager, and so on in a chain of command up to the CEO, who must answer to the board members, who answer to the stockholders. There is a clear chain of authority to allow everyone to know to whom to answer and for whom to be responsible. This permits the organization to make and enforce decisions.

**A clear division of labour:** Within a bureaucracy, everyone has a specialized task. In a school, for example, sociology instructors teach sociology, but they do fix leaks in the roof. That is a clear and common-sense division of labour. But what about in a restaurant where food is backed up in the kitchen while a hostess stands nearby texting on her phone? Her job is to seat customers, not to deliver food. Is this a smart division of labour?

**Explicit rules** refer to the way in which rules are outlined, written down, and standardized. For example, student guidelines are contained in the student handbook. As technology changes, organizations scramble to ensure their explicit rules cover emerging topics like cyberbullying and identity theft.

**Impersonality** of bureaucracies removes personal feelings from professional situations. Each position exists independently of who has the job so that clients and workers theoretically receive equal treatment. This was an attempt to eliminate favoritism. Through impersonality, large formal organizations try to protect their members, customers and clients. However, impersonality often results in disregard for personal experience. For example, you may be late for work because your car broke down, but the manager at Pizza Hut doesn't care why you are late, only that you are late.

Finally, bureaucracies are, in theory, **meritocracies**, meaning that hiring and promotion are based on documented skills, rather than on favoritism or random choice. To get into college programs, you need to have good grade. To become a lawyer, you must graduate from law school and pass the provincial bar exam. Of course, there is a popular image of bureaucracies rewarding conformity and flattery rather than skill or merit. How well do you think established meritocracies identify talent?

There are several positive aspects of bureaucracies. Bureaucracies can improve efficiency, ensure equal opportunities, and increase efficiency. There are times when rigid hierarchies are needed. However, there can be inefficiency in the organization of bureaucracies. First, in some bureaucracies, workers can't find meaning in the repetitive, standardized nature of their tasks. Second, bureaucracies can lead to inefficiency and ritualism (red tape). They can focus on rules and regulations to the point of undermining the organization's goals and purpose. Third, bureaucracies tend toward inertia. You may have heard the expression "trying to turn a tanker around mid-ocean," which refers to the difficulties of changing direction of something large and set in its ways. Inertia means bureaucracies focus on perpetuating themselves rather than effectively accomplishing the tasks they were designed to achieve. Finally, as Robert Michels (1911/1949) suggested, bureaucracies are characterized by the **iron law of oligarchy** in which the organization is ruled by a few elites. The organization promotes the self-interest of oligarchs and insulates them from the needs of the public.

Many bureaucracies grew large at the time that our school model was developed, during the Industrial

Revolution. Young workers were trained, and organizations were built for mass production and assembly-line work in factories. A clear chain of command was useful. Now, in the information age, this kind of rigid training and organizations can decrease productivity and efficiency. Today's workplace requires a faster pace, more problem solving, and a flexible approach to work. Smaller organizations are often more innovative and competitive because they have flatter hierarchies and more democratic decision making, which invites more communication, greater networking, and increased individual participation of members. Too many rules and a strict division of labour can leave an organization behind. Unfortunately, once established, bureaucracies can take on

## The McDonaldization of Society



Figure 5.9. This McDonald's storefront in Egypt shows the McDonaldization of society.  
(Photo courtesy of s\_w\_ellis/flickr)

The **McDonaldization** of society (Ritzer, 1994) refers to the increasing presence of the fast-food business model. This business model includes efficiency (the division of labour), predictability, calculability, and control (monitoring). For example, in your average chain grocery store, people at the cash register check out customers while stockers keep the shelves full of goods, and deli workers slice meat (efficiency). Whenever you enter a store in that grocery chain, you receive the same type of goods, see the same store organization, and find the same brands at the same prices (predictability). You can weigh your fruit and vegetable purchases rather than simply guessing at the price for that bag of onions, while the employees use a time card (calculability). Store employees wear uniforms and name tags so that they can be easily identified. Security cameras monitor the store, and some parts of the store, such as the stockroom, are considered off-limits to customers (control).

While McDonaldization has resulted in improved profits and an increased availability of goods and services, it has also reduced the variety of goods. In addition, available products may be uniform, generic, and bland. Think of the difference between a mass-produced shoe and one made by a local shoemaker, between a chicken from a family-owned farm versus a corporate grower, or a cup of coffee from the local roaster instead of a coffee-shop chain. Ritzer also notes that the rational systems, as efficient as they are, are irrational because they become more important than the people working within them, or the clients being served. "Most specifically, irrationality means that rational systems are unreasonable systems. By that I mean that they deny the basic humanity, the human reason, of the people who work within or are served by them." (Ritzer, 1994)



## Making Connections: Sociological Research

### Secrets of the McJob

We often talk about bureaucracies disparagingly, and no organizations have taken more heat than fast-food restaurants. The book and movie *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* by Eric Schossler (2001) paints an ugly picture of what goes in, what goes on, and what comes out of fast-food chains. From their environmental impact to their role in the U.S. obesity epidemic, fast-food chains are connected to numerous societal ills. Furthermore, working at a fast-food restaurant is often disparaged, and even referred to dismissively, as a McJob rather than a real job.

But business school professor Jerry Newman (2007) went undercover and worked behind the counter at seven fast-food restaurants to discover what really goes on there. His book, *My Secret Life on the McJob*, documents his experience. Newman found, unlike Schossler, that these restaurants have much good alongside the bad. Specifically, he asserted that the employees were honest and hard-working, the management was often impressive, and the jobs required a lot more skill and effort than most people imagined. In the book, Newman cites a pharmaceutical executive who states that a fast-food service job on an applicant's résumé is a plus because it indicates the employee is reliable and can handle pressure.

So what do you think? Are these McJobs and the organizations that offer them still serving a role in the economy and people's careers? Or are they dead-end jobs that typify all that is negative about large bureaucracies? Have you ever worked in one? Would you?

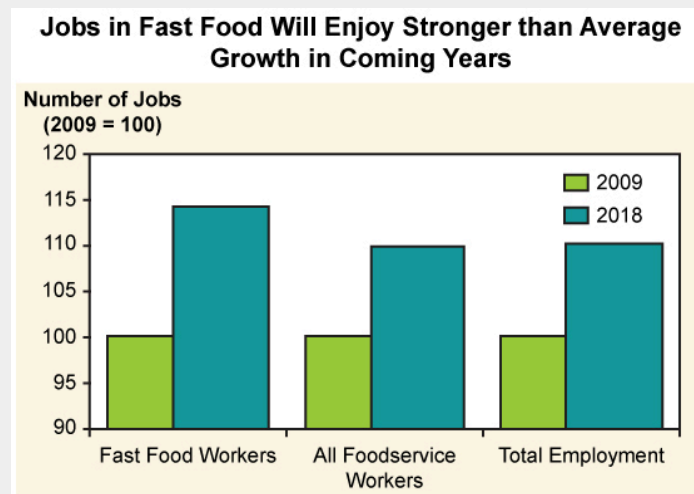


Figure 5.10. Fast-food jobs are expected to grow more quickly than most industries. (Graph courtesy of U.S. Department of Labor)



## The Holocaust: What can sociology tell us?

In sociology, the group is always more than the sum of its parts. Individuals change their behaviour around others. Chapter 1 looked at how being in a crowd affected people very differently during the 2010 Vancouver Olympics and the riots of the 2011 Stanley Cup final. This chapter shows how being a member of a social group influences people to conform or attach to an in-group or out-group. How does the insight that “the group is more than the sum of the parts” help us understand the Holocaust?

The Holocaust (literally “whole burnt”) refers to the systematic extermination of European Jews and Roma by Nazis between 1941 and 1945. During this period, at least six million Jews and Roma were killed by the Nazis. How was it possible? It’s difficult to imagine that this event could merely be the product of isolated individuals. It needs to be understood at the level of group behaviour.

Clearly, some Germans in the 1930s were anti-Semitic, but even among these individuals the concept of Hitler’s Final Solution would have been unthinkable. Often, the explanation has been that the Nazi era in 20th century Germany was a temporary abnormality, a period of mass irrationality and social breakdown; an imposition of racism, hatred, and violence on the population by a power-hungry madman, Adolf Hitler, devoted to world domination. This explanation has some truth: the combination of war reparations imposed on Germany after the First World War and global capitalist crisis in the 1930s (the Great Depression) created conditions of instability and widespread desperation. Desperate people do not think clearly.

However, the sociological analysis of the rise of the Nazis and the implementation of the Holocaust is more disconcerting. The Nazis were democratically elected not once but twice (in 1932 and 1933); the suspension of the constitution and the institution of emergency rule happened through legal, constitutional means; ordinary citizens enables the imposition of totalitarian rule and the internment of Jews, Roma, homosexuals, the disabled, and political opponents. And all of this was accomplished in one of the most modern, cultured, technologically advanced and rational societies in Europe. The leaders were not all sadists, criminals, or madmen. While there were clearly a few individuals in the camps known for their sadistic cruelty, “by conventional clinical criteria no more than 10 per cent of the SS could be considered ‘abnormal’” (Kren and Rappoport, quoted in Bauman, 1989).

As Zygmunt Bauman (1989) has argued, the Holocaust could not have occurred without the existence of modern, rational forms of social organization.

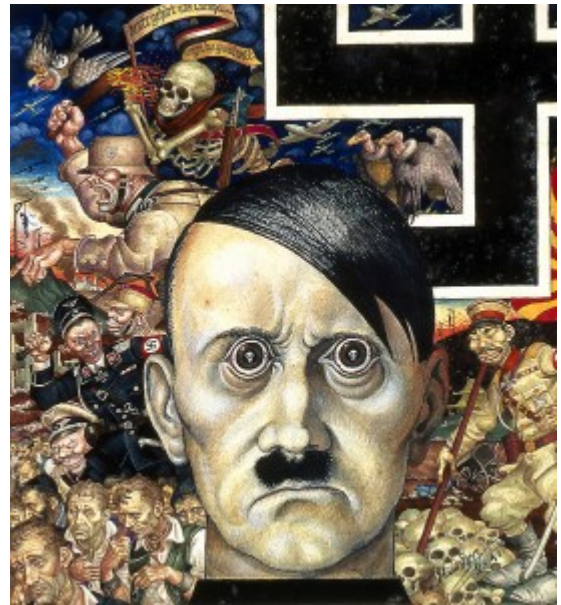


Figure 5.11. Polish-Jewish artist Arthur Szyk (1894-1951). *Anti-Christ* (1942). (Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons).

Bauman argues that it was the rational, efficient organization of the Nazi bureaucracy that enabled a series of solutions to be examined and rejected before the Final Solution was accepted. Bureaucracy also provided the three conditions which made it possible to overcome individual moral aversion to the mass killing:

- First, the violence was *authorized* according with bureaucratic procedures and hierarchical channels of command.
- Second, the violence was *routinized* by the rule-bound practices and clear division of labour of bureaucratic organization.
- Third, the victims of the violence were *dehumanized* through, not only ideological propaganda and media spin, but also the impersonality inherent in bureaucracy (Bauman, 1989).

The Holocaust was the product of the same ordinary sociological phenomena that operates in society today, including the formation of in-groups and out-groups, conformity to structures of authority, groupthink, and the 'rational' structure of bureaucracy. Therefore, an answer to how the Holocaust was possible must begin with studying collective behaviour. Why do individuals conform to the will of groups even when this means overcoming strong personal moral convictions or rational thinking? We need to examine the properties of groups to understand how the effect of the whole is more than the sum of the individual parts.

## Chapter Summary

Groups largely define how we think of ourselves. There are two main types of groups: primary and secondary. A primary group is long-term with complex relationships.

The size and dynamics of a group greatly affects how members act. Primary groups rarely have formal leaders, although there can be informal leadership.

In secondary groups, there are two types of leadership functions, with expressive leaders focused on emotional health and wellness, and instrumental leaders more focused on results. Further, there are different leadership styles: democratic leaders, authoritarian leaders, and laissez-faire leaders. People use groups as standards of comparison to define themselves—as both who they are and who they are not. Sometimes groups can be used to exclude people or as a tool that strengthens prejudice.

Within a group, conformity is the extent to which people want to go along with group norms. Several experiments have illustrated how strong the drive to conform can be. Conformity and obedience can lead people to ethically and morally suspect acts.

## Key Terms

**authoritarian leader:** A leader who issues orders and assigns tasks.

**bureaucracy:** A formal organization characterized by a hierarchy of authority, a clear division of labour, explicit rules, and impersonality.

**category:** People who share similar characteristics but who are not connected in any way.

**clear division of labour:** The structuring of work in a bureaucracy such that everyone has a specialized task to perform.

**conformity:** The extent to which an individual complies with group or societal norms.

**crowd:** A collection of people who exist in the same place at the same time, but who don't interact or share a sense of identity.

**democratic leader:** A leader who encourages group participation and consensus-building before acting.

**expressive function:** A group function that serves an emotional need.

**expressive leader:** A leader who is concerned with process and with ensuring everyone's emotional well-being.

**formal organizations:** Large, impersonal organizations.

**glass ceiling:** An invisible barrier that prevents women from achieving positions of leadership.

**group:** Refers to any collection of at least two people who interact with some frequency and who share a sense that their identity is somehow aligned with the group.

**groupthink:** The tendency to conform to the attitudes and beliefs of the group despite individual misgivings.

**hierarchy of authority:** A clear chain of command found in a bureaucracy.

**in-group:** A group a person belongs to and feels is an integral part of his or her identity.

**instrumental function:** Orientation toward a task or goal.

**instrumental leader:** A leader who is goal oriented with a primary focus on accomplishing tasks.

**laissez-faire leader:** A hands-off leader who allows members of the group to make their own decisions.

**leadership function:** The main focus or goal of a leader.

**leadership style:** The style a leader uses to achieve goals or elicit action from group members.

**McDonaldization:** The increasing presence of the fast-food business model in common social institutions.

**meritocracy:** A bureaucracy where membership and advancement are based on merit as shown through proven and documented skills.

**out-group:** A group that an individual is not a member of and may compete with.

**primary groups:** Small, informal groups of people who are closest to us.

**reference groups:** Groups to which an individual compares herself or himself.

**secondary groups:** Larger and more impersonal groups that are task-focused and time-limited.

**social network:** A collection of people tied together by a specific configuration of connections.

**total institution:** An organization in which participants live a controlled life and in which total resocialization occurs.

**utilitarian organization:** An organization that people join to fill a specific material need.

## Chapter Quiz

### 5.2. Groups

1. What role do secondary groups play in society?
  - a. They are transactional, task-based, and short-term, filling practical needs.
  - b. They provide a social network that allows people to compare themselves to others.
  - c. The members give and receive emotional support.
  - d. They allow individuals to challenge their beliefs and prejudices.
2. When a high school student gets teased by her basketball team for receiving an academic award, she is dealing with competing \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Primary groups
  - b. Out-groups
  - c. Reference groups
  - d. Secondary groups
3. Which of the following is NOT an example of an in-group?
  - a. The Ku Klux Klan
  - b. A university club
  - c. A synagogue
  - d. A high school
4. What is a group whose values, norms, and beliefs come to serve as a standard for one's own behaviour?
  - a. Secondary group
  - b. Formal organization
  - c. Reference group

d. Primary group

5. Who is more likely to be an expressive leader?
  - a. The sales manager of a fast-growing cosmetics company
  - b. A high school teacher at a youth correctional facility
  - c. The director of a summer camp for chronically ill children
  - d. A manager at a fast-food restaurant
6. Which of the following is NOT an appropriate group for democratic leadership?
  - a. A fire station
  - b. A college classroom
  - c. A high school prom committee
  - d. A homeless shelter
7. In Asch's study on conformity, what contributed to the ability of subjects to resist conforming?
  - a. A very small group of witnesses
  - b. The presence of an ally
  - c. The ability to keep one's answer private
  - d. All of the above
8. Which of these is an example of a total institution?
  - a. Jail
  - b. High school
  - c. Political party
  - d. A gym
9. What is an advantage of the McDonaldization of society?
  - a. There is more variety of goods.
  - b. There is less theft.
  - c. There is more worldwide availability of goods.
  - d. There is more opportunity for businesses.

10. What is a disadvantage of the McDonaldization of society?
- There is less variety of goods.
  - There is an increased need for employees with postgraduate degrees.
  - There is less competition so prices are higher.
  - There are fewer jobs so unemployment increases.

[Quiz answers at end of chapter]

### Short Answer

- How has technology changed your primary groups and secondary groups? Do you have more or fewer primary groups due to online connectivity? Do you believe that someone, like Levy, can have a true primary group made up of people she has never met? Why or why not?
- Compare and contrast two different political groups or organizations, such as the Occupy (Canada) and Tea Party movements (in the United States) or one of the Arab Spring uprisings. How do the groups differ in terms of leadership, membership, and activities? How do the group's goals influence participants? Are any of them in-groups (and have they created out-groups)? Explain your answer.
- The concept of hate crimes has been linked to in-groups and out-groups. Research and documents an example where people have been excluded or tormented due to this kind of group dynamic?
- Where do you prefer to shop, eat out, or grab a cup of coffee? Large chains like Walmart or smaller retailers? Starbucks or a local restaurant? What do you base your decisions on? Does this section change how you think about these choices? Why or why not?

### Further Research

Information about cyberbullying causes and statistics:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2014001/article/14093-eng.htm#a7>.

Take the What is your leadership style? quiz: <http://psychology.about.com/qz/Whats-Your-Leadership-Style>.

Explore other experiments on conformity: <http://openstaxcollege.org/l/Stanford-Prison>.

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## Image Attributions

**Figure 5.1.** Occupy Victoria (vii) by r.a. paterson (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/bcpaterson/6248358546/>) used under CC BY SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)

**Figure 5.2.** Idle No More Ottawa (2013) by Michelle Caron ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Idle\\_No\\_More\\_2013\\_b.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Idle_No_More_2013_b.jpg)) used under CC BY SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)

**Figure 5.6.** Elizabeth May on CBC Radio One by ItzaFineDay (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/itza fineday/2636098278>) used under CC BY 2.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)

**Figure 5.8. (a)** Brownie and Cub compare badges by Girl Guides of Canada (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/girlguidesofcan/8488348265/in/photolist-dW61da>) used under CC BY 2.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)

## Long Descriptions

**Figure 5.3:** A graph with the x axis representing where a community exists ('online' or 'in real life') and the y axis representing the technology infrastructure ('Do it yourself' or 'hosted'). The Z axis describes the state of tribe at outset ('Scattered' or 'well formed'). Do it yourself online communities start out "scattered". Hosted communities in real life start out "well formed."

### Solutions to Chapter Quiz

1 a, | 2 c, | 3 d, | 4 c, | 5 c, | 6 a, | 7 d, | 8 a, | 9 b, | 10 c, | 11 a

[6]

## Social Inequality in Canada



Figure 6.1. Toronto neighbourhood. Photo courtesy of Can Pac Swire/ Flickr

## Learning Objectives

### 6.1. What Is Social Inequality?

- Break the concept of social inequality into its component parts: social differentiation, social stratification, and social distributions of wealth, income, power, and status.
- Define the difference between equality of opportunity and equality of condition.
- Distinguish between caste and class systems.
- Distinguish between class and status.
- Identify the structural basis for the different classes that exist in capitalist societies.

### 6.2. Social Inequality and Mobility in Canada

- Define the difference between relative and absolute poverty.
- Describe the current trend of increasing inequalities of wealth and income in Canada.
- Distinguish the the differences between Marx's and Weber's definitions of social class and explain why they are significant.
- Characterize the social conditions of the owning class, the middle class, and the traditional working class in Canada.
- Apply the research on social mobility to the question of whether Canada is a meritocracy.
- Recognize cultural markers that are used to display class identity.

### 6.3. Global Stratification and Inequality

- Define global inequality.
- Describe different sociological models for understanding global inequality.
- Understand how sociological studies identify worldwide inequalities.

## Introduction to Social Inequality in Canada

When he died in 2008, Ted Rogers Jr., then CEO of Rogers Communications, was the fifth-wealthiest individual in Canada, holding assets worth \$5.7 billion. In his autobiography (2008) he credited his success to a willingness to take risks, work hard, bend the rules, be on the constant look-out for opportunities, and be dedicated to building the business. He saw himself as a self-made billionaire who started from scratch, seized opportunities, and created a business through his own initiative.

The story of Ted Rogers is not exactly rags-to-riches, however. His grandfather, Albert Rogers, was a director of Imperial Oil (Esso) and his father, Ted Sr., became wealthy when he invented an alternating current vacuum tube for radios in 1925. Ted Rogers Sr. went on to manufacturing radios, owning a radio station, and acquiring a TV broadcasting licence.

However, Ted Sr. died when Ted Jr. was five years old, and the family businesses were sold. The family was still wealthy enough to send him to Upper Canada College, the famous private school that educates children from some of Canada's wealthiest families. Ted seized the opportunity at Upper Canada to make money as a bookie, taking bets on horse racing from the other students. Then he attended Osgoode Hall Law School, where reportedly his secretary went to classes and took notes for him. He bought an early FM radio station when he was still in university and started in cable TV in the mid-1960s. By the time of his death, Rogers Communications was worth \$25 billion.

At the other end of the opportunity spectrum are the Indigenous gang members in the Saskatchewan Correctional (CBC, 2010). CBC noted that 85 percent of the inmates in the prison were of Indigenous descent. The statistical profile of Indigenous Saskatchewan youth is grim, with high levels of school attrition, domestic abuse, drug dependencies, and child poverty.

In some ways the Indigenous inmates interviewed were like Ted Rogers: they were willing to seize opportunities, take risks, bend rules, and apply themselves to their vocations. They too aspired to get the money that would give them the freedom to make their own lives. However, as one of the inmates put it, "the only job I ever had was selling drugs" (CBC, 2010). The consequence was falling into a lifestyle that led to joining a gang, being kicked out of school, developing issues with addiction, and eventually getting arrested and incarcerated. Unlike Ted Rogers, however, the inmate added, "I didn't grow up with the best life" (CBC, 2010).

How do we make sense of the different stories? Canada is supposed to be a country where individuals can work hard to get ahead. It is an "open" society. There are no formal class, gender, racial, ethnic, geographical, or other boundaries that prevent people from rising to the top. People are free to make choices. But does this explain the difference in life chances that divide the Indigenous youth from the Rogers family? What determines a person's social standing? And how does social standing expand or limit a person's choices?



Figure 6.2. The Ted Rogers statue with Ted Rogers Centre for Heart Research in the background. Who gets monumentalized in Canada, and who gets forgotten? (Image courtesy of Oaktree/Wikimedia Commons)



## 6.1. What Is Social Inequality?

Sociologists use the term social inequality to describe the unequal distribution of resources, rewards and positions in a society. When a social category like class, occupation, gender, or race puts people in a position from which they can claim a greater share of resources or services, this becomes the basis of social inequality.

The term social stratification refers to an institutionalized system of social inequality. In social stratification, the divisions and relationships of social inequality have solidified into a system that determines who gets what, when, and why.

The distinct horizontal layers found in rock, called “strata,” help visualize stratification of social structure. Society’s layers are made of people, and society’s resources are distributed unevenly throughout the layers. The people who have more resources represent the top layer of social stratification. Other groups, with progressively fewer and fewer resources, represent the lower layers of our society. Social stratification assigns people to socioeconomic strata based on factors like wealth, income, race, education, and power. Sociologists ask how systems of stratification are formed. What is the basis of systematic social inequality in society?

Many Canadians believe in equality of opportunity and assume everyone has an equal chance at success. Equality of opportunity exists when people have the same chance to pursue economic or social rewards. This is often seen as a function of equal access to education, meritocracy (where individual merit determines social standing), and formal or informal measures to eliminate social discrimination. Sociologists debate whether Canadians have equality of opportunity.

Ted Rogers’ story illustrates the belief in equality of opportunity. In his personal narrative, hard work and talent — not inherent privilege, birthright, prejudicial treatment, or societal values—determined his social rank. This emphasis on self-effort is based on the belief that people individually control their own social standing, a key piece in the idea of equality of opportunity.

Most people connect inequalities of wealth, status, and power to the individual characteristics of those who succeed or fail. The story of the Indigenous gang members, although it is also a story of personal choices, disproves that belief. The type of choices available to the Indigenous gang members are very different than those available to the Rogers family.

Social inequality is not about individual inequalities, but about systematic inequalities based on group membership, class, gender, ethnicity, and other variables that structure access to rewards and status. Sociologists examine the structural conditions of social inequality. There are differences in individuals’ abilities and talents. The larger question, however, is how inequality becomes systematically structured in economic, social, and political life. Who gets the opportunities to develop their abilities and talents, and



Figure 6.3. In the upper echelons of the working world, people with the most power reach the top. These people make the decisions and earn the most money. The majority of Canadians will never see the view from the top. (Photo courtesy of Alex Proimos/Flickr)



Figure 6.4. Strata in rock illustrate social stratification. People are sorted, or layered, into social categories. Many factors determine a person’s social standing, such as income, education, occupation, age, race, gender, and even physical abilities. (Photo courtesy of Just a Prairie Boy/Flickr)

who does not? Where does “ability” or “talent” come from? Because we live in a society that emphasizes the individual — individual effort, individual morality, individual choice, individual responsibility, individual talent, etc. — it is often difficult to see how life chances are socially structured.

In most modern societies, stratification is defined by differences in

- **wealth**, the net value of money and assets a person has, and
- **income**, a person’s wages, salary, or investment dividends.
- **power** (how many people a person must take orders from versus how many people a person can give orders to) and
- **status** (the degree of honour or prestige one has in the eyes of others).

These four factors merge to define individuals’ social standing within a hierarchy. Cultural attitudes and beliefs support and perpetuate social inequalities.

## Systems of Stratification

Sociologists distinguish between two types of systems of stratification.

- Closed systems accommodate little change in social position. They do not allow people to shift levels and do not permit social relations between levels.
- Open systems, based on achievement, allow movement and interaction between layers and classes.

Different systems reflect, emphasize, and foster certain cultural values, and shape individual beliefs. This difference in stratification systems can be examined by the comparison between class systems and caste systems.

### *The Caste System*

Caste systems are closed stratification systems in which people can do little or nothing to change their social standing. A caste system is one in which people are born into their social standing and remain in it their whole lives. It is based on fixed or rigid status distinctions, rather than economic factors. Status is defined by the level of honour or prestige received by membership in a group.

Sociologists distinguish between ascribed status — a status received by being born into a category or group (hereditary position, gender, race, etc.) — and achieved status — a status received through individual effort or merits (occupation, educational level, moral character, etc.). Caste systems are based on a hierarchy of ascribed statuses, based on being born into fixed caste groups.

The caste system existed in India from 4,000 years ago until the 20th century. In the Hindu caste tradition, people were also expected to work in the occupation of their caste and marry according to their caste. Accepting this social standing was considered a moral duty. Cultural values and economic restrictions reinforced the system. Caste systems promote beliefs in fate, destiny, and the will of a higher power, rather than valuing individual freedom. A caste society socialized individuals to accept his or her social standing.

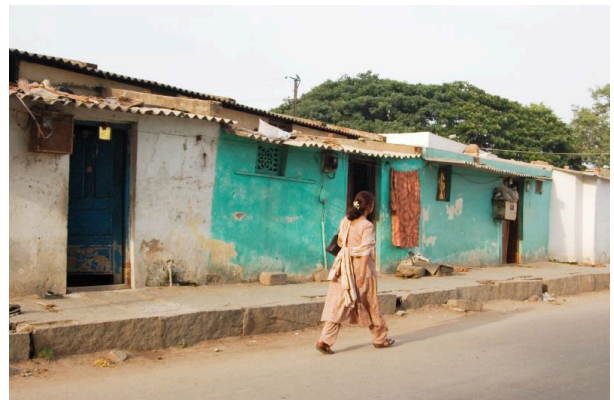


Figure 6.5. India used to have a rigid caste system. The people in the lowest caste suffered from extreme poverty and were shunned by society. Some aspects of India’s defunct caste system remain socially relevant. The Indian woman in this photo is of a specific Hindu caste. (Photo courtesy of Elessar/Flickr)

Although the caste system in India has been officially dismantled, its residual presence in Indian society is deeply embedded. In rural areas, aspects of the tradition are more likely to remain, while urban centres show less evidence of this past. In India's larger cities, people now have more opportunities to choose their own career paths and marriage partners. As a global centre of employment, corporations have introduced merit-based hiring and employment to the nation.

### *The Class System*

A class system is based on both social factors and individual achievement. It is at least a partially open system. A class consists of a set of people who have the same relationship to the means of production, that is, to the ways used to produce the goods and services needed for survival: tools, technologies, resources, land, workplaces, etc. In Karl Marx's analysis, class systems form around the institution of private property, dividing those who own or control productive property from those who do not, who survive through their labour.

Social class has both a strictly material quality relating to these definitions of individuals' positions within a given economic system, and a social quality relating to the formation of common class interests, political divisions, life styles and consumption patterns, and "life chances" (Weber 1969). Whether defined by material or social characteristics however, the main social outcome of the class structure is inequality in society.

In capitalism, the principle class division is between

- the capitalist class who live from the proceeds of owning or controlling property (capital assets like factories and machinery, or capital itself in the form of investments, stocks, and bonds) and
- the working class who live from selling their labour to the capitalists for a wage.

Marx used terms like **bourgeoisie**, **proletariat** and lumpenproletariat (the sub-proletariat).

The bourgeoisie include shopkeepers, farmers, and contractors who own some property and perhaps employ a few workers but still rely on their own labour to survive. The **proletariat** are the poorer workers. The lumpenproletariat are the chronically unemployed or irregularly employed who are in and out of the workforce. They are what Marx referred to as the "reserve army of labour," a pool of potential labourers who are not always needed in the economy.

In a class system, social inequality is structural, meaning that it is "built in" to the organization of the economy. The relationship to the means of production means whether someone is an owner or not. The relationship to the means of production creates a pattern of social relationships that exist outside of individuals' choice. The bourgeoisie is driven to accumulate capital and increase profit. They achieve this in a competitive marketplace by reducing the cost of production by lowering the cost of labour (by reducing wages, moving production to lower wage areas, or replacing workers with labour-saving technologies). This contradicts the interests of the proletariat who want to establish a good standard of living by maintaining the level of their wages and the level of employment in society.

The class interests clash and define a pattern of management-labour conflict and political differences.

However, unlike caste systems, class systems are open. People are at least formally free to gain a different level of education or employment than their parents. They can move up and down the stratification system. They can also socialize with and marry members of other classes, moving from one class to another. Individuals can move up and down the class hierarchy, even while the class categories and the class hierarchy remain stable.



In a class system, occupation is not fixed at birth. Though family and other social models guide a person toward a career, personal choice plays a role. For example, Ted Rogers Jr. chose a career in media like his father but managed to move from a position of relative wealth and privilege to be the fifth wealthiest bourgeois in the country.

## 6.2. Social Inequality and Mobility in Canada

### Standard of Living

In the last century, Canada has seen a steady rise in standard of living, wealth available to acquire material necessities and comforts. The standard of living is based on factors such as income, employment, class, poverty rates, and affordability of housing. Because standard of living is closely related to quality of life, it can represent factors such as the ability to afford a home, own a car, and take vacations. Access to a standard of living that enables equal participation in community life is not equally distributed, however.



Figure 6.6. (Image courtesy of Wayne Stadler/Flickr).

Canadians may not have to live in absolute poverty—“a severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information” (United Nations, 1995)—to be marginalized and socially excluded. Relative poverty refers to the minimum amount of income or resources needed to be able to participate in the “ordinary living patterns, customs, and activities” of a society (Townsend, 1979).

In Canada, a small portion of the population has the highest standard of living. Statistics Canada data showed that 10 percent of the population held 58 percent of our nation’s wealth in 2005 (Osberg, 2008). In 2007, the richest 1 percent took 13.8 percent of the total income earned by Canadians (Yalnizyan, 2010). In 2010, the median income earner in the top 1 percent earned 10 times more than the median income earner of the other 99 percent (Statistics Canada, 2013).

Wealthy people receive the most schooling, have better health, and consume the most goods and services. Wealthy people also have decision-making power. One aspect of their decision-making power comes from their positions as owners corporations and banks. They can grant themselves salary raises and bonuses. By 2010, only two years into the economic crisis of 2008, the pay of CEOs at Canada’s top 100 corporations jumped by 13 percent (McFarland, 2011), while negotiated wage increases in 2010 amounted to only 1.8 percent (HRSDC, 2010).

Many people think of Canada as a middle-class society. They think a few people are rich, a few are poor, and most are well off, existing in the middle of the social strata. But as the data above indicate, the distribution of wealth is not even. Millions of women and men struggle to pay rent, buy food, and find work that pays a living wage. Moreover, the share of the total income claimed by those in the middle-income ranges has been shrinking since the early 1980s, while the share taken by the wealthiest has been growing (Osberg, 2008).

For several decades, between 1946 and 1981, changes in income inequality were small even though the Canadian economy was massively transformed:

- the economy moved from an agricultural base to an industrial base;
- the population urbanized and doubled in size;
- the overall production of wealth measured by gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 4.5%; and per capita output increased by 227% (Osberg, 2008).

Economic inequality not change during this period of massive transformation.

From 1981 until the present, during another period of rapid and extensive economic change, the overall production of wealth continued to expand. However, economic inequality increased dramatically. What happened?

Between 1946 and 1981 real wages increased in pace with economic growth. But since 1981 only the top 20% of families have seen increase in real income, and the very wealthy have seen huge increases. The taxable income of the top 1% of families increased by 80% between 1982 and 2004 (Osberg, 2008).

Neoliberal policies of reduced state spending and increased tax cuts have been major differences between these two eras. The neoliberal theory that benefits of tax cuts to the rich would “trickle down” to the middle class and the poor has proven false. The biggest losers in neoliberal policy are the very poor. As Osberg notes, it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that the homeless—those forced to beg in the streets and those dependent on food banks—began to appear in Canada in significant numbers (2008).

The idea that equality of opportunity—a meritocracy leads to social mobility, movement from one social position to another—is debatable. Degrees of social inequality also vary significantly between regions.

## Making Connections: Sociological Research

### Measuring Levels of Poverty

Statistics Canada produces two relative measures of poverty: the low income measure (LIM) and the low income cut-off (LICO) measure. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada has developed an absolute measure: the market basket measure (MBM).

**Low income measure:** The LIM is defined as half the median family income. A person whose income is below that level is said to be in low income. The LIM is adjusted for family size.

**Low income cut-off:** The LICO is the income level below which a family would devote at least 20 percentage points more of their income to food, clothing, and shelter than an average family would. People are said to be in the low-income group if their income falls below this threshold. The threshold varies by family size and community size, as well as if income is calculated before or after taxes. For example, a single individual in Toronto would be said to be living in low income if his or her 2009 after-tax income was below \$18,421.

**Market basket measure:** The MBM is a measure of the disposable income a family would need to be able to purchase a basket of goods that includes food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and other basic needs. The dollar value of the MBM varies by family size and composition, as well as community size and location. MBM data are available since 2000 only.

The three measures produce different results. In 2009, according to each measure, the following numbers of Canadians were living in low income:

- LICO—3.2 million (9.6 per cent of the population)
- MBM—3.5 million (10.6 per cent)
- LIM—4.4 million (13.3 per cent)

Table 6.1 shows how the three measures also produce different results over time. Using the LICO measure results in a decreasing share of people in low income from 1996 to 2007, followed by a slight upturn in 2008 and 2009. The LIM measure results in a share of people in low income that has increased since 1990. The MBM, which has data starting only in 2000, shows results similar to the LICO but with a sharper upturn in 2008 and 2009.

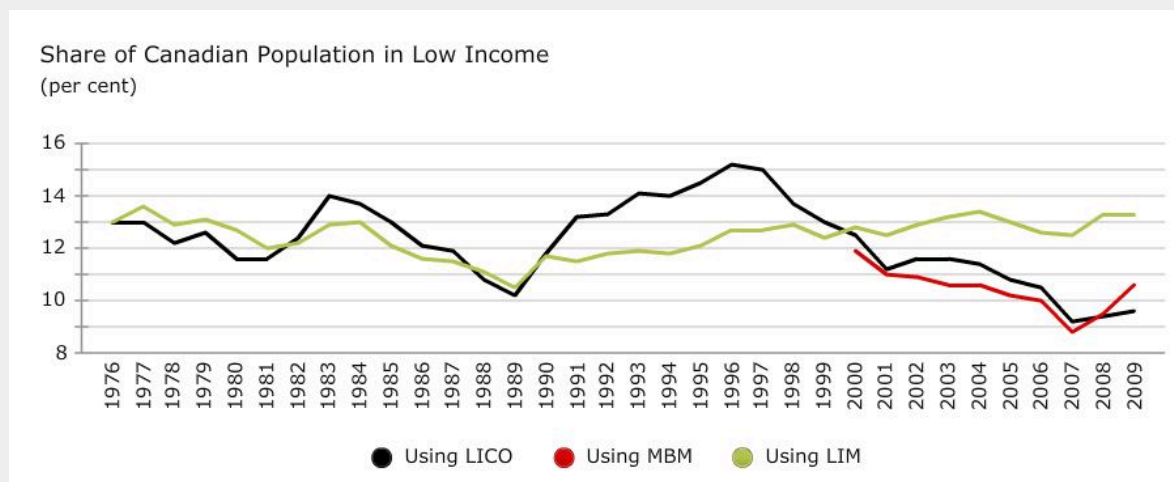


Table 6.1. "Measuring Levels of Poverty" excerpted from The Conference Board of Canada "Canadian Income Inequality: Is Canada becoming more unequal?" (2011, <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/hot-topics/caninequality.aspx>). (Used under the Conference Board of Canada's Terms of Use: [http://www.conferenceboard.ca/terms\\_of\\_use.aspx](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/terms_of_use.aspx))

## Social Classes in Canada



Figure 6.7: The traditional working class — Miners in Nanaimo, B.C. (late 19th century). The Nanaimo coal mines were the site of a brutal two-year strike from 1912–1914 against low wages and dangerous working conditions. Source: Miners of Number One Mine, Nanaimo, at the pithead, B-03624 (Image courtesy of the Royal B.C. Museum)



Figure 6.8: The owning class—James and Laura Dunsmuir shown beside their Italian-style garden at their Hatley Castle residence near Victoria, B.C. (now part of Royal Roads University). James Dunsmuir was heir to his family's coal fortune and managed the family coal operations on Vancouver Island from 1876–1910. He was a powerful spokesman for capitalist interests and anti-union efforts in B.C. and spent two years as B.C. Premier from 1900–1902. (Image courtesy of ...)

Does a person's appearance indicate class? Do you know a person's income by their car? There was a time in Canada when class was more visibly apparent. In some countries, like the United Kingdom, social class can still be guessed by differences in schooling, lifestyle, and even accent. In Canada, however, it is harder to determine class from outward appearances.

Some analyses of class emphasize variables like wealth, income, education, and occupation. Class stratification is not just determined by a group's economic position but by the prestige of the group's occupation, education, consumption, and lifestyle. It is a matter of **status**—the level of honour or prestige because of social position.

Some sociologists talk about upper, middle, and lower classes (with many subcategories within them) in a way that combine status categories with class categories. This is **socio-economic status (SES)**, social position relative to others based on income, education, and occupation. For example, although plumbers might earn more than high school teachers, the status division between blue-collar work (people who “work with their hands”) and white-collar work (people who “work with their minds”) means that plumbers may be characterized as lower class but teachers as middle class. The division of classes into upper, middle, and lower can be arbitrary.

Social class is complex. Social class has at least three objective components:

- a group's position in the occupational structure,
- a group's position in the authority structure (i.e., who has authority over whom), and
- a group's position in the property structure (i.e., ownership or non-ownership of capital).

Social class also has a subjective component involving lifestyle and how people perceive their place in the class hierarchy.

One way of distinguishing the classes focuses on the authority structure. Classes can be divided according to how much relative power and control members of a class have over their lives.

- The owning class not only have power and control over their own lives, their economic position gives them power and control over others' lives as well.
- A “middle class” is composed of small business owners and educated, professional, or administrative labour, not because they have control other strata of society, but they do exert some control over their own work.
- The traditional working class has little control over their work or lives.

Below, we will explore the major divisions of Canadian social class and their key subcategories.

### *The Owning Class*

The owning class is the powerful “elite.” In Canada, the richest 86 people (or families) account for 0.002 percent of the population, but in 2012 they had accumulated the equivalent wealth of the lowest 34 percent of the country's population (McDonald, 2014). The combined net worth of these 86 families added up to \$178 billion in 2012, which equalled the net worth of the lowest 11.4 million Canadians. In terms of income, in 2007 the average income of the richest 0.01 percent of Canadians was \$3.833 million (Yalnizyan, 2010).



Figure 6.9. Members of the upper class can afford to live, work, and play in exclusive places designed for luxury and comfort. (Photo courtesy of PrimeImageMedia.com/Flickr)

In addition to material goods, money also provides access to power. Canada's owning class has a lot of power. As corporate leaders, their decisions affect the jobs of millions. As media owners, they shape the nation's identity. They run the major network television stations, radio broadcasts, newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, and sports franchises. As philanthropists, they support social causes. They also fund think tanks like the C. D. Howe Institute, AIMS and the Fraser Institute. Such think tanks usually promote the interests of business elites. As campaign contributors, they influence and fund politicians, usually to protect their own economic interests.

Canadian society has historically distinguished between “old money” (inherited wealth passed from one generation to the next) and “new money” (wealth you have earned and built yourself). While both types may have equal net worth, they have traditionally held different social standing. People of old money, firmly situated in the upper class for generations, have held high prestige. Their families have socialized them to know the customs, norms, and expectations that come with wealth. Often, the very wealthy do not work for wages. Some study business or become lawyers to manage the family fortune.

New money members of the owning class may not know the customs of the elite. They have not gone to the most exclusive schools. They have not established old-money social ties. People with new money might flaunt their wealth, buying sports cars and mansions, but they might still exhibit behaviours attributed to the middle and lower classes. For example, Toronto politicians Rob and Doug Ford were estimated to hold family assets worth \$50 million, yet they presented themselves as just “average guys” who stand with their blue-collar constituents against “rich elitist people” (McArther, 2013; Warner, 2014). Rob Ford's infamous crack cocaine smoking, public binge drinking, and use of foul language did not make him at home on old money circles.

### *The Middle Class*

Many people call themselves middle class, but there are different ideas about what that means. People with annual incomes of \$150,000 call themselves middle class, as do people who annually earn \$30,000. That helps explain why some sociologists divide the middle class into upper and lower subcategories. These divisions are based on levels of status defined by levels of education, types of work, cultural capital, and the lifestyles.

Upper-middle-class people tend to hold bachelor's and postgraduate degrees in subjects such as business, management, law, or medicine that lead to occupations in the professions. **Professions** are occupations that claim high levels of specialized technical and intellectual expertise and are regulated by autonomous professional organizations (like the Canadian Medical Association or legal bar associations). Lower-middle-class members hold bachelor's degrees or diplomas from two-year community colleges that lead to various types of white collar, service, administrative, or paraprofessional occupations.

Comfort is a key concept to the middle class. Middle-class people work hard and live comfortable lives. Upper-middle-class people tend to pursue careers that earn even more comfortable incomes. They provide their families with large homes and expensive cars. They may go skiing or boating on vacation. Their children receive elite educations (Gilbert, 2010).

In the lower middle class, people hold jobs supervised by members of the upper middle class. They fill technical, lower-level management or administrative support positions. Compared to traditional working-class work, lower- middle-class jobs have more prestige and come with slightly higher pay cheques. With these incomes, people can afford a decent, mainstream lifestyle, but they struggle to maintain it. They generally do not have enough income

to build significant savings. In addition, their grip on class status is more precarious than in the upper tiers of the class system. When budgets are tight, lower-middle-class people are often lose their jobs.

### *The Traditional Working Class*

The traditional working class is sometimes also referred to as being part of the lower class. Just like the middle and upper classes, the lower class can be divided into subsets: the working class, the working poor, and the underclass. Compared to the middle class, traditional working-class people have less of an educational background and usually earn smaller incomes. While there are many working-class trades that require skill and pay middle-class wages, the majority often work jobs that require little prior skill or experience, doing routine tasks under close supervision.

Traditional working-class people, the highest subcategory of the lower class, are usually equated with blue-collar types of jobs: "wage-workers who are engaged in the production of commodities, the extraction of natural resources, the production of food, the operation of the transportation network required for production and distribution, the construction industry, and the maintenance of energy and communication networks" (Veltmeyer, 1986, p. 83). The work is considered blue collar because it is hands-on and often physically demanding. The term "blue collar" comes from the traditional blue coveralls worn by manual labourers.



