

Do We Make the World or Does the World Make Us?

Concepts and Theories

The social world as we know it and have known it is mostly an illusion. Yet, if we were all completely deluded, there would be no point in trying to investigate and explain, and this writing, as well as any other, would be worthless. The existence of illusions is not incompatible with the existence of facts and of the principles of logic. But facts and logic are inextricably mixed with concepts and theories, and in the study of society the concepts and theories involved are the ones that we daily act upon as well as use to explain how things are and why. . . . As was once said of philosophy, sociology is like rebuilding a boat, plank by plank, while floating on it in the middle of the ocean.

—Randall Collins, *The Discovery of Society*
(Collins and Makowsky 1998)

Graduate students in a communications course at California State University, Sacramento (Perkins, Kidd, and Smith 1999), were asked to participate in a local service organization and provide a qualitative analysis of the organization. The course, *Assessing Communications in Organizations*, integrated classroom readings on theory and applied field research with students' actual experiences in the community. Students worked with groups ranging from women's homeless and domestic violence shelters to a teen conference sponsored by the Camp Fire Boys and Girls. Students also compiled annotated bibliographies on the particular social issues that the organizations addressed.

According to the faculty, students benefited from the service learning framework by gaining an increased awareness of and a direct exposure to particular social problems. One

student worked at a domestic violence shelter that used “creative arts” to help women both as therapy and as a form of self-empowerment. This student decided to actually take the arts courses as well as provide services for the shelter. She wrote of her experiences, “I personally benefited by feeling the expansion of and power of my own creativity” (Perkins et al. 1999:40). But her strongest reflections concerned who the women in the program were and what actual conditions *they* faced. She explains,

My research has taught me that they are usually subject to harsh and stereotypical judgments. While I do not think I judged them harshly, I had no idea I would find the women thoughtful, articulate, and friendly. The women I met have been working very hard on themselves to improve their lives and it shows. (p. 41)

Eventually, this student was asked to join the organization’s board of directors and continued to participate and serve in integral ways.

Another student who worked at a shelter for homeless women experienced a similar integrated engagement with both the individuals who needed services and the social conditions that created their need. She remembered “driving home upset and distraught . . . horrified and repulsed at the levels of social and economic deprivation that I was witnessing” (Perkins et al. 1999:41). She continued,

I spent a lot of time asking myself why I had been so blissfully unaware of these problems previously. In the end, I realized that these experiences were necessary. Talking to the women and hearing their stories has raised my awareness in a way that would be impossible to experience without having served them. (p. 41)

According to these students’ teachers, “they challenged their preconceived notions by engaging in self-reflection and ultimately experienced personal growth as a result of their service-learning activities” (p. 41). By doing so, students changed their own perceptions of society at the same time that they acted to change society itself.

Society is socially constructed. As Randall Collins suggests in the opening quotation, when we talk about society, we may be referring to an *illusion* of sorts. Unlike some natural sciences, sociologists cannot literally dissect society under a microscope or measure it in a beaker. Society is really a narrative device we use to represent a large number of people who share enough values, behaviors, languages, and material things to consider them as a group. Studying society is not exactly the same as examining a cell under a microscope or the interaction between two chemical compounds. But the people do exist. Their activities can be observed. What they think can be documented. They live in families and prepare meals; build schools and churches; elect, obey, or protest governments; and work in myriad ways to produce what they need to survive. Émile Durkheim (1982) called these phenomena **social facts**. Society may be a social construction, even an illusion, but that does not mean it isn’t real.

In many ways, we make the world. Like the boat that Collins refers to, each day we rebuild society, sometimes plank by plank. Part of the sociologist's job is to examine closely how we go about making and remaking society. In contemporary sociological lingo, we call the human activity of making the world **agency**. Sociologists define agency as the ability to change the institutions in which [people] live."¹ We might expand that to include all social relationships both *macro* or large (economies and governments) as well as *micro* or small (personal intimacies, relationships, and encounters). The ways in which we control and change our interactions with institutional structures and other people represent our agency. For the two California State students, getting involved with attempts to solve social problems not only changed their own understandings of the problems and themselves, but also helped to change the conditions creating the problems.

But the world surely makes us, too. We are born into a world where both macro and micro systems have already determined what language we learn, what foods we might eat, and what belief systems we adopt. The economic and social class systems and our position within them are already in place by the time we arrive. Sociologists refer to these material and cultural conditions as the **social structure**. Despite our best intentions and strongest will, where we are born, what socioeconomic class we occupy, and what values and ideas are discussed by the people around us heavily shape who we are and what we become. As Karl Marx (Marx and Engels 1955) wrote, people "make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past" (p. 1).

Sociologists develop concepts and theories as tools to help examine social structure, human agency, and their impact on one another. This dynamic of structure and agency is crucial for understanding both the origin of social problems and the possibilities of acting in the world to change them. To better grasp how sociologists approach society, we should take a closer look at the most basic and popular tools they use. After looking at particular concepts, each major theoretical approach will be followed by a service learning case study that illuminates how one might apply such concepts and theories to practice.

SOCIAL CONCEPTS

Sociologists use a number of concepts to help them understand and engage with society. On a structural level, **institutions** are one of the most important concepts for students to comprehend. While definitions vary somewhat, most sociologists would agree that institutions represent *patterns of behavior that become formalized as structural or cultural entities*. Groups and collective phenomena such as family, church, schools, legislatures,

¹T. R. Young, *The Red Feather Dictionary of Critical Social Science* (http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/red_feather/). T. R. was a prolific writer whose website is a vital resource for students, teachers, and researchers alike.

hospitals, and prisons can all be described as social institutions. Gordon Marshall (1998) refers to institutions as “super-customs,” which are “sets of mores, folkways, and patterns of behavior” that address major social interests. These include people’s practices as institutions, not just the structural unit or physical place. Thus, religion, law, and education can also be thought of as general institutions, regardless of any specific church, court, or school.