## The Working Poor

The working poor, like some sections of the working class, unskilled, low-paying employment. However, their jobs rarely offer benefits such as retirement planning, and their positions are often seasonal or temporary. They work as migrant farm workers, house cleaners, and day labourers. Some are high school dropouts. Some are illiterate, unable to read job ads. Many do not vote because they do not believe that any politician will help change their situation (Beeghley, 2008).

How can people work full time and still be poor? Even working full time, more than a million of the working poor earn incomes too meagre to support a family. In 2012, 1.8 million working people (including 540,000 working full-time year round) earned less than Statistic Canada's low income cut-off level, which defines poverty in Canada (Johnstone & Cooper, 2013). Minimum wage varies from province to province. However, a minimum wage is not necessarily a **living wage**. A living wage is the amount needed to meet a family's basic needs and enable them to participate in community life (Johnstone & Cooper, 2013). Even for a single person, minimum wage is low. A married couple with children will have a hard time covering expenses.

The underclass live mainly in inner cities. Many are unemployed or underemployed. Those who hold jobs typically perform menial tasks for little pay. Some of the underclass are homeless. Social assistance provides a much-needed support through food assistance, medical care, housing, etc. for some.

## Social Mobility

**Social mobility** refers to the ability to change positions within a social stratification system. This is a key concept in determining whether inequalities of condition limit people's life chances or whether equality of opportunity exists in a society. A high degree of social mobility, upwards or downwards, would suggest that the stratification system of a society is open, that there is equality of opportunity.

**Upward mobility** refers to an upward shift in social class. Canadians celebrate the rags- to-riches achievements of celebrities like Guy Laliberté who went from street busking in Quebec to being the CEO of Cirque du Soleil, with a net worth of \$2.5 billion. Actor and comedian Jim Carey lived with his family in camper van growing up in Scarborough, Ontario. Ron Joyce was a beat policemen in Hamilton before he co-founded Tim Hortons. CEO of Magna International Frank Stronach immigrated to Canada from Austria in 1955 with only \$50. There are many stories of people from modest beginnings rising to fame and fortune. But the number of people who move from poverty to wealth is very small. Still, upward mobility is not only about becoming rich and famous. In Canada, people who earn a university degree, get a good job, or marry someone with a good income may move up socially.

**Downward mobility** indicates a lowering of social class. Some people move downward because of business setbacks, unemployment, or illness. Dropping out of school, losing a job, or becoming divorced may result in a loss of income or status and, therefore, downward social mobility.

**Intergenerational mobility** explains a difference in social class between different generations of a family. For example, an upper-class executive may have parents who belonged to the middle class. In turn, those parents may have been raised in the lower class. Patterns of intergenerational mobility can reflect long-term societal changes.

**Intragenerational mobility** describes a difference in social class between different members of the same generation. For example, the wealth and prestige experienced by one person may be quite different from that of his or her siblings.

**Structural mobility** happens when societal changes enable a whole group of people to move up or down the social class ladder. Structural mobility is attributable to changes in society, not individual changes.

In the first half of the 20th century industrialization expanded the Canadian economy, which raised the standard of living and led to upward structural mobility. In today's work economy, the recession and the outsourcing of jobs overseas have contributed to high unemployment rates. Many people have experienced economic setbacks, creating a wave of downward structural mobility.

Some Canadians believe that people move up in class because of individual efforts and move down by their own acts. Ideally, access to rewards would exactly equal personal efforts and merits. Class position or other social characteristics (gender, race, ethnicity, etc.) would not affect the relationship between merit and rewards.

Other Canadians believe that equality of opportunity is a myth. This myth keeps people motivated to work hard and accept social inequality as the outcome of personal achievement. The equality of opportunity ideal hides structural inequality in society. The rich stay rich, and the poor stay poor.

Sociology studies about social mobility in Canada suggest there is some truth to both views.

Social mobility is measured by comparing either the occupational status or earnings between parents and children. If children's earnings or status remain the same as their parents, then there is no social mobility. If children's earnings or status moves up or down with respect to their parents, then there is social mobility.

Canada has a relatively high rate of social mobility and equality of opportunity compared to the United States, where almost 50 percent of sons remain at the same income level as their fathers. In an international comparison, the United Kingdom had even lower social mobility than the United States, while Finland, Norway, and Denmark had greater social mobility than Canada. (Corak et al., 2010).

One of the key factors that distinguishes Canada's social mobility from that of the United States is that the United States has a much greater degree of social inequality to start. The higher degree of social inequality is linked to lower degrees of social mobility. (Corak et al., 2010).

However, the data also show that Canada does not have true equality of opportunity. Class background significantly affects chances to get ahead. For example, the chance that a son born to a father in the 30 to 50 percent ranges of income would move up into the top 50 percent of income earners was about 50 percent (Yalnizyan, 2007). In contrast, a son in the bottom 20 percent of income earners had only a 38 percent chance of moving into the top 50 percent of income earners. For the bottom 20 percent of families, 62 percent of sons remained within the bottom 50 percent of income earners (Corak et al., 2010).



## Class Traits



Figure 6.10. Does taste or fashion sense indicate class? Is there any way to tell if this young man comes from an upper-, middle-, or lower-class background? (Photo courtesy of Kelly Bailey/Flickr)

**Class traits**, also called class markers, are the typical behaviours, customs, and norms that define each class. They define a crucial subjective component of class identities. Class traits indicate the level of exposure a person has to a wide range of cultural resources. Class traits also indicate the amount of resources a person has to spend on items like hobbies, vacations, and leisure activities.

People may associate the upper class with enjoyment of costly, refined, or highly cultivated tastes — expensive clothing, luxury cars, high-end fundraisers, and opulent vacations. People may also believe that the middle and lower classes are more likely to enjoy camping, fishing, or hunting, shopping at large retailers, and participating in community activities. It is important to note that while these descriptions may be class traits, they may also simply be stereotypes. Moreover, just as class distinctions have blurred in recent decades, so too have class traits. A very wealthy person may enjoy bowling as much as opera. A factory worker could be a skilled French cook. Pop star Justin Bieber might dress in hoodies, ball caps, and ill fitting clothes, and a low-income hipster might own designer shoes.

These days, individual taste does not necessarily follow class lines. Still, you are not likely to see someone driving a Mercedes living in an inner-city neighbourhood. And most likely, a resident of a wealthy gated community will not be riding a bicycle to work. Class traits often develop based on cultural behaviours that stem from the resources available within each class.

## Making Connections: Sociological Research

### Turn-of-the-Century “Social Problem Novels”: Sociological Gold Mines

Class distinctions were sharper in the 19th century and earlier, in part because people easily accepted them. The ideology of social order made class structure seem natural, right, and just.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, American and British novelists played a role in changing public perception. They published novels in which characters struggled to survive against a merciless class system. These dissenting authors used gender and morality to question the class system and expose its inequalities. They protested the suffering of urbanization and industrialization, drawing attention to these issues.

These “social problem novels,” sometimes called Victorian realism, forced middle-class readers into an uncomfortable position: The readers had to question and challenge the natural order of social class.

For speaking out so strongly about the social issues of class, authors were both praised and criticized. Most authors did not want to dissolve the class system. They wanted to bring about an awareness that would improve conditions for the lower classes, while maintaining their own higher-class positions (DeVine, 2005).



Figure 6.11. Charles Dickens (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons).

Soon, middle-class readers were not their only audience. In 1870, Forster’s Elementary Education Act required all children aged five through 12 in England and Wales to attend school. The act increased literacy levels among the urban poor, causing a rise in sales of cheap newspapers and magazines. Additionally, the increasing number of people who rode public transit systems created a demand for “railway literature,” as it was called (Williams, 1984). These reading materials are credited with the move toward democratization in England. By 1900 the British middle class established a rigid definition for itself, and England’s working class also began to self-identify and demand a better way of life.

Many of the novels of that era are seen as sociological goldmines. They are studied as existing sources because they detail the customs and mores of the upper, middle, and lower classes of that period in history.

Examples of “social problem” novels include Charles Dickens’s (1812-1870) *The Adventures of Oliver Twist* (1838), which shocked readers with its brutal portrayal of the realities of poverty, vice, and crime. Thomas Hardy’s (1840-1928) *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (1891) was considered

revolutionary by critics for its depiction of working-class women (DeVine, 2005), and American novelist Theodore Dreiser's (1871-1945) *Sister Carrie* (1900) portrayed an accurate and detailed description of early Chicago.

### 6.3. Global Stratification and Inequality



Figure 6.12. (a) A family lives in this grass hut in Ethiopia. (b) Another family lives in a single-wide trailer in the trailer park in the United States. Both families are considered poor or lower class. With such differences in global stratification, what constitutes poverty? (Photo (a) courtesy of Canned Muffins/Flickr; photo (b) courtesy of Herb Neufeld/Flickr)

**Global stratification** compares the wealth, economic stability, and power of countries across the world. Global stratification highlights worldwide patterns of social inequality.

In the early years of civilization, hunter-gatherer and agrarian societies lived off the Earth, rarely interacting with other societies. When explorers began travelling, societies began trading goods as well as ideas and customs.

In the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution created great wealth in Western Europe and North America. Mechanical inventions sent large numbers of people to work in factories and coal mines — not only men, but also women and children. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, industrial technology had gradually raised the standard of living for many people in the United States and Europe.

The Industrial Revolution also saw the rise of vast inequalities between countries that were industrialized and those that were not. As some nations embraced technology and increased wealth and goods, others maintained traditional ways. The wealth gap widened with nonindustrialized nations. Researchers suggest that the disparity also resulted from power differences. Critical sociology believes that industrializing nations took advantage of the resources of traditional nations. As industrialized nations became rich, other nations became poor (Rostow, 1960).

Sociologists studying global stratification analyze economic comparisons between nations. Income, purchasing power, and wealth are used to calculate global stratification. Global stratification also compares the quality of life.

Poverty levels vary greatly. The poor in wealthy countries like Canada or Europe are better off than the poor in countries such as Mali or India. In 2002 the United Nations implemented the Millennium Project, an



attempt to cut poverty worldwide by the year 2015. To reach the project's goal, planners in 2006 estimated that industrialized nations must set aside 0.7 percent of their gross national income — the total value of the nation's goods and services — to aid developing countries (Landler & Sanger, 2009; Millennium Project, 2006). The project was successful in reaching its target of cutting extreme poverty by half — the number of people living on \$1.25/ day or less — but fell short of halving the number of people suffering from hunger. Undernourishment in developing regions fell from 23.3% to 12.9% (United Nations, 2015).

## Neoliberalism and Globalization



Figure 6.13. Luxury vacation resorts can contribute to a poorer country's economy. This one, in Jamaica, attracts middle and upper-middle class people from wealthier nations. The resort is a source of income and provides jobs for local people. Just outside its borders, however, are poverty-stricken neighbourhoods. (Photo courtesy of gailf548/Flickr)

As you read in the chapter on culture, **globalization** refers to the integration of international trade and finance.

Globalization intensified after World War II, and especially in the late 20th century. New technologies allowed large amounts of capital and goods to circulate globally. The globalization of investment and production means that capital can move freely around the world to where labour costs are cheapest and profit greatest. Corporate, political, environmental decisions are no longer based on state boundaries. This lessens the ability of national governments to control policy.

**Neoliberalism** is a set of policies in which the state reduces its role in providing public services, regulating industry, redistributing wealth, and protecting “the commons” —the collective property that exists for everyone to share (the environment, public and community facilities, airwaves, etc.). Neoliberalism is not only a response to the economic crises and reduction in profits within a country; it is also a response to the competition for globalized capital. Neoliberal policy aims to attract increasingly fickle global capital by making entire countries more “competitive.” The result, as David Harvey argues, has been to massively shift the balance of power to the global economic elites (2005, pp. 16–19). Wealth has been redistributed upwards.

Globalization puts pressure on government policy. Changes in government policy contribute to growing inequality in Canada. Canada moved from a welfare state model of resource redistribution to a neoliberal model of free market resources distribution.

What is the welfare state? After World War II a kind of labour-management “accord” existed in Canada. This involved the recognition of labour unions, the mediation of the state in capital/labour disputes, the use of

taxes to address economic recessions, and a social safety. This set of policies is known as the welfare state. In a high wage/high consumption economy, the ability of individuals to continue to consume was important, so unemployment insurance, pensions, health care, and disability benefits were important. This labour-management accord also reaffirmed the rights of private property or capital to introduce new technology, to reorganize production, and to invest wherever they pleased. Therefore, it was not a system of *economic* democracy or socialism. Nevertheless, the claims of full employment, continued prosperity, and the creation of a “just society” seemed possible within the capitalist economic system.

When the welfare state system began to show strain in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the relationship between the state and the economy began to change again. With a global economy of lean production and precarious employment, the state began withdrawing from universal social services and social security. **Neoliberalism** describes the new thinking by government. Neoliberalism abandons the interventionist model of the welfare state to emphasize the use of “free market” to regulate society.

Neoliberalist policies are promoted as ways of addressing the “inefficiency of big government,” the “burden on the taxpayer,” the “need to cut red tape,” and the “culture of entitlement and welfare dependency.” Neoliberalism favours competitive marketplace over government regulation. The market is said to promote efficiency, lower costs, good decision making, non-favouritism, and a disciplined work ethic, etc.

The facts often tell a different story. For example, government-funded health care in Canada costs far less per person than private health care in the United States (OECD, 2015). Norway has much higher taxes than Canada, much lower unemployment, lower income inequality, lower inflation, better public services, a higher standard of living. Norway nevertheless has a globally competitive corporate sector with substantial state control (especially in the areas of oil and gas production, which is 80% owned by the Norwegian state) (Campbell, 2013). Deregulation policies caused the financial crisis of 2008. Some neoliberal economists now acknowledge that the free market model is flawed (CBC News, 2013).

The new global capitalism and politics has been described as the reemergence of **empire** (Hardt & Negri, 2000). Rather than a system of independent nation-states, the world can be seen as a single unit within which state sovereignty has been transferred to a higher entity (Negri, 2004, p. 59). Trade agreements no longer restrict the flow of capital and goods. Frequent global “police actions” and trade embargoes by various “coalitions of the willing” enforce peace or intervene in domestic policy (in, for example, Iraq, Yugoslavia, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iran, Libya, and Syria). Similarly, the Kyoto Protocol on climate change or the Ottawa Treaty on landmines are examples of global initiatives that blur the boundaries of nation states.

Empire in this sense refers to a new global form of sovereignty. Antonio Negri states that this is not the same as saying that the world is dominated by a country like the United States or China; rather, power lies with a “network” of dominant nation-states, supranational institutions (the UN, OPEC, IMF, WTO, G8, NATO, etc.) and major capitalist corporations (Hardt & Negri, 2000; Negri, 2004). Empire is not like imperialism during the era of colonialism. Empire is a new political form that emerged in response to the dynamics of global capitalism.

## Chapter Summary

### What Is Social Inequality?

Stratification systems are either closed, meaning they allow little change in social position, or open, meaning they allow movement and interaction between the layers. In a caste system, social standing is based on ascribed status or birth. Class systems are open, with achievement playing a role in social position. People fall into classes based on factors like wealth, income, education, and occupation.

## Social Inequality and Mobility in Canada

There are three main classes in Canada: the owning class, middle class, and traditional working class. Social mobility describes a shift from one social class to another. While Canada is supposed to be a meritocracy, many factors hinder upward social mobility.

## Global Stratification and Inequality

Global stratification compares the wealth, economic stability, status, and power of countries. By comparing income and productivity between nations, researchers can better identify global inequalities.

### 6.4. Theoretical Perspectives on Social Inequality

Social stratification can be examined from different sociological perspectives — functionalism, critical sociology, and symbolic interactionism. The functionalist perspective states that inequality serves an important function in aligning individual merit and motivation with social position. Critical sociologists observe that stratification promotes inequality, such as between rich business owners and exploited workers. Symbolic interactionists examine stratification from a micro-level perspective. They observe how social standing affects people's everyday interactions, particularly the tendency to interact with people of like status, and how the concept of "social class" is constructed and maintained through cultural distinctions of education and taste (or cultural capital) and conspicuous consumption.

#### Key Terms

**absolute poverty:** A severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information.

**achieved status:** A status received through individual effort or merits (eg. occupation, educational level, moral character, etc.).

**ascribed status:** A status received by virtue of being born into a category or group (eg. hereditary position, gender, race, etc.).

**bourgeoisie:** In capitalism, the owning class who live from the proceeds of owning or controlling productive property (capital assets like factories and machinery, or capital itself in the form of investments, stocks, and bonds).

**caste system:** A system in which people are born into a social standing that they will retain their entire lives.

**class:** A group who shares a common social status based on factors like wealth, income, education, and occupation.

**class system:** Social standing based on social factors and individual accomplishments.

**class traits:** The typical behaviours, customs, and norms that define each class, also called class markers.

**conspicuous consumption:** Buying and using products to make a statement about social standing.

**cultural capital:** Cultural assets in the form of knowledge, education, and taste that can be transferred intergenerationally.

**downward mobility:** A lowering of one's social class.

**empire:** A new supra-national, global form of sovereignty whose territory is the entire globe.

**equality of condition:** A situation in which everyone in a society has a similar level of wealth, status, and power.

**equality of opportunity:** A situation in which everyone in a society has an equal chance to pursue economic or social rewards.

**global stratification:** A comparison of the wealth, economic stability, status, and power of countries.

**globalization:** The integration of international trade and finance markets.

**income:** The money a person earns from work or investments.

**intergenerational mobility:** A difference in social class between different generations of a family.

**intragenerational mobility:** A difference in social class between different members of the same generation.

**living wage:** The income needed to meet a family's basic needs and enable them to participate in community life.

**lumpenproletariat:** In capitalism, the underclass of chronically unemployed or irregularly employed who are in and out of the workforce.

**means of production:** Productive property, including the things used to produce the goods and services needed for survival: tools, technologies, resources, land, workplaces, etc.

**meritocracy:** An ideal system in which personal effort—or merit—determines social standing.

**neoliberalism:** A set of policies in which the state reduces its role in providing public services, regulating industry, redistributing wealth, and protecting the commons while advocating the use of free market mechanisms to regulate society.

**power:** How many people a person must take orders from versus how many people a person can give orders to.

**proletariat:** Those who seek to establish a sustainable standard of living by maintaining the level of their wages and the level of employment in society.

**relative poverty:** Living without the minimum amount of income or resources needed to be able to participate in the ordinary living patterns, customs, and activities of a society.

**social inequality:** The unequal distribution of valued resources, rewards, and positions in a society.

**social mobility:** The ability to change positions within a social stratification system.

**social stratification:** A socioeconomic system that divides society's members into categories ranking from high to low, based on things like wealth, power, and prestige.

**socio-economic status (SES):** A group's social position in a hierarchy based on income, education, and occupation.

**standard of living:** The level of wealth available to acquire material goods and comforts to maintain a particular socioeconomic lifestyle.

**status:** The degree of honour or prestige one has in the eyes of others.

**structural mobility:** When societal changes enable a whole group of people to move up or down the class ladder.

**upward mobility:** An increase — or upward shift — in social class.

**wealth:** The value of money and assets a person has from, for example, inheritance.



## Chapter Quiz

### 6.1. What Is Social Inequality?

1. What factor makes caste systems closed?
  - a. They are run by secretive governments.
  - b. People cannot change their social standings.
  - c. Most have been outlawed.
  - d. They exist only in rural areas.
2. What factor makes class systems open?
  - a. They allow for movement between the classes.
  - b. People are more open-minded.
  - c. People are encouraged to socialize within their class.
  - d. They do not have clearly defined layers.
3. Which of these systems allows for the most social mobility?
  - a. Caste
  - b. Monarchy
  - c. Endogamy
  - d. Class

### 6.2. Social Inequality and Mobility in Canada

4. Which person best illustrates opportunities for upward social mobility in Canada?
  - a. First-shift factory worker
  - b. First-generation college student
  - c. Firstborn son who inherits the family business
  - d. First-time interviewee who is hired for a job

5. Which statement illustrates low status consistency?
  - a. A suburban family lives in a modest ranch home and enjoys a nice vacation each summer.
  - b. A single mother receives welfare and struggles to find adequate employment.
  - c. A college dropout launches an online company that earns millions in its first year.
  - d. A celebrity actress owns homes in three countries.
  
6. Based on meritocracy, a physician's assistant would \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Receive the same pay as all the other physician's assistants
  - b. Be encouraged to earn a higher degree to seek a better position
  - c. Most likely marry a professional at the same level
  - d. Earn a pay raise for doing excellent work
  
7. In Canada, most people define themselves as \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Middle class
  - b. Upper class
  - c. Lower class
  - d. No specific class
  
8. Structural mobility occurs when \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. An individual moves up the class ladder.
  - b. An individual moves down the class ladder.
  - c. A large group moves up or down the class ladder due to societal changes.
  - d. A member of a family belongs to a different class than his or her siblings.
  
9. The intergenerational behaviours, customs, education, taste, and norms associated with a class are known as \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. class traits
  - b. power
  - c. prestige
  - d. underclass

10. Which of the following scenarios is an example of intergenerational mobility?

- a. A janitor belongs to the same social class as his grandmother.
- b. An executive belongs to a different class than her parents.
- c. An editor shares the same social class as his cousin.
- d. A lawyer belongs to a different class than her sister.

11. Occupational prestige means that jobs are \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. all equal in status
- b. not equally valued
- c. assigned to a person for life
- d. not part of a person's self-identity

### 6.3. Global Stratification and Inequality

12. Social stratification is a system that \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Ranks society members into categories
- b. Destroys competition between society members
- c. Allows society members to choose their social standing
- d. Reflects personal choices of society members

13. Which graphic concept best illustrates the concept of social stratification?

- a. Pie chart
- b. Flag poles
- c. Planetary movement
- d. Pyramid

[Quiz answers at end of chapter]

## Short Answer

### 6.1. What Is Social Inequality?

1. Track the social stratification of your family tree. Did the social standing of your parents differ from the social standing of your grandparents and great-grandparents? What social traits were handed down by your forebears? Are there any exogamous marriages in your history? Does your family exhibit status consistencies or inconsistencies?
2. What defines communities that have a low-status consistency? What are the ramifications, both positive and negative, of cultures with low-status consistency? Think of specific examples to support your ideas.
3. Review the concept of stratification. Now choose a group of people you have observed and been a part of — for example, cousins, high school friends, classmates, sport teammates, or coworkers. How does the structure of the social group you chose adhere to the concept of stratification?

### 6.2. Social Inequality and Mobility in Canada

1. Which social class do you and your family belong to? Are you in a different social class than your grandparents and great-grandparents? Does your class differ from your social standing and, if so, how? What aspects of your societal situation establish you in a social class?
2. What class traits define your peer group? For example, what speech patterns or clothing trends do you and your friends share? What cultural elements, such as taste in music or hobbies, define your peer group? How do you see this set of class traits as different from other classes either above or below yours?
3. Provide examples of class inequality and of status inequality in your community. Are there examples in which class inequality differs from status inequality? What is the significance of these differences?

### 6.3. Global Stratification and Inequality

1. Why is it important to understand and be aware of global stratification? Make a list of specific issues that are related to global stratification. For inspiration, turn on a news channel or read the newspaper. Next, choose a topic from your list and look at it more closely. Who is affected by this issue? How is the issue specifically related to global stratification?
2. Compare a family that lives in a grass hut in Ethiopia to a Canadian family living in a mobile home in Canada. Assuming both exist at or below the poverty levels established by their country, how are the families' lifestyles and economic situations similar and how are they different?

## Further Research

### 6.1. What Is Social Inequality?

*The New York Times* investigated social stratification in their series of articles called “Class Matters.” The online accompaniment to the series includes an interactive graphic called “How Class Works,” which tallies four factors — occupation, education, income, and wealth — and places an individual within a certain class and percentile. What class describes you? Test your class rank on the interactive site: [http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/national/20050515\\_CLASS\\_GRAPHIC/index\\_03.html](http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/national/20050515_CLASS_GRAPHIC/index_03.html)

### 6.2. Social Inequality and Mobility in Canada

Mark Ackbar made a documentary about social class and the rise of the corporation called *The Corporation*. The filmmakers interviewed corporate insiders and critics. The accompanying website is full of information, resource guides, and study guides to the film.: <http://thecorporation.com/>.

### 6.3. Global Stratification and Inequality

Nations Online refers to itself as “among other things, a more or less objective guide to the world, a statement for the peaceful, nonviolent coexistence of nations.” The website provides a variety of cultural, financial, historical, and ethnic information on countries and peoples throughout the world: <http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/first.shtml>

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## Long Description

**Figure 6.22:** Long Description: A family walks up a road towards the rising sun. The sun is labeled “CCF” with the suns rays saying, “Prosperity, justice, democracy, unity, equality, freedom, security.”

### Solutions to Chapter Quiz

1 b, | 2 a, | 3 d, | 4 b, | 5 c, | 6 d, | 7 a, | 8 c, | 9 a, | 10 b, | 11 b, |  
12 a, | 13 d, | 14 c, | 15 a, | 16 b, | 17 b, | 18 d

[7]

Global Inequality



Figure 7.1. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals [Long Description at the end of the chapter]

## Learning Objectives

### 7.1 Global Stratification and Classification

- Describe global stratification.
- Understand how different classification systems have developed.
- Use terminology from Wallerstein's world systems approach.
- Explain the World Bank's classification of economies.

### 7.2. Global Wealth and Poverty

- Understand the differences between relative and absolute poverty.
- Describe the economic situation of some of the world's most impoverished areas.
- Explain the cyclical impact of the consequences of poverty.

### 7.3. Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification

- Describe the modernization and dependency theory perspectives on global stratification.

## Introduction to Global Inequality

A new millennium started in 2000. Just like we make New Year resolutions, some countries wanted to change the world in the new millennium. United Nations countries made Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs aimed to eliminate extreme poverty around the world. Nearly 200 countries signed the goals.

The countries created eight categories of goals. They hoped to reach these targets by 2015:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development (United Nations, 2010)

By 2016, progress was made toward some MDGs, but little progress was made toward others.

### Goals with progress:

- poverty
- education
- child mortality
- access to clean water (health)

Some nations made much progress in these goals, but others made very little.

**Goals with less progress:**

- Hunger and malnutrition increased from 2007 through 2009, undoing earlier achievements.
- Employment was also slow to increase
- HIV infection rates were not reduced. Infection rates continue to outpace the number of people getting treatment.
- Mortality and health care rates for mothers and infants also showed little advancement. (United Nations, 2010)

The United Nations continues to work for global equality, however. In 2016 the UN launched its *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* to build on progress made in the MDGs. The *Agenda* includes seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), described as “our shared vision of humanity and a social contract between the world’s leaders and the people. They are a to-do list for people and planet, and a blueprint for success.” (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 2016) You can follow the progress towards these goals on the United Nations’ website dedicated to the SDGs, <https://www.globalgoals.org>.

How have the world’s people have ended up in circumstances that require projects like the MDGs and SDGs? How did wealth become concentrated in some nations? What motivates companies to globalize? Is it fair for powerful countries to make rules that make it difficult for less-powerful nations to compete globally? Sociologists and historians investigate questions like these. This chapter provides background for understanding some of these issues.

## 7.1. Global Stratification and Classification

Just as North America’s wealth is increasingly concentrated among its richest citizens while the middle class slowly disappears, **global inequality** involves the concentration of resources in certain nations, significantly affecting the opportunities of individuals in poorer and less powerful countries.

### Global Stratification

In Canada, stratification refers to the unequal distribution of resources among individuals, global stratification refers to this unequal distribution among nations. Global stratification refers to this unequal distribution of resources among nations. There are two dimensions to global stratification: gaps between nations and gaps within nations.

Economic inequality and social inequality are often related (Myrdal, 1970). For example, as the table below illustrates, people’s life expectancy depends heavily on where they happen to be born.

Country	Infant Mortality Rate	Life Expectancy
Canada	4.9 deaths per 1,000 live births	81 years
Mexico	17.2 deaths per 1,000 live births	76 years
Democratic Republic of Congo	78.4 deaths per 1,000 live births	55 years

Most of us are accustomed to thinking of global stratification as economic inequality. For example, we can compare China’s average worker’s wage to Canada’s average wage. Social inequality, however, is just as harmful as economic discrepancies. Prejudice and discrimination — whether against a certain race, ethnicity, religion, or the like — can create and aggravate conditions of economic equality, both within and between nations.

Think about the inequality that existed for decades within the nation of South Africa. Apartheid was one of the most extreme cases of institutionalized and legal racism. Apartheid created social inequality that earned the world's condemnation. Think also about Western disregard of the crisis in Darfur. Since few citizens of Western nations identified with the impoverished, non-white victims of the genocide, there was little pressure to provide aid.

Gender inequity is another global concern. Consider female genital mutilation. Nations that practice this female circumcision procedure defend it as a cultural tradition and argue that the West should not interfere. Other nations, however, condemn the practice and work to stop it.

Inequalities based on sexual orientation and gender identity exist around the world. According to Amnesty International, many crimes are committed against people who do not conform to traditional gender roles or sexual orientations. Legalized and culturally accepted forms of prejudice and discrimination exist everywhere. The prejudice and discrimination can restrict freedom and even endanger lives; for example, culturally sanctioned rape and state-sanctioned executions. (Amnesty International, 2012).

## Global Classification

Our language can imply that less developed nations want to be like countries with postindustrial global power like the U.S. and Russia. Terms such as “developing” (non-industrialized) and “developed” (industrialized) imply that non-industrialized countries are inferior. These terms suggest that developing nations must improve to participate successfully in the global economy. Global economy is a label meaning that economic activity crosses national borders.

In fact, the earth couldn't sustain life if every country consumed resources and polluted like Canada, Russia and the United States. Here is a history of how we talked about development.

## Cold War Terminology

During the Cold War (1945–1980) the world was divided between capitalist and communist economic systems. We classified countries into first world, second world, and third world nations based on economic development and standard of living. Capitalist democracies such as the United States, Canada and Japan were part of the first world. The poorest, most undeveloped countries were referred to as the third world. The third world included most of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The second world was the socialist world or Soviet bloc: These countries were industrially developed but organized according to a state socialist or communist model.

During the Cold War, global inequality was described in terms of economic development. Along with developing and developed nations, the terms “less-developed nation” and “underdeveloped nation” were used. Modernization theory suggested that societies moved through natural stages of development: They progressed toward becoming developed societies (defined as stable, democratic, capitalist). Here is a summary of stages according to modernization theory:

- traditional society (based on simple agriculture with low productivity)
- industrial production, expansion of markets
- maturity (a modern industrialized economy, highly capitalized and technologically advanced)
- the age of mass-consumption (TVs, cars, refrigerators, etc.), and luxury goods, general prosperity, egalitarianism.

This was the era when we thought “developed nations” should provide foreign aid to the less-developed nations to raise their standard of living (that is, to be more like them).

## Immanuel Wallerstein: World Systems Approach

Wallerstein's (1979) world systems approach uses an economic **and** political basis to understand global inequality. Development and underdevelopment are not stages in a natural process of gradual modernization, but the product of power relations and **colonialism**. Wallerstein conceived the global economy as a complex historical system supporting an economic hierarchy. This hierarchy placed some nations in positions of power with many resources; Other nations were put in a state of economic subordination. Those in a state of subordination faced many obstacles.

**Core nations** are dominant countries, highly industrialized, technological, and urbanized. For example, Wallerstein says that the United States is an economic powerhouse that can support or deny support to important economic legislation. In that way the U.S. exerts control over aspects of the global economy and exploits other nations. Free trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA) are examples of how a core nation tries to use its power to gain the most advantageous trade position.

**Peripheral nations** have little industrialization. Their industries are often built from the outdated castoffs of core nations. Their factories and means of production are owned by core nations. Their resources are exploited by core nations. They may have unstable government and inadequate social programs, and they become economically dependent on core nations for jobs and aid. Many countries are in this category. Check the label of your jeans or sweatshirt and see where it was made. Chances are it was a peripheral nation such as Guatemala, Bangladesh, Malaysia, or Colombia. Workers in these factories, which are owned or leased by global core nation companies, usually do not have the same privileges and rights as Canadian workers.

**Semi-peripheral nations** are in-between nations, not powerful enough to dictate policy and are used as major sources for raw material. They may have an expanding middle-class marketplace for core nations. They may also exploit peripheral nations. Mexico is an example. Mexico provides cheap agricultural labour to the United States and Canada and supplies goods to the North American market at a rate dictated by U.S. and Canadian consumers. However, Mexicans don't have the protections offered to U.S. or Canadian workers.

## World Bank Economic Classification by Income

The World Bank classifies economies by GNI or gross national income. Gross national income equals all goods and services plus net income earned outside the country by nationals. It also includes incomes from corporations headquartered in the country doing business out of the country. GNI is measured in U.S. dollars. GNI includes not only the value of goods and services inside the country, but also the value of income earned outside the country if it is earned by nationals. That means that multinational corporations that earn billions in offices and factories around the globe are considered part of a core nation's GNI if they have headquarters in the core nations. Along with tracking the economy, the World Bank tracks demographics and environmental health to provide a picture of whether a nation is high income, middle income, or low income.

## *High-Income Nations*

The World Bank defines high-income nations as having a GNI of at least \$12,500 (USD) per capita. It separates out the OECD (Organization for Economic and Co-operative Development) countries, a group of 34 nations whose governments work together to promote economic growth and sustainability. According to the World Bank (2011), in 2010, the average GNI of a high-income nation belonging to the OECD was \$40,136 per capita; on average, 77% of the population in these nations was urban. OECD countries include Canada, the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom (World Bank, 2011). In 2010, the average GNI of a high-income nation that did **not** belong to the OECD was \$23,839 per capita. 83% of their population was, on average, urban. These countries include Saudi Arabia and Qatar (World Bank, 2011, 2018).

High-income countries face two major issues: capital flight and deindustrialization. Capital flight refers to the movement (flight) of capital from one nation to another, as when General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler close Canadian factories in Ontario and open factories in Mexico. Deindustrialization, a related issue, occurs because of capital flight. No new companies open to replace jobs lost to foreign nations. Global companies move their industrial processes to the places where they can get the most production with the least cost, including the costs for building infrastructure, training workers, shipping goods, and, of course, paying employee wages. As emerging economies create their own industrial zones, global companies see the opportunity for much lower costs. Those opportunities lead to businesses closing the factories that supply jobs to the middle-class in core nations and moving their industrial production to peripheral and semi-peripheral nations

## *Capital Flight, Outsourcing, and Jobs in Canada*



Figure 7.2. This old General Motors plant in Oshawa, Ontario, is a victim of auto industry outsourcing. (Photo courtesy of Rick Harris/Flickr)

Capital flight describes jobs and infrastructure moving from one nation to another. Look at the manufacturing industries in Ontario. Ontario was the traditional centre of manufacturing in Canada from the 19th century. At the turn of the 21st century, 18% of Ontario's labour market was made up of manufacturing jobs in industries like automobile manufacturing, food processing, and steel production. At the end of 2013, only 11% of the labour force worked in manufacturing. Between 2000 and 2013, 290,000 manufacturing jobs were lost (Tiessen, 2014).

Often the value of the Canadian dollar compared to the American dollar is blamed for these job losses. Because of the high value of Canada's oil exports, international investors can drive up the value of the Canadian dollar in a process referred to as Dutch disease, the relationship between an increase in the



development of natural resources and a decline in manufacturing. Canadian-manufactured products become too expensive as a result. However, this is just another way of describing capital flight to locations that have cheaper manufacturing costs and cheaper labour. Since the introduction of the North American free trade agreements, the ending of the tariff system that protected branch plant manufacturing in Canada allowed U.S. companies to shift production to low-wage regions south of the border and in Mexico.

Capital flight also occurs when services (as opposed to manufacturing) are relocated. When you contact the tech support line for your cell phone or internet provider, you may have spoken to someone halfway across the globe. It might be the middle of the night in that country, yet these service providers pick up the line saying, “good morning,” as though they are in the next town over. They know everything about your phone or your modem, often using a remote server to log in to your home computer to accomplish what is needed. These are the workers of the 21st century. They are not on factory floors or in traditional sweatshops; they are educated, speak at least two languages, and usually have significant technology skills. They are skilled workers, but they are paid a fraction of what similar workers are paid in Canada. For Canadian and multinational companies, this makes sense. India and other semi-peripheral countries have emerging infrastructures and education systems to fill their needs, without core nation costs.

As services relocate, so do jobs. In Canada, unemployment is high. Many university-educated people can't find work, and those with only a high school diploma have more obstacles. We have outsourced ourselves out of jobs. But before we complain, look at the culture of consumerism that Canadians embrace. A television that might have cost \$2,000 a few years ago is now \$450. That cost saving comes from somewhere. When Canadians seek the lowest possible price, shop at big box stores for the biggest discount they can get, and ignore other factors in exchange for low cost, they are building the market for outsourcing. And as the demand builds, the market will ensure it is met, often at the expense of the people who wanted that inexpensive television.



Figure 7.3. Is this international call centre the wave of the future?  
(Photo courtesy of Vilma.com/Flickr)

### *Middle-Income Nations*

The World Bank defines lower middle-income countries as having a GNI that ranges from \$1,006 to \$3,975 per capita and upper middle-income countries as having a GNI ranging from \$3,976 to \$12,500 per capita. In 2010, the average GNI of an upper middle-income nation was \$5,886 per capita with a population that was 57% urban. Brazil, Thailand, China, and Namibia are examples of middle-income nations (World Bank, 2011).

Perhaps the most important issue for middle-income nations is the problem of debt accumulation. **Debt accumulation** is the buildup of external debt, when countries borrow money from other nations to fund expansion or growth. Global economic uncertainty make repaying these debts (or even paying the interest) challenging, and nations find themselves in trouble. Such issues have plagued middle-income countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as East Asian and Pacific nations (Dogruel and Dogruel, 2007). Even in the European Union, composed of more core nations than semi-peripheral nations, the semi-peripheral nations of Italy, Portugal, and Greece face increasing debt burdens. The economic downturns in these countries threaten the economy of the entire European Union.

## Low-Income Nations

The World Bank defines low-income countries as nations having a GNI of \$1,005 per capita or less in 2010. In 2010, the average GNI of a low-income nation was \$528 and the average population was 796,261,360, with 28% located in urban areas. For example, Myanmar, Ethiopia, and Somalia are considered low-income countries. Low-income economies are primarily found in Asia and Africa, where most of the world's population lives (World Bank, 2011).

Two major challenges these countries face: women are disproportionately affected by poverty (in a trend toward a global feminization of poverty) and much of the population lives in absolute poverty. **Global feminization of poverty** means that around the world, women bear a disproportionate percentage of the burden of poverty. More women than men live in poor conditions, receive inadequate health care, endure the most of malnutrition and inadequate drinking water, and so on. Throughout the 1990s, data showed that while overall poverty rates were rising, especially in peripheral nations, the rates of impoverishment increased nearly 20% more for women than for men (Mogadham, 2005).

Why is this happening? While many variables affect women's poverty, research identifies three causes:

1. The expansion of female-headed households
1. The persistence and consequences of inequalities within households (biases against women)
2. The implementation of neoliberal economic policies around the world (Mogadham, 2005)

This means that within an impoverished household, women are more likely to go hungry than men; in agricultural aid programs, women are less likely to receive help than men; and often, women are left taking care of families with no male counterpart due to economic, social or political conditions.

## 7.2. Global Wealth and Poverty

What does it mean to be poor? Does it mean being a single support parent with two kids in Toronto, waiting for the next pay cheque to buy groceries? Does it mean living with almost no furniture in your apartment because your income does not allow for extras like beds or chairs? Or does it mean the distended bellies of the chronically malnourished in the peripheral nations of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia?

Poverty has no single definition. You might feel poor if you can't afford cable television or a car. When you see a fellow student with a new laptop or smartphone, you might feel that your ten-year-old desktop computer makes you poor. However, someone else might look your clothes or food and consider you rich.



Figure 7.4. How poor is poor for these beggar children in Vietnam? (Photo courtesy of Augapfel/Flickr)

## Types of Poverty

Social scientists define global poverty in different ways, considering the complexities and the issues of relativism. Relative poverty is a state of living where people can afford necessities but are unable to meet their society's average standard of living. They may be unable to participate in society in a meaningful way. A Canadian might feel "poor" if they do not have a car or money for a safety net should a family member become sick.

Unlike relative poverty, people who live in absolute poverty lack even the necessities: adequate food, clean water, safe housing, and access to health care. Absolute poverty is defined by the World Bank (2011) as living on less than a dollar a day. A shocking number of people — more than 88 million — live in absolute poverty. Close to 3 billion people live on less than \$2.50 a day (Shah, 2011). If you were forced to live on \$2.50 a day, how would you do it? What would you buy, and what could you do without? How would you manage the necessities — and how would you make up the gap between what you need to live and what you can afford?

## Who Are the Impoverished?

Who is living in absolute poverty? Most of us would guess correctly that the richest countries typically have the fewest people. Compare Canada and India. Canada has a relatively small population but owns a large amount of the world's wealth. India has a large population and less accumulated wealth (although that country's wealth increases).

The poorest people in the world are women in peripheral and semi-peripheral nations. For women, the rate of poverty is worsened by the pressure on their time. Studies show that women in poverty, who are responsible for all family comforts as well as any earnings they can make, have less leisure time. While men and women may have the same rate of economic poverty, women are suffering more in terms of overall well-being (Buvinić, 1997). It is harder for females to get credit to expand businesses, to take the time to learn a new skill, or to spend extra hours improving their craft to be able to earn at a higher rate.



Figure 7.5. Slums in India illustrate absolute poverty all too well. (Photo courtesy of Emmanuelle Dyan/Flickr)

## Africa

Most of the poor countries in the world are in Africa. Not all African nations are poor, however. Countries like South Africa and Egypt have much lower rates of poverty than Angola and Ethiopia, for instance. Overall, African income levels have been dropping relative to the rest of the world, meaning that Africa is getting relatively poorer. Climate conditions like drought bring starvation to some regions and make the problem worse. Wars are fought over resources. Many wars and resource depletion are the legacy of centuries of colonialism and continued exploitation by economically powerful nations.

Why is Africa—a resource rich continent—so poor? The biggest reason: Many natural resources were long ago taken or destroyed by colonial countries and their wars. Much of the continent's poverty is due to destruction of land that can be farmed (arable land). Centuries of struggle over land and resources left much arable land ruined. Climate change and deforestation affect many areas. Some countries with inadequate rainfall don't have irrigation infrastructure.

In some African countries, civil wars and poor government happened because artificial borders were made by colonial countries. Often puppet leaders were put in charge by colonial power, too.

Consider Rwanda. Two ethnic groups lived together with their own system of hierarchy and management until Belgians took control of the country in 1915. The Belgian occupiers rigidly defined members of the population into two unequal ethnic groups. Before the Belgians, members of the Tutsi group held positions of power. Belgian interference led to the Hutu's seizing power during a 1960s revolt. This eventually led to a repressive government and genocide against Tutsis. Hundreds of thousands of Rwandans were killed or fled their country. (U.S. Department of State, 2011c).

Since the 1960s, most African countries regained the power to govern themselves; however, many countries continue to struggle to overcome the past interference. (World Poverty, 2012a).

## Asia

While most the world's poorest countries are in Africa, most of the world's poorest people are in Asia. (Why is that?) Like Africa, Asia finds itself with unequal distribution of wealth. Japan, South Korea, Indonesia hold much more wealth than Laos and Cambodia, for example. In fact, most poverty is concentrated in South Asia. Centuries of colonialism also affected economic development in many Asian countries. Another cause of poverty in Asia is the pressure that the size of the population puts on its resources. In fact, many believe that China's success in recent times has much to do with its harsh population control rules.

According to the U.S. State Department, China's market-oriented reforms have also contributed to significant reduction of poverty and rapidly increasing in income levels (U.S. Department of State, 2011b). However, every part of Asia has felt the recent global recessions, from the poorest countries whose aid packages were hit, to the more industrialized ones whose own industries slowed down. (World Poverty, 2012b).

## Latin America

Poverty rates in some Latin American countries like Mexico have improved recently, partly because of investment in education. But other countries continue to struggle. Although there is a large amount of foreign investment in this part of the world, it tends to be higher-risk speculative investment. The instability of these investments means that the region has been unable to benefit, especially when mixed with high interest rates for aid loans. Further, internal political struggles, illegal drug trafficking, and corrupt governments have added to the pressure (World Poverty, 2012c). This is another area of the world impacted by centuries of colonialism.

## The True Cost of a T-Shirt

Most of us do not pay too much attention to where our favourite products are made. And certainly when you are shopping for a cheap T-shirt, you probably do not turn over the label, check who produced the item, and then research whether or not the company has fair labour practices. In fact it can be very difficult to discover where exactly the items we use everyday have come from. Nevertheless, the purchase of a T-shirt involves us in a series of social relationships that ties us to the lives and working conditions of people around the world.

On April 24, 2013, the Rana Plaza building in Dhaka, Bangladesh, collapsed killing 1,129 garment workers. The building, like 90% of Dhaka's 4,000 garment factories, was structurally unsound. Garment workers in Bangladesh work under unsafe conditions for as little as \$38 a month so that North American consumers can purchase T-shirts in the fashionable colours of the season for as little as \$5. The workers at Rana Plaza were in fact making clothes for the Joe Fresh label — the signature popular Loblaw brand — when the building collapsed. Having been put on the defensive for their overseas sweatshop practices, companies like Loblaw have pledged to improve working conditions in their suppliers' factories, but compliance has proven difficult to ensure because of the increasingly complex web of globalized production (MacKinnon and Strauss, 2013).



Figure 7.6. This protestor seeks to bring attention to the issue of sweatshops. (Photo courtesy of Ohio AFL-CIO Labor 2008/Flickr)



At one time, the garment industry was important in Canada, centred on Spadina Avenue in Toronto and Chabanel Street in Montreal. But over the last two decades of globalization, Canadian consumers have become increasingly tied through popular retail chains to a complex network of outsourced garment production that stretches from China, through Southeast Asia, to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The early 1990s saw the economic opening of China when suddenly millions of workers were available to produce and manufacture consumer items for Westerners at a fraction of the cost of Western production. Manufacturing that used to take place in Canada moved overseas. Over the ensuing years, the Chinese began to outsource production to regions with even cheaper labour: Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. The outsourcing was outsourced. The result is that when a store like Loblaw places an order, it usually works through agents who in turn source and negotiate the price of materials and production from competing locales around the globe.

Most of the T-shirts that we wear in Canada today begin their life in the cotton fields of arid west China, which owe their scale and efficiency to the collectivization projects of centralized state socialism. However, as the cost of Chinese labour has incrementally increased since the 1990s, the Chinese have moved into the role of connecting Western retailers and designers with production centres elsewhere. In a global division of labour, if agents organize the sourcing, production chain and logistics, Western retailers can focus their skill and effort on retail marketing. It was in this context that Bangladesh went from having a few dozen garment factories to several thousand. The garment industry now accounts for 80% of Bangladesh's export earnings. Unfortunately, although there are legal safety regulations and inspections in Bangladesh, the rapid expansion of the industry has exceeded the ability of underfunded state agencies to enforce them.

The globalization of production makes it difficult to follow the links between the purchasing of a T-shirt in a Canadian store and the chain of agents, garment workers, shippers, and agricultural workers whose labour has gone into producing it and getting it to the store. Our lives are tied to this chain each time we wear a T-shirt, yet the history of its production and the lives it has touched are more or less invisible to us. It becomes even more difficult to do something about the working conditions of those global workers when even the retail stores are uncertain about where the shirts come from. There is no international agency that can enforce compliance with safety or working standards. Why do you think worker safety standards and factory building inspections have to be imposed by government regulations rather than being simply an integral part of the production process? Why does it seem normal that the issue of worker safety in garment factories is set up in this way? Why does this make it difficult to resolve or address the issue?

The fair trade movement has pushed back against the hyper-exploitation of global workers and forced stores like Loblaw to try to address the unsafe conditions in garment factories like Rana Plaza. Organizations like the Better Factories Cambodia program inspect garment production regularly in Cambodia, enabling stores like Mountain Equipment Co-op to purchase reports on the factory chains it relies on. After the Rana Plaza disaster, Loblaw signed an Accord of Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh to try to ensure safety compliance of their suppliers. However the bigger problem seems to originate with our desire to be able to purchase a T-shirt for \$5 in the first place.

## Consequences of Poverty

The consequences of poverty are often also causes of poverty. Poor people experience inadequate health care, limited education, and inaccessible birth control. Those born into these conditions are incredibly challenged in their efforts to break this cycle of disadvantage.

Sociologists Neckerman and Torche (2007) divided the consequences into three areas. The first, “the sedimentation of global inequality,” means that once poverty becomes entrenched in an area, it is very difficult to reverse. Poverty exists in a cycle where the consequences and causes are interconnected. The second consequence of poverty is its effect on physical and mental health. Poor people face physical health challenges, including malnutrition and high infant and maternal mortality rates. Mental health is also negatively affected by the emotional stresses of poverty. Again, these effects of poverty become more entrenched as time goes on. Neckerman and Torche’s third consequence of poverty is the prevalence of crime. Cross-nationally, crime rates, particularly violent crime, are higher in countries with higher levels of income inequality (Fajnzylber, Lederman, and Loayza 2002).



Figure 7.7. For this child at a refugee camp in Ethiopia, poverty and malnutrition are a way of life. (Photo courtesy of DFID – UK Department for International Development/Flickr)

## Slavery

While most of us are accustomed to thinking of slavery in terms of pre–Civil War America, modern-day slavery goes hand in hand with global inequality. In short, slavery refers to any time people are sold, treated as property, or forced to work for little or no pay. Just as in pre–Civil War America, these humans are at the mercy of their employers. **Chattel slavery**, the form of slavery practised in the pre–Civil War American South, is when one person owns another as property. Child slavery, which may include child prostitution, is a form of chattel slavery. **Debt bondage**, or bonded labour, involves the poor pledging themselves as servants in exchange for the cost of basic necessities like transportation, room, and board. In this scenario, people are paid less than they are charged for room and board. When travel is involved, people can arrive in debt for their travel expenses and be unable to work their way free, since their wages do not allow them to ever get ahead.

The global watchdog group Anti-Slavery International recognizes other forms of slavery: human trafficking (where people are moved away from their communities and forced to work against their will), child domestic work and child labour, and certain forms of servile marriage, in which women are little more than chattel slaves (Anti-Slavery International, 2012).

## 7.3. Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification

As with any social issue, global or otherwise, there are a variety of theories that scholars develop to study the topic. The two most widely applied perspectives on global stratification are modernization theory and dependency theory.

## Modernization Theory

According to modernization theory, low-income countries are affected by their lack of industrialization and can improve their global economic standing through:

1. An adjustment of cultural values and attitudes to work
2. Industrialization and other forms of economic growth (Armer and Katsillis, 2010)

Critics point out the inherent ethnocentric bias of this theory. It supposes all countries have the same resources and are capable of following the same path. In addition, it assumes that the goal of all countries is to be as “developed” as possible (i.e., like the model of capitalist democracies provided by Canada or the United States). There is no room within this theory for the possibility that industrialization and technology are not the best goals.

There is, of course, some basis for this assumption. Data show that core nations tend to have lower maternal and child mortality rates, longer lifespans, and less absolute poverty. It is also true that in the poorest countries, millions of people die from the lack of clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, which are benefits most of us take for granted. At the same time, the issue is more complex than the numbers might suggest. Cultural equality, history, community, and local traditions are all at risk as modernization pushes into peripheral countries. The challenge, then, is to allow the benefits of modernization while maintaining a cultural sensitivity to what already exists.

## Dependency Theory

**Dependency theory** was created in part as a response to the Western-centric mindset of modernization theory. It states that global inequality is primarily caused by core nations (or high-income nations) exploiting semi-peripheral and peripheral nations (or middle-income and low-income nations), creating a cycle of dependence (Hendricks, 2010). In the period of colonialism, core or metropolis nations created the conditions for the underdevelopment of peripheral or hinterland nations through a **metropolis-hinterland relationship**. The resources of the hinterlands were shipped to the metropolises where they were converted into manufactured goods and shipped back for consumption in the hinterlands. The hinterlands were used as the source of cheap resources and were unable to develop competitive manufacturing sectors of their own.

Dependency theory states that as long as peripheral nations are dependent on core nations for economic stimulus and access to a larger piece of the global economy, they will never achieve stable and consistent economic growth. Further, the theory states that since core nations, as well as the World Bank, choose which countries to make loans to, and for what they will loan funds, they are creating highly segmented labour markets that are built to benefit the dominant market countries.

At first glance, it seems this theory ignores the formerly low-income nations that are now considered middle-income nations and are on their way to becoming high-income nations and major players in the global economy, such as China. But some dependency theorists would state that it is in the best interests of core nations to ensure the long-term usefulness of their peripheral and semi-peripheral partners. Following that theory, sociologists have found that entities are more likely to outsource a significant portion of a company’s work if they are the dominant player in the equation; in other words, companies want to see their partner countries healthy enough to provide work, but not so healthy as to establish a threat (Caniels, Roeleveld, and Roeleveld, 2009).

## Globalization Theory

Globalization theory focuses less on the relationship between dependent and core nations, and more on the international flow of capital investment in an increasingly interconnected world market. Since the 1970s, capital accumulates less in national economies. Rather, as in the example of the garment industry, capital circulates on a global scale, leading to global inequalities both **between** nations and **within** nations. The production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services are integrated on a worldwide basis. Effectively, we no longer live and act in national states.

The core pieces of the “globalization project” (McMichael, 2012) — the project to transform the world into one market — are

- imposition of open “free” markets across national borders
- deregulation of trade and investment
- privatization of public goods and services.

Development has been redefined from nationally managed economic growth to “participation in the world market” (World bank, cited in McMichael, 2012, pp. 112-113). The global economy, not modernized national economies, emerges as the site of development. Within this model, the world and its resources are reorganized and managed based on free trade of goods and services and the free circulation of capital. This is all managed by democratically unaccountable political and economic elite organizations like the G20, the WTO (World Trade Organization), GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs), the World Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund), and international measures used to liberalize the global economy.

According to globalization theory, globalization redistributes wealth and poverty on a global scale. Outsourcing shifts production to low-wage areas, displacement leads to higher unemployment rates in the traditionally wealthy global north, people migrate from rural to urban areas and “slum cities” and from poor countries to rich countries. Large numbers of workers simply become redundant to global production and turn to informal, casual labour. The anti-globalization movement has emerged as a counter-movement for an alternative, non-corporate world based on environmental sustainability, food sovereignty, labour rights, and democratic accountability.

Some populist leaders like Donald Trump have been accused of “hijacking” anti-globalization feelings for votes while they continue to support accumulation of wealth by capitalist elites and exploitation of the world’s workers.

## Factory Girls

Would you like to know more about global inequality, and modernization and dependency theories.?

The book *Factory Girls: From Village to City in Changing China*, by Leslie T. Chang, provides this opportunity. Chang follows two young women (Min and Chunming) who are employed at a handbag plant. They help manufacture fashionable purses and bags for the global market. As part of the growing population of young people who are leaving behind the homesteads and farms of rural China, these female factory workers enter city life to pursue an income much higher than they could have earned back home.

Chang’s study is based in a city you may not have heard of, Dongguan. Dongguan produces one-third of all shoes on the planet (Nike and Reebok are major manufacturers here) and 30% of the world’s computer disk drives, in addition to a wide range of clothing (Chang, 2008).



Chang focused less on this global market and was more concerned with its effect on these two women. Chang examines the daily lives and interactions of Min and Chunming — their workplace friendships, family relations, gadgets, and goods — in this evolving global space where young women can leave tradition behind and shape their own futures. Chang discovers that the women are hyper-exploited, but are also freed from the rural, Confucian, traditional culture. This allows them unprecedented personal freedoms. They go from the traditional family affiliations and narrow options of the past to life in a “perpetual present.” Friendships are fleeting and fragile, forms of life are improvised and sketchy, and everything they do is marked by the goals of upward mobility, resolute individualism, and an obsession with prosperity. Life for the women factory workers in Dongguan is an adventure, compared to their fate in rural village life, but one characterized by grueling work, insecurity, isolation, and loneliness. Chang writes, “Dongguan was a place without memory.”

## Chapter Summary

### Global Stratification and Classification

Stratification refers to the gaps in resources both between nations and within nations. While economic equality is of great concern, so is social equality, like the discrimination stemming from race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and/or sexual orientation. While global inequality is nothing new, several factors, like the global marketplace and the pace of information sharing, make it more relevant than ever. Researchers try to understand global inequality by classifying it according to factors such as how industrialized a nation is, whether it serves as a means of production or as an owner, and what income it produces.

### Global Wealth and Poverty

When looking at the world’s poor, we first have to define the difference between relative poverty, absolute poverty, and subjective poverty. While those in relative poverty might not have enough to live at their country’s standard of living, those in absolute poverty do not have, or barely have, basic necessities such as food. Subjective poverty has more to do with one’s perception of one’s situation. North America and Europe are home to fewer of the world’s poor than Africa, which has highest number of poor countries, or Asia, which has the most people living in poverty. Poverty has numerous negative consequences, from increased crime rates to a detrimental impact on physical and mental health.

### Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification

Modernization theory, dependency theory, and globalization theory are three of the most common lenses sociologists use when looking at the issues of global inequality. Modernization theory posits that countries go through evolutionary stages and that industrialization and improved technology are the keys to forward movement. Dependency theory sees modernization theory as Eurocentric and patronizing. With this theory, global inequality is the result of core nations creating a cycle of dependence by exploiting resources and labour in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries. Globalization theory argues that the division between the wealthy and the poor is now organized in the context of a single, integrated global economy rather than between core and peripheral nations.

## Key Terms

**absolute poverty:** The state where one is barely able, or unable, to afford basic necessities.

**anti-globalization movement:** A global counter-movement based on principles of environmental sustainability, food sovereignty, labour rights, and democratic accountability that challenges the corporate model of globalization.

**capital flight:** The movement (flight) of capital from one nation to another, via jobs and resources.

**chattel slavery:** A form of slavery in which one person owns another.

**core nations:** Dominant capitalist countries.

**debt accumulation:** The buildup of external debt, wherein countries borrow money from other nations to fund their expansion or growth goals.

**debt bondage:** When people pledge themselves as servants in exchange for money or passage. They are subsequently paid too little to regain their freedom.

**deindustrialization:** The loss of industrial production, usually to peripheral and semi-peripheral nations where the costs are lower.

**dependency theory:** Theory stating that global inequity is due to the exploitation of peripheral and semi-peripheral nations by core nations.

**first world:** A term from the Cold War era that is used to describe industrialized capitalist democracies.

**global inequality:** The concentration of resources in core nations and in the hands of a wealthy minority.

**global stratification:** The unequal distribution of resources between countries.

**gross national income (GNI):** The income of a nation calculated based on goods and services produced, plus income earned by citizens and corporations headquartered in that country.

**metropolis-hinterland relationship:** The relationship between nations when resources of the hinterlands are shipped to the metropolises where they are converted into manufactured goods and shipped back to the hinterlands for consumption.

**modernization theory:** A theory that low-income countries can improve their global economic standing by industrialization of infrastructure and a shift in cultural attitudes toward work.

**peripheral nations:** Nations on the fringes of the global economy, dominated by core nations, with very little industrialization.

**relative poverty:** The state of poverty where one is unable to live the lifestyle of the average person in the country.

**second world:** A term from the Cold War era that describes nations with moderate economies and standards of living.

**semi-peripheral nations:** In-between nations, not powerful enough to dictate policy but acting as a major source of raw materials and providing an expanding middle-class marketplace.

**third world:** A term from the Cold War era that refers to poor, nonindustrialized countries.

## Chapter Quiz

1. France might be classified as which kind of nation?
  - a. Global
  - b. Core
  - c. Semi-peripheral
  - d. Peripheral
2. In the past, Canada manufactured clothes. Many clothing corporations have shut down their Canadian factories and relocated to China. This is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Conflict theory
  - b. OECD
  - c. Global inequality
  - d. Capital flight
3. Slavery in the pre-Civil War American South most closely resembled \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Chattel slavery
  - b. Debt bondage
  - c. Relative poverty
  - d. Peonage
4. Maya is a 12-year-old girl living in Thailand. She is homeless and often does not know where she will sleep or when she will eat. We might say that Maya lives in \_\_\_\_\_ poverty.
  - a. Subjective
  - b. Absolute
  - c. Relative
  - d. Global

5. Mike, a college student, rents a studio apartment. He cannot afford a television and lives on cheap groceries like dried beans and ramen noodles. Since he does not have a regular job, he does not own a car. Mike is living in \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Global poverty
  - b. Absolute poverty
  - c. Subjective poverty
  - d. Relative poverty
6. In a B.C. town, a mining company owns all the stores and most of the houses. It sells goods to the workers at inflated prices, offers house rentals for twice what a mortgage would be, and makes sure to always pay the workers less than they need to cover food and rent. Once the workers are in debt, they have no choice but to continue working for the company, since their skills will not transfer to a new position. This most closely resembles \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Child slavery
  - b. Chattel slavery
  - c. Debt slavery
  - d. Servile marriage
7. One flaw in dependency theory is the unwillingness to recognize \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. That previously low-income nations such as China have successfully developed their economies and can no longer be classified as dependent on core nations
  - b. That previously high-income nations such as China have been economically overpowered by low-income nations entering the global marketplace
  - c. That countries such as China are growing more dependent on core nations
  - d. That countries such as China do not necessarily want to be more like core nations
8. One flaw in modernization theory is the unwillingness to recognize \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. That semi-peripheral nations are incapable of industrializing
  - b. That peripheral nations prevent semi-peripheral nations from entering the global market
  - c. Its inherent ethnocentric bias
  - d. The importance of semi-peripheral nations industrializing

9. If a historian says that nations evolve toward more advanced technology and more complex industry as their citizens learn cultural values that celebrate hard work and success, she is using \_\_\_\_\_ theory to study the global economy.
  - a. Modernization theory
  - b. Dependency theory
  - c. Globalization theory
  - d. Evolutionary dependency theory
10. If a historian says that corporate interests dominate the global economy by creating global trade agreements and eliminating international tariffs that will favour the ability of capital to invest in low wage regions, he or she is a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Dependency theorist
  - b. Globalization theorist
  - c. Modernization theorist
  - d. Symbolic interactionist
11. Dependency theorists explain global inequality and global stratification by focusing on the way that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Core nations and peripheral nations exploit semi-peripheral nations
  - b. Semi-peripheral nations exploit core nations
  - c. Peripheral nations exploit core nations
  - d. Core nations exploit peripheral nations

[Quiz answers at end of chapter]

## Short Answer

### 7.1. Global Stratification and Classification

1. Why do you think some researchers believe that Cold War terminology is objectionable? (“first world” etc.)
2. Give an example of the feminization of poverty in core nations. How is it the same or different in peripheral nations?
3. Imagine you are studying global inequality by looking at child labour manufacturing Barbie dolls in China. What do you focus on? How will you find this information? What theoretical perspective might you use?

### 7.2. Global Wealth and Poverty

Go to your campus bookstore. Find out who manufactures apparel and novelty items with your school's insignias. In what countries are these produced? Does your school adhere to any principles of fair trade?

### 7.3. Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification

1. There is much criticism that modernization theory is Eurocentric. Do you think dependency theory and globalization theory are also biased? Why or why not?
2. Compare and contrast modernization theory, dependency theory, and globalization theory. Which do you think is more useful for explaining global inequality? Explain, using examples. You may want to use a table for your comparison.

## Further Research

### 7.2. Global Wealth and Poverty

Students often think that Canada is immune to the atrocity of human trafficking. Check out the following link to learn more about trafficking in Canada: <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/ntnl-ctn-pln-cmbt/index-eng.aspx>; You can also check out the Canadian Women's Foundation's efforts to end sex trafficking: <http://www.canadianwomen.org/trafficking>

### 7.3. Theoretical Perspectives on Global Stratification

For more information about global affairs, check the Munk School of Global Affairs website: <http://munkschool.utoronto.ca/>

Go to Naomi Klein's website for more information about the anti-globalization movement: <http://www.naomiklein.org/main>

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## Image Attributions

**Figure 7.2.** Eve of Destruction by Rick Harris (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/37153080@N00/62624493/>) use under CC BY SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)

## Long Descriptions

**Figure 7.1:**

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.  
Achieve universal primary education.  
Promote gender equality and empower women.  
Reduce child mortality.  
Improve maternal health.  
Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.  
Ensure environmental sustainability.  
Develop a global partnership for development.

### Solutions to Chapter Quiz

1 b, | 2 a, | 3 d, | 4 b, | 5 d, | 6 a, | 7 b, | 8 d, | 9 b, | 10 c, | 11 a, |  
12 c, | 13 a, | 14 b, | 15 d

[8]

## Racism and Discrimination



Figure 8.1. UNESCO Culture of Peace symbol; Courtesy of The Canadian Centres for Teaching Peace

### Learning Objectives

#### 8.1. Racialization, Ethnicity, and Minority Groups

- Understand the difference between race and ethnicity.
- Define a majority group (dominant group).
- Define a minority group (subordinate group).

#### 8.2. Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

- Explain the difference between stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and racism.
- Identify different types of discrimination.

#### 8.3. Intergroup Relations and the Management of Diversity

- Explain different intergroup relations in terms of their relative levels of tolerance.
- Give historical and/or contemporary examples of each type of intergroup relation.

#### 8.4. Racism and Discrimination in Canada

- Compare and contrast the different experiences of various ethnic groups in Canada.
- Apply theories of intergroup relations and race and ethnicity to different subordinate groups.

## Introduction

Canada is an increasingly diverse nation with an official policy of multiculturalism. Historically, Canada is a **settler society**, a society based on colonization and displacement of Indigenous inhabitants. Immigration is a major influence on contemporary population **diversity**.

In the two decades following World War II, Canada's immigration policy was explicitly racist. In 1947 Prime Minister Mackenzie King said this in the House of Commons:

There will, I am sure, be general agreement with the view that the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large-scale immigration from the orient would change the fundamental composition of the Canadian population.... The government, therefore, has no thought of making any change in immigration regulations which would have consequences of the kind. (as cited in Li, 1996, pp. 163-164)

Today this is a completely unacceptable statement. Immigration is now based on a non-racial point system. Canada defines itself as a multicultural nation that promotes and recognizes diversity. This does not mean, however, that Canada's history of institutional and individual racism has been erased. It doesn't mean that all conflict in a diverse population has been resolved.

In 1997, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination criticized the Canadian government for using the term *visible minority*. The Committee said that distinctions based on race or colour are discriminatory (CBC, 2007). The term combines a diverse group of people into one category whether they have anything in common or not. What does it mean to be a member of a visible minority in Canada? What does it mean to be a member of the non-visible majority? What do these terms mean in practice?

### 8.1. Racialization, Ethnicity, and Minority Groups

The terms race, ethnicity, and minority group have distinct meanings for sociologists. *Race* refers to superficial physical (sometimes social) differences, while *ethnicity* describes shared culture. And *minority group* describes groups that are subordinate, or lacking power in society. For example, the elderly might be considered a minority group due to diminished status in our society. The World Health Organization's research on elderly maltreatment shows that 10% of nursing home staff admit to physically abusing an elderly person in the past year, and 40% admit to psychological abuse (2011). As a minority group, the elderly are also subject to economic, social, and workplace discrimination.

**Visible minorities** are defined by Statistics Canada as "persons, other than Indigenous peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour" (2013, p. 14).

Table 8.1. Visible minority population and top three visible minority groups, selected census metropolitan areas, Canada, 2011, p. 17. (Table courtesy of Statistics Canada's *Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada report [PDF]*): <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.pdf>

Cities	Total Population	Visible Minority Population	Percentage	Top Three Visible Minority Groups
Canada	32,852,325	6,264,755	19.1%	South Asian, Chinese, Black
Toronto	5,521,235	2,596,420	47.0%	South Asian, Chinese, Black
Montréal	3,752,475	762,325	20.3%	Black, Arab, Latin American
Vancouver	2,280,695	1,030,335	45.2%	Chinese, South Asian, Filipino
Ottawa – Gatineau	1,215,735	234,015	19.2%	Black, Arab, Chinese
Calgary	1,199,125	337,420	28.1%	South Asian, Chinese, Filipino
Edmonton	1,139,585	254,990	22.4%	South Asian, Chinese, Filipino
Winnipeg	714,635	140,770	19.7%	Filipino, South Asian, Black
Hamilton	708,175	101,600	14.3%	South Asian, Black, Chinese

## Racialization

The concept of race has changed across time and cultures, becoming less connected with ancestral ties, and more concerned with superficial physical or social characteristics. In the past, categories of race were invented based on geographic regions, ethnicities, skin colours, and more. However, these early ideas are incorrect: race is not biologically based. **Racialization** means that race is socially constructed. Certain groups become racialized through a social process that marks them for unequal treatment based on perceived differences.

Consider skin tone, for example: the social construction of race recognizes that the relative darkness or fairness of skin is an evolutionary adaptation to the available sunlight in different regions. In some countries, such as Brazil, class determines racial categorization more than skin colour, for example. People with high levels of melanin (a pigment that determines skin colour) may consider themselves “white” if they enjoy a middle-class lifestyle. On the other hand, someone with low levels of melanin in their skin might be assigned the identity of “Black” if they have little education or money.

Names for racial categories change, also showing that race is a system of social labelling. For example, the category *negroid*, popular in the 19th century, evolved into the term *negro* by the 1960s, and then this term was replaced with Black Canadian. The term was intended to celebrate the multiple identities that a Black person might hold, but the term oversimplifies: It lumps together a large variety of ethnic groups. Unlike the United States where the term *African American* is common, many Black Canadians immigrated from the Caribbean and retain ethnic roots from that area. Culturally they remain distinct from immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa or the descendants of the slaves brought to mainland North America. Some prefer to use the term *Afro-Caribbean Canadian* for that reason.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission explains that ideas about “race” are socially constructed differences:

based on characteristics such as accent or manner of speech, name, clothing, diet, beliefs and practices, leisure preferences, places of origin and so forth. The process of social construction of race is called racialization: “the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life” (Racial discrimination, race and racism)

Because race is a social construct, the Commission describes people as *racialized person* or *racialized group* instead of the inaccurate *racial minority*, *visible minority*, *person of colour* or *non-white* (Racial discrimination, race and racism).

In 1978 France made it illegal to collect census data on ethnicity because the data could be used for racist purposes. Davies points out that “this has the side-effect of making systemic racism in the labour market much harder to quantify” (2017).

Research organizations like Statistics Canada and the Conference Board of Canada still use categories such as *Black* or *visible minority* in reports. Many sociology studies also use such terms to analyze racism. This book uses the language of those reports to describe obstacles faced by racialized groups in Canada.

## What Is Ethnicity?

*Ethnicity* is a term used to describe shared culture—the practices, values, and beliefs of a group. This might include shared language, religion, and other traditions. Like *race*, the term *ethnicity* is imprecise, and its meaning changed over time. And like race, individuals may be identified or self-identify with ethnicities in complex, even contradictory, ways. For example, ethnic groups such as Irish, Italian, Russian, Jewish, and Serbian might all be groups whose members are included in the racialized category *white*. Conversely, the ethnic group British includes citizens from many racial backgrounds: Black, Afro-Caribbean, white, Asian, etc. These examples illustrate the complexity of these identifying terms. Ethnicity, like race, continues to be an identification method used—whether through the census, affirmative action initiatives, non-discrimination laws, or daily interaction. Not everyone agrees with these labels.

## What Are Minority Groups?

Sociologist Louis Wirth defined a minority group as “any group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from others in their society for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination” (1945). These definitions correspond to the concept that the dominant group as the one with the most power in a society, while subordinate groups are those who lack power. Lack of power is the main characteristic of a minority or subordinate group.

A numerical minority is not a necessarily a characteristic of being a minority group; sometimes larger groups can be considered minority groups due to their lack of power. For example, consider apartheid in South Africa: a numerical majority (the Black inhabitants of the country) were exploited and oppressed by the white minority.

Scapegoat theory suggests that the dominant group will displace their unfocused aggression onto a subordinate group. History shows many examples of the scapegoating of a subordinate group. Adolf Hitler used the Jewish people as scapegoats for Germany’s social and economic problems. In Canada, eastern European immigrants were labelled Bolsheviks and interned during the economic slump after World War I. In the United States, many states made laws to disenfranchise immigrants; these laws were popular because they let the dominant group scapegoat a subordinate group. Many minority groups have been scapegoated for a nation’s—or an individual’s—problems.

## 8.2. Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

### Stereotypes

The terms *stereotype*, *prejudice*, *discrimination*, and *racism* are often used interchangeably. Sociologists define them differently:

- **Stereotypes** are oversimplified ideas about groups of people
- **Prejudice** refers to thoughts and feelings about those groups
- **Discrimination** refers to actions toward them.
- **Racism** is a type of prejudice that involves set beliefs about a racialized group

Stereotypes are oversimplified ideas about groups of people. Stereotypes can be based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation—almost any characteristic. They may be positive but are often negative (usually toward other groups, such as when members of a dominant group suggest that a subordinate group is stupid or lazy). Whether positive or negative, the stereotype is a false generalization.

Where do stereotypes come from? New stereotypes are rarely created; rather, they are recycled from old stereotypes. They are reused to describe new subordinate groups. For example, many stereotypes currently used to characterize Black people were used earlier in Canadian history to characterize Irish and eastern European immigrants.

### Prejudice and Racism

Prejudice refers to beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that someone holds about a group. A prejudice is not based on experience; instead, it is a prejudgment. Racism is a type of prejudice that is used to justify the belief that one racialized category is somehow superior or inferior to others. White supremacist groups are examples of racist organizations; their members' belief in white supremacy has encouraged hate crimes and hate speech for over a century.

### Discrimination

While prejudice refers to biased *thinking*, discrimination consists of *actions* against a group of people. Discrimination can be based on age, religion, health, sexuality and other indicators. Anti-discrimination laws try to address this social problem.

Discrimination based on racialized categories or ethnicity can take many forms, from unfair housing practices to biased hiring systems. Open discrimination has long been part of Canadian history. Discrimination against Jews was typical until the 1950s. McGill University imposed quotas on the admission of Jewish students in 1920, a practice which continued in its medical faculty until the 1960s. The Nova Scotia case of Viola Desmond shows that Canada had also its own version of American Jim Crow laws, which designated “whites only” areas in cinemas, public transportation, workplaces, etc. Both Ontario and Nova Scotia had racially segregated schools. These practices are unacceptable in Canada today.

However, discrimination cannot be erased from our culture just by making laws. Sociologist Émile Durkheim called racism “a social fact,” meaning that it does not require individual action to continue (1895). The reasons are complex and relate to educational, criminal, economic, and political systems.

For example, when a newspaper racializes individuals accused of a crime, it may deepen stereotypes of a minority. Stereotypes of Somali Canadians, for example, were reinforced by news reports of gang-related deaths in Toronto's social housing projects (Wingrove & Mackrael, 2012). Another example of racist practices is **racial steering**, in which real estate agents direct home buyers toward or away from certain neighbourhoods based on race. Racist attitudes and beliefs are often more sinister than specific racist practices.

Discrimination can promote a group's status, such as white privilege. While most white people admit that non-white people live with a set of disadvantages, very few white people acknowledge the benefits they receive simply by being white. **White privilege** refers to the fact that dominant groups often accept their experience as normative (or superior) experience. This is often unconscious racism. Feminist sociologist Peggy McIntosh described several examples of "white privilege." For instance, white women can easily find makeup that matches their skin tone, and white people can be assured that, most of the time, they will be dealing with authority figures of their own race (1988). Can you think of other examples of white privilege?

## Institutional Racism

Discrimination also manifests in different ways. In addition to individual discrimination, institutional discrimination or **institutional racism** exists when a social system embeds disenfranchisement of a group. One example is Canadian immigration policy that imposed head taxes on Chinese immigrants in 1886 and 1904.

Institutional racism refers to the way in which racialized distinctions are used to organize the policy and practice of institutions. These distinctions systematically reproduce inequalities along racialized lines. They define what people can and cannot do based on racialized characteristics. It is not necessarily the intention to reproduce inequality. Rather, inequality results from patterns of differential treatment based on racialized or ethnic categorizations of people.

The Indian Act and immigration policy provide clear examples of institutional racism in Canada. Effects of institutional racism can also be observed in the structures that reproduce income inequality for visible minorities and Indigenous Canadians.

An important historical example of institutionalized racism is the residential school system. The residential school system was set up in the 19th century to assimilate Indigenous children into European culture. From 1883 until 1996, over 150,000 Indigenous, Inuit, and Métis children were forcibly separated from their parents and their cultural traditions and sent to residential schools. They usually received substandard education. Many were subject to neglect, disease, and abuse. Many did not see their parents again, and thousands of children died at the schools.

When they did return home, they found it difficult to fit in. They had not learned the skills needed for life on reserves and had also been taught to be ashamed of their cultural heritage. Because the education at the residential schools was often inferior, they also had difficulty fitting into non-Indigenous society.



Figure 8.2. Class of Mi'kmaq girls taken in the Shubenacadie Residential School, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, 1929 by Library Archives



The residential school system was part of a system of institutional racism because it was based on a distinction between the educational needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In introducing the policy to the House of Commons in 1883, Public Works Minister Hector Langevin argued, “In order to educate the children properly we must separate them from their families. Some people may say that this is hard but if we want to civilize them we must do that” (as cited in Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012, p. 5).

The sad legacy of this “civilizing” mission has been:

- several generations of severely disrupted Indigenous families and communities;
- the loss of Indigenous languages and cultural heritage;
- and the neglect, abuse, and traumatization of thousands of Indigenous children.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded that the residential school system was a systematic assault on Indigenous families, children, and cultures in Canada. Some see the policy and its legacy to cultural genocide (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2012).

While the last of the residential schools closed in 1996, serious problems remain for Indigenous education. Forty percent of Indigenous people aged 20 to 24 have no high school diploma (61% of on-reserve Indigenous people), compared to 13% of non-Indigenous (Congress of Indigenous Peoples, 2010). The impact of generations of children being removed from their homes to underfunded and frequently abusive residential school system has been “joblessness, poverty, family violence, drug and alcohol abuse, family breakdown, sexual abuse, prostitution, homelessness, high rates of imprisonment, and early death” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012).

Even with the public apology to residential school survivors and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the federal government continues to refuse basic Indigenous claims to title, self-determination, and control over their lands and resources.

## Missing Pages

My name is Shirley Christmas (nee Paul) I was born in Gagetown, New Brunswick, on my grandparent's farm which my grand mother was the mid-wife in those days. I always jokingly said, she was the first ever to smack me in the butt. I come from a large family consisting of 12 sisters and two brothers, I am the third eldest. I lived in Membertou since I turned 2 years of age.

Today I am about to embark on an emotional journey that took place when I was knee high to a grasshopper at the age of five to the age of eleven. For many years after leaving in 1961, the residential school became my nightmare till it burned to the ground in 1986; then the nightmares stopped but my childhood now lays buried beneath its ashes forever lost.

Where do I begin? The reason why I am so unsure of where I want to start is because it's a long treacherous road that is not easy to travel; for hidden in the deepest crevasses is a darkened secret that lives within the very depths of my soul that no one knew about except me, God and another person. While growing up I did my best to avoid this path, knowing too well the agonizing pain it caused me. I felt so unloved, unworthy even to my parents and siblings for a very long time.

I began drinking at the age of sixteen in order too drown my sorrows. I became a bitter wicked person who was angry with the world. When I was in a drunken stupor, I cared not who I hurt with my words and lashed out like a wild beast. Before long I had become an alcoholic, the only time I felt no pain was when I was drunk.

During the years of my growth into maturity, I thought for sure that someday I would forget this part of my life and live normal like every one else. I use to think I was the only person carrying this burden, where my soul would suffer in silence from the pain, humiliation and shame. I did what I could to lessen the anguish I held inside.

One day after being on a three-day drunk, I was shown the path I was on. It was my wake-up call to either better my life or stay being a slave to the bottle. It was then I realized that I wasn't the only one hurting, I was hurting the most precious person in my entire life. I was building a destructive roadway for my two-year-old son, who was standing there in a dirty diaper and a bottle with sour milk in his little hands. I looked around the room saw all the beer bottles laying all over the place some broken and the house reeking of old beer and cigarettes. I shouted to no one but me with tears running down my face I was beginning to feel the shame of being an unfit mother. I said these words that echoed through the house. "What am I doing? How could I do this to my son?" It was then I knew what I had to do to give my child a good life. I have been sober for forty-five years, since that day. It was also the day I closed the door of my thoughts from the days of the Residential School burying it so deep as to never resurface again. Well, so I thought.

Was my life so traumatized as a child between the ages of five and eleven that it became a blank wall? Where did my life go, why was I not remembering when other's reminiscence their childhood as if it were yesterday? I do remember before I was five like the places where we lived, I remember a time a close friend and I were about three and we had a knack of getting into mischief without trying, it was just a natural occurrence when ever we were together, this still accounts for today.

I remember I was at Jane's house because my mother was working in town, then Pauline ran across the street to see her mother; Jane and I should have been playing with our dolls, but instead we got into the dye. All I know was Jane's mother came in and here we were all blue from head to toe plus everything else in the room. There were other times my sisters would bring up incidents of our childhood as they remembered. I tried to visualize but it wasn't meant to be. When I heard the stories, it seemed unreal like watching a total stranger in my space.

You know the saying, "life is like a book," well there must be some truth in it if you ask me. Not knowing about one's childhood is like reading a book with missing pages or looking at pictures with marred images. It leaves you wondering about the missing pieces in the photograph or wondered what really happened in the story. Throughout the years having no childhood memories was forever in the back of my mind. I racked my brain trying to remember what I could, however very few came through, while others were unclear shadows of my past.

Another time a friend took me down memory-lane; while she was speaking about us sitting by the brook with our feet dangling in the water. I looked deep within my head, trying to remember, but I could not recall that day. Why is it she can vividly describe what was happening when we were about six or seven? Why can't I re-live those days as easily as others? What happened to the missing seven years of my young life?

Not having a childhood did not really hit till my grandchildren were of school age and bringing assignments home to ask grandparents what we remembered about our childhood. Well I'm telling you my whole insides were all mumbo jumbo and I was rendered speechless. I didn't want to cry in front of my grandchildren or my children, so, I told them I couldn't remember everything and made things up along the way. Ever since then I tried to avoid talking about a past I didn't have. It became inevitable to me, that I lost my childhood, it was then I broke down and sobbed my heart out. Each time I thought about it I would cringe in fear and the pain surged through my body filled with anger that no longer could be held within. Eventually I was forced to open a door where there were things I had never wanted resurfacing.

I was a scared little girl of five taken away from home in a big truck with a wooden box as a cover from the elements, in this case it was a chilly September morning. This was where we sat all herded like cattle, it felt like we were in the truck all day because it was dark by the time we stopped. The only person I knew was my big brother Ike, together we traveled to the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School after spending the night in a community close to Orangedale where we boarded a train with lots of other native children. I just wanted to go home and I cried most of the trip not leaving my brother's side. (*This was my brother's second year*) this picture was taken day before by a Mi'kmaq photographer Ray Doucette later known as "Raytel Studio's" It was dark and cold when we arrived at the Shubenacadie train station. After departing from the train, we were separated by people in long dresses and funny hats, who spoke in stern voices. Next thing you know I was ripped from my brother's side and placed in a row with other girls my age group. I felt the sting of a slap on my face as the nun told me to stop crying now. Then we started walking the long trek to the school on the hill. On our arrival to the school we were taken in a large bathroom where we were told to remove our clothing and put on long night-dresses. Then we were taken to another huge room where we were lined up and had my pony-tails chopped off. I was given a number 16 that would remain with me during the duration of my seven years at the school. I never saw my brother again till we were put back on the train in June to return home. The sad part was I didn't know him after our first year in the residential school. When we were home for the summer, we got to know each other, but in September we were once again separated.



Figure 8.3. Shirley age 5 and Ike age 6

When I was six and a half, I was taken to the office of the head priest, he was a massive man in a black robe with giant crosses dangling from his attire. I was molested many times since that night. I believe it was that night that I blocked my childhood, the only memories were the bad things that destroyed the little girl in me, when I was told never to tell anyone or I will go straight to hell because God don't like liars. When I was eight, I was raped by this beast. For many, many years I carried that guilt knowing if I spoke of this sin, I would surely die and go to hell. In 2014, some 58 years later, I finally had the courage to speak of my story, but not without the pain and fear as if it just happened. Finally, the little girl hidden inside me, was at long last set free. Over the past few weeks I struggled within the depths of my spirit and tried to find that connection missing from my story of life. Surely there must have been some happy moments in that god-forsaken place. How will the story end without those missing years of my childhood? These should have been the most creative, adventurous and happy times that I should have experienced while growing up. Yet they were excluded from my story, it became the missing pages of my youth. Today I feel at a loss, because I have no happy memories to share with my children or grandchildren about my younger days. I lost my childhood at the Residential School so many decades ago. What could be more devastating than that?

Personal reflection by Shirley Christmas.



Figure 8.4. Shubenacadie Residential School

## Income Inequality among Racialized Canadians

Income inequality for racialized Canadians also shows the effects of institutional racism. Statistics Canada, the Conference Board of Canada and other research organizations regularly publish statistical reports demonstrating the systemic nature of this income inequality.

The median income of Indigenous people in Canada was 30% less than non-Indigenous people in 2006 (Wilson & Macdonald, 2010). Rates of child poverty (using Statistics Canada's after-tax low-income measure) for Indigenous people in 2006 were at 40%, while rates for non-Indigenous, non-racialized, non-immigrant children were 12% (Macdonald & Wilson, 2013).

Although labour participation rates are similar for racialized and non-racialized Canadians, unemployment for racialized men and women is much higher. Income levels for racialized Canadians are much lower than for non-racialized Canadians (Block and Galabuzi, 2011). These substantial, statistically significant differences between racialized and non-racialized Canadians indicate that economic institutions in Canada are based on racialized differences in the workforce rather than individual qualities of workers or even individual acts of prejudice by employers.

Table 8.2. Average Employment Income for Racialized and Non-Racialized Canadians by Generation in 2005 (Table courtesy of Block & Galabuzi, 2011/CCPA)

Generation	Racialized		Non-racialized		Differential (%)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1 <sup>st</sup> Generation	\$45,388	\$32,165	\$66,078	\$39,264	68.7%	81.9%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation	\$57,237	\$42,804	\$75,729	\$46,391	75.6%	92.3%
3 <sup>rd</sup> or more Generation	\$66,137	\$44,460	\$70,962	\$44,810	93.2%	99.2%

Source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census. Catalogue Number 97-563-XCB2006060

### 8.3. Intergroup Relations and the Management of Diversity

Western societies have used different strategies for the management of diversity. A **strategy for the management of diversity** refers to methods used to resolve conflicts, or potential conflicts, between groups that arise based on perceived differences. The solutions proposed for intergroup relations vary and have evolved. The most tolerant form of intergroup relations is multiculturalism, in which cultural distinctions are made between groups, but the groups are regarded to have equal standing in society. At the other end of the continuum are assimilation, expulsion, and even genocide—stark examples of intolerant intergroup relations.

#### Genocide

**Genocide**, the deliberate annihilation of a targeted (usually subordinate) group, is the most toxic intergroup relationship. Genocide has included both the intent to exterminate a group and the function of exterminating of a group, intentional or not.

Possibly the most well-known case of genocide is Hitler's attempt to exterminate the Jewish people in the first part of the 20th century. Also known as the Holocaust, the explicit goal of Hitler's "Final Solution" was the eradication of European Jews, as well as other minority groups such as Catholics, people with disabilities, Roma, Jehovah Witnesses, communists and homosexuals. With forced emigration, concentration camps, and mass executions in gas chambers, Hitler's Nazi regime was responsible for the deaths of 12 million people, including at least 6 million Jews. Hitler's intent was clear, and the high Jewish death toll certainly indicates that Hitler and his regime committed genocide. But how do we understand genocide that is not so open and deliberate?

During the European colonization of North America, historians estimate that Indigenous populations dropped from approximately 12 million people in the year 1500 to barely 237,000 by the year 1900 (Lewy, 2004). European settlers forced Indigenous people off their own lands, often causing thousands of deaths in forced removals. The Cherokee or Potawatomi Trail of Tears in the United States is one example of forced removal. Settlers also enslaved Indigenous people or forced them to give up their religious and cultural practices.

But the major cause of Indigenous death was the introduction of European diseases, with Indigenous people's lack of immunity to these foreign diseases. Smallpox, diphtheria, and measles spread rapidly among North American Indigenous peoples, who had no prior exposure to the diseases and therefore no ability to fight them. Some argue that the spread of disease was an unintended effect of settlers, while others believe it was intentional, with rumours of smallpox-infected blankets being distributed as "gifts" to Indigenous communities.

Newfoundland's Beothuk people became extinct from a variety of factors caused by European contact, including isolation from natural resources needed to sustain their traditional way of life. Shanawdithit, the last known living member of the Beothuk people, died of tuberculosis in St. John's, Newfoundland on June 6, 1829.



Figure 8.5. Portrait of Demasduit in 1819, a Beothuk woman captured and renamed "Mary March" by her captors. Demasduit died of tuberculosis in 1820. Watercolour by Lady Henrietta Martha Hamilton. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada (C-087698), Ottawa, Ontario.

Genocide is not just a historical concept. Recently, ethnic and geographic conflicts in the Darfur region of Sudan led to hundreds of thousands of deaths, for example. Because of land conflict, the Sudanese government and militias led a campaign of killing, forced displacement, and systematic rape of Darfuri people. A treaty was signed in 2011. There are many examples of 20th and 21st century genocide around the world. Refugees from genocide often live in camps and apply to move to countries like Canada.

## Expulsion

**Expulsion** refers to a dominant group forcing a subordinate group to leave a certain area or country. As seen in the examples of the Beothuk and the Holocaust, expulsion can be a factor in genocide. However, it can also stand on its own as a destructive group interaction. The Great Expulsion of the French-speaking Acadians from Nova Scotia by the British beginning in 1755 is the most notorious case of the use of expulsion to manage diversity in Canada. The British conquest of Acadia (which included contemporary Nova Scotia and parts of New Brunswick, Quebec, and Maine) in 1710 created the problem of what to do with the French colonists who had been living there for 80 years. In the end, approximately three-quarters of the Acadian population were rounded up by British soldiers and loaded onto boats without regard for keeping families together. Many of them ended up in Spanish Louisiana where they formed the basis of contemporary Cajun culture.

On the West Coast, the War Measures Act was used in 1942 to designate Japanese Canadians as enemy aliens. They were interned in camps. Their property and possessions were sold to pay for their forced removal and internment. David Suzuki's family, for example, was interned in British Columbia from early during the Second World War until after the war ended in 1945. His father was sent to a labour camp and the



family business sold, even though they were second- and third generation Canadians. Over 22,000 Japanese Canadians (14,000 of whom were born in Canada) were held in these camps between 1941 and 1949, even though the RCMP and the Department of National Defence reported there was no evidence of collusion or espionage. In fact, many Japanese Canadians demonstrated their loyalty to Canada by serving in the Canadian military during the war.

This was the largest mass movement of people in Canadian history. At the end of World War II, Japanese Canadians were forced to settle east of the Rocky Mountains or face deportation to Japan. This ban only ended after 1949, four years after the war's end. In 1988, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney issued a formal apology for this expulsion, and compensation of \$21,000 was paid to each surviving internee.

## Segregation

**Segregation** refers to the physical separation of two groups, particularly in residence, but also in workplace and social functions. Segregation can be *de jure* segregation (segregation that is enforced by law) and *de facto* segregation (segregation that occurs without laws but because of other factors). A stark example of *de jure* segregation is the apartheid movement of South Africa, which existed from 1948 to 1994. Under apartheid, Black South Africans were stripped of their civil rights and forcibly relocated to areas that segregated them physically from their white compatriots. Only after decades of degradation, violent uprisings, and international advocacy was apartheid finally abolished.

*De jure* segregation occurred in the United States for many years after the Civil War. During this time, many former Confederate states passed “Jim Crow” laws that required segregated facilities for Blacks and whites. These laws were codified in 1896’s landmark Supreme Court case *Plessey v. Ferguson*, which stated that “separate but equal” facilities were constitutional. For the next five decades, Blacks were subjected to legalized discrimination, forced to live, work, and go to school in separate—but *unequal*—facilities. It wasn’t until 1954 and the *Brown v. Board of Education* case that the Supreme Court declared that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal,” thus ending *de jure* segregation in the United States.

*De jure* segregation was also a factor in Canada’s development. Although slavery ended in Canada in 1834, when Britain abolished slavery throughout the empire, the approximately 60,000 Blacks who arrived with the British Empire Loyalists following the American Revolution and through the “Underground Railroad” were subject to discrimination and differential treatment. Legislation in Ontario and Nova Scotia created racially segregated schools, while *de facto* segregation of Blacks occurred in the workplace, restaurants, hotels, theatres, and swimming pools.

Similarly, segregating laws were passed in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Ontario preventing Chinese- and Japanese-owned restaurants and laundries from hiring white women out of concern that the women would be corrupted (Mosher, 1998). The reserve system created through the treaty process with First Nations peoples is also a form of *de jure* segregation. *De jure* segregation (except for the reserve system) was largely eliminated in Canada by the 1950s and 1960s.

*De facto* segregation, however, cannot be abolished by courts. Segregation has existed throughout Canada, with different racial or ethnic groups often segregated by neighbourhood. Various Chinatowns or Japantowns developed in Canadian cities in the 19th and 20th centuries. The community of Africville was a residentially



Figure 8.6 In the “Jim Crow” South, it was legal to have “separate but equal” facilities for blacks and whites. (Photo courtesy of Library of Congress/Wikimedia Commons)

and socially segregated Black enclave in Halifax established by escaped American slaves. Some urban neighbourhoods like Richmond, Surrey, and Markham are home to high concentrations of Chinese and South Asians.

## Assimilation

**Assimilation** describes the process by which a minority individual or group gives up its own identity by taking on the characteristics of the dominant culture. In Canada, assimilation was government policy with the Indian Act. The Indian Act attempted to Europeanize the Indigenous population. Assimilation was also the policy for absorbing immigrants from different lands.

Canada is a settler nation. Except for Indigenous Canadians, all Canadians have immigrant ancestors. In the 20th century, there were three waves of immigration to Canada (Li, 1996).

- During the wheat boom from 1900 to the beginning of World War I, Canada recruited almost 3 million settlers from various parts of Europe, although many subsequently emigrated to the United States.
- For the two decades following World War II, another 3 million immigrants arrived (96% from Europe between 1946 and 1954, and 83% from Europe between 1954 and 1967).
- The third wave of immigration following the change of the race-based immigration policy saw increasingly larger proportions of immigrants from non-European countries.

Most immigrants are eventually absorbed into Canadian culture, although sometimes after facing extended periods of prejudice and discrimination. Assimilation means the loss of the minority group's cultural identity as the people in that group become absorbed into the dominant culture, while there is minimal to no impact on the majority group's cultural identity.



Figure 8.7. Government advertisement in 1907 to encourage immigration and settlement of the western provinces. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Some assimilated groups may keep only symbolic gestures of their original ethnicity. For instance, many Irish Canadians may celebrate Saint Patrick's Day, many Hindu Canadians enjoy the Diwali festival, and many Chinese Canadians may celebrate Chinese New Year. However, for the rest of the year, other aspects of their originating culture may be forgotten.

Assimilation is opposite to the “cultural mosaic” model understood by Canadian multiculturalism; rather than maintaining their own cultural flavour, subordinate cultures give up their own traditions to conform to their new environment. Cultural differences are erased. The American “melting pot” model is like assimilation, although ideally the “melting pot” sees the combination of cultures resulting in a new culture entirely.



Sociologists measure the degree to which immigrants have assimilated to a new culture with four benchmarks:

- socioeconomic status
- spatial concentration
- language assimilation and
- intermarriage.

Discrimination can make assimilation difficult for new immigrants who wish to assimilate. Language assimilation can be a huge barrier, limiting employment and educational options and therefore limiting socioeconomic status.

## Multiculturalism

In the government document, *Multiculturalism: Being Canadian*, **multiculturalism** is defined as “the recognition of the cultural and racial diversity of Canada and of the equality of Canadians of all origins” (as cited in Day, 2000, 6).

Multiculturalism is represented in Canada by the metaphor of the mosaic: This suggests that in a multicultural society each ethnic or racial group preserves its unique cultural traits while contributing to national unity. Each culture is equally important within the mosaic. Each culture retains its own identity and yet adds to the colour of the whole. Multiculturalism is characterized by mutual respect by all cultures, both dominant and subordinate, creating a polyethnic environment of mutual acceptance.

Canada was the first country to adopt an official multicultural policy. In 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau implemented both a policy of official bilingualism (both French and English would be the languages of the state) and a policy of multiculturalism. The multicultural policy was designed to assist the different cultural groups in Canada to preserve their heritage, overcome cultural barriers to participation in Canadian society, and exchange with other cultural groups to contribute to national unity (Ujimoto, 2000). The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms obliges Canadian law and federal institutions to operate “in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians” (as cited in Li, 1996, p. 132).



Figure 8.8. The Monument to Multiculturalism (1985) by Francesco Pirelli, in front of Union Station, Toronto (Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Constitutional democracies like Canada are typically based on the protection of individual rights, but multiculturalism implies that the protection of cultural difference also depends on protecting **group-specific rights** (i.e., rights conferred on individuals by their membership in a group).

In Canadian multicultural policy, no culture takes precedence over any other, at least not official. All Canadians are recognized as “full and equal participants in Canadian society” (the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988). However, in practice, there has been conflict.

Whether Sikhs in the RCMP should be allowed to wear *dastaar* while in uniform was an early example. Although it seems trivial today, in 1990 many felt that the right of Sikhs to maintain their religious practice undermined a core tradition of both the police force and Canada. The case became a symbol of a deeper fear about multiculturalism: that it would foster a dangerous fragmentation of fragile Canadian unity. New non-European immigrants were seen by some as too different and accommodation too disruptive to “Canadian” values and practices. Of course, similar claims about the unassimilable differences of immigrants from Ireland, Eastern Europe, and southern Europe were made in earlier waves of immigration.

While Canadians accept diversity—the most accepting of all OECD countries in 2011 according to the Gallup World Poll (Conference Board of Canada, 2013)—issues around multiculturalism bring up the problem of ethical relativism. Ethical relativism is the idea that all cultures and all cultural practices have equal value. In a fully multicultural society, what principles can resolve issues where different cultural beliefs or practices clash?

## 8.4. Racism and Discrimination in Canada

When colonists came to the New World, they found a land that did not need “discovering” since it was already occupied. While the first wave of immigrants came from western Europe, eventually the bulk of people entering North America were from northern Europe, then eastern Europe, then Latin America and Asia. There was also the forced immigration of African slaves. Most groups underwent a period in which they were relegated to the bottom of the social hierarchy before they managed to achieve social mobility.

Today, our society is multicultural, although the extent to which this multiculturalism is embraced varies. The sections below describe how several groups became part of Canadian society, discuss the history of intergroup relations for each group, and assess each group’s status today.

### Indigenous Canadians

The only non-immigrant ethnic group in Canada, Aboriginal Canadians were once a large population, but by 2011 they made up only 4.3% of the Canadian populace (Statistics Canada, 2013).



Figure 8.9 The *dastaar* (turban) is a required article of the Sikh faith. Baltej Singh Dhillon (not shown here) was the first Sikh member of the RCMP to wear a turban on active duty. This sparked a major controversy in 1990, but today people barely notice when they see a police officer wearing a turban. (Photo courtesy of Gurumustuk Singh/Flickr)

## Making Connections: Social Policy and Debate

### Sports Teams with Indigenous Names



Figure 8.10. The Edmonton Eskimos face off against the Saskatchewan Roughriders. Photo by Daniel Paquet CC BY-SA 2.0

Team names like Eskimos, Indians, Warriors, Braves, and even Savages and Redskins are common. These names came from historical stereotypes of Indigenous people.

Speaking about the Edmonton Eskimos football team, Natan Obed of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (the national Inuit organization) argues that the term “Eskimo” is derogatory and represents a legacy of colonialism and disrespect. “If I was called an Eskimo or introduced as an Eskimo by anyone else, I would be offended by that.... It is something that was acceptable at one time but now just isn’t.... It’s time for the team to change its name. And it’s time also for all sports teams to change their names if they continue to use Indigenous people as their mascots” (CBC, 2015).

Since the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) campaigned against the use of mascots, asserting that the “warrior savage myth ... reinforces the racist view that Indians are uncivilized and uneducated, and it has been used to justify policies of forced assimilation and destruction of Indian culture” (NCAI Resolution #TUL-05-087, 2005). The campaign has had only limited success. While some teams changed their names, hundreds of professional, college, and school teams still have names derived from stereotypes. Another group, American Indian Cultural Support (AICS) is especially concerned with such names at K–12 schools, grades where children should be gaining a fuller and more realistic understanding of Indigenous people than such stereotypes supply (2005).

What do you think about such names? Should they be allowed or banned? What argument would a symbolic interactionist make on this topic?

### *How and Why They Came*

The earliest humans in Canada arrived millennia before European immigrants. Dates of the migration are debated with estimates ranging from between 45,000 and 12,000 BCE. It is thought that people migrated to this new land from Asia in search of big game to hunt, which they found in huge herds of grazing herbivores in the Americas. Over the centuries and then the millennia, Indigenous cultures blossomed into an intricate web of hundreds of interconnected groups, each with its own customs, traditions, languages, and religions.

### *History of Intergroup Relations*

Indigenous cultures prior to European settlement are referred to as pre-contact or pre-Columbian. *Pre-Columbian* means prior to the 1492 accidental arrival of Christopher Columbus. Mistakenly believing that he had landed in the East Indies, Columbus called the Indigenous people *Indians*: a name that persisted for centuries despite being a mistake. That mistake lumped together over 500 distinct groups, all with their own languages and traditions.

The history of intergroup relations between European settlers and Indigenous peoples is brutal. As discussed in the section on genocide, European colonies nearly destroy the Indigenous population. And although Indigenous people's lack of immunity to European diseases caused the most deaths, overt mistreatment by Europeans was equally devastating.

The history of Indigenous relations with Europeans in Canada since the 16th century can be described in four stages (Patterson, 1972).

- In the first stage, the relationship was largely mutually beneficial and profitable as the Europeans relied on Indigenous groups for knowledge, food, and supplies. Indigenous groups traded for European technologies.
- In the second stage, however, Indigenous people were increasingly drawn into the European-centred economy, coming to rely on fur trading for their livelihood rather than their own indigenous economic activity. This resulted in diminishing autonomy and increasing subjugation economically, militarily, politically, and religiously.
- In the third stage, the reserve system was established, clearing the way for full-scale European colonization, resource exploitation, agriculture, and settlement. If Indigenous people tried to retain their stewardship of the land, Europeans fought them off with more powerful weapons. A key element is the Indigenous view of land and land ownership. Most First Nations cultures considered



Figure 8.11. Elders and Indigenous soldiers from the World War I Canadian Expeditionary Force. Seated in the middle is W. M. Graham, a Depart. of Indian Affairs official, who focused on preventing First Nations from “regressing” to their old traditions. He believed ceremonial dancing was an evil that only “demoralized the Indians” (Titley, 1983). (Photo courtesy of Library and Archives Canada/Wikimedia Commons).

the Earth a living entity whose resources they could respectfully steward; the concepts of land ownership and conquest did not exist in most Indigenous societies.

- The last stage of the relationship developed after World War II, when Indigenous Canadians began to mobilize politically to challenge oppressive conditions and forced assimilation. In this stage, Indigenous people developed political organizations and turned to the courts to fight for treaty rights and self-government.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was a turning point in Indigenous-European relations. The Proclamation established British rule over former French colonies, and set aside lands for First Nations peoples. It legally established that First Nations had sovereign rights to their territory. Although these were often disputed, challenged, or ignored by colonists, land speculators, and subsequent governments, these rights became the basis of contemporary treaty rights and negotiations.

The Indian Act of 1876 was another turning point. The Act attempted to codify and formalize the provisions of the Royal Proclamation and all other accumulated acts of government. The Indian Act was, however, a paternalistic “civilizing policy.” The care of the Indigenous population was placed under the control of the federal government until they could be assimilated into European culture.

Discrimination against Indigenous Canadians was institutionalized. As the deputy superintendent of Indian Affairs said in 1920, “Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department” (as cited in Leslie, 1978, p. 114). The Indian Act controlled everything in Indigenous life from who could be defined as an Indian, to the reserve and band council system, to the types of Indigenous activities that would no longer be permitted (*potlatch* and ceremonial dancing, for example).

Some of the most damaging provisions of the Indian Act and its amendments were:

- The prohibition against owning, acquiring, or “pre-empting” land
- The dismantling of traditional institutions of Indigenous government and the banning of ceremonial practices
- The imposition of the band council system, which was foreign to Indigenous tradition and powerless to make meaningful decisions without approval of the Department of Indian Affairs
- Denial of the power to allocate funds and resources
- The prohibition against hiring lawyers or seeking legal redress in pursuing land claims
- The denial of the right to vote municipally (until 1948), provincially (until 1949), and federally (until 1960) (Mathias & Yabsley, 1991)

Establishment of residential schools in the late 19th century further damaged Indigenous culture. These schools, run by Christian missionaries and the Canadian government, attempted to “civilize” Indigenous Canadian children and assimilate them into European society. The residential schools were located off-reserve to ensure that children were separated from their families and culture. Schools forced children to cut their hair, speak English or French, and practise Christianity. Education in the schools was usually substandard. Physical and sexual abuses were common; only in 1996 did the last of the residential schools close. In 2008 Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized for residential schools on behalf of the Canadian government. Many of the problems that Indigenous Canadians face today result from almost a century of traumatizing mistreatment at these residential schools.

### *Current Status*

In the 1960s, First Nations began to mobilize politically and intensify their demands for Indigenous rights. The Liberal government’s 1969 White Paper became a focus of Indigenous protest because it proposed to eliminate the Indian Act, the Department of Indian Affairs, and the concept of Indigenous rights altogether. First Nations people would be treated just like everyone else, as if the sovereign treaties and centuries of oppression had not occurred. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau declared, “No society can be built on historical might-have-beens” (as cited in Weaver, 1981, p. 55).



By the time of the repatriation of the Constitution in 1982, the government's position reversed, and the status of Indians, Inuit, and Métis were recognized, as were existing Indigenous and treaty rights.

However, Indigenous people still suffer the effects of centuries of discrimination. The income of Indigenous people in Canada is far lower than that of non-Indigenous people, and rates of child poverty are much greater. Even though the last residential school closed in 1996, many Indigenous people still face obstacles to high school completion. Long-term poverty, inadequate education resources, cultural dislocation, and high rates of unemployment create obstacles for Indigenous Canadians.

## Black Canadians

As discussed in the section on racialization, the term *Black Canadian* is often preferred to *African Canadian*. Many Canadians have roots in the Caribbean rather than roots among African slaves from the United States. They see themselves ethnically as Caribbean Canadians. Some recent immigrants from Africa may feel that they have more of a claim to the term *African Canadian* than those who are many generations removed from ancestors who originally came to this country.

Assumed commonality of the category *Black Canadians* is a function of racism. The Ontario Human Rights Commission describes people as “racialized person” or “racialized group” instead of the more outdated and inaccurate terms. The section below sometimes contains terminology from studies using older labels.

### *How and Why They Came*

The French in the 17th century brought some African slaves to Canada. At least 6 of the 16 legislators in English Upper Canada owned slaves (Mosher, 1998). The economic conditions in Canada did not encourage slavery, so the practice was not widespread. Nevertheless, it was not until 1834 that slavery was banned throughout the British Empire, including Canada.

Canada became the destination of the Underground Railroad, a secret network organized to transport escaped slaves to freedom. Between the American Revolution in 1776 and the end of the American Civil War in 1865, Canada received approximately 60,000 runaway slaves and Black Empire Loyalists from the United States. Around 10% of the Loyalists who came to Canada after the American Revolution were Black Loyalists (Walker, 1980). They were usually granted land much inferior to Loyalists of European heritage. Many returned to the United States after the Civil War, and by 1911 only about 17,000 remained in Canada (Mosher, 1998).

After immigration policy changes in the late 1960s, more people from the Caribbean immigrated to Canada. Before 1971, The category Black Canadian described less than 1% of the population (Li, 1996). In the 2011 census, 2.9% of the population and 15.1% of all visible minorities were described as Black (Statistics Canada, 2013). People with Caribbean origins make up the largest proportion, with nearly 40% having Jamaican heritage and 32% identifying heritage elsewhere in the Caribbean (Statistics Canada, 2007).

More recently, Somalis from Africa immigrated to Canada because of war. They represent the largest African immigrant group ever to come to Canada in such a short time (Abdulle, 1999).

### *History of Intergroup Relations*

Although slavery became illegal in Canada in 1834, informal practices of segregation led to discrimination throughout the 19th century. For example, while Blacks could vote and sit on juries, these rights were frequently denied. Ontario (outside of Toronto) and Nova Scotia legally segregated schools along racialized lines. Those laws remained until 1965 in Ontario and 1983 in Nova Scotia (Black History Canada, 2014).

Sometimes neighbourhoods were also segregated (Mosher 1998). Some racialized neighbourhoods were labeled as slums by nonresidents and destroyed. In the 1960s, for example, Halifax city councilors voted to relocate residents of the historic community of Africville as part of “urban renewal.” Africville was bulldozed between 1965 and 1970 without meaningful consultation with Africville residents. The NFB features a free online documentary about the community. In 2010, the government of Nova Scotia apologized to the Africville residents.



Figure 8.12. Africville Church, Nova Scotia, Canada by Hantsheroes via Wikimedia Commons. The church was reconstructed in 2011 as part of the province's Africville Apology.

Occupational choice was also restricted for Black Canadians in the first half of the 20th century. Employment was often limited to domestic work or railroad porters. For example, the father of Oscar Peterson, the famous jazz pianist, was a Canadian Pacific railroad porter in Montreal, while his mother was employed as a domestic worker (Library and Archives Canada, 2001). For most of the 20th century, Black Canadians were mostly employed in low-pay service jobs or as unskilled labour.

### *Current Status*

Although formal discrimination is illegal, true equality does not yet exist. The 2006 census shows that Black Canadians earned 75.6 cents for every dollar a white worker earned in Canada, or \$9,101 less per year. In 2006, 24% of Black individuals in families and 54% of single Black individuals lived in poverty (compared to 6.4% of individuals in white families and approximately 26% of single white individuals) (Block & Galabuzi, 2011).

In addition, Blacks are subject to greater degrees of *racial profiling* than other groups. Racial profiling refers to the practice of selecting specific racialized groups for greater levels of criminal justice surveillance. Despite police denials, Wortley and Tanner's study confirms that drivers perceived by Toronto police as Black are more frequently stopped, questioned, and searched by the police for “driving while being Black” violations than other groups (2004).

## Asian Canadians

Asian Canadians represent a great diversity of cultures and backgrounds. Asian immigrants arrived in Canada in waves, at different times, and for different reasons. The experience of a Japanese Canadian whose family has been in Canada for five generations will be different from a Laotian Canadian who has only been in Canada for a few years. This section discusses some of the experience of Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian immigrants.



Figure 8.13. Viola Desmond overcame barriers to become an entrepreneur, beautician and educator. Ms. Desmond challenged nonwritten segregation laws after she was arrested in a Nova Scotia movie theater in 1946. The film *Long Road to Justice* (YouTube) tells part of her story. Public Domain photo courtesy of Wikipedia Commons.



### *How and Why They Came*

The first Asian immigrants to Canada in the mid-19th century were Chinese. These immigrants were mostly men who wanted to work to support their families in China. Their first destination was the Fraser Canyon for the 1858 gold rush. Many of these Chinese came north from California. The second major wave of Chinese immigration arrived for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway when contractors recruited thousands of workers from Taiwan and China. Chinese labourers were paid approximately a third of what white, Black, and Indigenous workers were paid. Chinese labourers were used to complete the most difficult sections of track, living under squalid and dangerous conditions: More than 600 Chinese workers died during the construction. Chinese men also engaged in other manual labour like mining, laundry, cooking, canning, and agricultural work. The work was grueling and underpaid, but like many immigrants they persevered (Chan, 2013).

The first wave of Japanese immigrants in 1887 were, like the first Chinese immigrants, mostly men. They came from fishing and farming backgrounds in the southern Japanese islands. They settled in Japantowns in Victoria and Vancouver, as well as in the Fraser Valley and small towns along the Pacific coast where they worked mostly in fishing, farming, and logging. Like the Chinese settlers, they were paid much less than workers from European backgrounds and were usually hired for menial labour or heavy agricultural work. With restrictions imposed on the immigration of Japanese men after 1907, most of the early Japanese immigrants after 1907 were women, either the wives or betrothed of Japanese immigrants (Sunahara & Oikawa, 2011).

South Asians refer to a diverse group of people with different ethnic backgrounds in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. The first South Asians in Canada were Sikhs from the Punjab region of India. The first group of Sikhs arrived in Vancouver in 1904 from Hong Kong, attracted by stories of high wages from British Indian troops who had travelled through Canada (Buchignani, 2010). They were encouraged by Hong Kong-based agents of the Canadian Pacific Railway who had seen travel on their passenger liners plummet with the head tax imposed on Chinese immigration.

Most of the first Sikhs in Canada arrived via Hong Kong or Malaysia, where the British had typically employed them as policemen, watchmen, and caretakers. They were originally from rural areas of Punjab and mortgaged their properties for passage in exchange for the prospect of sending money home. Many arrived in Canada unable to speak English but eventually found employment in mills, factories, the railway, and Okanagan orchards (Johnston, 1989). By 1908 there were over 5,000 South Asians in British Columbia, 90% of them Sikh. (Buchignani, 2010).

### *History of Intergroup Relations*

Asian Canadians were subject to particularly harsh racism in the 19th and 20th centuries. The 1902 Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration declared that the Japanese and Chinese were “unfit for full citizenship. They are so nearly allied to a servile class that they are obnoxious to a free community and dangerous to the state” (CBC, 2001).

The right of Asians to vote, own property, and seek employment, and their ability to immigrate and integrate into Canadian society were severely restricted. This disenfranchisement prevented these groups from having access to political office, jury duty, the professions like law, civil service jobs, underground mining jobs, and labour on public works—these all required being on provincial voters’ lists. Voting rights were only returned to Chinese and South Asian Canadians in 1947 and to Japanese Canadians in 1949, whereas immigration restrictions were not removed until the 1960s.

The imposition of “head taxes” of \$50 in 1885 and \$500 in 1903 were attempts to restrict Chinese immigration. The Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act included discriminatory laws that marked the Chinese as unwanted immigrants to Canada from 1885 to 1947.

For similar reasons, the immigration of Japanese men was restricted to 400 a year after 1907, and further reduced to 150 individuals a year after 1928. Their success in the fishing industry led the federal fisheries department to reduce Japanese trolling licenses by one-third in 1922. They, like the Chinese, were also subject to “yellow peril” hysteria. When the Japanese, many veterans of the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, successfully defended their community against white supremacist mobs in the 1907 anti-Asian riots in Vancouver, they were accused of smuggling a secret army into Canada (Sunahara & Oikawa, 2011). An even uglier action was the establishment of Japanese internment camps of World War II, discussed earlier as an illustration of expulsion.



Figure 8.14. A Chinese head tax receipt for \$500 issued on August 2, 1918. (Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons).

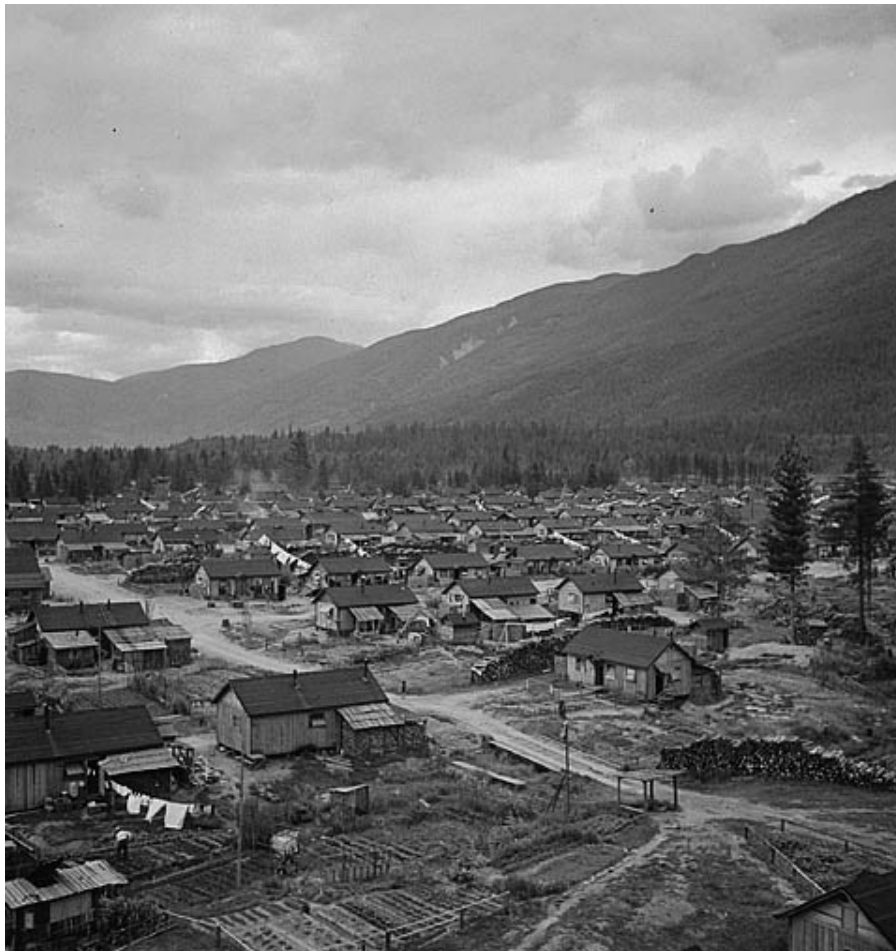


Figure 8.15. Japanese internment camp in British Columbia. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons/Jack Long)

Of the three groups, South Asians were the most recent to arrive. However, by 1908 the large number of arrivals led to the imposition of immigration restrictions. South Asians were British subjects, so restrictions took a more devious form, however. Immigrants from South Asia were obliged to possess at least \$200 on arrival (very challenging considering that in British India they might be able to earn 10 to 20 cents a day), and they had to arrive in Canada by continuous passage from India. The government then put pressure on steamship companies not to sell direct through-passage tickets from Indian ports.

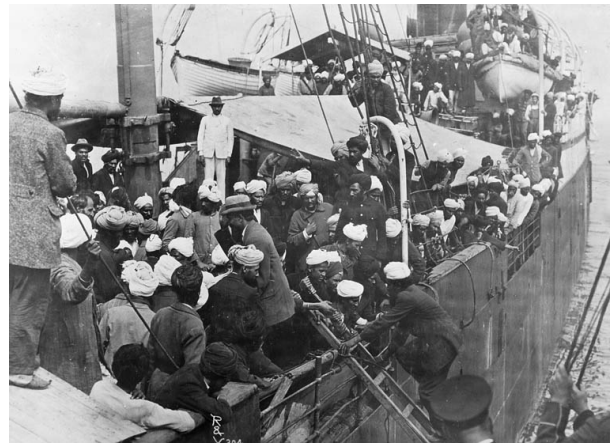


Figure 8.16. South Asians aboard the Komagata Maru in English Bay, Vancouver, in 1914. (Photo courtesy of Library and Archives Canada/Wikimedia Commons).

### *Current Status*

Asian Canadians faced racial prejudice, despite a seemingly positive stereotype today as a model minority.

The model minority stereotype is applied to a minority group that is seen as reaching significant educational, professional, and socioeconomic levels without challenging the existing establishment. This stereotype can result in unrealistic expectations, putting a stigma on members of this group that don't meet the expectations. Stereotyping all Asians as smart, industrious, and capable can also lead to a lack of much-needed government assistance or discrimination. Asian Canadians also face a stereotype that they are passive, lack communication skills, are "techies," or not "real" Canadians.

## **Chapter Summary**

### **Racialization, Ethnicity, and Minority Groups**

Race is a social construct. Ethnicity is a term that describes shared culture and national origin. Minority groups are defined in sociology by their lack of power.

### **Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination**

Stereotypes are oversimplified ideas about groups of people. Prejudice refers to thoughts and feelings, while discrimination refers to actions. Racism refers to the belief that one group is inherently superior or inferior to other races.

### **Intergroup Relations and the Management of Diversity**

Intergroup relations range from celebrating diversity to intolerance as severe as genocide. In pluralism, groups retain their own identity. In assimilation, groups conform to the identity of the dominant group.

### **Racism and Discrimination in Canada**

From Indigenous people who first inhabited these lands to the waves of immigrants over the past 500 years, migration is an experience with many shared characteristics. Most groups have experienced various degrees of prejudice and discrimination.

## Key Terms

**assimilation:** The process by which a minority individual or group takes on the characteristics of the dominant culture.

**conquest:** The forcible subjugation of territory and people by military action. **discrimination:** Prejudiced action against a group of people.

**diversity:** difference in abilities, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, physical characteristics, religion, sexual orientation, and values.

**dominant group:** A group of people who have more power in a society than any of the subordinate groups.

**ethical relativism:** The idea that all cultures and all cultural practices have equal value. **ethnicity:** Shared culture, which may include heritage, language, religion, and more.

**expulsion:** When a dominant group forces a subordinate group to leave a certain area or the country.

**genocide:** The deliberate annihilation of a targeted (usually subordinate) group.

**group-specific rights:** Rights conferred on individuals by their membership in a group.

**institutional racism:** When a societal system has developed with an embedded disenfranchisement of a group.

**minority group:** Any group of people who are singled out from others for differential and unequal treatment.

**model minority:** The stereotype applied to a minority group that is seen as reaching higher educational, professional, and socioeconomic levels without protest against the majority establishment.

**multiculturalism:** The recognition of cultural and racial diversity and of the equality of different cultures.

**prejudice:** Biased thought based on flawed assumptions about a group of people.

**racial profiling:** The selection of individuals for greater surveillance, policing, or treatment on the basis of racialized characteristics.

**racial steering:** When real estate agents direct prospective homeowners toward or away from certain neighbourhoods based on their race.

**racialization:** The social process by which certain social groups are marked for unequal treatment based on perceived physiological differences.

**racism:** A set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices used to justify the belief that one racial category is somehow superior or inferior to others.

**scapegoat theory:** A theory stating that the dominant group will displace its unfocused aggression onto a subordinate group.

**segregation:** The physical separation of two groups, particularly in residence, but also in workplace and social functions.

**settler society:** A society historically based on colonization through foreign settlement and displacement of Aboriginal inhabitants.

**stereotypes:** Oversimplified ideas about groups of people.

**strategy for the management of diversity:** The systematic methods used to resolve conflicts, or potential conflicts, between groups that arise based on perceived differences.

**subordinate group:** A group of people who have less power than the dominant group.

**white privilege:** The benefits people receive simply by being part of the dominant group.

**visible minority:** Persons, other than Indigenous persons, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. Many disagree with the use of this label, including the UN and the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

## Chapter Quiz

### 8.1. Racialization, Ethnicity, and Minority Groups

1. The racial term “black Canadian” can refer to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. A black person living in Canada
  - b. People whose ancestors came to Canada through the slave trade
  - c. A white person who originated in Africa and now lives in Canada
  - d. Any of the above
2. What is the one defining feature of a minority group?
  - a. Self-definition
  - b. Numerical minority
  - c. Lack of power
  - d. Strong cultural identity
3. Ethnicity describes shared \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Beliefs
  - b. Language
  - c. Religion
  - d. Any of the above
4. Which of the following is an example of a numerical majority being treated as a subordinate group?
  - a. Jewish people in Germany
  - b. Creoles in New Orleans

- c. White people in Brazil
- d. Blacks under apartheid in South Africa

5. Scapegoat theory shows that \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Subordinate groups blame dominant groups for their problems.
  - b. Dominant groups blame subordinate groups for their problems.
  - c. Some people are predisposed to prejudice.
  - d. All of the above.

## 8.2. Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

6. Stereotypes can be based on \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Race.
  - b. Ethnicity.
  - c. Gender.
  - d. All of the above.
7. What is discrimination?
- a. Biased thoughts against an individual or group
  - b. Biased actions against an individual or group
  - c. Belief that a race different from yours is inferior
  - d. Another word for stereotyping
8. A Caucasian in Canada will probably deal with authority Images of the same category as them. This is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Intersection theory
  - b. Conflict theory
  - c. White privilege
  - d. Multiculturalism
9. The Speedy Gonzales Loonie Toons cartoon character (a small Mexican speaking heavily accented English, wearing a big sombrero) is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Intersection theory
  - b. Stereotyping
  - c. Interactionist view

## 8.3. Intergroup Relations and the Management of Diversity



10. Which intergroup relation displays the least tolerance?
  - a. Segregation
  - b. Assimilation
  - c. Genocide
  - d. Expulsion
11. What doctrine justified legal segregation in the American South?
  - a. Jim Crow
  - b. *Plessey v. Ferguson*
  - c. *De jure*
  - d. Separate but equal
12. What intergroup relationship is represented by the “mosaic” metaphor?
  - a. Assimilation
  - b. Pluralism
  - c. Expulsion
  - d. Segregation
13. Assimilation is represented by the \_\_\_\_\_ metaphor.
  - a. Melting pot
  - b. Mosaic
  - c. Salad bowl
  - d. Separate but equal

#### 8.4. Racism and Discrimination in Canada

14. What makes aboriginal Canadians unique as a subordinate group in Canada?
  - a. They are the only group that experienced expulsion.
  - b. They are the only group that was segregated.
  - c. They are the only group that was enslaved.
  - d. They are the only group that did not come here as immigrants.
15. Which subordinate group is often referred to as the “model minority?”

- a. Black Canadians
- b. Asian Canadians
- c. White ethnic Canadians
- d. First Nations

[Quiz answers at end of chapter]

## Short Answer

### 8.1. Racialization, Ethnicity, and Minority Groups

How do you describe your ethnicity? Do you include your family's country of origin? Do you consider yourself multiethnic? How does your ethnicity compare to that of the people you spend most of your time with?

### 8.2. Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

1. How does stereotyping contribute to institutionalized racism?
2. Give an example of stereotyping that you see in everyday life. Explain what would need to happen for this to be eliminated.

### 8.3. Intergroup Relations and the Management of Diversity

1. Do you believe immigration laws should foster pluralism, assimilation, or multiculturalism? Which perspective do you think is most supported by current Canadian immigration policies?
2. Which intergroup relation do you think is the most beneficial to the subordinate group? To society as a whole? Why?

## Further Research

### 8.1. Racialization, Ethnicity, and Minority Groups

Explore PBS's site, *Race: The power of an illusion*: [http://www.pbs.org/race/002\\_SortingPeople/002\\_00-home.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/002_SortingPeople/002_00-home.htm)

### 8.2. Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

How far should multicultural rights extend? Read more about multiculturalism in a world perspective at the Multiculturalism Policies in Contemporary Democracies website: <http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/home>

Do you know someone who practises white privilege? Do you practise it? Explore the concept with this white privilege checklist [PDF] to see how much of it holds true for you or others: [http://www.sap.mit.edu/content/pdf/white\\_privilege\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.sap.mit.edu/content/pdf/white_privilege_checklist.pdf)

### 8.3. Intergroup Relations and the Management of Diversity

So you think you know your own assumptions? Check and find out with the Implicit Association Test:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/canada/takeatest.html>

#### 8.4. Racism and Discrimination in Canada

Are people interested in reclaiming their ethnic identities? Read this article and decide: “The White Ethnic Revival”: <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/23824>

## References

### 8. Introduction

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### Solutions to Chapter Quiz

1 d, | 2 c, | 3 d, | 4 d, | 5 b, | 6 d, | 7 b, | 8 c, | 9 b, | 10 c, | 11 a, |  
12 b, | 13 a, | 14 d, | 15 b

[9]

## Deviance



Figure 9.1. Pencils. Deviance in sociology may not be what you think! Photo courtesy of constancemc/Flickr.

## Learning Objectives

### 9.1. Deviance, Crime and Control

- Define deviance and categorize different types of deviant behaviour.
- Determine why certain behaviours are defined as deviant while others are not.
- Differentiate between different methods of social control.
- Understand social control as forms of government including penal social control, discipline, and risk management.

### 9.2. Crime and the Law

- Identify and differentiate between different types of crimes.
- Differentiate the different sources of crime statistics, and examine the falling rate of crime in Canada.
- Examine the overrepresentation of different minorities in the corrections system in Canada.
- Examine alternatives to prison.

## Introduction to Deviance, Crime, and Social Control

Psychopaths and sociopaths are favourite “deviants” in pop culture: *American Psycho*, Hannibal Lecter, *Dexter*. Dangerous individuals provide fascinating fictional characters. Psychopathy and sociopathy both refer to personality disorders involving anti-social behaviour, diminished empathy and lack of inhibitions. These categories should be distinguished from psychosis, which is a condition involving a debilitating break with reality.

Psychopaths and sociopaths are often able to pass as “normal” citizens, although their manipulation and cruelty can have devastating consequences. The term **psychopathy** is often used to emphasize that the source of the disorder is internal, based on psychological, biological, or genetic factors. **Sociopathy** is used to emphasize predominant social factors in the disorder: social or familial roots and the inability to be social or abide by societal rules (Hare, 1999). In this sense, sociopathy would be a sociological disease. It involves an incapacity for companionship, although many accounts of sociopaths describe them as acting charming, attractively confident, and outgoing (Hare, 1999).

In a society with mostly secondary rather than primary relationships, the pop culture sociopath or psychopath functions as an example of social unease. The sociopath is portrayed as the nice neighbour next door who one day “goes off” or is revealed to have an evil second life. In many ways, the sociopath represents our anxieties about the loss of community and living among people we do not know. In this sense, the sociopath is a very modern sort of deviant.

In sociology, however, deviance has a much broader meaning.

## 9.1. Deviance, Crime and Control

What is deviance? What is the relationship between deviance and crime? According to sociologist William Graham Sumner, **deviance** is a violation of cultural or social norms or codified law (1906). Codified **laws** are norms that are written in formal codes enforced by government bodies. A **crime** is an act of deviance that breaks not only a norm, but a law. Deviance can be as minor as nose picking in public or as major as murder.

John Hagen classifies deviant acts in terms of their perceived harmfulness and the severity of the response to them (1994). The most serious acts of deviance are **consensus crimes**. There is near-unanimous public agreement about consensus crimes. Acts like murder and sexual assault are usually regarded as morally intolerable, injurious, and subject to harsh penalties.

**Conflict crimes** are acts like prostitution or smoking cannabis. Such acts may be illegal but there is considerable public disagreement concerning their seriousness.

**Social deviations** are acts like abusing serving staff or behaviours arising from mental illness or addiction. Social deviations are not illegal in themselves but are widely regarded as serious or harmful. People often agree that these behaviours call for institutional intervention.

Finally there are **social diversions** like riding skateboards on sidewalks or facial piercings or tattoos that may be regarded as distasteful to many, or for others cool, but harmless.

“What is deviant behaviour?” cannot be answered simply. No act or person is *intrinsically* deviant. The sociological approach to deviance differs from moral and legalistic approaches to deviance in two important ways:

**First, deviance is defined by social context.** To understand why some acts are deviant and some are not, their context, the existing rules, and how these rules developed need to be understood. If the rules change, what counts as deviant also changes. Because norms vary across cultures and time, ideas about deviance also change.

Fifty years ago, public schools in Canada had strict dress codes that banned women from wearing pants to class. Today, it is socially acceptable for women to wear pants, but less so for men to wear skirts. In wartime, acts usually considered morally wrong, such as killing, may be rewarded. Much of the confusion and ambiguity about hockey violence involves the different sets of norms for inside and outside the arena. Acts that are acceptable and even encouraged on ice would be punished with jail time if they occurred on the street.

The second sociological insight is that **deviance is not an intrinsic (biological or psychological) attribute of individuals.** Deviance is also not intrinsic to an act. Deviance is a product of social processes. Acts themselves are not deviant. Whether an act is deviant or not depends on society’s definition. The norms themselves, or the social contexts that determine which acts are deviant or not, are continually defined and redefined through ongoing social processes—political, legal, cultural, etc. One way in which certain activities or people become defined as deviant is through the intervention of moral entrepreneurs.



Figure 9.2. Much of the appeal of watching entertainers perform in drag comes from the humour inherent in seeing everyday norms violated. (Photo courtesy of Cassiopeiya/Wikimedia Commons)

Howard Becker defined **moral entrepreneurs** as individuals or groups who, in their own interests, publicize and problematize “wrongdoing.” Moral entrepreneurs have the power to create and enforce rules to punish wrongdoing (1963). Although Judge Emily Murphy is one of the Famous Five feminist suffragists who fought to have women legally recognized as “persons,” she was also a moral entrepreneur important in changing Canada’s drug laws. In 1922 she wrote *The Black Candle* which demonized the use of cannabis:

[Cannabis] has the effect of driving the [user] completely insane. The addict loses all sense of moral responsibility.

Addicts to this drug, while under its influence, are immune to pain, and could be severely injured without having any realization of their condition. While in this condition they become raving maniacs and are liable to kill or indulge in any form of violence to other persons, using the most savage methods of cruelty without, as said before, any sense of moral responsibility.... They are dispossessed of their natural and normal will power, and their mentality is that of idiots. If this drug is indulged in to any great extent, it ends in the untimely death of its addict. (Murphy, 1922)

Moral entrepreneurs can create **moral panic** about activities they deem deviant like cannabis use. A moral panic occurs when media-fuelled public fear lead authorities to label and repress deviants, which in turn creates a cycle in which more acts of deviance are discovered, more fear is generated, and more suppression occurs. Individuals’ deviant status is **ascribed to them through social processes**. Individuals are not born deviant, but become deviant through their interaction with groups, institutions, and authorities.

Through social interaction, individuals are **labelled** deviant or come to recognize themselves as deviant. For example, up until the 19th century, the law was mostly indifferent about who slept with whom, except where it related to marriage or property inheritance. However, in the 19th century sexuality became a matter of moral, legal, and psychological concern. The homosexual, or “sexual invert,” was defined by emerging psychiatric and biological disciplines as a psychological deviant whose instincts were contrary to nature.

In the 19th century, homosexuality was defined as a dangerous quality that defined the entire personality and moral being of an individual (Foucault, 1980). From that point until the late 1960s, homosexuality was regarded as a deviant activity that could result in legal prosecution, moral condemnation, ostracism, violent assault, and loss of career. Since then, the LGBTQ rights movement and constitutional protections of civil liberties have reversed many of the attitudes and legal structures that led to the prosecution of gays, lesbians, and transgendered people. Homosexuality as deviance was the outcome of a social process.

The symbolic interactionist approach in sociology discusses **labelling theory**: individuals become criminalized through contact with the **criminal justice system** (Becker, 1963). Prison, for example, influences individual behaviour and self-understanding, but often not in the way intended. Prisons are agents of socialization. The act of imprisonment modifies individual behaviour to make individuals more criminal. Sociological research into the social characteristics of those who encounter the criminal justice system shows that variables such as gender, age, race, and class make it more likely individuals will be processed as criminals. Social variables and power structures help us understand who becomes a criminal.

Understanding the social construction of experience leads to alternative ways of understanding and responding to issues. In studying crime and deviance, sociologists confront beliefs about a “criminal personality.”

Classifying people is a social process that Hacking called “making up people” (2006). Howard Becker called it “labelling” (1963). Crime and deviance are social constructs that vary according to

- definitions of crime
- forms and effectiveness of policing
- social characteristics of deviants
- power relations that structure society.



The social process of labelling people or activities as deviant limits the type of social responses available. Labels can be arbitrary, and the choice of label has consequences. Who gets labelled what by whom has powerful social consequences. The sociological imagination can address crime and deviance both at the individual and social levels. A deeper understanding of the social factors that produce crime and deviance allows development of more effective prevention strategies.

## Making Connections: Sociology in the Real World

### Why I Drive a Hearse

When Neil Young left Canada in 1966 to seek his fortune in California as a musician, he was driving his famous 1953 Pontiac hearse, Mort 2. While driving the hearse in Hollywood, he saw Stephen Stills and Richie Furay driving the other way, a fortunate encounter that led to the formation of Buffalo Springfield (McDonough, 2002). Later Young wrote the song Long May You Run as an elegy to his first hearse, Mort.

Rock musicians are often noted for their eccentricities, but is driving a hearse deviant behaviour? When sociologist Todd Schoepflin met his friend, Bill, who drove a hearse, Schoepflin wondered what effect driving a hearse had on his friend, and what effect it had on others. Would using a hearse be considered deviant by most people? Schoepflin interviewed Bill. Bill had simply been on the lookout for a reliable winter car. On a tight budget, he searched used car ads and found the hearse. He bought the vehicle because it worked well and was inexpensive.

Bill admitted that others' reactions to the car had been mixed. His parents were horrified, and some coworkers stared. A mechanic refused to work on it, stating that it was "a dead person machine." Bill received mostly positive reactions, however. Strangers gave him a thumbs-up on the highway and stopped him in parking lots to chat about his car. His girlfriend loved it; his friends wanted to borrow it; and people offered to buy it.

Could it be that driving a hearse isn't deviant? Schoepflin theorized that, although outside conventional norms, driving a hearse is such a mild form of deviance that it becomes a mark of distinction.

Conformists find the choice of vehicle intriguing, while nonconformists see a fellow oddball. As one of Bill's friends remarked, "Every guy wants to own a unique car." Such stories remind us that although deviance is often viewed as a violation of norms, it's not always seen in a negative light (Schoepflin, 2011).



Figure 9.3. How would you view the owner of this car? Photo courtesy of Ray Barnea/Flickr

## Social Control as Sanction

When a person violates a social norm, what happens? A driver caught speeding can receive a speeding

ticket. A student who texts in class gets a warning. An adult belching loudly is avoided. All societies practise **social control**, the enforcement of norms. Social control is an organized action intended to change people's behaviour (Innes, 2003). Social control aims to maintain **social order**, practices and behaviours on which society's members base their daily lives. Think of social order as an employee handbook, and social control as the incentives and disincentives used to encourage or oblige employees to follow those rules. When a worker violates a workplace guideline, the manager steps in to enforce the rules.

**Sanctions** are way to enforce rules. Sanctions can be positive as well as negative: **Positive sanctions** are rewards given for conforming to norms. A promotion at work is a positive sanction for working hard. **Negative sanctions** are punishments for violating norms. Being arrested is a punishment for shoplifting. Both types of sanctions play a role in social control.

Sociologists also classify sanctions as formal or informal. Shoplifting, a form of social deviance is illegal, but there are no laws dictating the proper way to scratch one's nose. That doesn't mean picking your nose in public won't be punished; instead, there are **informal sanctions**. Informal sanctions emerge in face-to-face social interactions. For example, wearing flip-flops to a formal dinner or swearing loudly in church may draw disapproving looks or even verbal reprimands, but behaviour that is seen as positive — such as helping an old man carry grocery bags across the street—may receive positive informal sanctions, such as a smile or pat on the back.

**Formal sanctions**, on the other hand, are ways to officially recognize and enforce norm violations. A student caught plagiarizing or cheating on an exam, for example, might be expelled. Someone who speaks inappropriately to the boss could be fired. Someone who commits a crime may be arrested. On the positive side, a soldier who saves a life may receive an official commendation, or a manager might receive a bonus for increasing departmental productivity.

## Social Control as Government and Discipline

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) notes that European society became increasingly concerned with social control as a government practice (Foucault, 2007). In this sense, government doesn't simply mean activities of the state, but all the practices by which individuals or organizations govern the behaviour of others or themselves. **Government** refers to the strategies which seek to guide the conduct of another or others.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, many books were written on how to govern and educate children, how to govern the poor and beggars, how to govern a family or an estate, how to govern an army or a city, how to govern a state and run an economy, and how to govern one's own conscience and conduct. These books described the growing art of government, which defined different ways to direct the conduct of individuals or groups.

Early guides to governing often just extended Christian monastic practices about government and salvation of souls. People needed to be governed in all aspects of their lives. The 19th century invention of modern institutions like the prison, public school, modern army, asylum, hospital, and factory organized ways of government and social control through the entire population.

Foucault (1979) describes these modern forms of government as **disciplinary social control** because they rely on detailed continuous training, control and observation of individuals. **Disciplinary social control** transforms

- criminals into law-abiding citizens,
- children into educated and productive adults,
- recruits into disciplined soldiers,

- patients into healthy people, etc.

The ideal of discipline as social control is to make individuals compliant (Foucault 1979). That does not mean they become passive or sheep-like, but that disciplinary training increases their abilities, skills, and usefulness while making them more compliant.



Figure 9.4. Presidio Modelo prison, Cuba, built between 1926 and 1928 was based on Bentham's panopticon design. (Photo courtesy of Friman/Wikimedia Commons)

The chief parts of disciplinary social control in modern institutions like prison and school are surveillance, normalization, and examination (Foucault, 1979). **Surveillance** refers to ways to make the lives and activities of individuals visible to authorities. In 1791, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) published his book on the ideal prison, the “seeing machine.” Prisoners’ cells would be arranged in a circle around a central observation tower where they could be both separated from each other and continually in view of prison guards. In this way social control could become automatic because prisoners would need to monitor and control their own behaviour or face sanctions.

Similarly, in a traditional classroom, students sit in rows of desks visible to the teacher at the front of the room. In a store, shoppers can be observed through one-way glass or video monitors. Contemporary surveillance expands capacity for observation electronically, making activities of a population visible. London, England holds the dubious honour of the most surveilled city in the world. The city’s “ring of steel” is a security cordon in which over half a million surveillance cameras monitor and record traffic moving in and out of the city centre.

The practice of **normalization** refers to the way norms, such as the level of math ability expected from a grade 2 student, are first established and then used to assess, differentiate, and rank individuals according to their abilities (e.g., as an A student, B student, C student, etc.). Individuals’ progress, whether in math skills, good prison behaviour, health outcomes, or other areas, is established through constant comparisons with others. Minor sanctions are used to modify noncompliant behaviour. Rewards are applied for good behaviour and penalties for bad.

Periodic **examinations** through testing in schools, medical examinations in hospitals, inspections in prisons, year-end reviews in the workplace, etc. bring together surveillance and normalization in a way that allows individuals to be assessed, documented, and known by authorities. Based on examinations, individuals can receive different disciplinary procedures. Gifted children might receive an enriched educational program; weaker students might receive remedial lessons.



Formal laws, **courts**, and the **police** intervene when laws are broken, but disciplinary techniques allow continuous social control of activities through surveillance, normalization, and examination. While we may never break a law, if we work, go to school or hospital, we are routinely subject to disciplinary control through most of the day.

## Social Control as Risk Management

Some recent types of social control adopt a **risk management** model for some problematic behaviours. Risk management refers to interventions designed to reduce the likelihood of undesirable events occurring based on risk probability. Risk management is unlike the crime and punishment model of penal social sanctions or the rehabilitation, training, or therapeutic models of disciplinary social control. Risk management strategies do not control individual deviants. Risk management strategies attempt to restructure the environment of problematic behaviour to minimize the risks to the general population.



Figure 9.5. The contents of a needle exchange kit. Image courtesy of Todd Huffman/Flickr

For example, the public health model for controlling intravenous drug use does not focus on criminalizing drug use or making users to “kick drugs” (O’Malley, 1998). It recognizes that fines or imprisonment do not curtail drug use, and that therapeutic rehabilitation of drug use is not only expensive but unlikely to succeed unless drug users are willing. Instead, the public health model calculates the risk of deaths from drug overdoses and the danger to the general population from the transmission of disease (like HIV and hepatitis C). It then attempts to modify the riskiest behaviours through targeted interventions. Programs like needle exchanges (designed to prevent the sharing of needles) or safe-injection-sites (designed to provide sanitary conditions for drug injection and immediate medical services for overdoses) do not *prevent* addicts from using drugs but *minimize* the harms resulting from drug use by modifying the environment in which drugs are injected. Reducing risks to public health is the priority of the public health model.

In the case of crime, the **new penology** strategies of social control are also less concerned with criminal responsibility, moral condemnation, or rehabilitative intervention (Feely & Simon, 1992). **New penology** strategies identify, classify, and manage groupings of offenders sorted by the degree of dangerousness they represent to the public. In this way, imprisonment is used to incapacitate those who represent a significant risk, but probation and various levels of surveillance are used for those who represent a lower risk. Examples include sex offender tracking and monitoring, or the use of electronic monitoring ankle bracelets for low-risk offenders. New penology strategies seek to regulate levels of deviance, not intervene or respond to individual deviants or the social determinants of crime.

Similarly, **situational crime control** redesigns spaces where crimes or deviance could occur to minimize the risk of crimes occurring (Garland, 1996). Using alarm systems, CCTV surveillance cameras, adding or improving lighting, broadcasting irritating sounds, or making street furniture uncomfortable are all ways of working on the cost/benefit analysis of potential deviants or criminals before they act, rather than acting directly on the deviants or criminals themselves.

## 9.2. Crime and the Law

The sociological study of crime, deviance, and social control is especially important for public policy debates. In 2012 the Conservative government passed the Safe Streets and Communities Act, a controversial piece of legislation because it introduced mandatory minimum sentences for certain drug or sex related offences, restricted the use of conditional sentencing (non-prison punishments), imposed harsher sentences on certain categories of young offender, reduced the ability for Canadians with a criminal record to receive a pardon, and made it more difficult for Canadians imprisoned abroad to transfer back to a Canadian prison to be near family and support networks. The legislation imposed a mandatory six-month sentence for cultivating six cannabis plants, for example. This followed the Tackling Violent Crime Act passed in 2008, which, among other provisions, imposed a mandatory three-year sentence for first-time gun-related offences.

This government policy represented a shift toward a punitive approach to crime control and away from preventive strategies such as drug rehabilitation, prison diversion, and social reintegration programs. Despite the evidence that rates of serious and violent crime have been falling in Canada, and while even some U.S. conservative politician have begun to reject the punitive approach as an expensive failure, the government pushed the legislation through Parliament. In response to evidence that questions the need for more punitive measures of crime control, then Justice Minister Rob Nicholson said, “Unlike the Opposition, we do not use statistics as an excuse not to get tough on criminals. As far as our Government is concerned, one victim of crime is still one too many” (Galloway, 2011).

What accounts for the appeal of “get tough on criminals” policies at a time when crime rates are falling and at their lowest level since 1972 (Perreault, 2013)? One reason is that violent crime is a form of deviance that lends itself to spectacular media coverage. Such coverage distorts the actual public threat.

Television news frequently begins with “chaos news” — crime, accidents, natural disasters — that present an image of society as a dangerous and unpredictable. However, this image of crime doesn’t accurately represent the types of crime that occur. The news typically reports on the worst sorts of violent crime, but violent crime made up only 21 percent of all police-reported crime in 2012 (down 17 percent from 2002). Homicides made up only one-tenth of 1 percent of all violent crimes in 2012 (down 16 percent from 2002). In 2012, the homicide rate fell to its lowest level since 1966 (Perreault, 2013). Moreover, an analysis of television news reporting on murders in 2000 showed that while 44 percent of CBC news coverage and 48 percent of CTV news coverage focused on murders committed by strangers, only 12 percent of murders in Canada are committed by strangers. Similarly, while 24 percent of the CBC reports and 22 percent of the CTV reports referred to murders in which a gun had been used, only 3.3 percent of all violent crime involved a gun in 1999. In 1999, 71 percent of violent crimes in Canada did not involve any weapon (Miljan, 2001).

This distortion creates the conditions for **moral panic** around crime. As we noted earlier, a moral panic occurs when a relatively minor or atypical situation of deviance is amplified and distorted by the media, police, or members of the public. The deviance becomes defined as a general threat to society (Cohen, 1972). Public attention focusses the situation, so more instances are discovered, the deviants are rebranded as “folk devils,” and authorities react by taking social control measures disproportionate to the acts of deviance.

For example, the implementation of mandatory minimum sentences for the cannabis cultivation in the Safe Streets and Communities legislation was said to be in response to the infiltration of organized crime into Canada. For years newspapers uncritically published stories on the cannabis trade, describing it as widespread, gang-related, and linked to the cross-border trade in guns and more serious drugs like heroin. Television news coverage often shows police in white, disposable hazardous-waste outfits removing cannabis plants from suburban houses, and presents exaggerated estimates of street value.

However, a 2011 Justice Department study revealed that out of a random sample of 500 grow-ops, only 5 percent had connections to organized crime. A 2005 RCMP-funded study noted that “firearms or other hazards” were found in only 6 percent of grow-op cases examined (Boyd & Carter, 2014). While 76 percent of Canadians believe that cannabis should be legally available (Stockwell et al., 2006), and several jurisdictions have legalized cannabis, the Safe Streets and Communities Act tried to reinvigorate the punitive messaging of the “war on drugs” based on disinformation and moral panic.

## What Is Crime?

Although deviance is a violation of social norms, it is not always punishable, and it is not necessarily bad. Crime, on the other hand, is a behaviour that violates official law and is punishable through formal sanctions. Walking to class backwards is a deviant behaviour. Driving with a high blood alcohol level is a crime. Like other forms of deviance, however, ambiguity exists concerning what constitutes a crime and whether all crimes are, in fact, “bad” and deserve punishment. For example, in 1946 Viola Desmond refused to sit in the balcony designated for blacks at a cinema in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. She was dragged from the cinema by two men. She was then arrested, obliged to stay overnight in the male cell block, tried without counsel, and fined.

The courts ignored the issue of racial segregation in Canada. Instead her crime was said to be tax evasion because she had not paid the 1 cent difference in tax between a balcony ticket and a main floor ticket. She took her case to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia where she lost. Long after her death, she was posthumously pardoned because the application of the law was clearly in violation of norms of social equality.

All societies have informal and formal ways of maintaining social control. Within these systems of norms, societies have **legal codes** that maintain formal social control through laws, which are rules adopted and enforced by a political authority. Those who violate these rules incur negative formal sanctions. Normally, punishments are relative to the degree of the crime and the importance to society of the value underlying the law. However, there are other factors that influence criminal sentencing.

## Types of Crimes

Not all crimes are given equal weight. Society socializes its members to view certain crimes as more severe than others. For example, most people consider murdering someone to be far worse than stealing a wallet. They expect a murderer to be punished more severely than a thief. In modern North American society, crimes are classified as one of two types based on their severity. **Violent crimes** (also known as “crimes against a person”) are based on the use of force or the threat of force. Rape, murder, and armed robbery fall under this category. **Nonviolent crimes** involve the destruction or theft of property, but do not use force or the threat of force. They are also sometimes called “property crimes.” Larceny, car theft, and vandalism are all types of nonviolent crimes. If you use a crowbar to break into a car, you are committing a nonviolent crime; if you mug someone with the crowbar, you are committing a violent crime.

When we think of crime, we often picture **street crime**, or offences committed by ordinary people against other people or organizations, usually in public spaces. We often overlook **corporate crime**, crime committed by white-collar workers in a business environment. Embezzlement, insider trading, and identity theft are all types of corporate crime. Although these types of offences rarely receive the same media coverage as street crimes, they can be far more damaging. The 2008 world economic recession was the result of a financial collapse triggered by corporate crime.

An often-debated third type of crime is **victimless crime**. These are called victimless because the perpetrator is not explicitly harming another person. As opposed to battery or theft, which clearly have a victim, a crime like drinking a beer at age 17 or selling a sexual act do not result in injury to anyone other than the

individual who engages in them. While some claim acts like these are victimless, others argue that they actually harm society. Prostitution may foster abuse toward women by clients or pimps. Drug use may increase the likelihood of employee absences. Such debates highlight how the deviant and criminal nature of actions develops through ongoing public discussion.

## Making Connections: Sociological Research

### Hate Crimes

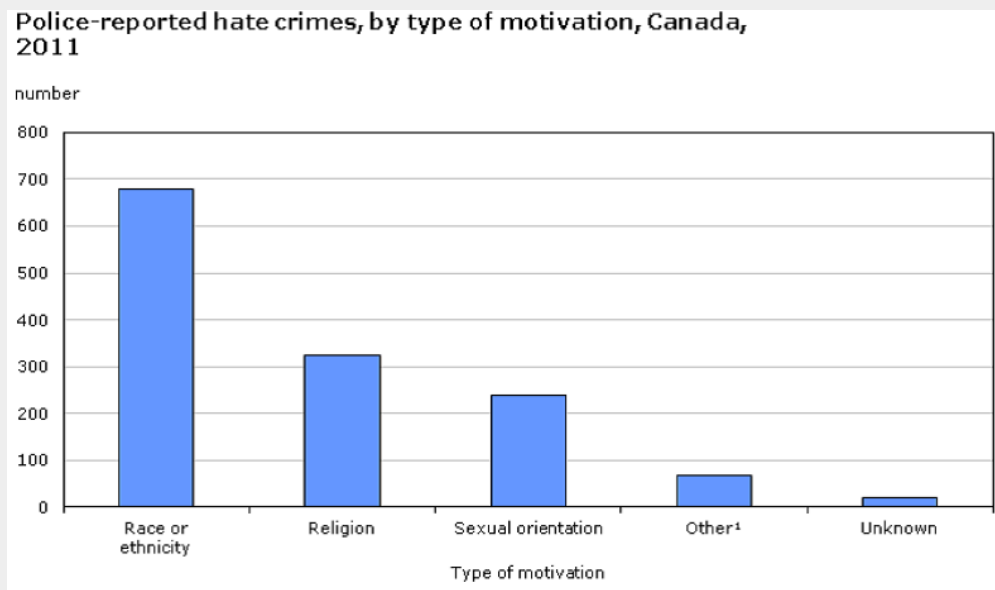


Figure 9.6. In Canada, there were 1,332 reported victims of hate crimes in 2011. The General Social Survey suggests that only one-third of hate motivated incidences are reported to police. [Long Description at the end of the chapter] Source: Allen & Boyce, 2013

The skinheads were part of a group that called itself White Power. They had been to an all-night drinking party when they decided they were going to vandalize some cars in the temple parking lot. They encountered the caretaker Nirmal Singh Gill and took turns attacking him.

The eldest of the skinheads had recently been released from the military because of his racist beliefs. Another had a large Nazi flag pinned to the wall of his apartment. In a telephone call intercepted during the investigation, one skinhead was recorded as saying, “Can’t go wrong with a Hindu death cause it always sends a f’n message” (R. v. Miloszewski, 1999).

Attacks motivated by hate based on a person’s race, religion, or other characteristics are hate crimes. The category of hate crimes grew out of the provisions in the Criminal Code that prohibit hate propaganda (sections 318 and 319) including advocating genocide, public incitement of hatred, or willful promotion of hatred against an identifiable group.

In 1996, section 718.2 of the Criminal Code was amended to introduce hate motivation as an aggravating factor in crime that needed to be considered in sentencing (Silver et al., 2004). In 2009 Statistics Canada reported that 5 percent of the offences experienced by victims of crime in

Canada were believed by the victims to be motivated by hate (approximately 399,000 incidents in total) (Perreault & Brennan, 2010). However, hate crimes reported to police in 2009 totaled only 1,473. About one-third of the General Social Survey respondents said they reported the hate-motivated incidents to the police. In 2011 police-reported hate crimes had dropped to 1,322 incidents.

The majority of these were racially or ethnically motivated, but many were based on religious prejudice (especially anti-Semitic) or sexual orientation. A significant portion of the hate-motivated crimes (50 percent) involved mischief (vandalism, graffiti, and other destruction of property). This figure increased to 75 percent for religious-motivated hate crimes. Violent hate crimes constituted 39 percent of all hate crimes (22 percent accounted for by violent assault specifically). Sexual-orientation-motivated hate crimes were the most likely to be violent (65 percent) (Allen & Boyce, 2013).

## Crime Statistics

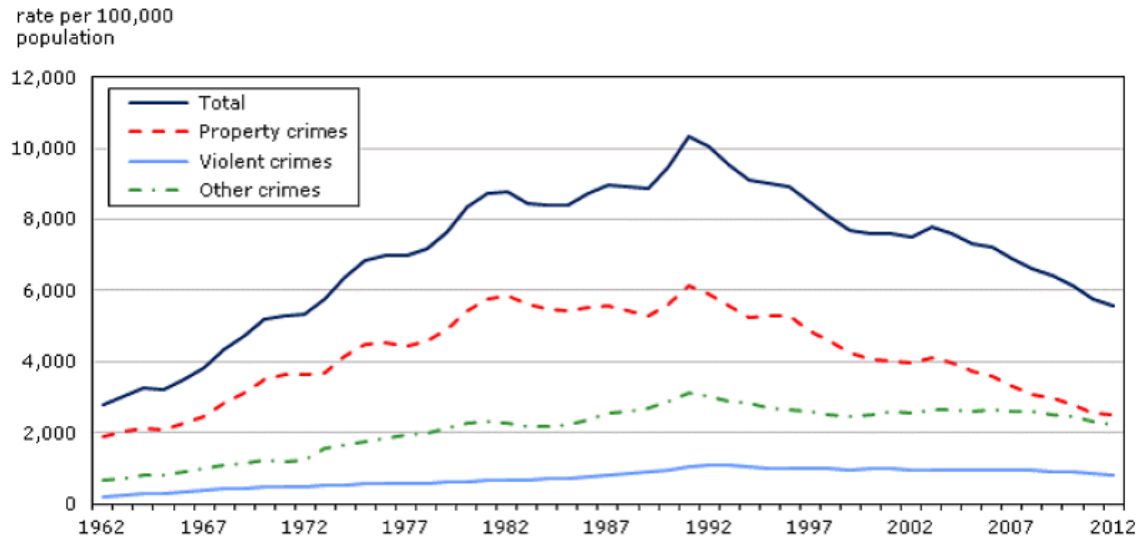
What crimes are people in Canada most likely to commit, and who is most likely to commit them? To understand criminal statistics, first understand how statistics are collected. Since 1962, Statistics Canada has been collecting and publishing crime statistics known as the *Uniform Crime Reports Survey* (UCR). These annual publications contain data from all the police agencies in Canada. Although the UCR contains comprehensive data on police reports, it doesn't account for the many crimes unreported. Victims are often unwilling to report, largely based on fear, shame, or distrust of the police. Data accuracy of the UCR also varies greatly. Because police and other authorities decide which criminal acts to focus on, the data reflects the priorities of the police rather than actual levels of crime. For example, if police decide to focus on gun-related crimes, more gun-related crimes will be discovered and counted.

Similarly, changes in legislation to introduce new crimes or change the categories under which crimes are recorded will also alter the statistics. To address some of these problems, in 1985, Statistics Canada began to publish a separate report known as the *General Social Survey on Victimization* (GSS). The GSS is a self-report study. A **self-report study** is a collection of data acquired using voluntary response methods, based on telephone interviews. In 2014, for example, survey data were gathered from 79,770 households across Canada on the frequency and type of crime they experience. The surveys are thorough, providing a wider scope of information than was previously available. This allows researchers to examine crime from more detailed perspectives and to analyze the data based on factors such as the relationship between victims and offenders, the consequences of the crimes, and substance abuse involved in the crimes. Demographics are also analyzed, such as age, ethnicity, gender, location, and income level.

## The Declining Crime Rate in Canada

While neither of these publications can describe all crimes committed in Canada, general trends are identified. Crime rates were on the rise after 1960, but following an all-time high in the 1980s and 1990s, rates of violent and nonviolent crimes started to decline. In 2012 they reached their lowest level since 1972 (Perreault, 2013).

### Police-reported crime rates, Canada, 1962 to 2012



**Note:** Information presented in this chart represents data from the UCR Aggregate (UCR1) Survey, and permits historical comparisons back to 1962. New definitions of crime categories were introduced in 2009 and are only available in the new format back to 1998. As a result, numbers in this chart will not match data released in the new UCR2 format. Specifically, the definition of violent crime has been expanded. In addition, UCR1 includes some different offences in the 'Other' crimes category.

Figure 9.7. The crime rates for all types of crime in Canada, including violent crime, have been declining since 1992. Why?  
Source: Perreault, 2013

In 2012, approximately 2 million crimes occurred in Canada. Of those, 415,000 were classified as violent crimes, mostly assault and robbery. The rate of violent crime reached its lowest level since 1987, led by decreases in sexual assault, common assault, and robbery. The homicide rate fell to its lowest level since 1966.

An estimated 1.58 million nonviolent crimes also took place, most common being theft under \$5,000 and mischief. The declining crime rate is mostly due to decreases in nonviolent crime, especially decreases in mischief, break-ins, disturbing the peace, motor vehicle theft, and possession of stolen property. However, only 31 percent of violent and nonviolent crimes were reported to the police.

Opinion polls continue to show that most Canadians believe that crime rates, especially violent crime rates, are rising (Edmiston, 2012), even though the statistics show a steady decline since 1991. Where is the disconnect? There are three primary reasons for the decline in the crime rate.

- First, demographic changes to the Canadian population: Most crime is committed by people aged 15 to 24. This age cohort has declined in size since 1991.
- Second, male unemployment is highly correlated with the crime rate. Following the recession of 1990–1991, better economic conditions improved male unemployment.
- Third, police methods have arguably improved since 1991, including having a more targeted approach to sites and types of crime. While reporting on spectacular crime has not diminished, the underlying social and policing conditions have.

Lower crime rates may be overlooked because of TV and social media daily recital of violent and frightening crime.

## Corrections

The **corrections system**, more commonly known as the prison system, supervises those who have been arrested, convicted, and sentenced for a criminal offence. At the end of 2011, approximately 38,000 adults were in prison in Canada, while another 125,000 were under community supervision or probation (Dauvergne, 2012). In contrast, seven million Americans were behind bars in 2010 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011). Canada's 2011 rate of adult incarceration was 140 per 100,000 population. In the United States in 2008, the incarceration rate was approximately 1,000 per 100,000 population. More than 1 in 100 U.S. adults were in jail or prison, the highest in U.S. history. While Americans account for 5 percent of the global population, they have 25 percent of the world's inmates, the largest number of prisoners in the world (Liptak, 2008). While Canada's incarceration rate is far lower than the United States', there are some very disturbing features of the Canadian corrections system.



Figure 9.8. Dorchester Penitentiary. Image Courtesy of courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

From 2010 to 2011, Indigenous Canadians were 10 times more likely to be incarcerated than the non-Indigenous population. While Indigenous people accounted for about 4 percent of the Canadian population, in 2013, they made up 23.2 percent of the federal penitentiary population. Indigenous women made up 33.6 percent of incarcerated women in Canada. This problem of **overrepresentation** of Indigenous people in the corrections system—the difference between the proportion of Indigenous people incarcerated in Canadian correctional facilities and their proportion in the general population—continues to grow appreciably despite a Supreme Court ruling in 1999 (*R. vs. Gladue*) that the social history of Indigenous offenders should be considered in sentencing. Section 718.2 of the Criminal Code states, “all available sanctions other than imprisonment that are reasonable in the circumstances should be considered for all offenders, with particular attention to the circumstances of Indigenous offenders.” Prison is supposed to be used only as a last resort. Nevertheless, between 2003 and 2013, the Indigenous population in prison grew by 44 percent (Correctional Investigator Canada, 2013).

Hartnagel summarized the research about why Indigenous people are overrepresented in the criminal justice system (2004).

- First, Indigenous people are disproportionately poor. Poverty is associated with higher arrest and incarceration rates. Unemployment in particular is correlated with higher crime rates.
- Second, Indigenous lawbreakers tend to commit more detectable street crimes than the less detectable white-collar crimes of other segments of the population.
- Third, the criminal justice system disproportionately profiles and discriminates against Indigenous people. It is more likely for Indigenous people to be apprehended, processed, prosecuted, and sentenced than non-Indigenous people.
- Fourth, the legacy of colonization has disrupted and weakened traditional sources of social control in Indigenous communities. The informal social controls that effectively control criminal and deviant behaviour in intact communities have been compromised in Indigenous communities due to forced assimilation, the residential school system, and migration to poor inner city neighbourhoods.



Although Black Canadians are a smaller minority of the Canadian population than Indigenous people, they experience a similar problem of overrepresentation in the prison system. Blacks represent approximately 2.9 percent of the Canadian population, but make up 9.5 percent of the total prison population in 2013, up from 6.3 percent in 2003–2004 (Correctional Investigator Canada, 2013). A survey revealed that blacks in Toronto are subject to racial profiling by the police, which might partially explain their higher incarceration rate (Wortley, 2003).

**Racial profiling** occurs when police single out a racialized group for extra policing, including a disproportionate use of stop-and-search practices (i.e. “carding”), undercover sting operations, police patrols in racialized minority neighbourhoods, and extra attention at border crossings and airports. Survey respondents revealed that Blacks in Toronto were much more likely to be stopped and searched by police than were whites or Asians. Moreover, in a reverse of the situation for whites, older and more affluent Black males were more likely to be stopped and searched than younger, lower-income blacks. As one survey respondent put it: “If you are Black and drive a nice car, the police think you are a drug dealer or that you stole the car. They always pull you over to check you out” (Wortley, 2003).

## Prisons and their Alternatives

Recent public debates in Canada about being “tough on crime” often assume that imprisonment and mandatory minimum sentences are effective crime control practices. Common sense might suggest that harsher penalties deter offenders from committing more crimes after release from prison. However, research shows that serving prison time does not reduce the tendency to re-offend.

In general, the effect of imprisonment on **recidivism** — the likelihood for people to be arrested again — was either non-existent or *increased* the likelihood of re-offence in comparison to non-prison sentences (Nagin, Cullen, & Jonson, 2009). In particular, first time offenders sent to prison have higher rates of recidivism than similar offenders sentenced to community service (Nieuwbeerta, Nagin, & Blockland, 2009).

Moreover, the collateral effects of the imprisonment of one family member include negative impacts on other family members and communities, including increased aggressiveness of young sons (Wildeman, 2010) and increased likelihood that the children of incarcerated fathers will commit offences as adults (van de Rakt & Nieuwbeerta, 2012). Some researchers identify a **penal-welfare complex** to describe the creation of inter-generational criminalized populations who are excluded from participating in society or holding regular jobs (Garland, 1985). Petty crimes like theft, public consumption of alcohol, drug use, etc. enable those trapped in generational criminal activity to get by in the absence of regular sources of security and income. These petty crimes are increasingly targeted by zero tolerance and minimum sentencing policies, making the cycle harder to break.

Alternatives to prison sentences can be used as criminal sanctions. In Canada, these include fines, electronic monitoring, probation, and community service. These alternatives divert offenders from penal social control, based on principles drawn from labelling theory. They emphasize

- compensatory social control, which obliges an offender to pay a victim to compensate for a harm committed;
- therapeutic social control, which involves the use of therapy to return individuals to a normal state;
- and conciliatory social control, which reconciles the parties of a dispute to mutually restore harmony to a social relationship that has been damaged.

Many non-custodial sentences involve **community-based sentencing**, in which offenders serve a conditional sentence in the community, usually by performing some sort of community service. Some research shows that rehabilitation is more effective if the offender is in the community rather than prison. A version of

community-based sentencing is **restorative justice conferencing**, which focuses on establishing a direct, face- to-face connection between the offender and the victim. The offender is obliged to make restitution to the victim, thus “restoring” a situation of justice. Part of the process of restorative justice is to lead the offender to fully acknowledge responsibility for the offence, express remorse, and make a meaningful apology to the victim (Department of Justice, 2013).

In special cases where the parties agree, **Indigenous sentencing circles** involve victims, the Indigenous community, and Indigenous elders in a process of deliberation with Indigenous offenders to determine the best way to find healing for the harm done to victims and communities. This is a form of **traditional Indigenous justice**, which centres on healing and building community rather than retribution. These might involve specialized counselling or treatment programs, community service under the supervision of elders, or the use of an Indigenous nation’s traditional penalties (Indigenous Justice Directorate, 2005).

It is difficult to find data in Canada on the effectiveness of these types of programs. However, a large meta-analysis examined ten studies from Europe, North America, and Australia. This study determined that restorative justice conferencing was effective in reducing rates of recidivism and criminal justice system costs (Strang et al., 2013). Recidivism was reduced between 7 and 45 percent from traditional penal sentences by using restorative justice conferencing.

Rehabilitation and recidivism are, of course, not the only goals of the corrections systems. Many people are skeptical about the capacity of offenders to be rehabilitated and see criminal sanctions as a means of (a) deterrence to prevent crimes, (b) retribution or revenge to address harms to victims and communities, or (c) incapacitation to remove dangerous individuals from society.

## Conclusions

The sociological study of crime, deviance, and social control is especially important for public policy debates. Often, in the news and public debate, how best to respond to crime is framed in moral terms; therefore, for example, the policy alternatives get narrowed to the option of either being “tough” on crime or “soft” on crime. Tough and soft are moral categories.

Debating with these moral terms limits solutions and undermines the ability to raise questions about effective responses to crime. Policy debates over crime seem susceptible to “non-science” discussed in Chapter 2: Sociological Research. The story of an isolated individual crime becomes the basis for belief in a failed criminal justice system. This shows overgeneralization and knowledge based on selective evidence. Moral categories of judgement frame problems unscientifically.

The sociological approach is different. Sociology focuses on the effectiveness of social control strategies for addressing criminal behaviour and risk to public safety. Sociologists think systematically about who commits crimes and why. Sociologists look at the big picture to see why certain acts are considered normal and others deviant, or why certain acts are criminal, and others are not. In a society with large inequalities of power and wealth, sociologists ask who gets to define whom as criminal.

This chapter illustrates the sociological imagination at work by examining the “individual troubles” of criminal behaviour and victimization within the social structures that sustain them. Sociology advocates evidence-based and systematic policy options.

## Chapter Summary

Deviance is a violation of norms. Whether or not something is deviant depends on contextual definitions, the situation, and people's response to the behaviour. Society seeks to limit deviance with sanctions that help maintain a system of social control. In modern normalizing societies, disciplinary social control is a primary governmental strategy of social control.

### Key Terms

**community-based sentencing:** Offenders serve a conditional sentence in the community, usually by performing some sort of community service.

**consensus crimes:** Serious acts of deviance about which there is near-unanimous public agreement.

**conflict crimes:** Acts of deviance that may be illegal but about which there is considerable public disagreement concerning their seriousness.

**corporate crime:** Crime committed by white-collar workers in a business environment.

**corrections system:** The system tasked with supervising individuals who have been arrested, convicted, or sentenced for criminal offences.

**crime:** A behaviour that violates official law and is punishable through formal sanctions.

**criminal justice system:** An organization that exists to enforce a legal code.

**deviance:** A violation of contextual, cultural, or social norms.

**disciplinary social control:** Detailed continuous training, control, and observation of individuals to improve their capabilities.

**examination:** The use of tests by authorities to assess, document, and know individuals.

**formal sanctions:** Sanctions that are officially recognized and enforced.

**government:** Practices by which individuals or organizations seek to govern the behaviour of others or themselves.

**hate crimes:** Attacks based on a person's race, religion, or other characteristics.

**Indigenous sentencing circles:** The involvement of Indigenous communities in the sentencing of Indigenous offenders.

**informal sanctions:** Sanctions that occur in face-to-face interactions.

**labelling theory:** The ascribing of a deviant behaviour to another person by members of society.

**law:** Norms that are specified in explicit codes and enforced by government bodies.

**legal codes:** Codes that maintain formal social control through laws.

**moral entrepreneur:** An individual or group who, to serve self-interest, publicizes and problematizes "wrongdoing" and has the power to create and enforce rules to penalize wrongdoing.

**moral panic:** An expanding cycle of deviance, media-generated public fears, and police repression.

**negative sanctions:** Punishments for violating norms.

**nonviolent crimes:** Crimes that involve the destruction or theft of property, but do not use force or the threat of force.

**normalization:** The process by which norms are used to differentiate, rank, and correct individual behaviour.

**normalizing society:** A society that uses continual observation, discipline, and correction of its subjects to exercise social control.

**overrepresentation:** The difference between the proportion of an identifiable group in a particular institution (like the correctional system) and their proportion in the general population.

**penal social control:** A means of social control that prohibits certain social behaviours and responds to violations with punishment.

**penal-welfare complex:** The network of institutions that create and exclude inter-generational, criminalized populations on a semi-permanent basis.

**police:** A civil force in charge of regulating laws and public order at a federal, state, or community level.

**positive sanctions:** Rewards given for conforming to norms.

**power elite:** A small group of wealthy and influential people at the top of society who hold the power and resources.

**psychopathy:** A personality disorder characterized by anti-social behaviour, diminished empathy, and lack of inhibitions.

**racial profiling:** The singling out of a particular racial group for extra policing.

**recidivism:** The likelihood for people to be arrested again after an initial arrest.

**restorative justice conferencing:** Focuses on establishing a direct, face-to-face connection between the offender and the victim.

**sanctions:** The means of enforcing rules.

**self-report study:** Collection of data acquired using voluntary response methods, such as questionnaires or telephone interviews.

**situational crime control:** Strategies of social control that redesign spaces where crimes or deviance could occur to minimize the risk of crimes occurring there.

**social control:** The regulation and enforcement of norms.

**social deviations:** Deviant acts that are not illegal but are widely regarded as harmful.

**social diversions:** Acts that violate social norms but are generally regarded as harmless.

**social order:** An arrangement of practices and behaviours on which society's members base their daily lives.

**sociopathy:** A personality disorder characterized by anti-social behaviour, diminished empathy, and lack of inhibitions.

**street crime:** Crime committed by average people against other people or organizations, usually in public spaces.

**surveillance:** Various means used to make the lives and activities of individuals visible to authorities.

**therapeutic social control:** A means of social control that uses therapy to return individuals to a normal

state.

**traditional Indigenous justice:** Centred on healing and building community rather than retribution.

**victimless crime:** Activities against the law that do not result in injury to any individual other than the person who engages in them.

**violent crimes** (also known as “crimes against a person”): Based on the use of force or the threat of force.

**white-collar crime:** Crimes committed by high status or privileged members of society.

## Chapter Quiz

1. Which of the following best describes how deviance is defined?
  - a. Deviance is defined by federal, provincial, and local laws.
  - b. Deviance’s definition is determined by one’s religion.
  - c. Deviance occurs whenever someone else is harmed by an action.
  - d. Deviance is socially defined.
2. In 1946, Viola Desmond was arrested for refusing to sit in the blacks-only section of the cinema in Nova Scotia. This is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. A consensus crime
  - b. A conflict crime
  - c. A social deviation
  - d. A social diversion
3. A student has a habit of texting during class. One day, the professor stops his lecture and asks her to respect the other students in the class by turning off her phone. In this situation, the professor used \_\_\_\_\_ to maintain social control.
  - a. Informal positive sanctions
  - b. Formal negative sanction
  - c. Informal negative sanctions
  - d. Formal positive sanctions

4. Societies practise social control to maintain \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Formal sanctions
  - b. Social order
  - c. Cultural deviance
  - d. Sanction labelling
5. Which of the following is an example of corporate crime?
  - a. Embezzlement
  - b. Larceny
  - c. Assault
  - d. Burglary
6. Spousal abuse is an example of a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Street crime
  - b. Corporate crime
  - c. Violent crime
  - d. Nonviolent crime
7. Which of the following situations best describes crime trends in Canada?
  - a. Rates of violent and nonviolent crimes are decreasing.
  - b. Rates of violent crimes are decreasing, but there are more nonviolent crimes now than ever before.
  - c. Crime rates have skyrocketed since the 1970s due to lax court rulings.
  - d. Rates of street crime have gone up, but corporate crime has gone down.
8. What is a disadvantage of crime victimization surveys?
  - a. They do not include demographic data, such as age or gender.
  - b. They may be unable to reach important groups, such as those without phones.
  - c. They do not address the relationship between the criminal and the victim.
  - d. They only include information collected by police officers.

9. A convicted sexual offender is released on parole and arrested two weeks later for repeated sexual crimes. How would labelling theory explain this?
- The offender has been labelled deviant by society and has accepted this master status.
  - The offender has returned to his old neighbourhood and so re-established his former habits.
  - The offender has lost the social bonds he made in prison and feels disconnected from society.
  - The offender is poor and coping with conditions of oppression and inequality

[Quiz answers at end of chapter]

## Short Answer

### 9.1. Deviance and Control

- If given the choice, would you purchase an unusual car such as a hearse for everyday use? How would your friends, family, or significant other react? Since deviance is culturally defined, most of the decisions we make are dependent on the reactions of others. Is there anything the people in your life encourage you to do that you don't do? Why do you resist their encouragement?
- Think of a recent time when you used informal negative sanctions. To what act of deviance were you responding? How did your actions affect the deviant person or persons? How did your reaction help maintain social control?

### 9.2. Crime and the Law

Recall the crime statistics presented in this chapter. Do they surprise you? Are these statistics represented accurately in the media? Why does the public perceive that crime rates are increasing and believe that punishment should be stricter when actual crime rates have been steadily decreasing?

## Further Research

### 9.1. Deviance and Control

Although we rarely think of it in this way, deviance can have a positive effect on society. Check out the Positive Deviance Initiative, a program initiated by Tufts University to promote social movements around the world that strive to improve people's lives: <http://www.positivedeviance.org/>.

### 9.2. Crime and the Law

Crime is established by legal codes and upheld by the criminal justice system. The corrections system is the dominant system of criminal punishment, but a number of community-based sentencing models offer alternatives that promise more effective outcomes in terms of recidivism. Although crime rates increased throughout most of the 20th century, they have been dropping since their peak in 1991.

How is crime data collected in Canada? Read about the victimization survey used by Statistics Canada and



take the survey yourself: <http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=4504>.

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## Image Attributions

**Figure 9.1.**

**Figure 9.4.** Inside one of the prison buildings at Presidio Modelo by Friman (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Presidio-modelo2.JPG>) used under CC BY SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>)

**Figure 9.8.** Dorchester Penitentiary. Image Courtesy of courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

**Figure 9.\_.** Lizzie Borden ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lizzie\\_borden.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Lizzie_borden.jpg)) is in the public domain ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_domain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain))

**Figure 9.\_.** Cover page of 1550 edition of Machiavelli's *Il Principe* and *La Vita di Castruccio Castracani da Lucca* by RJC ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Machiavelli\\_Principe\\_Cover\\_Page.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Machiavelli_Principe_Cover_Page.jpg)) is in the public domain ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_domain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain))

**Figure 9.11.** Cover scan of a Famous Crimes by Fox Features Syndicate ([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Famous\\_Crimes\\_54893.JPG](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Famous_Crimes_54893.JPG)) is in the public domain ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_domain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain))

# Long Descriptions

Figure 9.6 Long Description: Police Reported Hate Crimes, by type of motivation, in Canada, 2011

Type of Hate Crime	Number reported to Police
Race or Ethnicity	690
Religion	315
Sexual Orientation	235
Other	80
Unknown	10

## Solutions to Chapter Quiz

1 d, | 2 a, | 3 c | 4 b, | 5 a, | 6 a, | 7 a, | 8 b, | 9 a

[10]

## Marriage and Family



Figure 10.1. Detail from mural in Open Hearth Park, Sydney, NS. Once upon a time, any definition of family automatically included children. Is that still true today? Photo Courtesy of constancemc/Flickr

### Learning Objectives

#### 10.1. What Is Marriage? What Is a Family?

- Define “the family”.
- Describe micro, meso, and macro approaches to the family.
- Outline the sociological approach to the dynamics of attraction and love.
- Analyze changes in marriage and family patterns.
- Understand the effect of the family life cycle on the quality of family experience.

#### 10.2. Variations in Family Life

- Recognize variations in family life.
- Describe the different forms of the family including the nuclear family, single-parent families, cohabitation, same-sex couples, and unmarried individuals.
- Discuss the functionalist, critical, and symbolic interactionist perspectives on the modern family.

### 10.3. Challenges Families Face

- Understand the social and interpersonal impact of divorce.
- Describe the problems of family abuse and discuss whether corporal punishment is a form of abuse.

## Introduction to Marriage and Family

Christina and James met in college and dated for more than five years. For the past two years, they have been living together in a condo they purchased jointly. While Christina and James were confident in their decision to enter into a commitment (such as a 20-year mortgage), they are unsure if they want to enter *marriage*. The couple had many discussions and decided that marriage just did not seem necessary. Was it not only a piece of paper? Didn't half of all marriages end in divorce?

Neither Christina nor James had seen much success with marriage while growing up. Christina was raised by a single mother. Her parents never married, and her father had little contact with the family. Christina and her mother lived with her maternal grandmother, who often served as a surrogate parent. James grew up in a two-parent household until age seven, when his parents divorced. He lived with his mother for a few years, and then later with his mother and her boyfriend. James remained close with his father who remarried and had a baby with his new wife.

Christina and James are now thinking about having children, and the subject of marriage has resurfaced. Christina likes the idea of children growing up in a traditional family. James is concerned about possible marital problems down the road and negative consequences for the children. When they shared these concerns with their parents, James's mom thought the couple should get married. Despite having been divorced and having a live-in boyfriend of 15 years, she believes that children are better off when their parents are married. Christina's mom believes that the couple should do whatever they want but adds that it would "be nice" if they wed. Christina and James's friends told them, married or not married, they would still be a family.

Christina and James are like many young couples today, particularly those in urban areas (Useem, 2007). Statistics Canada (2012) reports that the number of unmarried, common-law couples grew by 35% between 2001 and 2011, for a total of 16.7% of all Canadian families Canada. Cohabiting, but unwed, couples account for 16.7% of all families in Canada. Some may never choose to wed (Jayson, 2008). With fewer couples marrying, the traditional Canadian family structure is less common.

Nevertheless, although the percentage of traditional married couples has declined as a proportion of all families, at 67% of all families, it is still by far the common family structure.

## 10.1. What Is Marriage? What Is a Family?

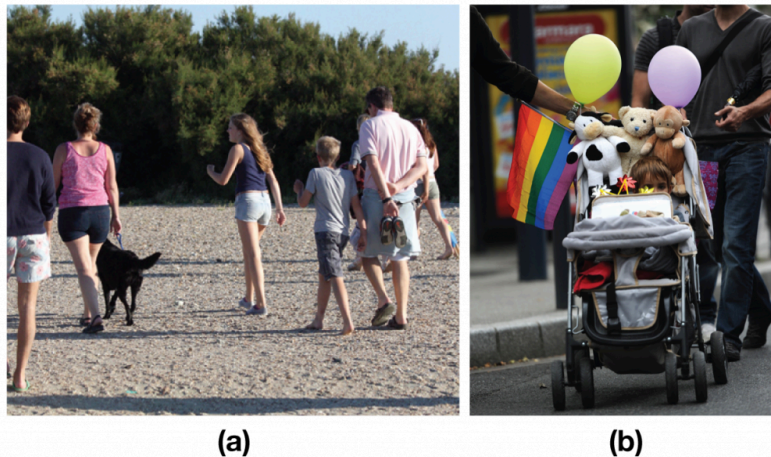


Figure 10.2. The modern concept of family is far more encompassing than in past decades. What do you think constitutes a family? (Photo (a) courtesy of Gareth Williams/ flickr; photo (b) courtesy of Guillaume Paumier/ Wikimedia Commons)

Marriage and family are key social structures in most societies. While the two institutions have historically been closely linked in Canada, their connection is becoming more complex. The relationship between marriage and family is often taken for granted, but with the increasing diversity of family forms, their relationship needs to be reexamined.

What is marriage? Not even sociologists are able to agree on a single meaning. This book defines **marriage** as a legally recognized social contract between two people, traditionally based on a sexual relationship, and implying permanence. An inclusive definition must consider variations, such as whether a formal legal union is required (think of common-law marriage and its equivalents), or whether more than two people can be involved (consider polygamy). Other variations on the definition of marriage might include whether spouses are of opposite or same sex, and whether one traditional expectations of marriage — to produce children— is included today.

Sociologists study the relationship between the institution of marriage and the institution of family because, historically, marriages create a family, and families are the most basic unit of society. Both marriage and family create status roles that are sanctioned by society.

So what is a family? A husband, a wife, and two children—maybe even a pet—served as the model for the traditional Canadian family for most of the 20th century. But what about other family forms, such as a single-parent household or a gay couple without children? Should they be considered families?

The question of what constitutes a family is debated in family sociology, as well as in politics and religion. Social conservatives tend to define the family in terms of a “traditional” nuclear family structure with each family member filling a certain role (like father, mother, or child). Sociologists, on the other hand, tend to define family more in terms of the way members relate to one another.

This book defines family as a socially recognized group joined by blood

- relations, marriage, or adoption that
- forms an emotional connection and
- serves as an economic unit of society.

Sociologists also identify different types of families based on how they form. A **family of orientation** refers



to the family into which a person is born. A **family of procreation** describes one that is formed through marriage. These distinctions have cultural significance related to issues of lineage.

Family is a *social form* that comes into existence around five different *contents* or interests:

- sexual activity,
- economic cooperation,
- reproduction,
- socialization of children, and
- emotional support.

The types of family form vary: nuclear families, polygamous families, extended families, same-sex parent families, single-parent families, blended families, and zero-child families, etc. However, the family forms aren't random; rather, these forms are determined by cultural traditions, social structures, economic pressures, and historical transformations.

## Making Connections: Sociology in the Real World

### How Do Working Moms Impact Society?

What constitutes a “typical family” in Canada has changed tremendously over the past decades. One of the most notable changes has been the increasing number of mothers who work outside the home. Earlier in 20th century Canada, most family households consisted of one parent working outside the home and the other being the primary child care provider. Because of traditional gender roles and family structures, this was typically a working father and a stay-at-home mom. Research shows that in 1951 only 24% of all women worked outside the home (Li, 1996). In 2009, 58.3% of all women did, and 64.4% of women with children younger than three years of age were employed (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Sociologists interested in this topic might approach it from a variety of angles. One might be interested in its impact on child development; another sociologist may explore its effect on family income; while a third sociologist might examine how other social institutions have responded to this shift in society.

A sociologist studying the impact of working mothers on child development might ask questions about children raised in child care settings outside the home. How is a child socialized differently when raised largely by a child care provider rather than a parent? Do early experiences in a



Figure 10.3. Working mother at the end of a day. (Image courtesy of Thanh Mai Bui Duy/Flickr)

school-like child care setting lead to improved academic performance later in life? How does a child with two working parents perceive gender roles compared to a child raised with a stay-at-home parent?

Another sociologist might be interested in the increase in working mothers from an economic perspective. Why do so many households today have dual incomes? Has this changed the income of families substantially? How do women's dual roles in the household and in the wider economy affect their occupational achievements and ability to participate on an equal basis with men in the workforce? What impact does the larger economy play in the economic conditions of an individual household? Do people view money — savings, spending, debt — differently than they have in the past?

Curiosity about this trend's influence on social institutions might lead a researcher to explore the effect on the nation's educational and child care systems. Has the increase in working mothers shifted traditional family responsibilities onto schools, such as providing lunch and even breakfast for students? How does the creation of after-school care programs shift resources away from traditional school programs? What would the effect be of providing a universal, subsidized child care program on the ability of women to pursue uninterrupted careers?

Family forms also are subject to intense moral and political debate about the definition of the family, the “decline of the family,” or policy options to best support children. In these debates, sociology searches for the factual knowledge needed to make evidence-based decisions on political and moral issues.

As these examples show, sociologists study many real-world topics. Their research often influences social policies and political issues. Results from sociological studies might play a role in developing federal policies like the Employment Insurance maternity and parental benefits program. They might help a group striving to reduce social stigmas placed on stay-at-home dads. They might help governments determine how to best allocate funding for education.

Many European countries like Sweden have substantial family support policies, such as a full year of parental leave at 80% of wages when a child is born, and heavily subsidized, high-quality daycare and preschool programs. Sociologists might be interested in studying whether the benefits of the Swedish system—in terms of children's well-being, lower family poverty, and gender equality—outweigh the drawbacks of higher Swedish tax rates.

## Perceptions of the family

Symbolic interactionist theories say that families are groups in which participants view themselves as family members and act accordingly. Families are groups in which people come together to form a strong primary group connection, maintaining emotional ties to one another over a long period of time. Such families could potentially include groups of close friends as family. However, the way family groupings view themselves is not independent of the wider social forces.

North Americans are divided when it comes to determining what does and what does not constitute a family. In a 2010 survey conducted by Ipsos Reid, participants were asked what they believed constituted a family unit. 80% of respondents agreed that a husband, wife, and children constitute a family. 66% stated that a common-law couple with children still constitutes a family. The numbers drop for less traditional structures:

a single mother and children (55%), a single father and children (54%), grandparents raising children (50%), common-law or married couples without children (46%), gay male couples with children (45%) (Postmedia News, 2010). This survey revealed that children tend to be the key indicator in establishing “family” status: the percentage of individuals who agreed that unmarried couples constitute a family nearly doubled when children were added.

Another study also revealed that 60% of North Americans agreed that if you consider yourself a family, you are a family (a concept that reinforces an interactionist perspective) (Powell et al., 2010). Canadian statistics are based on the more inclusive definition of “census families.” Statistics Canada defines a census family as “composed of a married or common-law couple, with or without children, or of a lone parent living with at least one child in the same dwelling. Couples can be of the opposite sex or of the same sex” (Statistics Canada, 2012).

Sociologists argue that the general concept of family is more diverse and less structured than in years past. Society has given more leeway to the design of a family — making room for what works for its members (Jayson, 2010).

Family is a subjective concept, but it is a fact that family (however defined) is very important to North Americans. In a 2010 survey by Pew Research Center in Washington, D.C., 76% of adults surveyed stated that family is “the most important” element of their life — just 1% said it was “not important” (Pew Research Center, 2010). It is also very important to society. American President Ronald Reagan notably stated, “The family has always been the cornerstone of American society. Our families nurture, preserve, and pass on to each succeeding generation the values we share and cherish, values that are the foundation of our freedoms” (Lee, 2009).

The dark side of this importance can also be seen in Reagan's successful use of "family values" rhetoric to attack welfare mothers. His infamous "welfare queen" story about a Black single mother in Chicago, who supposedly defrauded the government of \$150,000 in welfare payments, was a complete fabrication that nevertheless "worked" politically because of widespread social anxieties about the decline of the family.

While the design of the family may have changed in recent years, the fundamentals of emotional closeness and support are still present. Most respondents to the Pew survey stated that their family today is at least as close (45%) or closer (40%) than the family with which they grew up (Pew Research Center, 2010).

Alongside the debate surrounding what constitutes a family is the question of what North Americans believe constitutes a marriage. Many religious and social conservatives believe that marriage can only exist between man and a woman, citing religious scripture and the basics of human reproduction as support. Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated, "I have no difficulty with the recognition of civil unions for nontraditional relationships but I believe in law we should protect the traditional definition of marriage" (*Globe and Mail*, 2010). Social liberals and progressives, on the other hand, believe that marriage can exist between two consenting and that it is discriminatory to deny such a couple the civil, social, and economic benefits of marriage.

## Making Connections: Sociology in the Real World

### The Evolution of Television Families

Whether you grew up watching the Cleavers, the Waltons, the Huxtables, or the Simpsons, most of the iconic families you saw in television sitcoms included a father, a mother, and children cavorting under the same roof while comedy ensued. The 1960s was the height of the suburban American nuclear family on television with shows such as *The Donna Reed Show* and *Father Knows Best*. While some shows of this era portrayed single parents (*My Three Sons* and *Bonanza*, for instance), the single status almost always resulted from being widowed, not divorced or unwed.

Although family dynamics in real North American homes were changing, the expectations for families portrayed on television were not. North America's first reality show, *An American Family* (which aired on PBS in 1973) chronicled Bill and Pat Loud and their children as a "typical" American family. Cameras documented the typical coming and going of daily family life in true cinéma-vérité style. During the series, the oldest son, Lance, announced to the family that he was gay, and at the series' conclusion, Bill and Pat decided to divorce. Although the Loud's union was among the 30% of marriages that ended in divorce in 1973, the family was featured on the



Figure 10.4. Family photo of the Louds, who were the subject of a 12-part television documentary, *An American Family*, that aired on PBS stations in 1973. (Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

cover of the March 12 issue of *Newsweek* with the title “The Broken Family” (Ruoff, 2002).

Less traditional family structures in sitcoms gained popularity in the 1980s with shows such as *Diff'rent Strokes* (a widowed man with two adopted African American sons) and *One Day at a Time* (a divorced woman with two teenage daughters). Still, traditional families such as those in *Family Ties* and *The Cosby Show* dominated the ratings. The late 1980s and the 1990s saw the introduction of the dysfunctional family. Shows such as *Roseanne*, *Married with Children*, and *The Simpsons* portrayed traditional nuclear families, but in a much less flattering light than those from the 1960s did (Museum of Broadcast Communications, 2011).

Over the past 10 years, the nontraditional family has become somewhat of a tradition in television. While most situation comedies focus on single men and women without children, those that do portray families often stray from the classic structure: they include unmarried and divorced parents, adopted children, gay couples, and multigenerational households. Even those that do feature traditional family structures may show less traditional characters in supporting roles, such as the brothers in the highly rated shows *Everybody Loves Raymond* and *Two and Half Men*. Even wildly popular children's programs as Disney's *Hannah Montana* and *The Suite Life of Zack & Cody* feature single parents.

In 2009, ABC premiered an intensely nontraditional family with the broadcast of *Modern Family*. The show follows an extended family that includes a divorced and remarried father with one stepchild, and his biological adult children — one of who is in a traditional two-parent household, and the other who is a gay man in a committed relationship raising an adopted daughter. While this dynamic may be more complicated than the typical "modern" family, its elements may resonate with many of today's viewers. "The families on the shows aren't as idealistic, but they remain relatable," states television critic Maureen Ryan. "The most successful shows, comedies especially, have families that you can look at and see parts of your family in them" (Respers France, 2010).

## 10.2. Variations in Family Life

The combination of husband, wife, and children that 80% of Canadians believes constitutes a family is not representative of most Canadian families. According to 2011 census data, only 31.9% of all census families consisted of a married couple with children, down from 37.4% in 2001. 63% of children under age 14 live in a household with two married parents. This is a decrease from almost 70% in 1981 (Statistics Canada, 2012).

This two-parent family structure is known as a *nuclear family*. Recent years have seen a rise in variations of the nuclear family with the parents not being married. The proportion of children aged 14 and under who live with two unmarried cohabiting parents increased from 12.8% in 2001 to 16.3% in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012).

### Single Parents

Single-parent households are also more common. In 2011, 19.3% of children aged 14 and under lived with a single parent only, up slightly from 18% in 2001. Of that 19.3%, 82% live with their mother (Statistics Canada, 2012).

Stepparents are an additional family element in two-parent homes. A stepfamily is defined as “a couple family in which at least one child is the biological or adopted child of only one married spouse or common-law partner and whose birth or adoption preceded the current relationship” (Statistics Canada, 2012). Among children living in two parent households, 10% live with a biological or adoptive parent and a stepparent (Statistics Canada, 2012).

In some family structures, a parent is not present at all. In 2010, 106,000 children (1.8% of all children) lived with a guardian who was neither their biological nor adoptive parent. Of these children, 28% lived with grandparents, 44% lived with other relatives, and 28% lived with non-relatives or foster parents. If we also include families in which both parents and grandparents are present (about 4.8% of all census families with children under the age of 14 years), this family structure is referred to as the **extended family**, and may include aunts, uncles, and cousins living in the same home. Foster children account for about 0.5% of all children in private households.

Changes in the traditional family structure raise questions about how such societal shifts affect children. Research, mostly from American sources, has shown that children living in homes with both parents grow up with more financial and educational advantages than children who are raised in single-parent homes (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The Canadian data is not so clear. We will have to wait for more research to be published from sources such as the National Longitudinal Survey to see whether there is more conclusive evidence concerning the relative advantages of dual- and single-parent family settings.

Nevertheless, what the data show is that the key factors in children’s quality of life are the educational levels and economic condition of the family, not whether children’s parents are married, common-law, or single. For example, young children in low-income families are more likely to have vocabulary problems, and young children in higher-income families have more opportunities to participate in recreational activities (Human Resources Development Canada, 2003). This is a matter related more to public policy decisions concerning the level of financial support and care services (like public child care) provided to families than different



Figure 10.5. One in five Canadian children live in a single-parent household. (Photo courtesy of Ross Griff/flickr)



family structures. In Sweden, the government provides generous paid parental leave after the birth of a child, free health care, temporary paid parental leave for parents with sick children, high-quality subsidized daycare, and substantial direct child-benefit payments for each child. Indicators of child well-being (literacy, levels of child poverty, rates of suicide, etc.) score very high regardless of the difference between single- and dual-parent family structures (Houseknecht and Sastry,

## Cohabitation

Living together before or instead of marriage is a growing option. Cohabitation, living together in a sexual relationship without being married, was practised by an estimated 1.6 million people (16.7% of all census families) in 2011, which shows an increase of 13.9% since 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2012). This surge in cohabitation is likely due to the decrease in social stigma pertaining to the practice. Canada, 2012).

Cohabiting couples may choose to live together to spend more time together or to save money on living costs. Many couples view cohabitation as a “trial run” for marriage. Today, approximately 28% of men and women cohabitated before their first marriage. By comparison, 18% of men and 23% of women married without ever cohabitating (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The clear majority of cohabitating relationships eventually result in marriage; only 15% of men and women cohabit only and do not marry. About one-half of cohabitators transition into marriage within three years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

While couples may use this time to “work out the kinks” of a relationship before they wed, the most recent research has found that cohabitation has little effect on the success of a marriage. Those who do not cohabit before marriage have slightly better rates of remaining married for more than 10 years (Jayson, 2010).

### Population pyramids of legal marital status by single year of age and sex, Canada, 1981 and 2011

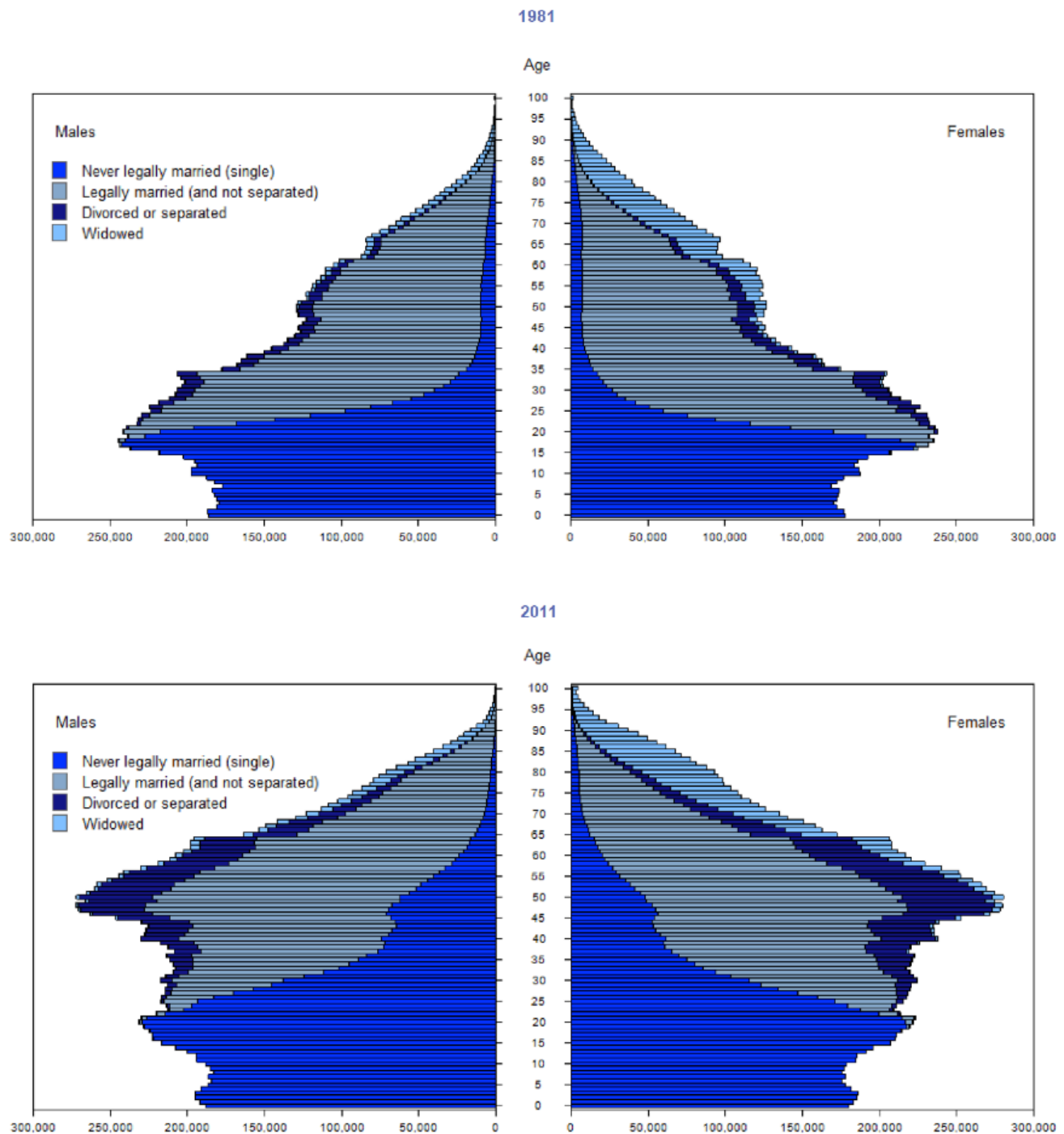


Figure 10.6 As shown by these population pyramids of marital status, more young people are choosing to delay or opt out of marriage. (Milan, Anne. 2013; Population pyramids courtesy of Statistics Canada)

### Same-Sex Couples

The number of same-sex couples has grown significantly in the past decade. In Canada, same-sex couples make up 0.8% of all couples. The Civil Marriage Act (Bill C-38) legalized same sex marriage in Canada on July 20, 2005. Some provinces and territories had already adopted legal same-sex marriage, beginning with

Ontario in June 2003. In 2011, Statistics Canada reported 64,575 same-sex couple households in Canada, up by 42% from 2006. Of these, about three in ten were same-sex married couples compared to 16.5% in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2012). These increases are a result of more coupling, the change in the marriage laws, growing social acceptance of homosexuality, and a subsequent increase in willingness to report it.

While there is some concern from socially conservative groups (especially in the United States) regarding the well-being of children who grow up in same-sex households, research reports that same-sex parents are as effective as opposite-sex parents. In an analysis of 81 parenting studies, sociologists found no quantifiable data to support the notion that opposite-sex parenting is any better than same-sex parenting. Children of lesbian couples, however, were shown to have slightly lower rates of behavioural problems and higher rates of self-esteem (Biblarz and Stacey, 2010).

## Staying Single

Gay or straight, a new option for many Canadians is simply to stay single. In 2011, about one-fifth of all individuals over the age of 15 did not live in a couple or family (Statistics Canada, 2012). Never-married individuals accounted for 73.1% of young adults in the 25 to 29 age bracket, up from 26% in 1981 (Milan, 2013). More young men in this age bracket are single than young women — 78.8% to 67.4% — reflecting the tendency for men to marry at an older age and to marry women younger than themselves (Milan, 2013).

Although both single men and single women report social pressure to get married, women are subject to greater scrutiny. Single women are often portrayed as unhappy “spinsters” or “old maids” who cannot find a man to marry them. Single men, on the other hand, are typically portrayed as lifetime bachelors who cannot settle down or simply “have not found the right girl.” Single women report feeling insecure and displaced in their families when their single status is disparaged (Roberts, 2007). However, single women older than 35 report feeling secure and happy with their unmarried status, as many women in this category have found success in their education and careers. In general, women feel more independent and more prepared to live a large portion of their adult lives without a spouse or domestic partner than they did in the 1960s (Roberts, 2007).

The decision to marry or not to marry can be based a variety of factors including religion and cultural expectations.

Asian North Americans are the most likely to marry while Black North Americans are the least likely to marry (Venugopal, 2011). Additionally, individuals who place no value on religion are more likely to be unmarried than those who place a high value on religion. For Black women, however, the importance of religion made no difference in marital status (Bakalar, 2010). In general, being single is not a rejection of marriage; rather, it is a lifestyle that does not necessarily include marriage. By age 40, according to census figures, 20% of women and 14% of men will have never married (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).



Figure 10.7. More and more Canadians are choosing lifestyles that don't include marriage. (Photo courtesy of Glenn Harper/flickr)

## Theoretical Perspectives on Marriage and Family

Sociologists study families on both the macro- and micro-level to determine how families function. Sociologists may use a variety of theoretical perspectives to explain events that occur within and outside of the family.

### *Functionalism*

Functionalists uphold the notion that families are an important social institution that they play a key role in stabilizing society. Family members take on status roles in a marriage or family. The family — and its members — perform certain functions that facilitate the prosperity and development of society.

Anthropologist George Murdock defined the family narrowly as “a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction,” which “includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children” (Murdock, 1949). Murdock conducted a survey of 250 societies and determined that there are four universal residual functions of the family: sexual, reproductive, educational, and economic (Lee, 1985). In each society, although the structure of the family varies, the family performs these four functions.

According to Murdock, the family (which for him includes the state of marriage) regulates sexual relations between individuals. He does not deny the existence or impact of premarital or extramarital sex, but states that the family offers a socially legitimate sexual outlet for adults (Lee, 1985). Although societies differ greatly to the

degree that they place limitations on sexual behaviour, all societies have norms governing sexual behavior. The function of the family is to establish the stated norms around sexual gratification.

This outlet for legitimate sexual relations gives way to reproduction, which is a necessary part of ensuring the survival of society. Each society needs to replace the older people with new generations of young people. Again, the institution of the family provides a socially legitimate and regulated form in which children are produced and given recognized status in society. Societies which practice celibacy, like the religious community of the Shakers were dysfunctional as they were unable to maintain sufficient population to remain viable. By the 1920s there were only 12 Shaker communities left in the United States.

Once children are produced, the family plays a vital role in training them for adult life. As the primary agent of socialization, the family teaches young children the ways of thinking and behaving that follow social and cultural norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes. Parents teach their children manners and civility. A well-mannered child (presumably) reflects a well-mannered parent. In most societies, the family unit is responsible for establishing the emotional security and sense of personal self-worth of its members, which begins in childhood. When families fail to do this they are seen as dysfunctional.

Parents also teach children gender roles. Gender roles are an important part of the economic function of a family. According to functionalists, the differentiation of the roles based on sex ensures that families are well-balanced and coordinated. Each family member is seen as performing a specific role and function to maintain the functioning of the family. Each family member has a socially recognized role that reduces internal competition for status within the family, and ambiguity about the status of the family in the external community.

When family members move outside of these roles, the family is thrown out of balance and must recalibrate to function properly. For example, if the father assumes an expressive role, such as providing daytime care for the children, the mother must take on an instrumental role such as gaining paid employment outside of the home in order for the family to maintain balance and function.

The fourth function of the family Murdock identified is economic. The family is understood as a primary economic unit where the economic well-being of family members is provided. In premodern family forms, the extended family itself is the basis of the economy. As a unit it produces the basic needs of its members including food, shelter, health care, and comfort in general. In modern society, some of these economic functions, like production and health care, are taken over by other social institutions, but the family remains the principle unit of consumption. Family members coordinate their incomes to provide economically for the rest of the family.

### *Critical Sociology*

Critical sociologists point out that North American families are defined as private entities, the consequence of which (historically) has been to see family matters as issues concerning only those within the family. Serious issues including domestic violence and child abuse, inequality between the sexes, the right to dispose of family property equally, and so on, have been historically treated as being outside of state, legal, or police jurisdiction. The feminist slogan of the 1960s and 1970s — “the personal is the political” — indicates how feminists began to draw attention to the broad social or *public* implications of matters long considered private or inconsequential. As women’s roles had long been relegated to the private sphere, issues of power that affected their lives most directly were largely invisible.

Critical sociology highlights the political-economic context of the inequalities of power in family life. The family is often not a haven but rather an arena where the effects of societal power struggles are felt. This exercise of power often entails the differentiation and performance of family status roles. *Why* are women expected to perform the “expressive” roles in the family while the men perform “instrumental” roles, and what are the implications of this division of labour? Critical sociologists therefore study conflicts as simple as the enforcement of rules from parent to child, or more serious issues such as domestic violence (spousal and child), sexual assault, marital rape, and incest, as products of power structures in broader society.

The political and economic context is also key to understanding changes in the structure of the family over the 20th and 21st centuries. The debate between functionalist and critical sociologists on the rise of non-nuclear family forms is an example. Since the 1950s, the functionalist approach to the family has emphasized the importance of the nuclear family — a married man and woman in a socially approved sexual relationship with at least one child — as the basic unit of an orderly and functional society. Although only 39% of families conformed to this model in 2006, in functionalist approaches, it often operates as a model of the *normal* family, with the implication that non-normal family forms lead to a variety of society-wide dysfunctions.

On the other hand, critical perspectives emphasize that the diversity of family forms does not indicate the “decline of the family” (i.e., of the ideal of the nuclear family) so much as the diverse response of the family form to the tensions of gender inequality and historical changes in the economy and society. The nuclear family should be not ne seen as a normative model for how families should be, and more as an historical anomaly that reflected the specific social and economic conditions of the two decades following World War II.

### *Symbolic Interactionism*

Interactionists view the world in terms of symbols and the meanings assigned to them (LaRossa and Reitzes, 1993). The family itself is a symbol. To some, it is a father, mother, and children; to others, it is any union that involves respect and compassion. Interactionists stress that family is not an objective, concrete reality. Like other social phenomena, it is a social construct that is subject to the ebb and flow of social norms and ever-changing meanings.

Consider the meaning of other elements of family: “parent” was a symbol of a biological and emotional connection to a child. With more parent-child relationships developing through adoption, remarriage, or change in guardianship, the word “parent” today is less likely to be associated with a biological connection than with whoever is socially recognized as having the responsibility for a child’s upbringing. Similarly, the terms “mother” and “father” are no longer rigidly associated with the meanings of caregiver and breadwinner. These meanings are more free-flowing through changing family roles.

Interactionists also recognize how the family status roles of each member are socially constructed, which plays an important part in how people perceive and interpret social behaviour. Interactionists view the family as a group of role players or “actors” that come together to act out their parts in an effort to construct a family. These roles are up for interpretation. In the late 19th and early 20th century, a “good father,” for example, was one who worked hard to provide financial security for his children. Today, a “good father” is one who takes the time outside of work to promote his children’s emotional well-being, social skills, and intellectual growth — in some ways, a much more daunting task.

Symbolic interactionism therefore draws our attention to *how* the norms that define what a “normal” family is, and how it should operate, come into existence. The rules and expectations that coordinate the behaviour of family members are products of social processes and joint agreement, even if the agreements are tacit or implicit. In this perspective, norms and social conventions are not regarded as permanently fixed by functional requirements or unequal power relationships. Rather, new norms and social conventions continually emerge from ongoing social interactions to make family structures intelligible in new situations, and to enable them to operate and sustain themselves.

### 10.3. Challenges Families Face

As the structure of family changes over time, so do the challenges families face. Events like divorce and remarriage present new difficulties for families and individuals. Other long-standing domestic issues, such as abuse, continue to strain the health and stability of families.

#### Divorce and Remarriage

Divorce, while fairly common and accepted in modern Canadian society, was once a word that would only be whispered and was accompanied by gestures of disapproval. Prior to the introduction of the Divorce Act in 1968 there was no federal divorce law in Canada. In provincial jurisdictions where there were divorce laws, spouses had to prove adultery or cruelty in court. The 1968 Divorce Act broadened the grounds for divorce to include mental and physical cruelty, desertion, and/or separation for more than three years, and imprisonment. In 1986, the Act was amended again to make “breakdown of marriage” the sole ground for divorce. Couples could divorce after one year’s separation, and there was no longer a requirement to prove “fault” by either spouse.

These legislative changes had immediate consequences on the divorce rate. In 1961, divorce was generally uncommon, affecting only 36 out of every 100,000 married persons. In 1969, the year after the introduction of the Divorce Act, the number of divorces doubled from 55 divorces per 100,000 population to 124. The divorce rate peaked in 1987, after the 1986 amendment, at 362 divorces per 100,000 population. Over the last quarter century divorce rates have dropped steadily, reaching 221 divorces per 100,000 population in 2005 (Kelly, 2010).

The dramatic increase in divorce rates after the 1960s has been associated with the liberalization of divorce laws (as noted above); the shift in societal makeup, including the increase of women entering the workforce (Michael, 1978); and marital breakdowns in the large cohort of baby boomers (Kelly, 2010). The decrease in divorce rates can be attributed to two probable factors: an increase in the age at which people get married, and an increased level of education among those who marry — both of which have been found to promote greater marital stability.

*Table 10.1. Crude divorce rate per 100,000 people in Canada, provinces, and territories: 1961-2005. After peaking in 1987 there has been a steady decrease in divorce rates. (Source: Kelly (2010). Table courtesy of Statistics Canada)*

Province or Territory	1961	1968	1969	1985	1986	1987	1990	1995	2000	2005
<b>Canada</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>124.2</b>	<b>238.9</b>	<b>298.8</b>	<b>362.3</b>	<b>282.3</b>	<b>262.2</b>	<b>231.2</b>	<b>220.7</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	1.3	3.0	20.0	96.6	118.8	193.7	175.5	170.6	169.9	153.5
Prince Edward Island	7.6	18.2	91.9	166.3	154.5	213.1	214.4	191.0	197.0	204.8
Nova Scotia	33.2	64.8	102.1	263.3	292.4	307.8	265.1	244.6	218.2	209.5
New Brunswick	32.4	22.9	55.3	187.3	237.6	273.1	228.7	191.6	227.3	192.2
Québec	6.6	10.2	49.2	236.4	282.5	324.7	291.6	274.5	231.2	203.0
Ontario	43.9	69.3	160.4	223.4	290.7	403.7	280.2	264.4	223.8	229.4
Manitoba	33.9	47.9	136.3	213.3	272.6	356.5	252.4	235.3	212.0	206.9
Saskatchewan	27.1	40.0	92.1	187.3	240.0	286.4	233.9	228.4	214.7	194.1
Alberta	78.0	125.7	221.0	336.0	391.8	390.2	332.1	276.6	271.7	246.4
British Columbia	85.8	110.8	205.0	278.6	374.1	397.6	296.1	275.0	246.8	233.8
Yukon	164.1	200.0	262.5	389.9	379.6	546.6	289.0	371.9	222.4	350.2
Northwest Territories		36.7	96.8	130.8	171.6	195.8	115.0	142.8	229.8	152.5
Nunavut	Nunavut is included in the Northwest Territories before 2000.								25.5	33.3

So what causes divorce? While more young people are choosing to postpone or opt out of marriage, those who enter into the union do so with the expectation that it will last. A great deal of marital problems can be related to stress, especially financial stress. According to researchers participating in the University of Virginia's National Marriage Project, couples who enter marriage without a strong asset base (like a home, savings, and a retirement plan) are 70% more likely to be divorced after three years than are couples with at least \$10,000 in assets. This is connected to factors such as age and education level that correlate with low incomes.

The addition of children to a marriage creates added financial and emotional stress. Research has established that marriages enter their most stressful phase upon the birth of the first child (Popenoe and Whitehead, 2001). This is particularly true for couples who have multiples (twins, triplets, and so on). Married couples with twins or triplets are 17% more likely to divorce than those with children from single births (McKay, 2010). Another contributor to the likelihood of divorce is a general decline in marital satisfaction over time. As people get older, they may find that their values and life goals no longer match up with those of their spouse



(Popenoe and Whitehead, 2004).

Divorce is thought to have a cyclical pattern. Children of divorced parents are 40% more likely to divorce than children of married parents. And when we consider children whose parents divorced and then remarried, the likelihood of their own divorce rises to 91% (Wolfinger, 2005). This might result from being socialized to a mindset that a broken marriage can be replaced rather than repaired (Wolfinger, 2005). That sentiment is also reflected in the finding that when both partners of a married couple have been previously divorced, their marriage is 90% more likely to end in divorce (Wolfinger, 2005).

Samuel Johnson is quoted as saying that getting married a second time was “the triumph of hope over experience.” In fact, according to the 2001 Statistics Canada General Social Survey, 43% of individuals whose first marriage failed married again, while 16% married again after the death of their spouse. Another 1% of the ever-married population (people who have been married but may not currently be married), aged 25 and over, had been married more than twice (Clark and Crompton, 2006). American data show that most men and women remarry within five years of a divorce, with the median length for men (three years) being lower than for women (4.4 years). This length of time has been fairly consistent since the 1950s. The majority of those who remarry are between the ages of 25 and 44 (Kreider, 2006).

Marriage the second time around (or third or fourth time around) can be a very different process than the first. Remarriage lacks many of the classic courtship rituals of a first marriage. In a second marriage, individuals are less likely to deal with issues like parental approval, premarital sex, or desired family size (Elliot, 2010). Clark and Crompton suggest that second marriages tend to be more stable than first marriages, largely because the spouses are older and more mature. At the time of the Statistics Canada General Social Survey, 71% of the remarried couples surveyed were still together and had been for an average of 13 years. Couples tend to marry a second time more for intimacy-based reasons rather than external reasons and therefore enjoy a greater quality of relationship (Clark and Crompton, 2006).

## Making Connections: Sociological Research

### Do Half of All Marriages End in Divorce?

It is often cited that half of all marriages end in divorce. This statistic has made many people cynical when it comes to marriage, but it is misleading. A closer look at the data reveals a different story.

Using Statistics Canada data from 2008 that show a marriage rate of 4.4 (per 1,000 people) and a divorce rate of 2.11, it would appear that slightly less than one-half of all marriages failed (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2014a, 2014b). Similar United States data for 2003 showed more or less exactly 50% of marriages ending in divorce (Hurley, 2005). This reasoning is deceptive, however, because instead of tracing actual marriages to see their longevity (or lack thereof), this compares unrelated statistics. That is, the number of marriages in a given year does not have a direct correlation to the divorces occurring that same year. American research published in the *New York Times* took a different approach — determining how many people had ever been married, and of those, how many later divorced. The result? According to this analysis, American divorce rates have only gone as high as 41% (Hurley, 2005).

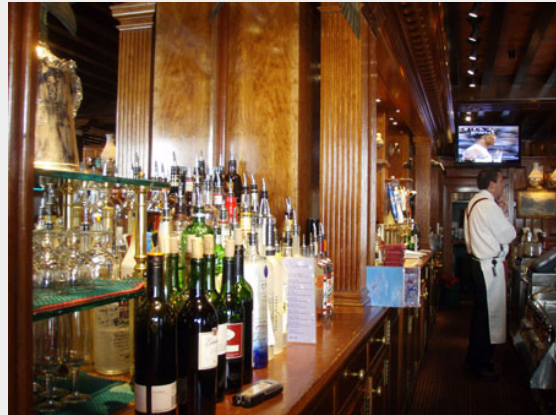


Figure 10.8. Bartenders are among the professions with the highest divorce rates (38.4%). Other traditionally low-wage industries (like restaurant service, custodial employment, and factory work) are also associated with higher divorce rates. (Aamodt and McCoy, 2010). (Photo courtesy of Daniel Lobo/flickr)

Another way to calculate divorce rates is the **total divorce rate**, which projects how many new marriages would be expected to fail after 30 years based on the divorce rate by marriage duration observed in a given year. In Canada, the total divorce rate figure reached a high of 50.6% in 1987, after the Divorce Act was amended to allow divorces after just one year of separation (rather than the mandatory three years previously). Since then, the total divorce rate has remained steady at between 35% and 42%. In 2008, 40.7% of marriages were projected to end before their 30th anniversary (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2014a).

Sociologists can also calculate divorce rates through a cohort study. For instance, we could determine the percentage of marriages that are intact after, say, five or seven years, compared to marriages that have ended in divorce after five or seven years. Sociological researchers must remain aware of research methods and how statistical results are applied. As illustrated, different methodologies and different interpretations can lead to contradictory, and even misleading results.

### *Children of Divorce and Remarriage*

Divorce and remarriage can be stressful for partners and children alike. Divorce is often justified by the notion that children are better off in a divorced family than in a family with parents who do not get along.

Others argue that parents who divorce sacrifice their children's well-being to pursue their own happiness.

Research suggests that separating out particular factors of the divorce, especially whether or not the divorce is accompanied by parental conflict, is key to determining whether divorce has a significant negative impact on children (Amato and Keith, 1991). Certainly while marital conflict does not provide an ideal childrearing environment, going through a divorce can also be damaging. Children are often confused and frightened by the threat to their family security. They may feel responsible for the divorce and attempt to bring their parents back together, often by sacrificing their own well-being (Amato, 2000). Only in high-conflict homes do children benefit from divorce and the subsequent decrease in conflict. The majority of divorces however come out of lower-conflict homes, and children from those homes are more negatively impacted by the stress of the divorce than the stress of unhappiness in the marriage (Amato, 2000).

On the other hand, Amato and Keith have argued that the overall the effect of divorce on children's well-being is relatively weak and has been declining over time. Children of divorces experience higher levels of well-being than children of intact, but highly conflictual marriages. Divorces that are not accompanied by parental conflict do less harm to children. (Amato and Keith, 1991). These findings would appear to lend credence to modern processes of *family mediation* in divorces where where a neutral third party helps people to negotiate a settlement to their dispute (BC Ministry of Attorney General, 2003).

Children's ability to deal with a divorce may depend on their age. Research has found that divorce may be most difficult for school-aged children, as they are old enough to understand the separation but not old enough to understand the reasoning behind it. Older teenagers are more likely to recognize the conflict that led to the divorce but may still feel fear, loneliness, guilt, and pressure to choose sides. Infants and preschool-age children may suffer the heaviest impact from the loss of routine that the marriage offered (Temke, 2006).

Proximity to parents also makes a difference in a child's well-being after divorce. Boys who live or have joint arrangements with their fathers show less aggression than those who are raised by their mothers only. Similarly, girls who live or have joint arrangements with their mothers tend to be more responsible and mature than those who are raised by their fathers only. Nearly 70% of the children of parents who are divorced have their primary residence with their mother, leaving many boys without a father figure residing in the home. Another 15% of the children lived with their father and 9% moved back and forth between both parents equally (Sinha, 2014). Still, researchers suggest that a strong parent-child relationship can greatly improve a child's adjustment to divorce (Temke, 2006).

There is empirical evidence that divorce has not discouraged children in terms of how they view marriage and family. In a survey conducted by researchers from the University of Michigan, about three-quarters of high school students said it was "extremely important" to have a strong marriage and family life. And over half believed it was "very likely" that they would be in a lifelong marriage (Popenoe, and Whitehead, 2001). These numbers have continued to climb over the last 25 years.

## Violence and Abuse

Violence and abuse are among the most serious challenges for families. Abuse can occur between spouses, between parent and child, as well as between other family members. The frequency of violence among families is difficult to determine because many cases of spousal abuse and child abuse are unreported. Studies show that abuse (reported or not) has a major impact on families and society.

### *Domestic Violence*

Domestic violence is a significant problem in Canada. One in four victims of violent crime in Canada was victimized by a spouse or family member in 2010 (Sinha, 2012). Domestic violence is often characterized as violence between household or family members, specifically spouses. To include unmarried, cohabitating,

and same-sex couples, family sociologists have created the term **intimate partner violence (IPV)**.

Women are the primary victims of intimate partner violence. It is estimated that 1 in 4 women has experienced some form of IPV in her lifetime (compared to 1 in 7 men) (Catalano, 2007). In 2011, women in Canada had more than double the risk of men of becoming a victim of police-reported family violence (Sinha, 2012). IPV may include physical violence, such as punching, kicking, or other methods of inflicting physical pain; sexual violence, such as rape or other forced sexual acts; threats and intimidation that imply either physical or sexual abuse; and emotional abuse, such as harming another's sense of self-worth through words or controlling another's behaviour. IPV often starts as emotional abuse and then escalates to other forms or combinations of abuse (Centers for Disease Control, 2012).

Perpetrators of IPV work to establish and maintain dependence in order to hold power and control over their victims, making them feel stupid, crazy, or ugly — in some way worthless. Between 2000 and 2010, nearly one-quarter of women who were murdered by their intimate partners were murdered for reasons of jealousy — compared to 10% of male victims (Sinha, 2012).

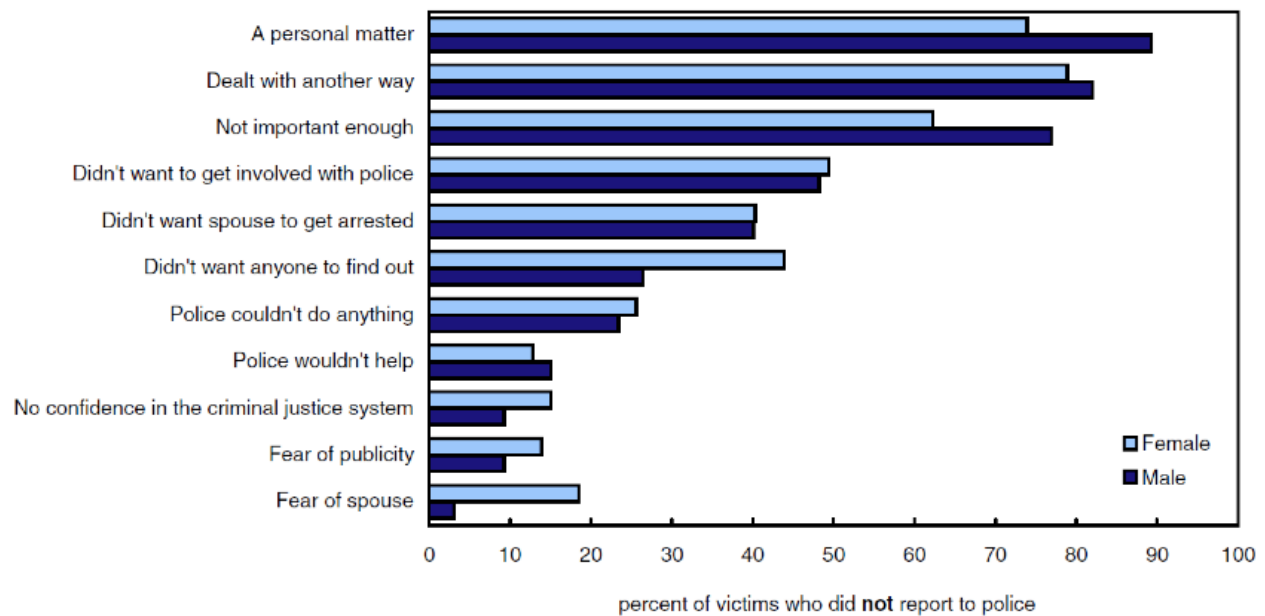
IPV affects different segments of the population at different rates. The rate of self-reported IPV for Indigenous women is about 2.5 times higher than for non-Indigenous women (Sinha, 2013). The severity of intimate partner violence also differed. Nearly 6 in 10 Indigenous women reported injury because of IPV compared to 4 in 10 non-Indigenous women. As a result, Indigenous female victims were also much more likely to report that they feared for their lives because of IPV (52% compared to 31% of non-Indigenous women) (Sinha, 2013). On the other hand, visible minority and immigrant groups do not have significantly different levels of self-reported spousal violence than the rest of the population (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Overall, women ages 25 to 34 are at the greatest risk of physical or sexual assault by an intimate partner (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Accurate statistics on IPV are difficult to determine, as less than one-quarter of victims report incidents to the police (Statistics Canada, 2011). Two-thirds of victims in Statistics Canada self-reported victimization studies stated that abuse had occurred more than once prior to their first police report. Nearly 3 in 10 stated that they had been abused more than 10 times prior to reporting (Statistics Canada, 2011).

According to the Statistics Canada General Social Survey (2009), victims cite varied reasons why they are reluctant to report abuse, as shown in Table 10.2.

**Reasons for not reporting spousal violence to police, by sex, 2009**



**Note(s):** Includes legally married, common-law, same-sex, separated and divorced spouses. Figures do not add to 100% due to multiple responses. Excludes data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2009.

Table 10.2. This chart shows reasons that victims give for why they fail to report abuse to police authorities [Long Description at the end of the chapter] (Statistics Canada 2011).

IPV has significant long-term effects on individuals and on society. Studies have shown that IPV damage extends beyond the direct physical or emotional wounds. Extended IPV has been linked to unemployment among victims, as many have difficulty finding or holding employment. Additionally, nearly all women who report serious domestic problems exhibit symptoms of major depression (Goodwin, Chandler, and Meisel, 2003). Female victims of IPV are also more likely to abuse alcohol or drugs, suffer from eating disorders, and attempt suicide (Silverman et al., 2001).

IPV is indeed something that affects more than just intimate partners. In a survey, 34% of respondents said they have witnessed IPV, and 59% said that they know a victim personally (Roper Starch Worldwide, 1995). Many people want to help IPV victims but are hesitant to intervene because they feel that it is a personal matter or they fear retaliation from the abuser—reasons similar to those of victims who do not report IPV.

## Making Connections: Corporal Punishment Debate

### Corporal Punishment

News reports in June 2013 broke the sensational story of dozens of children apprehended by Child and Family Services from a small Old Order Mennonite community in southern Manitoba. Several members of the community were charged by police with assault after reports that children had been disciplined using a leather strap, whip, and cattle prod (Hitchen, 2013). At one point, authorities apprehended all the children except for one 17-year-old. (CBC News, 2013) The 1892 law that permits the use of corporal punishment for children in Canada was upheld by a Supreme Court ruling in 2004 within certain restrictions, but corporal punishment remains a controversial issue in Canada (CBC News, 2004).

Physical abuse of children comes in many forms beating, kicking, throwing, choking, hitting with objects, burning. Injury by such behaviour is considered abuse even if caregiver did not intend harm. Other types of physical contact characterized as discipline (spanking, for example) are not considered abuse if no injury results. The Supreme Court ruling stated that teachers and parents can use reasonable corrective force against children between the ages of 2 and 12 the force is “minor” and of “a transitory and trifling nature” (CBC News, 2004). The court ruled that it was unacceptable to strike a child with an object, like a strap or whip, and striking a child in the head was also unacceptable.

This issue is controversial. While some parents feel that physical discipline (corporal punishment) is an effective way to respond to bad behaviour, others feel it is abuse. According to a 2005 study of mothers with preschoolers in Manitoba and Ontario, 70% of respondents reported using corporal punishment. One-third of them used it at least once a week. A 2007 Globe and Mail poll found that 78% of Canadian parents with children under 18 believed that parents do not discipline their children enough, and another 42% believed spanking benefited child development (Pearce, 2012).

However, studies show that spanking is not an effective form of punishment. It and may lead to aggression by the victim, particularly in those who are spanked at a young age (Berlin, 2009). Analysis of research published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal found that spanking was no better than other parenting methods at eliciting compliance in children. Spanking was in fact linked to increased levels of childhood aggression and also to long-term effects such as depression, emotional and behavioural problems, and drug and alcohol use in adulthood (Durrant and Ensom, 2012). This research led the Journal to call for the repeal of the spanking law from the Criminal Code. “It is time for Canada to remove this anachronistic excuse for poor parenting from the statute book” (Fletcher, 2012, p. 1339).



Figure 10.9. Corporal punishment. (Image courtesy of HA! Designs – Artbyheather/ Flickr)

## Child Abuse and Corporal Punishment

Children are among the most helpless victims of abuse. In 2010, more than 18,000 children and youth under the age of 17 were victims of police-reported family violence in Canada, accounting for nearly a quarter of all violent offences against children and youth (Sinha, 2012). Child abuse takes several forms: Neglect is most common, followed by physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological maltreatment, and medical neglect (Child Help, 2011). While the overall rate of violent crime involving children and youth is lower than the rate for the population, the rate of sexual assault is five times higher (Sinha, 2012). Girls were 37% more likely than boys to be the victim of family violence (and almost twice as likely by the time they reached ages 12 to 17 years). In large part, this is because girls are almost four times more likely to be a victim of sexual assault by a family member than boys.

Twenty-five percent of all violent crime against children and youth was perpetrated by a family member (parent, sibling, extended family member, or spouse), while another 54% involved an accused known to the victim (casual acquaintances, close friends, or dating partners) (Sinha, 2012). 59% of family violence against children was committed by parents, 19% by siblings, and 22% by other family members (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Infants are also often victims of physical abuse, particularly in the form of violent shaking. This type of physical abuse is referred to as shaken-baby syndrome, which describes a group of medical symptoms such as brain swelling and retinal hemorrhage resulting from forcefully shaking or causing impact to an infant's head. A baby's cry is the number one trigger for shaking. Parents may find themselves unable to soothe a baby's concerns and may take their frustration out on the child by shaking him or her violently. Other stress factors such as a poor economy, unemployment, and general dissatisfaction with parental life may contribute to this type of abuse. Shaken-baby syndrome was attributed as the cause of nearly one-third (31%) of family-related homicides of infants less than 1 year between 2000 and 2010 (Sinha, 2012).

## Chapter Summary

### What Is Marriage? What Is a Family?

Sociologists view marriage and families as societal institutions that help create the basic unit of social structure. Both marriage and a family may be defined differently — and practised differently — in cultures across the world. Families and marriages, like other institutions, adapt to social change.

### Variations in Family Life

Canadians' concepts of marriage and family are changing. Increases in cohabitation, same-sex partners, and singlehood are altering our ideas of marriage. Similarly, single parents, same-sex parents, cohabitating parents, and unwed parents are changing our notion of what it means to be a family. While many children still live in opposite-sex, two-parent, married households, these are no longer viewed as the only type of nuclear family.

### Challenges Families Face

Families face a variety of challenges, including divorce, domestic violence, and child abuse. Children are also negatively impacted by violence and abuse within the home; 18,000 children are victimized by family violence each year.

## Key Terms

**cohabitation:** When a couple shares a residence but is not married.

**extended family:** A household that includes at least one parent and child as well as other relatives like grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

**family:** Socially recognized groups of individuals who may be joined by blood, marriage, or adoption, and who form an emotional connection and an economic unit of society.

**family of orientation:** The family into which one is born.

**family of procreation:** A family that is formed through marriage.

**intimate partner violence (IPV):** Violence that occurs between individuals who maintain a romantic or sexual relationship; includes unmarried, cohabiting, and same-sex couples, as well as heterosexual married couples.

**marriage:** A legally recognized contract between two or more people in a sexual relationship, who have an expectation of permanence about their relationship.

**monogamy:** When someone is married to only one person at a time.

**nuclear family:** A cohabiting man and woman who maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and have at least one child.

**polygamy:** The state of being committed or married to more than one person at a time.

**shaken-baby syndrome:** A group of medical symptoms, such as brain swelling and retinal hemorrhage, resulting from forcefully shaking or impacting an infant's head.

**total divorce rate:** A projection of how many new marriages are expected to fail after 30 years, based on the divorce rate by marriage duration observed in a given year.



## Chapter Quiz

### 10.1 What Is Marriage? What Is a Family?

1. Sociologists tend to define family in terms of:
  - a. How a given society sanctions the relationships of people who are connected through blood, marriage, or adoption.
  - b. The connection of bloodlines.
  - c. The status roles that exist in a family structure.
  - d. How closely members adhere to social norms.
2. Research suggests that people generally feel that their current family is \_\_\_\_\_ than the family they grew up with.
  - a. Less close
  - b. More close
  - c. At least as close
  - d. None of the above

### 10.2. Variations in Family Life

3. The majority of Canadian children live in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Two-parent households.
  - b. One-parent households.
  - c. No-parent households.
  - d. Multigenerational households.
4. Couples who cohabit before marriage are \_\_\_\_\_ couples who did not cohabit before marriage to be married at least 10 years.
  - a. Far more likely than
  - b. Far less likely than
  - c. Slightly less likely than
  - d. Equally as likely as

5. Same-sex couple households account for \_\_\_\_\_ percent of Canadian households.
- a. 1
  - b. 10
  - c. 15
  - d. 30

### 10.3. Challenges Families Face

6. Current divorce rates are \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. At an all-time high
  - b. At an all-time low
  - c. Steadily increasing
  - d. Steadily declining
7. Which of the following is true of intimate partner violence (IPV)?
- a. IPV victims are more frequently men than women.
  - b. One in 10 women is a victim of IPV.
  - c. Aboriginal women are nearly 2.5 times more likely to be a victim of IPV than non-Aboriginal women.
  - d. Rape is the most common form of IPV.
8. Which type of child abuse is most prevalent in Canada?
- a. Physical abuse
  - b. Neglect
  - c. Shaken-baby syndrome
  - d. Internet stalking

[Quiz answers at end of chapter]

## Short Answer

### 10.1. What Is Marriage? What Is a Family?

According to research, what are Canadians' general thoughts on family? How do they view nontraditional family structures? How do you think these views might change in 20 years?

### 10.2. Variations in Family Life

1. Explain the different variations of the nuclear family and the trends that occur in each.
2. Why are some couples choosing to cohabit before marriage? What effect does cohabitation have on marriage?

### 10.3. Challenges Families Face

Explain why more than half of intimate partner violence goes unreported? Why are those who are abused unlikely to report the abuse?

## Further Research

### 10.1. What Is Marriage? What Is a Family?

For more information on family development and lines of descent, visit the Library and Archives Canada "Genealogy and Family History" website to find out how to research family genealogies in Canada: <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/genealogy/Pages/introduction.aspx>

### 10.2. Variations in Family Life

For more statistics on marriage and family, see the Statistics Canada report based on the 2011 census: *Portrait of Families and Living Arrangements in Canada: Families, households and marital status, 2011 Census of Population* [PDF]: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-312-x/98-312-x2011001-eng.pdf>

### 10.3. Challenges Families Face

To find more information on child abuse, visit the Canadian Child Welfare Research portal: <http://cwrp.ca/child-abuse-neglect>

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## Image Attributions

**Figure 10.13.** This CT scan is an example of Subdural haemorrhage caused by trauma by Glitzzy queen00 ([http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:Trauma\\_subdural\\_arrow.jpg](http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficheiro:Trauma_subdural_arrow.jpg)) is in the public domain ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_domain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_domain))

## Long Description

Long Description for Table 10.2. Reasons for not reporting spousal violence to police, by sex, 2009

Reason for not reporting spousal abuse	Percentage of men who did not report	Percentage of women who did not report
A personal matter	90%	75%
Dealt with another way	82%	77%
Not important enough	76%	64%
Didn't want to get involved with police	49%	50%
Didn't want spouse to get arrested	41%	41%
Didn't want anyone to find out	28%	44%
Police couldn't do anything	24%	26%
Police wouldn't help	15%	12%
No confidence in the criminal justice system	10%	15%
Fear of publicity	10%	13%
Fear of spouse	3%	19%

Long Description for Figure 10.\_ Marriage Satisfaction through the Stages.

	Number of men who rate their marriage as "very satisfying"	Number of women who rate their marriage as "very satisfying"
Stage 1: Childless	60%	75%
Stage 2: Children 0 to 2.5	66%	84%
Stage 3: Children 2.5 to 6	60%	61%
Stage 4: Children 6 to 13	37%	30%
Stage 5: Children 13 to 20	30%	40%
Stage 6: Children begin to leave home	21%	20%
Stage 7: "Empty Nest"	49%	61%

### Solutions to Chapter Quiz

1 a, | 2 c, | 3 c, | 4 d, | 5 b, | 6 a, | 7 d, | 8 c, | 9 a, | 10 c, | 11 d, |  
12 a, | 13 c, | 14 c, | 15 b

[11]

## Education



Figure 11.1. School bus. Once children attended neighborhood schools. Now most are bussed, sometimes long distances, to larger schools. Photo courtesy of constancemc/Flickr

### Learning Objectives

#### 11.1. Education around the World

- Identify differences in educational resources around the world.
- Describe the concept of universal access to education.

#### 11.2. Theoretical Perspectives on Education

- Define manifest and latent functions of education.
- Explain and discuss how functionalism, conflict theory, feminism, and interactionism

view issues of education.

## Introduction to Education

A child's education begins at birth. At first, education is an informal process: an infant watches and imitates others. As the infant grows into a young child, education becomes more formal through play and preschool. Once in grade school, academic lessons become the focus of education. But even then, education is about much more than the simple learning of facts.

Our education system also socializes us to our society. We learn cultural expectations and norms, which are reinforced by our teachers, our textbooks, and our classmates. (For students outside the dominant culture, this aspect of the education system can pose significant challenges.) You learned multiplication tables but also learned the social rules of taking turns on the swings at recess. You learned about the Canadian parliamentary process in a social studies course as well as learning when and how to speak up in class.

Schools can be agents of change or conformity, teaching individuals to think outside of the family and the local norms into which they were born. At the same time, school acclimatizes them to their place in society. Schools provide students with skills for communication, social interaction, and work discipline to create pathways to both independence and obedience.

The modern system of mass education is second only to the family in importance for socialization. Education promotes two main socializing tasks: homogenization and social sorting. Students from diverse backgrounds learn a standardized curriculum that effectively transforms diversity into homogeneity. Students learn a common knowledge base, a common culture, and a common sense of society's official priorities, and perhaps more importantly, they learn their place within it.

Education provides a unifying framework for participation in institutional life; At the same time are sorts students into different paths. Those who demonstrate ability within the curriculum standards or through informal patterns of status differentiation in student social life are set on paths to high-status positions in society. Those who do less well are gradually confined to lower, subordinate positions in society. Within the norms established by school curriculum and teaching methods, students learn from a very early age to identify their place as A, B, C, etc. level compared with classmates. In this way, schools are profound agencies of normalization.

## 11.1. Education around the World

**Education** is a social institution through which a society's children are taught basic academic knowledge, learning skills, and cultural norms. Every nation in the world is equipped with some form of education system, though those systems vary greatly. The major factors affecting education systems are the resources and money that are utilized to support those systems in different nations. As you might expect, a country's wealth has much to do with the amount of money spent on education. Countries that do not have such basic amenities as running water are unable to support robust education systems or, in many cases, any formal schooling at all. The result of this worldwide educational inequality is a social concern for many countries, including Canada.



Figure 11.2. These children are at a library in Singapore, where students are outperforming North American students on worldwide tests. (Photo courtesy of kodomut/flickr)

International differences in education systems are not solely a financial issue. The value placed on education, the amount of time devoted to it, and the distribution of education within a country also play a role in those differences. For example, students in South Korea spend 220 days a year in school, compared to the 190 days (180 days in Quebec) a year of their Canadian counterparts. Canadian students between the ages of 7 and 14 spend an average of 7,363 hours in compulsory education compared to an average of 6,710 hours for all member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (Statistics Canada, 2012). As of 2012, Canada ranked first among OECD countries in the proportion of adults aged 25 to 64 with post-secondary education (51%). Canada ranked first with students with a college education (24%) and eighth in the proportion of adults with a university education (26%). However, with respect to post-secondary educational attainment of 25- to 34-year-olds, Canada falls into 15th place as post-secondary education attainment rates in countries like South Korea and Ireland have been surpassing Canada by a large margin in recent years (OECD, 2013).

Then there is the issue of educational distribution within a nation. In December 2010, the results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests, which are administered to 15-year-old students worldwide, were released. Those results showed that students in Canada performed well in reading skills (5th out of 65 countries), math (8th out of 65 countries), and science (7th out of 65 countries) (Knighton, Brochu, and Gluszynski, 2010). Students at the top of the rankings hailed from Shanghai, Finland, Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The United States on the other hand was 17th in reading skills and had fallen from 15th to 25th in the rankings for science and math (National Public Radio, 2010).

Analysts determined that the nations and city-states at the top of the rankings had several things in common.

- First, they had well-established standards for education with clear goals for all students.
- They also recruited teachers from the top 5 to 10% of university graduates each year, which is not the case for most countries (National Public Radio, 2010).
- Finally, social factors. One analyst from the OECD, the organization that created the test, attributed 20% of performance differences and the United States' low rankings to differences in social background.

Canadian students' average scores were high over all but were also highly *equitable*. Equitable means that the difference in performance between high scorers and low scorers was relatively low (Knighton, Brochu, and Gluszynski, 2010). This suggests that differences in educational expenditure between jurisdictions and in the socioeconomic background of students don't create large gaps in performance. However, in the United States,

researchers noted that educational resources, including money and quality teachers, are not distributed equitably.

In the top-ranking countries, limited access to resources did not necessarily predict low performance. Analysts also noted what they described as “resilient students,” or those students who achieve at a higher level than one might expect given their social background. In Shanghai and Singapore, the proportion of resilient students is about 70%. In the United States, it is below 30%. These insights suggest that the United States’ educational system may be on a descending path that could detrimentally affect the country’s economy and its social landscape (National Public Radio, 2010).

## Education in Afghanistan

Since the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, there has been a spike in demand for education. This spike is so great, in fact, that it has exceeded the nation’s resources for meeting the demand. More than 6.2 million students are enrolled in grades 1 through 12 in Afghanistan, and about 2.2 million of those students are female (World Bank 2011). Both of these figures are the largest in Afghan history — far exceeding the time before the Taliban was in power. At the same time, there is currently a severe shortage of teachers in Afghanistan, and the educators in the system are often undertrained and frequently do not get paid on time. Currently, they are optimistic and enthusiastic about educational opportunities and approach teaching with a positive attitude, but there is fear that this optimism will not last.

With these challenges, there is a push to improve the quality of education in Afghanistan as quickly as possible. Educational leaders are looking to other post-conflict countries for guidance, hoping to learn from other nations that have faced similar circumstances. Their input suggests that the keys to rebuilding education are an early focus on quality and a commitment to educational access. Currently, educational quality in Afghanistan is generally considered poor, as is educational access. Literacy and math skills are low, as are skills in critical thinking and problem solving.

Education of females poses additional challenges since cultural norms decree that female students should be taught by female teachers. Currently, there is a lack of female teachers to meet that gender-based demand. In some provinces, the female student population falls below 15% of students (World Bank, 2011). Female education is also important to Afghanistan’s future because mothers are primary socialization agents: an educated mother is more likely to instill a thirst for education in her children, setting up a positive cycle of education for generations to come.

Improvements must be made to Afghanistan’s infrastructure in order to improve education, which has historically been managed at the local level. The World Bank, which strives to help developing countries break free of poverty and become self-sustaining has been hard at work to assist the people of Afghanistan in improving educational quality and access. The Education Quality Improvement Program provides training for teachers and grants to communities. The program is active in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan, supporting grants for both quality enhancement and development of infrastructure as well as providing a teacher education program.



Another program called Strengthening Higher Education focuses on six universities in Afghanistan and four regional colleges. The emphasis of this program is on fostering relationships with universities in other countries, including the United States and India, to focus on fields including engineering, natural sciences, and English as a second language. The program also seeks to improve libraries and laboratories through grants.

These efforts by the World Bank illustrate the ways global attention and support can benefit an educational system. In developing countries like Afghanistan, partnerships with countries that have established successful educational programs play a key role in efforts to rebuild.

## Formal and Informal Education

Education is not solely concerned with the basic academic concepts learned in a classroom. Societies also educate their children outside of the school system in everyday practical living. These two types of learning are referred to as formal education and informal education.

**Formal education** describes the learning of academic facts and concepts through a formal curriculum. Three hundred years ago few people knew how to read and write. Education was available only to the higher classes; they had the means to access scholarly materials, plus the luxury of leisure time to use for learning. The rise of capitalism and accompanying social changes made education more important to the economy and therefore more accessible to the general population.

The idea of universal mass education is a relatively recent idea, one that is still not achieved in many parts of the world. Around 1900, Canada and the United States were the first countries to approximate universal participation of children in school.

The modern Canadian educational system resulted from this progressive expansion of education. Today, basic education is considered a right and responsibility for all citizens. This system focuses on formal education: curricula and testing are designed for learning facts and concepts that society defines as basic knowledge.



Figure 11.3. A student in Afghanistan heads to school. The ISAF logo on his backpack represents a NATO-led security mission that has been involved in rebuilding Afghanistan. (Photo courtesy of isafmedia/flickr)

In contrast, **informal education** describes learning about cultural values, norms, and expected behaviours by participating in a society. Informal learning happens both through formal education system and at home. Our earliest learning experiences generally happen with parents, relatives, and others in our community. Through informal education, we learn how to dress for different occasions, how to perform regular life routines like shopping for and preparing food, and how to keep our bodies clean.

**Cultural transmission** refers to the way people come to learn the values, beliefs, and social norms of their culture. Both informal and formal education include cultural transmission. For example, a student will learn about cultural aspects of modern history in a Canadian history classroom. In that same classroom, the student might learn the cultural norm for asking a classmate out on a date through passing notes and whispered conversations.



Figure 11.4. Parents teaching their children to cook provide an informal education. (Photo courtesy of eyeliam/flickr)

## Access to Education

Another global concern in education is **universal access**. This term refers to people's equal ability to participate in an education system. On a world level, access might be more difficult for certain groups based on race, class, or gender (as was the case in Canada earlier in our nation's history, a dynamic we still struggle to overcome). The modern idea of universal access arose in Canada as a concern for people with disabilities. In Canada, one way in which universal education is supported is through provincial governments covering the cost of free public education. Of course, the way this plays out in terms of school budgets and taxes makes this an often-contested topic on the national, provincial, and community levels.

Table 11.1. Total spending per student in elementary and secondary schools varies by province and territory. 2006/2007 to 2010/2011 (in constant dollars, base year=2002)" (Table courtesy of Statistics Canada)

School Year		Canada	NFL	PEI	NS	NB	QB	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC	YK	NWT	NU
2006/2007	Dollars	9,640	8,413	7,701	8,523	8,937	9,327	9,553	9,964	9,746	9,169	9,681	19,449	14,914	14,087
	Percentage change	3.9	4.5	9.8	4.4	4.9	9.1	2.5	5.8	11.2	-3.7	3.6	14.5	8.1	8.0
2007/2008	Dollars	9,645	9,272	8,043	8,896	9,135	9,657	9,618	9,915	9,510	9,403	10,030	18,757	16,344	14,467
	Percentage change	2.0	10.2	4.4	4.4	2.2	3.5	0.7	-0.5	-2.4	2.6	3.6	-3.6	9.6	2.7
2008/2009	Dollars	10,186	9,977	8,690	9,226	9,969	9,916	10,132	10,827	10,110	10,498	10,366	17,966	19,127	14,379
	Percentage change	5.6	7.6	8.0	3.7	9.1	2.7	5.3	9.2	6.3	11.6	3.4	-4.2	17.0	-0.6
2009/2010	Dollars	10,616	11,297	10,032	9,884	10,283	10,143	10,719	11,417	10,236	10,725	10,528	17,764	21,650	17,798
	Percentage change	4.2	13.2	15.5	7.1	3.1	2.3	5.8	5.5	1.3	2.2	1.6	-1.1	13.2	23.8
2010/2011	Dollars	10,778	11,033	9,506	10,127	10,525	10,539	10,927	11,435	10,505	10,720	10,397	18,581	18,831	19,609
	Percentage change	1.5	-2.3	-5.2	2.5	2.4	3.9	1.9	0.2	2.6	0.0	-1.2	4.6	-13.0	10.2

Although school boards across the country had attempted to accommodate children with special needs in their educational systems through a variety of means from the 19th century on, it was not until the implementation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 that the question of universal



access to education for disabled children was seen in terms of a Charter right (Siegel and Ladyman 2000). Many provincial jurisdictions implemented educational policy to integrate special needs students into the classroom with mainstream students. For example, policy in British Columbia was revised in the mid-1990s to include specific measures to define students with special needs, develop individual education plans, and find school placements for students with special needs (Siegel and Ladyman 2000). In Ontario, Bill 82 was passed in 1980, establishing five principles for special education programs and services for special needs students: Universal access, education at public expense, an appeal process, ongoing identification and continuous assessment, and appropriate programming (Morgan 2003). These policies have had mixed results and continue to improve: Nova Scotia started reviewing its approach to inclusive education in 2017.

The best way to include differently able students in standard classrooms is still being researched and debated. “Inclusion” is a method that involves complete immersion in a standard classroom, whereas “mainstreaming” balances time in a special-needs classroom with standard classroom participation. There continues to be social debate surrounding how to implement the ideal of universal access to education.

## **11.2. Theoretical Perspectives on Education**

While education is important to both individual lives and society, sociologists view its role from different points of view. Functionalists believe that education equips people to perform different functional roles in society. Critical sociologists see education as widening the gap in social inequality. Feminist theorists point to evidence that sexism in education prevents women from achieving social equality. Symbolic interactionists study the dynamics of the classroom, the interactions between students and teachers, and how those affect everyday life.

## Functionalism

Functionalists view education as a very important social institution. They contend that education contributes two kinds of functions:

- manifest (or primary) functions, the intended and visible functions of education; and
- latent (or secondary) functions, the hidden and unintended functions.

### *Manifest Functions*

Several major manifest functions are associated with education.

**Socialization.** Beginning in preschool, students are taught to practise social roles. Sociologist Émile Durkheim characterized schools as “socialization agencies that teach children how to get along with others and prepare them for adult economic roles” (Durkheim 1898).

Socialization also involves learning the rules and norms of the society. In the early days of compulsory education, students learned the dominant culture. Today, since the Canadian culture is increasingly diverse, students may learn a variety of cultural norms, not only those of the dominant culture.

School systems in Canada also transmit the core national values through manifest functions like social control. Schools teach conformity to law and respect for authority (teachers and administrators). Such respect helps students navigate the school environment. This function also prepares students for the workplace and the world, where they will continue to be subject to people who have authority. Fulfillment of this function rests primarily with classroom teachers who are with students all day.



Figure 11.5. The teacher's authority in the classroom is a way in which education fulfills the manifest functions of social control. (Photo courtesy of Tulane Public Relations/flickr)

Education can also provide a path to upward social mobility. This function is named **social placement**. University and colleges are vehicles for moving students closer to the careers with financial freedom and security. As a result, university students are often more motivated to study areas believed socially advantageous. A student might value business courses over Victorian poetry class because business may be a stronger vehicle for financial success.

*Latent Functions*

Education also fulfills latent functions. Much of school has little to do with formal education. For example, the latent function of courtship happens through exposure to a peer group in the educational setting.

School introduces students to social networks that help find jobs later in life. Social media such as Facebook and LinkedIn make these networks easier than ever to maintain. The ability to work with others in small groups, a skill transferable to a workplace, is another latent function of school.

The educational system, especially university, traditionally allows students to learn about social issues through social and political advocacy. University also helps develop tolerance to the many views represented on campus. In 2011, the Occupy Wall Street movement swept across university campuses all over Canada, leading to demonstrations in which diverse students united to try to change the Canadian political climate.

*Table 11.2. Manifest and Latent Functions of Education. According to functionalist theory, education contributes to both manifest and latent functions.*

<b>Manifest Functions: Openly stated functions with intended goals</b>	Socialization	Transmission of culture	Social control	Social placement	Cultural innovation
<b>Latent Functions: Hidden, unstated functions with sometimes unintended consequences</b>	Courtship	Social networks	Working in groups	Creation of generation gap	Political and social integration

Functionalists recognize other ways that schools educate and enculturate students. Canadian students learn to value individualism — the valuing of the individual over the value of groups or society. In countries such as Japan and China, where the good of the group is valued over the rights of the individual, students do not learn the highest rewards go to the “best” individual in academics as well as athletics. One of the roles of schools in Canada is fostering self-esteem; conversely, schools in Japan focus on fostering social esteem — the honouring of the group over the individual.

In Canada, schools also fill the role of preparing students for competition and cooperation in life. Athletics foster both cooperation and competition, and even classrooms teach students both how to work together and how to compete against one another academically. Schools also fill the role of teaching patriotism. Although Canadian students do not have to recite a pledge of allegiance each morning like students in the United States, they take social studies classes where they learn about common Canadian history and identity.

Another role of schools, according to functionalist theory, is that of **sorting**, or classifying students based on academic merit or potential. The most capable students are identified early in schools through testing and classroom achievements. Exceptional students are often placed in accelerated programs in anticipation of successful university attendance. Other students are guided into vocational training programs with emphasis on shop and home economics.

Functionalists also contend that school, particularly in recent years, is taking over some of the functions that were traditionally undertaken by family. Society relies on schools to teach about human sexuality as well as basic skills such as budgeting and job applications — topics that at one time were addressed by the family.



Figure 11.6. Starting each day with the Pledge of Allegiance is one way in which American students are taught patriotism. How do Canadian students learn patriotism? (Photo courtesy of Jeff Turner/flickr)

## Critical Sociology

Critical sociologists do not believe that public schools reduce social inequality. Rather, they believe that the educational system reinforces and perpetuates social inequalities arising from differences in class, gender, race, and ethnicity. Where functionalists see education as serving a beneficial role, critical sociologists view it more critically. To them, it is important to examine how educational systems preserve the status quo and guide people of lower status into subordinate positions in society.

Educational attainment is closely linked to social class. Students of low socioeconomic status usually do not have the same opportunities as students of higher status, no matter how great their academic ability or desire to learn. For example, 25 of every 100 low-income Canadian 19-year-olds attend university compared to 46 of every 100 high-income Canadian 19-year-olds (Berger, Motte, and Parkin 2009). Barriers like the cost of higher education, but also subtler cultural cues, undermine education as a means of equality of opportunity.

Think of a student from a working-class home who wants to do well in school. On a Monday, he's assigned a paper that's due Friday. Monday evening, he must babysit his younger sister while his divorced mother works. Tuesday and Wednesday, he works stocking shelves after school until 10:00 p.m. By Thursday, the only day available to work on that assignment, he is so exhausted he can't start the paper. His mother, though she would like to help, is so tired she isn't able to encourage or support him. Since English is her second language, she has difficulty with some of his educational materials. They also lack a computer and printer at home, so they have to rely on the public library or school system for technology access. As this story shows, many students from working-class families must contend with helping out at home, contributing financially to the family, having poor study environments, and lacking material support from their families. This is a difficult match with education systems with a traditional curriculum that is more easily understood and completed by students of higher social classes.

This leads to social class reproduction, extensively studied by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. He studied **cultural capital**, the accumulation of cultural knowledge that helps navigate a culture. This changes the experiences and opportunities available to students from different social classes. Like economic capital, cultural capital (cultural taste, knowledge, patterns of speech, clothing, proper etiquette, etc.) is difficult and time consuming to acquire.

Members of the upper and middle classes have more cultural capital than families of lower-class status, and they can pass it on to their children. As a result, the educational system maintains a cycle in which the dominant culture's values are rewarded. Instruction and tests are biased toward the dominant culture and leave others struggling with content outside their social experience. For example, there has been a great deal of discussion over what standardized tests such as the IQ test and aptitude tests truly measure. Many argue that the tests group students by cultural ability rather than by natural intelligence.

The cycle of rewarding those who possess cultural capital is found in formal educational curricula and also in the **hidden curriculum**. Hidden curriculum refers to the type of nonacademic knowledge learned through informal learning and cultural transmission. The hidden curriculum is never formally taught; it reinforces the positions of those with higher cultural capital and awards status unequally.



Figure 11.7. Critical sociologists see the education system as a means by which those in power stay in power. (Photo courtesy Thomas Ricker/flickr)

Critical sociologists also point to **tracking** as perpetuating inequalities. Tracking is a formalized sorting system that places students on “tracks” (advanced versus low achievers). While educators may believe that students do better in tracked classes because they are with students of similar ability and may have access to more individual attention from teachers, critical sociologists feel that tracking leads to self-fulfilling prophecies in which students live up (or down) to teacher and societal expectations (Education Week 2004).

IQ tests have been attacked for being biased—for testing cultural knowledge rather than actual intelligence. For example, a test item may ask students what instruments belong in an orchestra. To correctly answer this question requires certain cultural knowledge—knowledge most often held by more affluent people who typically have more exposure to orchestral music. Based on IQ and aptitude testing, students are frequently sorted into categories that place them in enriched program tracks, average program tracks, and special needs or remedial program tracks. Though experts claim that bias has been eliminated from tests, critical sociologists maintain this is impossible. The tests are another way in which education does not provide equal opportunities, but instead maintains an established configuration of power.

## Feminist Theory

Feminist theory aims to understand the mechanisms and roots of gender inequality in education, as well as their societal repercussions. Like many other institutions of society, educational systems are characterized by unequal treatment and opportunity for women. Almost two-thirds of the world’s 862 million illiterate people are women, and the illiteracy rate among women is expected to increase in many regions, especially in several African and Asian countries (UNESCO 2005; World Bank 2007).

Canadian women’s educational attainments have slowly increased. Women now make up 56% of all post-secondary students and 58% of graduates from post-secondary institutions in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2013). Canadian women have the highest percentage of higher educational attainment among all OECD countries at 55%. A university education is also more financially advantageous for women in Canada than men. Women with a higher education degree earn on average 50% more than they would without higher education compared to 39% more for men. However, men with higher education were more likely to have a job than women with higher education (84.7% to 78.5%), and women earned less than men in absolute terms with their education: 74 cents for each dollar earned by men for ages 24 to 64 (OECD, 2012).

When women face limited opportunities for education, their capacity to achieve equal rights, including financial independence, are limited. Feminist theory seeks to promote women’s rights to equal education (and its benefits) across the world.

## Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism sees labelling theory in education. To a symbolic interactionist, labelling is connected to those who are in power and those who are being labelled. For example, low standardized test scores or poor performance in a class often lead to a student being labelled as a low achiever. Such labels are difficult to “shake off,” which can create a self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton 1968).

In his book *High School Confidential*, Jeremy Iverson, a Stanford University graduate, describes posing as a student at a California high school. One of the problems he identifies is teachers applying labels that students are never able to lose. One teacher told him, without knowing he was a bright graduate of a top university, that he would never amount to anything (Iverson 2006). Iverson obviously didn’t believe this false assessment. However, when an actual 17-year-old student hears this from a teacher, the student might begin to “live down to” that label.

According to symbolic interactionists, labelling extends to the degrees that symbolize completion of education. **Credentialism** emphasizes certificates or degrees to show that a person has a certain skill, has attained a certain level of education, or has met certain job qualifications. These certificates or degrees serve as a symbol of what a person has achieved, labelling that individual.

Labelling theory can significantly affect a student's schooling. Teachers and powerful social groups within the school apply labels that can be adopted by the entire school system.

## Chapter Summary

### Education around the World

Educational systems around the world have many differences, though the same factors — including resources and money — affect each of them. Educational distribution is a major issue in many nations, including in the United States, where the amount of money spent per student varies greatly by state. Education happens through both formal and informal systems; both foster cultural transmission. Universal access to education is a worldwide concern.

### Theoretical Perspectives on Education

The major sociological theories offer insight into how we understand education. Functionalists view education as an important social institution that contributes both manifest and latent functions. Functionalists see education as serving the needs of society by preparing students for later roles, or functions, in society. Critical sociologists see schools as a means for perpetuating class, racial-ethnic, and gender inequalities. In the same vein, feminist theory focuses specifically on the mechanisms and roots of gender inequality in education. The theory of symbolic interactionism focuses on education as a means for labelling individuals.

## Key Terms

**credentialism:** The emphasis on certificates or degrees to show that a person has a certain skill, has attained a certain level of education, or has met certain job qualifications.

**cultural capital:** Cultural knowledge that serves (metaphorically) as currency to help one navigate a culture.

**cultural transmission:** The way people come to learn the values, beliefs, and social norms of their culture.

**education:** A social institution through which a society's children are taught basic academic knowledge, learning skills, and cultural norms.

**formal education:** The learning of academic facts and concepts.

**grade inflation:** The idea that the achievement level associated with an A today is notably lower than the achievement level associated with A-level work a few decades ago.

**hidden curriculum:** The type of nonacademic knowledge that one learns through informal learning and cultural transmission.

**informal education:** Learning about cultural values, norms, and expected behaviours through participation in a society.

**social placement:** The use of education to improve one's social standing.

**sorting:** Classifying students based on academic merit or potential.

**tracking:** A formalized sorting system that places students on "tracks" (advanced, low achievers) that perpetuate inequalities.

**universal access:** The equal ability of all people to participate in an education system.

## Chapter Quiz

### 11.1. Education around the World

1. What are the major factors affecting education systems throughout the world?
  - a. Resources and money
  - b. Student interest
  - c. Teacher interest
  - d. Transportation
2. What do nations that are top-ranked in science and math have in common?
  - a. They are all in Asia.
  - b. They recruit top teachers.
  - c. They spend more money per student.
  - d. They use cutting-edge technology in classrooms.
3. Informal education \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Describes when students teach their peers
  - b. Refers to the learning of cultural norms
  - c. Only takes place at home
  - d. Relies on a planned instructional process
4. Learning from classmates that most students buy lunch on Fridays is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Cultural transmission
  - b. Educational access
  - c. Formal education
  - d. Informal education



5. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was an impetus for \_\_\_\_\_.
- a. Access to education
  - b. Average spending on students
  - c. Desegregation of schools
  - d. Higher salaries for teachers

## 11.2. Theoretical Perspectives on Education

6. Which of the following is *not* a manifest function of education?
- a. Cultural innovation
  - b. Courtship
  - c. Social placement
  - d. Socialization
7. Which theory of education focuses on the ways in which education maintains the status quo?
- a. Critical sociology
  - b. Piaget's theory
  - c. Functionalist theory
  - d. Symbolic interactionism
8. Which theory of education focuses on the labels acquired through the educational process?
- a. Critical sociology
  - b. Feminist theory
  - c. Functionalist theory
  - d. Symbolic interactionism
9. What term describes the assignment of students to specific education programs and classes on the basis of test scores, previous grades, or perceived ability?
- a. Hidden curriculum
  - b. Labelling
  - c. Self-fulfilling prophecy
  - d. Tracking

10. Functionalist theory sees education as serving the needs of \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. Families  
b. Society  
c. The individual  
d. All of the above
11. What term describes the separation of students based on merit?  
a. Cultural transmission  
b. Social control  
c. Sorting  
d. Hidden curriculum
12. Critical sociologists see sorting as a way to \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. Challenge gifted students  
b. Perpetuate divisions of socioeconomic status  
c. Help students who need additional support  
d. Teach respect for authority
13. Critical sociologists see IQ tests as being biased. Why?  
a. They are scored in a way that is subject to human error.  
b. They do not give children with learning disabilities a fair chance to demonstrate their true intelligence.  
c. They don't involve enough test items to cover multiple intelligences.  
d. They reward affluent students with questions that assume knowledge associated with upper-class culture.

[Quiz answers at end of chapter]

## Short Answer

### 11.1. Education around the World

1. Has there ever been a time when your formal and informal educations in the same setting were at odds? How did you overcome that disconnect?
2. Do you believe free access to schools has achieved its intended goal? Explain.

### 11.2. Theoretical Perspectives on Education

1. Thinking of your school, what are some ways that a conflict theorist would say that your school perpetuates class differences?
2. Which sociological theory best describes your view of education? Explain why.
3. Based on what you know about symbolic interactionism and feminist theory, what do you think proponents of those theories see as the role of the school?

## Further Research

### 11.1. Education around the World

Though it's a struggle, education is continually being improved in the developing world. To learn how educational programs are being fostered worldwide, explore the Education section of the Center for Global Development's website: <http://www.cgdev.org/topics/education>

### 11.2. Theoretical Perspectives on Education

Can tracking actually improve learning? This 2009 article from *Education Next* explores the debate with evidence from Kenya. <http://educationnext.org/tracking-improve-learning/>

The National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest) is committed to ending the bias and other flaws seen in standardized testing. Their mission is to ensure that students, teachers, and schools are evaluated fairly. You can learn more about their mission, as well as the latest in news on test bias and fairness, at their website: [http://openstaxcollege.org/l/fair\\_test](http://openstaxcollege.org/l/fair_test)

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## Image Attributions

**Figure 11.\_.** Living seasons in a Hopi village by U.S. Embassy Canada ([https://www.flickr.com/photos/us\\_mission\\_canada/8197704623/in/set-72157632038837142](https://www.flickr.com/photos/us_mission_canada/8197704623/in/set-72157632038837142)) used under CC BY 2.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>)

### Solutions to Chapter Quiz

1 a, | 2 b, | 3 b, | 4 a, | 5 a, | 6 b, | 7 c, | 8 a, | 9 d, | 10 d, | 11 d, |  
12 d, | 13 c, | 14 b, | 15 d

[12]

## Work in Canada

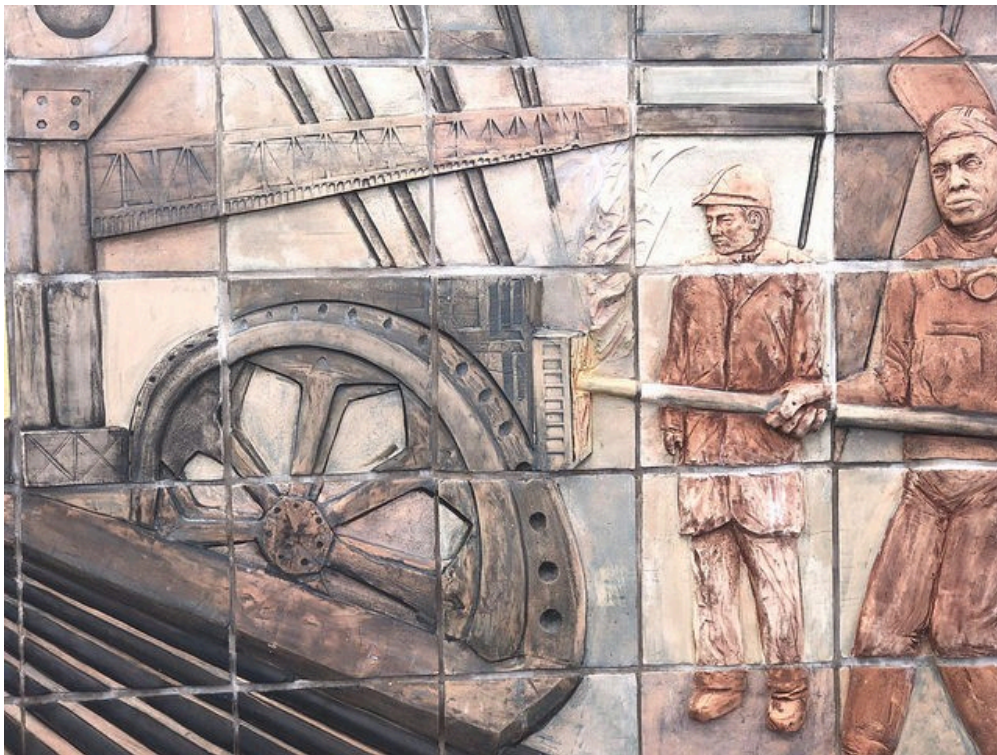


Figure 12.1. Detail from mural at Open Hearth Park In Sydney, NS. Heavy industry like steel production was once a cornerstone of the Canadian economy. Photo courtesy of constancemc/Flickr

### Learning Objectives

#### 12.1. Introduction to Work and the Economy

- Understand what economy refers to.

#### 12.2. Work in Canada

- Describe the current Canadian workforce and the trend of polarization.
- Explain how women and immigrants have impacted the modern Canadian workforce.
- Understand the basic elements of poverty in Canada today.

## 12.1. Introduction to Work and the Economy

Ever since the first people traded one item for another, there has been some form of economy in the world. The economy is how people meet their wants and needs through producing and exchanging goods and services. In sociology, **economy** refers to the social institutions through which a society's resources (goods and services) are managed.

**Goods** are the physical objects we find, grow, or make in order to meet human needs. Goods can meet essential needs, such as shelter, clothing, and food, or they can be luxuries — those things we do not *need* to live but *want* anyway. Goods produced for sale on the market are called **commodities**. In contrast to these *objects*, **services** are *activities* that benefit people. Examples of services include food preparation and delivery, health care, education, and entertainment. These services provide resources to maintain and improve a society. The food industry helps ensure that all of a society's members have access to nutrition. Health care and education systems care for those in need, help foster longevity, and equip people to become productive members of society.

Economy is one of human society's earliest social structures. Our earliest forms of writing (such as Sumerian clay tablets) were developed to record transactions, payments, and debts between merchants. As societies grow and change, so do their economies. The economy of a small farming community is very different from the economy of a large nation with advanced technology.

## 12.2. Work in Canada

Common wisdom states that if you study hard, develop good work habits, and graduate from high school or college, then you'll get a good job. And although the reality has always been more complex than the myth, worldwide recessions and other economic changes make it harder to win the employment game.

The data are grim: for example, in the United States, from December 2007 through March 2010, 8.2 million workers lost their jobs, and the unemployment rate grew to almost 10% nationally, with some states showing much higher rates (Autor, 2010). Times are very challenging for those in the workforce in Canada too. For those finishing their schooling, often with enormous student-debt burdens, finding employment is not just challenging — it can be terrifying.

So where did all the jobs go? Will any of them be coming back? If not, what new ones will there be? How do you find and keep a good job now? These are the kinds of questions people are currently asking about the job market in Canada.

## Polarization in the Workforce

The mix of jobs available in Canada has always varied. Geography, race, gender, and other factors have always played a role in finding employment. More recently, increased **outsourcing** (or contracting work to an outside source) of manufacturing jobs to developing nations has greatly diminished the number of high-paying, often unionized, blue-collar positions available. A similar problem exists in the white-collar sector, with many clerical and support positions also being outsourced. Think of the number of international technical-support call centres in Mumbai, India! The number of supervisory and managerial positions has been reduced as companies streamline their command structures. Industries continue to consolidate through mergers. Even highly educated skilled workers such as computer programmers have seen their jobs vanish overseas.

**Automation** (replacing workers with technology) of the workplace is another cause of the changes in the job market. Computers can be programmed to do many routine tasks faster and less expensively than people who used to do such tasks. Jobs like bookkeeping, clerical work, and repetitive tasks on production assembly lines all lend themselves to automation. Think about the newer automated toll passes we can install in our cars. Toll collectors are just one of the many endangered jobs that will soon cease to exist.

Despite all this, the job market is growing in some areas, but in a very polarized fashion. **Polarization** means that a gap has developed in the job market, with most employment opportunities at the lowest and highest levels and few jobs for those with mid-level skills and education. At one end, there is strong demand for low-skilled, low-paying jobs in industries like food service and retail. On the other end, some research shows that in certain fields there has been a steadily increasing demand for highly skilled and educated professionals, technologists, and managers. These high-skilled positions also tend to be highly paid (Autor, 2010).

The fact that some positions are highly paid while others are not is an example of the **dual labour market structure**, a division of the economy into sectors with different levels of pay. The primary labour market consists of high-paying jobs in the public sector, manufacturing, telecommunications, biotechnology, and other similar sectors that require high levels of capital investment (or other restrictions) that limit the number of businesses able to enter the sector. The costs of labour are considered marginal in comparison to the total capital investment required. Jobs in the sector usually offer good benefits, security, prospects for advancement, and comparatively higher levels of unionization.

The secondary labour market consists of jobs in more competitive sectors of the economy like service industries, restaurants, and commercial enterprises, where the cost of entry for businesses is relatively low. Jobs in the secondary labour market are usually poorly paid, offer few if any benefits, and have little job security, poor prospects for advancement, and minimal unionization. Wages paid to employees make up a significant portion of the cost of products or services offered to consumers, and because of the high level of competition, businesses are obliged to keep the cost of labour to a minimum to remain competitive.

Hard work does not guarantee success in the dual labour market economy, because **social capital**—the accumulation of a network of social relationships and knowledge that will provide a platform from which to achieve financial success—in the form of connections or higher education are often required to access the high-paying jobs. Increasingly, we are realizing intelligence and hard work are not enough. If you lack knowledge of how to leverage the right names, connections, and players, you are unlikely to experience upward mobility. Particularly in the knowledge economy, which generates a new dual labour market between jobs that require high levels of education (scientists, programmers, designers, etc.) and support jobs (secretarial, data entry, technicians, etc.), social capital in the form of formal education is a condition for accessing quality jobs.

The division between those who are able to access, create, use, and disseminate knowledge and those who cannot is often referred to as the **knowledge divide**. With so many jobs being outsourced or eliminated by automation, what kinds of jobs are available in Canada?

While manufacturing jobs are in decline and fishing and agriculture are static, several job markets are expanding. These include resource extraction, computer and information services, professional business services, health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services. Figure 12.2, from Employment and Social Development Canada, illustrates areas of projected growth.



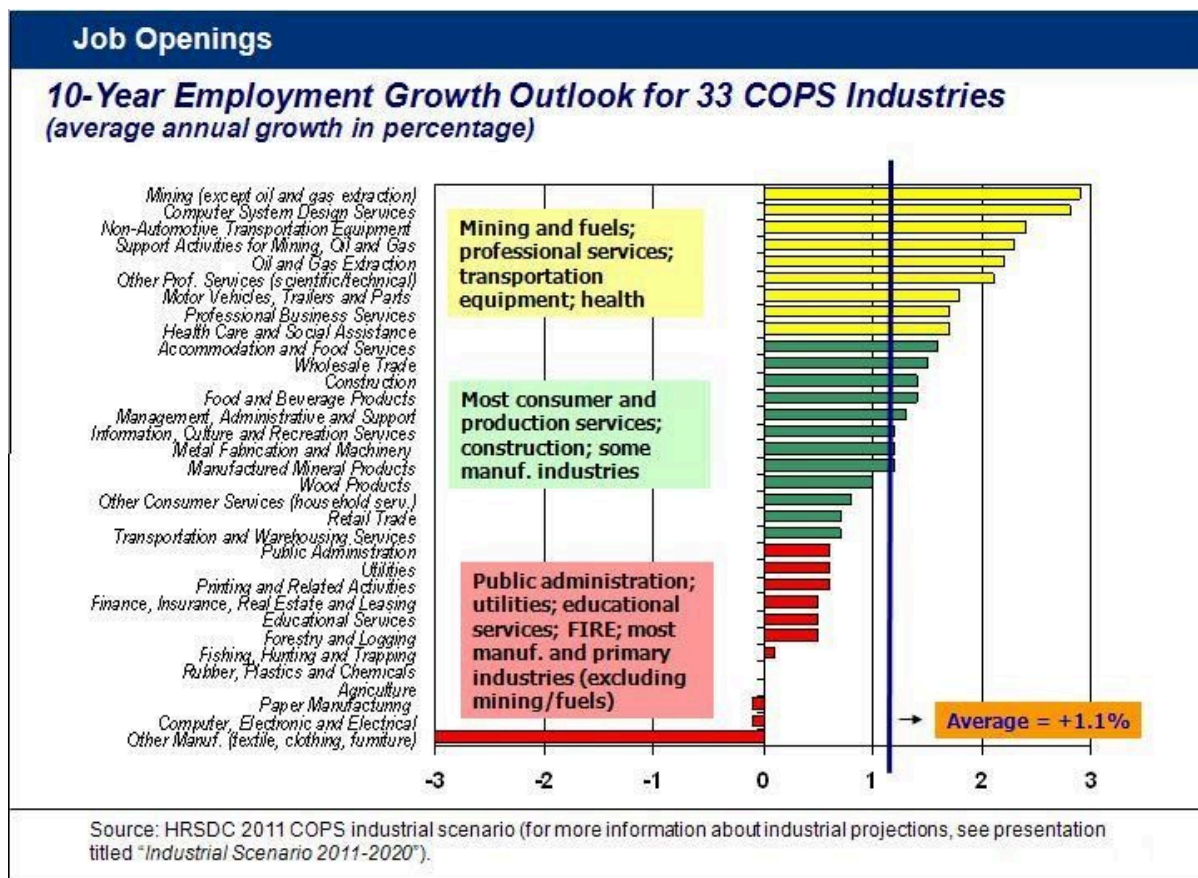


Figure 12.2. This chart shows the projected growth of several occupational groups. (Graph courtesy of the Employment and Social Development Canada (Labour Market Research and Forecasting Policy Research Directorate 2011a) available from <http://www23.hrsdc.gc.ca/l.3bd.2t.1l.shtml@-eng.jsp?lid=17&fid=1&lang=en>. The Canadian Government allows this graph to be used in whole or part for non-commercial purposes in any format (<http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/terms/index.shtml>).

Professional and related jobs, which include any number of positions, typically require significant education and training and tend to be lucrative career choices. Service jobs, according to Employment and Social Development Canada, can include everything from consumer service jobs such as scooping ice cream, to producer service jobs that contract out administrative or technical support, to government service jobs including teachers and bureaucrats (Labour Market Research and Forecasting Policy Research Directorate, 2011b).

There is a wide variety of training needed, and therefore an equally large wage discrepancy. One of the largest areas of growth by industry, rather than by occupational group (as seen above), is in the health field (Labour Market Research and Forecasting Policy Research Directorate, 2011a). This growth is across occupations, from practical nurses and assistants to management-level staff. Baby boomers are living longer than any generation before, and the growth of this population segment requires an increase in our country's elder care system, from home health care nursing to geriatric nutrition.

Notably, jobs in manufacturing are in decline. This is an area where those with less education traditionally could find steady, if low-wage, work. With these jobs disappearing, more and more workers will find themselves untrained for available employment. Another projected trend in employment relates to the level of education and training required to gain and keep a job.

As Figure 12.3 shows, growth rates are higher for those with more education. It is estimated that between 2011 and 2020, there will be 6.5 million new job openings due to economic growth or retirement, two-thirds of which will be in occupations that require post-secondary education (“PSE” in the chart) or in management positions (Labour Market Research and Forecasting Policy Research Directorate, 2011a). 70% of new jobs created through economic growth are projected to be in management or occupations that require post-secondary education. Those with a university degree may expect job growth of 21.3%, and those with a college degree or apprenticeship 34.3%.

At the other end of the spectrum, jobs that require a high school diploma or equivalent are projected to grow at only 24.9%, while jobs that require less than a high school diploma will grow at 8.6%. Quite simply, without a degree, it will be more difficult to find a job. These projections are based on overall growth across all occupation categories, so obviously there will be variations within different occupational areas. Seven out of the ten occupations with the highest proportion of job openings are in management and the health sector. However, once again, those who are the least educated will be the ones least able to fulfill the Canadian dream.

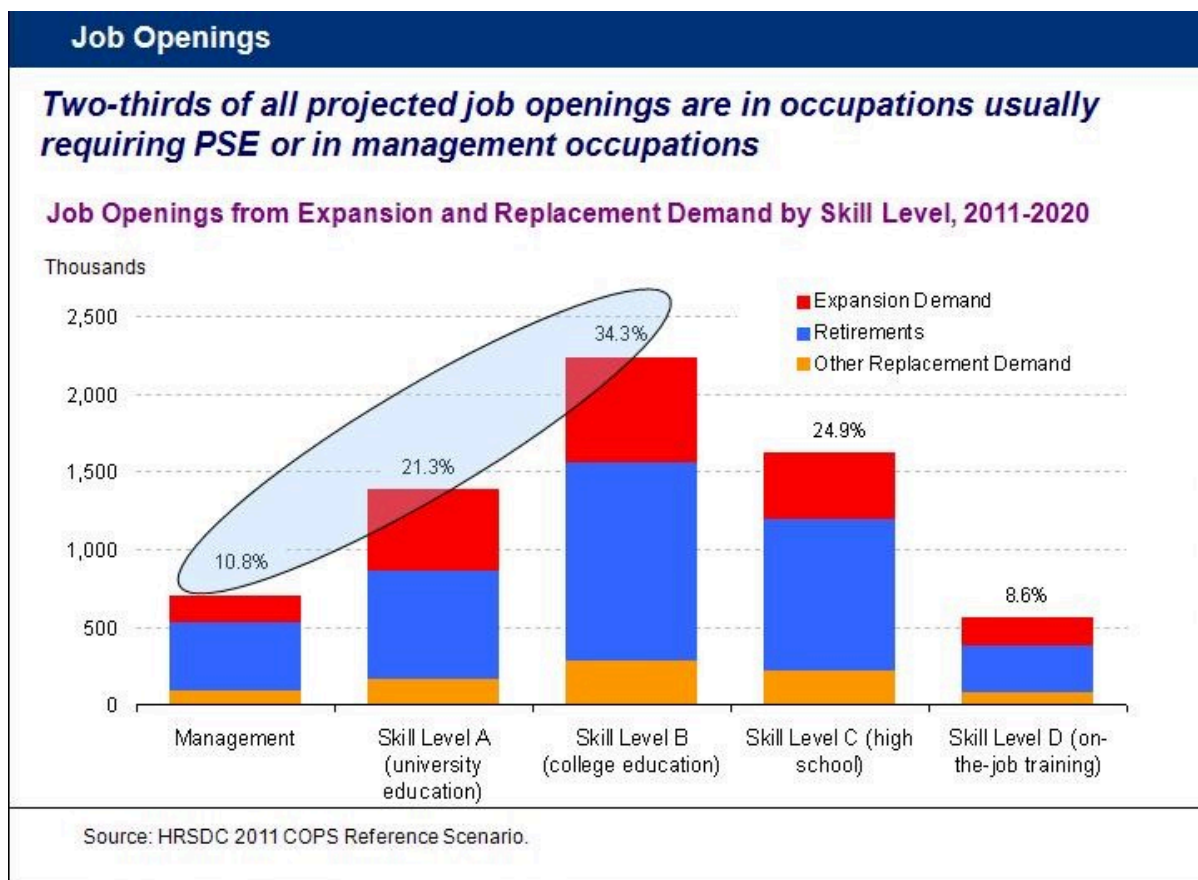


Figure 12.3. More education generally means more jobs. (Graph courtesy of the Social Development Canada (Labour Market Research and Forecasting Policy Research Directorate, 2011a)) available from <http://www23.hrsdc.gc.ca/l3bd.2t.1i1shtml@-eng.jsp?lid=17&fid=1&lang=en>. The Canadian Government allows this graph to be used in whole or part for non-commercial purposes in any format (<http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/terms/index.shtml>).

## Women in the Workforce

In the past, rising education levels in Canada were able to keep pace with the rise in the number of education-dependent jobs. Since the late 1970s, men have been enrolling in university at a lower rate than women, and graduating at a rate of almost 10% less (Wang and Parker, 2011). In 2008, 62% of undergraduate degrees and 54% of graduate degrees were granted to women (Drolet, 2011). The lack of male candidates reaching the

education levels needed for skilled positions has opened opportunities for women and immigrants. Women have been entering the workforce in ever-increasing numbers for several decades. Their increasingly higher levels of education attainment than men has resulted in many women being better positioned to obtain high-paying, high-skill jobs. Between 1991 and 2011, the percentage of employed women between the ages of 25 and 34 with a university degree increased from 19% to 40%, whereas among employed men aged 25 to 34 the percentage increased from 17% to 27%.

It is interesting to note however that at least 20% of all women with a university degree were still employed in the same three occupations as they were in 1991: registered nurses, elementary school and kindergarten teachers, and secondary school teachers. The top three occupations for university-educated men (11% of this group) were computer programmers and interactive media developers, financial auditors and accountants, and secondary school teachers (Uppal and LaRochelle-Côté, 2014). While women are getting more and better jobs and their wages are rising more quickly than men's wages are, Statistics Canada data show that they are still earning only 76% of what men are for the same positions. However when the wages of young women aged 25 to 29 are compared to young men in the same age cohort, the women now earn 90% of young men's hourly wage (Statistics Canada, 2011).

## Immigration and the Workforce

Simply put, people will move from where there are few or no jobs to places where there are jobs, unless something prevents them from doing so. The process of moving to a country is called immigration. Canada has long been a destination for workers of all skill levels. While the rate decreased somewhat during the economic slowdown of 2008, immigrants, both legal and illegal, continue to be a major part of the Canadian workforce. In 2006, before the recession arrived, immigrants made up 19.9% of the workforce, up from 19 percent in 1996 (Kustec, 2012). The economic downturn affected them disproportionately. In 2008, employment rates were at the peak for both native-born Canadians (84.1%) and immigrants (77.4%). In 2009, these figures dropped to 82.2% and 74.9% respectively, meaning that the gap in employment rates increased to 7.3 percentage points from 6.7. The gap was greater between native-born and very recent immigrants (18.6 percentage points in 2009, compared with a gap of 17.5 points in 2008) (Yssaad, 2012). Interestingly, in the United States, this trend was reversed. The unemployment rate decreased for immigrant workers and increased for native workers (Kochhar, 2010). This no doubt did not help to reduce tensions in that country about levels of immigration, particularly illegal immigration.

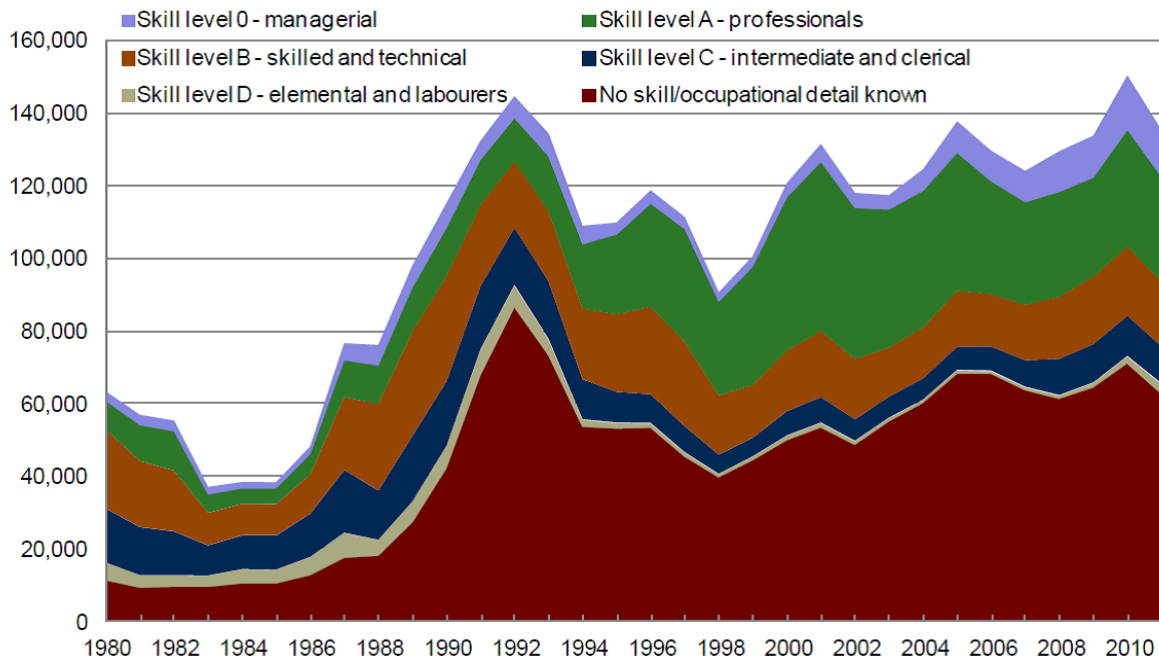


Figure 12.4. Landings of permanent residents intending to work by skill level, 1980-2011 (Graph courtesy of Citizenship & Immigration Canada (Kustec, 2012)). This graph is a reproduction of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada and that has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada. This graph may be used in part or whole for non-commercial purposes without further permissions.

Recent political debate about the Temporary Foreign Worker Program has been fuelled by conversations about low-skilled service industry jobs being taken by low-earning foreign workers (Mas, 2014). It should be emphasized that a substantial portion of working-age *immigrants* (i.e., not temporary workers) landing in Canada are highly educated and highly skilled (Figure 12.4). They play a significant role in filling skilled positions that open up through both job creation and retirement. About half of the landed immigrants identify an occupational skill, 80 to 90% of which fall within the higher skill level classifications. Of the other 50% of landed immigrants who intend to work but do not indicate a specific occupational skill, most have recently completed school and are new to the labour market, or have landed under the family class or as refugees — classes which are not coded by occupation (Kustec, 2012).

## Poverty in Canada

When people lose their jobs during a recession or in a changing job market, it takes longer to find a new one, if they can find one at all. If they do, it is often at a much lower wage or not full time. This can force people into poverty. In Canada, we tend to have what is called relative poverty, defined as being unable to live the lifestyle of the average person in your country. This must be contrasted with the absolute poverty that can be found in underdeveloped countries, defined as being barely able, or unable, to afford basic necessities such as food (Byrns, 2011). We cannot even rely on unemployment statistics to provide a clear picture of total unemployment in Canada. First, unemployment statistics do not take into account **underemployment**, a state in which people accept lower-paying, lower-status jobs than their education and experience qualifies them to perform. Second, unemployment statistics only count those:

1. who are actively looking for work
2. who have not earned income from a job in the past four weeks
3. who are ready, willing, and able to work

The unemployment statistics provided by Statistics Canada are rarely accurate, because many of the unemployed become discouraged and stop looking for work. Not only that, but these statistics undercount the youngest and oldest workers, the chronically unemployed (e.g., homeless), and seasonal and migrant workers.

A certain amount of unemployment is a direct result of the relative inflexibility of the labour market, considered **structural unemployment**, which describes when there is a societal level of disjuncture between people seeking jobs and the available jobs. This mismatch can be geographic (they are hiring in Alberta, but the highest rates of unemployment are in Newfoundland and Labrador), technological (skilled workers are replaced by machines, as in the auto industry), or can result from any sudden change in the types of jobs people are seeking versus the types of companies that are hiring. Because of the high standard of living in Canada, many people are working at full-time jobs but are still poor by the standards of relative poverty. They are the working poor. Canada has a higher percentage of working poor than many other developed countries (Brady, Fullerton, and Cross, 2010). In terms of employment, Statistics Canada defines the working poor as those who worked for pay at least for at least 910 hours during the year, and yet remain below the poverty line according to the Market Basket Measure (i.e., they lack the disposable income to purchase a specified “basket” of basic goods and services). Many of the facts about the working poor are as expected: those who work only part time are more likely to be classified as working poor than those with full-time employment; higher levels of education lead to less likelihood of being among the working poor; and those with children under 18 are four times more likely than those without children to fall into this category. In 2011, 6.4% of Canadians of all ages lived in households classified as working poor (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2011).

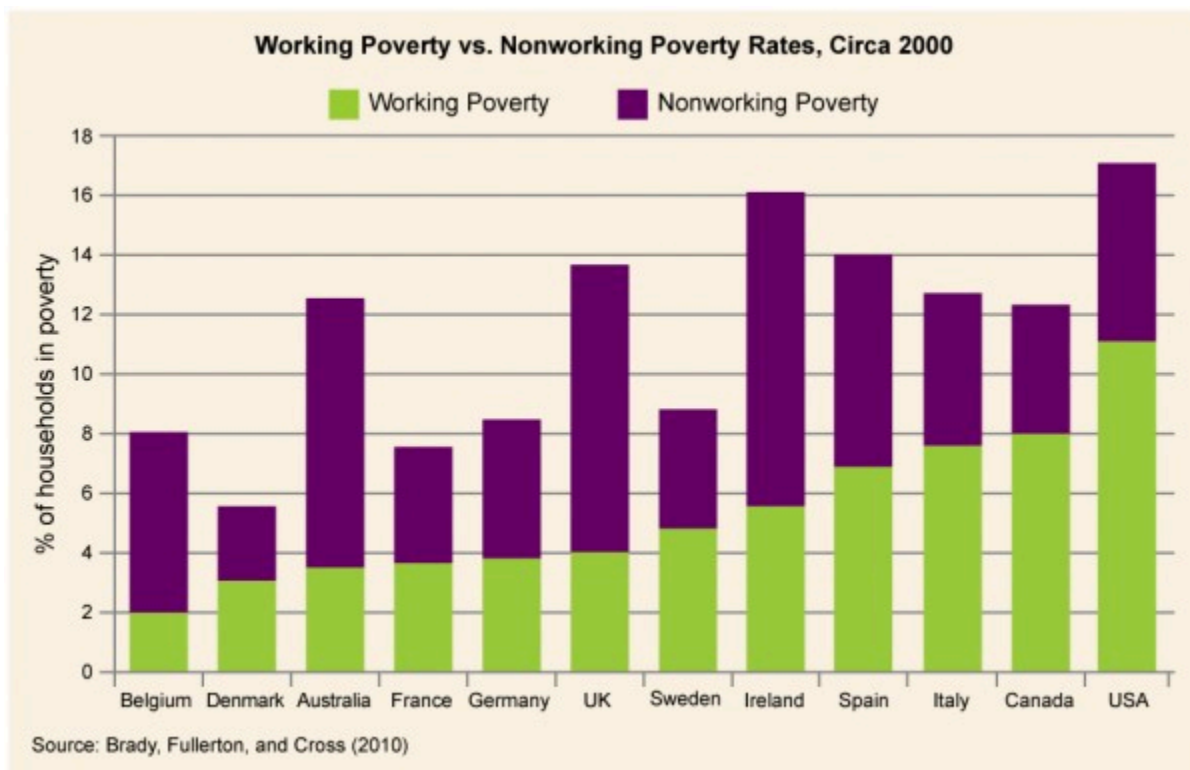


Figure 12.5. A higher percentage of the people living in poverty in Canada and the United States have jobs compared to other developed nations.

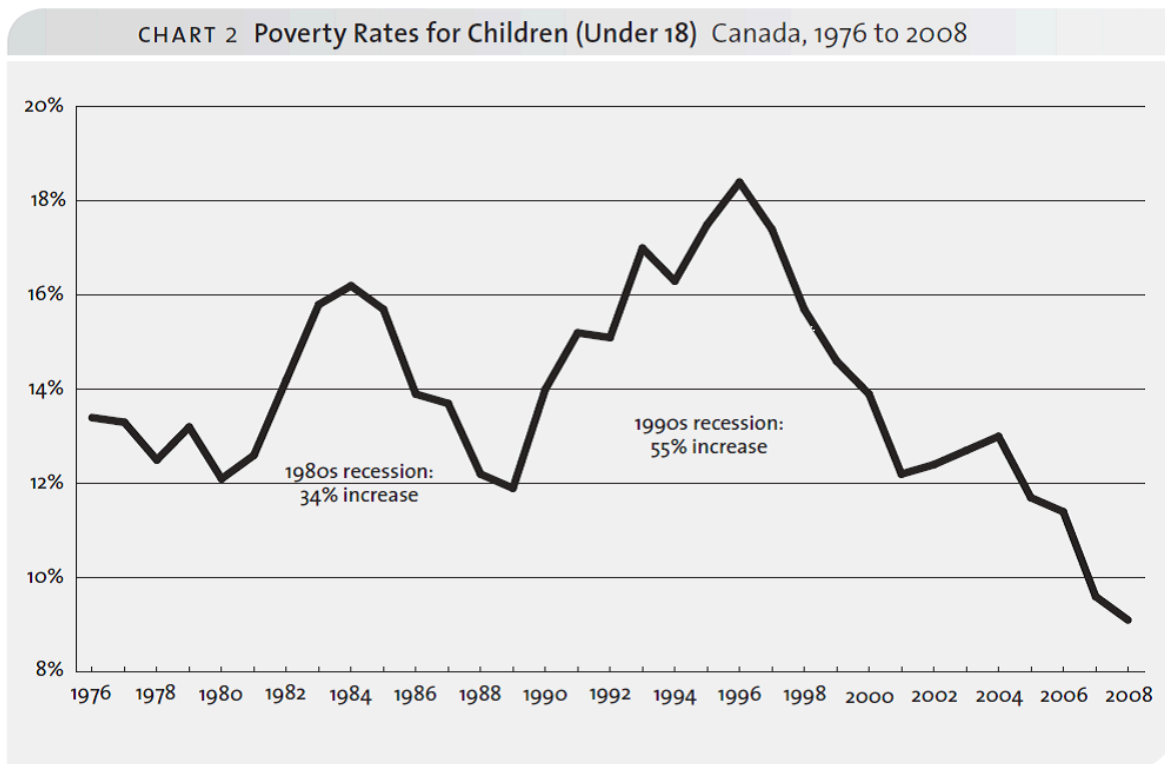


Figure 12.6. Poverty rates for children: 1976 to 2008. [Long Description at the end of the chapter] (Graph courtesy of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (Yalnizyan, 2010)) used with a CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 Unported license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>)

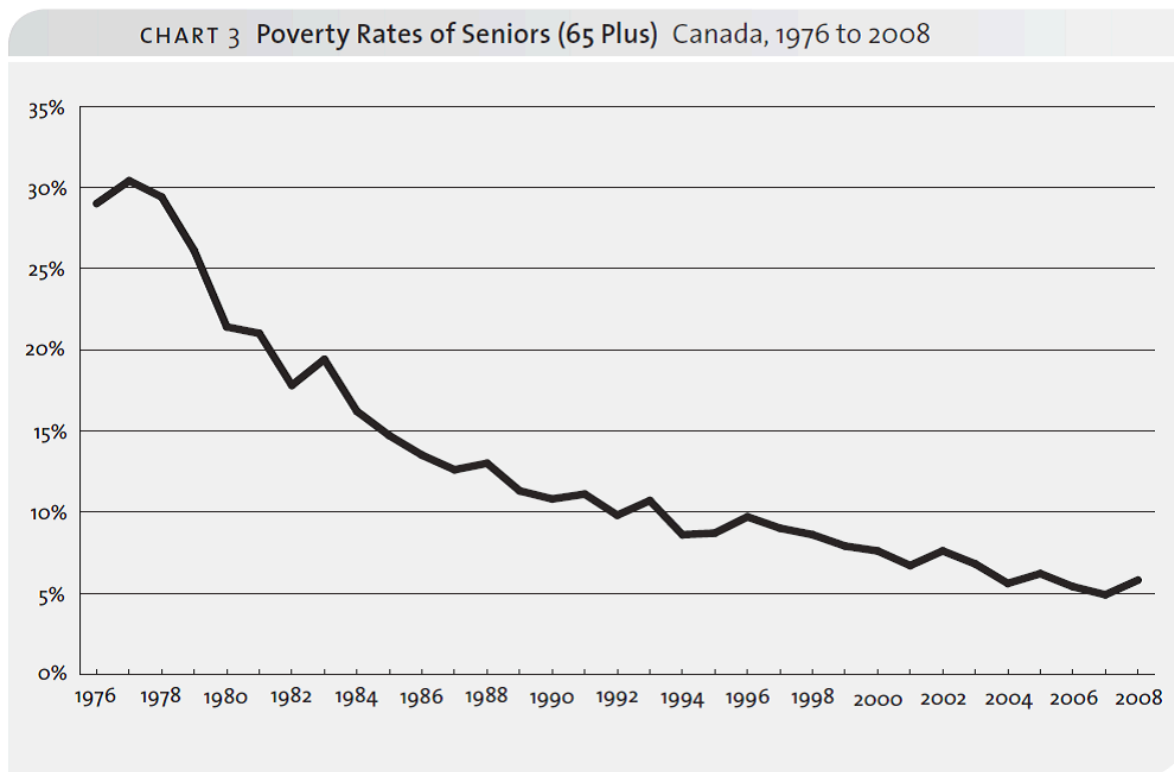


Figure 12.7. Poverty rates for seniors: 1976 to 2008. (Graph courtesy of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (Yalnizyan, 2010)) used with a CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 Unported license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>)



Most developed countries such as Canada protect their citizens from absolute poverty by providing different levels of social services such as employment insurance, welfare, health care, and so on. They may also provide job training and retraining so that people can re-enter the job market. In the past, the elderly were particularly vulnerable to falling into poverty after they stopped working; however, the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans, the Old Age Security program, and the Guaranteed Income Supplement are credited with successfully reducing old age poverty. A major concern in Canada is the number of young people growing up in poverty, although these numbers have been declining as well. About 606,000 children younger than 18 lived in low-income families in 2008. The proportion of children in low-income families was 9% in 2008, half the 1996 peak of 18% (Statistics Canada, 2011). Growing up poor can cut off access to the education and services people need to move out of poverty and into stable employment. As we saw, more education was often a key to stability, and those raised in poverty are the ones least able to find well-paying work, perpetuating a cycle.

With the shift to neoliberal economic policies, there has been greater debate about how much support local, provincial, and federal governments should give to help the unemployed and underemployed. Often the issue is presented as one in which the interests of “taxpayers” are opposed to the “welfare state.” It is interesting to note that in social democratic countries like Norway, Finland, and Sweden, there is much greater acceptance of higher tax rates when these are used to provide universal health care, education, child care, and other forms of social support than there is in Canada. Nevertheless, the decisions made on these issues have a profound effect on working in Canada.

## Chapter Summary

### Introduction to Work and the Economy

Economy refers to the social institution through which a society’s resources (goods and services) are managed. The Agricultural Revolution led to development of the first economies that were based on trading goods. Mechanization of the manufacturing process led to the Industrial Revolution and gave rise to two major competing economic systems. Under capitalism, private owners invest their capital and that of others to produce goods and services they can sell in an open market. Prices and wages are set by supply and demand and competition. Under socialism, the means of production is commonly owned, and the economy is controlled centrally by government. Several countries’ economies exhibit a mix of both systems. Convergence theory seeks to explain the correlation between a country’s level of development and changes in its economic structure.

### Work in Canada

The job market in Canada is meant to be a meritocracy that creates social stratifications based on individual achievement. Economic forces, such as outsourcing and automation, are polarizing the workforce, with most job opportunities being either low-level, low-paying manual jobs or high-level, high-paying jobs based on abstract skills. Women’s role in the workforce has increased, although they have not yet achieved full equality. Immigrants play an important role in the Canadian labour market. The changing economy has forced more people into poverty even if they are working. Welfare, old age pensions, and other social programs exist to protect people from the worst effects of poverty.

## Key Terms

**automation:** Workers being replaced by technology.

**commodities:** Goods produced for sale on the market.

**dual labour market:** The division of the economy into high-wage and low-wage sectors.

**economy:** The social institution through which a society's resources (goods and services) are managed.

**goods:** The physical objects we find, grow, or make in order to meet our needs and the needs of others.

**knowledge divide:** The division between those who are able to access, create, utilize, and disseminate knowledge and those who cannot.

**outsourcing:** When jobs are contracted to an outside source, often in another country.

**polarization:** When the differences between low-end and high-end jobs becomes greater and the number of people in the middle levels decreases.

**recession:** When there are two or more consecutive quarters of economic decline.

**services:** Activities that benefit people, such as health care, education, and entertainment.

**social capital:** The accumulation of a network of social relationships and knowledge that will provide a platform from which to achieve financial success — in the form of connections or higher education.

**structural unemployment:** When there is a societal level of disjuncture between people seeking jobs and the jobs that are available.

**underemployment:** A state in which a person accepts a lower-paying, lower-status job than his or her education and experience qualifies him or her to perform.

**working poor:** Statistics Canada defines the working poor as those who worked for pay at least for at least 910 hours during the year, and yet remain below the poverty line according to the Market Basket Measure (they lack the disposable income to purchase a specified "basket" of basic goods and services).



## Chapter Quiz

### 12.1. Introduction to Work and the Economy

1. Which of these is an example of a commodity?
  - a. Cooking
  - b. Corn
  - c. Teaching
  - d. Writing
2. When did the first economies begin to develop?
  - a. When all of the hunter-gatherers died
  - b. When money was invented
  - c. When people began to grow crops and domesticate animals
  - d. When the first cities were built
3. What is the most important commodity in a postindustrial society?
  - a. Electricity
  - b. Money
  - c. Information
  - d. Computers
4. In which sector of an economy would someone working as a software developer be?
  - a. Primary
  - b. Secondary
  - c. Tertiary
  - d. Quaternary

5. Which is an economic policy based on national policies of accumulating silver and gold by controlling markets with colonies and other countries through taxes and customs charges?
  - a. Capitalism
  - b. Communism
  - c. Mercantilism
  - d. Mutualism
6. Who was the leading theorist on the development of socialism?
  - a. Karl Marx
  - b. Alex Inkeles
  - c. Émile Durkheim
  - d. Adam Smith
7. The type of socialism now carried on by Cuba is a form of \_\_\_\_\_ socialism.
  - a. centrally planned
  - b. market
  - c. utopian
  - d. zero-sum
8. Which country serves as an example of convergence?
  - a. Singapore
  - b. North Korea
  - c. England
  - d. Canada

## 12.2. Work in Canada

9. Which is evidence that the Canadian workforce is largely a meritocracy?
  - a. Job opportunities are increasing for highly skilled jobs.
  - b. Job opportunities are decreasing for mid-level jobs.
  - c. Highly skilled jobs pay better than low-skill jobs.
  - d. Women tend to make less than men do for the same job.

10. If someone does not earn enough money to pay for the essentials of life he or she is said to be ----- poor.
- a. absolutely
  - b. essentially
  - c. really
  - d. working
11. About what percentage of the workforce in Canada are legal immigrants?
- a. Less than 1%
  - b. 1%
  - c. 20%
  - d. 66%

[Quiz answers at end of chapter]

## Short Answer

### 12.1. Introduction to Work and the Economy

1. Explain the difference between state socialism with central planning and market socialism.
2. In what ways can capitalistic and socialistic economies converge?
3. Describe the impact a rapidly growing economy can have on families.
4. How do you think the Canadian economy will change as we move closer to a technology-driven service economy?

### 12.2. Work in Canada

1. As polarization occurs in the Canadian job market, this will affect other social institutions. For example, if mid-level education does not lead to employment, we could see polarization in educational levels as well. Use the sociological imagination to consider what social institutions may be impacted, and how.
2. Do you believe we have a true meritocracy in Canada? Why or why not?

## Further Research

### 12.1. Introduction to Work and the Economy

Green jobs have the potential to improve not only your prospects of getting a good job, but the environment as well. Learn more about the green revolution in jobs: <http://openstaxcollege.org/l/greenjobs>.

### 12.2. Work in Canada

The role of women in the workplace is constantly changing: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2010001/article/11387-eng.htm>.

The Employment Projections Program of Employment and Social Development Canada looks at a ten-year projection for jobs and employment. See some employment trends for the next decade: <http://occupations.esdc.gc.ca/sppc-cops/w.2lc.4m.2@-eng.jsp>.

Global poverty is tracked by the [globalissues.org](http://www.globalissues.org) website. See recent analyses and statistics about poverty: <http://www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats>.

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## Long Descriptions

Figure 12.6 long description: Poverty Rates for Children (Under 18) Canada, 1976 to 2008

Year	1976	1978	1980	1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992
Percentage	13.5	12.5	12	14	16.1	14	12.1	14	15.1
Year	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	
Percentage	16.1	18.2	15.8	14	12.3	13.1	11.5	9.1	

### Solutions to Chapter Quiz

1 b, | 2 c, | 3 c, | 4 d, | 5 c, | 6 a, | 7 b, | 8 a, | 9 c, | 10 a, | 11 c