Sociologists agree that institutions establish a structural or cultural setting wherein people learn and act out the values and norms of a given society. By **values**, we generally mean those *strong, seemingly permanent dispositions shared by groups of people*. Values represent what societies define as good and bad, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, smart or stupid, and so forth. Sometimes values are openly celebrated and promoted. Other times they are underlying and so ingrained that we don’t even recognize their taken-for-granted status as part of our culture. Similarly, **norms** are *shared expectations of behavior*—what people consider to be doing the right thing. Thus, values and norms are intimately related, as norms require and reflect some sense of a culture’s values. Yet, as we will see when we examine labeling theory, for example, sometimes expected behaviors are stigmatized, thus representing negative, not positive values. In either case, institutions help reproduce and enforce both social values and social norms.

Institutions can, however, represent or become sites where people contest various cultural values and social norms. Marriage and family remain strong institutions in the United States and, as progenitors of traditions, they often reflect the culture’s more conservative values. Yet, even within these institutions, groups struggle to redefine values and norms. Gay male and lesbian marriages or civil unions; single-parent families; and interracial, interethnic, and even interreligious marriages all challenge more traditional sets of institutional values and norms that come from families or churches. In fact, institutions often become the sites where social problems that have been hidden or obscured seem to burst onto the scene. Implicit or latent conflicts and tensions over values and norms eventually break through the seemingly stable sense of shared actions and beliefs.

The family, for example, despite its image as an institution of traditional customs, cooperation, and socialization, has always been a site of conflict. According to historian Linda Gordon (2002), family members have traditionally used violence as a method for controlling conflicts. The rise of *domestic violence as a social problem* tells the story of changing politics and culture (values and norms), not the sudden appearance of physical force employed by fathers and mothers, and husbands and wives. She explains,

[F]amily violence has been historically and politically constructed. . . . First, the very definition of what constitutes unacceptable domestic violence . . . developed and then varied according to political moods and the force of certain political movements. Second, violence among family members arises from family conflicts which are historically influenced but political in themselves, in the sense of that word as having to do with power relations. (p. 18)

The institution of the family and marriage represent, for many, sacred values and powerful normative expectations. But the values and norms associated with these practices change over time.

Values, Norms, and Institutions in Action: Abby's House

At Worcester State College in Massachusetts, some students have participated in service learning projects at Abby's House, a domestic violence shelter for women and their children. Domestic violence or battered women's shelters (sometimes known as Safe Houses) started to appear in the mid-1970s, "not because of an increase in [domestic violence's] frequency or because the public has become more concerned, but because a social movement developed in the 1970s to help battered women" (Rafferty 2001:1). This movement was itself an outgrowth of the 1960s and 1970s women's movement that challenged traditional cultural values and norms (such as wives' subservience to husbands) and legal rights (such as wives' inability to sue husbands

for violence and rape). Abby's House was founded in 1976, as "one of the first overnight emergency shelters for women with or without children in the U.S." (Rafferty 2001:1).

Here, students met and worked with women who made difficult choices based on conflicting values about caring for their children's (and their own) health and safety. Most had spent tortured weeks, months, and years experiencing abuse before they left their homes and husbands, with or without their children. Their dilemmas were heightened by traditional norms that taught wives to be deferent to husbands, and traditional values that celebrate family unity above all outcomes. According to sociologist Sam Marullo (1999), students engaged in service learning projects are uniquely situated not only to learn what values and norms *are*, but also to understand the existence of struggles over what values and norms *should be*. Sociologists' "explicit elaboration of values helps our students with their own values clarification" (p. 897) as they are challenged to take on others' roles, reflect on the social structuring of others' choices, and weigh questions of value conflicts and social justice.



Image 1.1 Photo of Abby's House dining hall and cafeteria.

Source: Copyright © Abby Kelley Foster House, Inc.

According to founder Annette Rafferty (2001), Abby's House exists "to be the comfort, to be the decent place. To help women shape something meaningful from absolutely nothing, to offer resources and much needed understanding" (p. 2). Rafferty believes that students' experiences here challenge their inherited sense of middle-class values. On the one hand, students witnessed the need for women to take action for themselves and their children's safety by leaving violent situations in the home. Cultural and class judgments about women's roles and responsibilities were shaken by the lived reality of these women in crisis. On the other hand, the House's mission is to allow people in crisis to "gain control, to be empowered." Thus, it's crucial for volunteers and staff to be "aware of what [a guest] is capable of doing for herself . . . to do for a person what she is capable of doing is to disempower" (p. 72). Rafferty explains, "Of necessity we make judgments, but judgments are always open to revision. We provide support, back-up. We intervene when appropriate. We share information, resources, and skills" (p. 72). While students learn about the particular issues involved in domestic violence, homelessness, and other things, they also learn the various dimensions of power and how important it is to work collaboratively and collectively. They learn that the process of service involves an awareness of power dynamics and politics, as well as simple kindness and compassion.

At Abby's House, students helped care for children and participated in the daily upkeep of the premises. Some took training courses to help counsel women in abusive relationships. But in working to provide a safe place for women who chose to leave their marriages and "break up" their families in order to protect their children and themselves, students grappled with the definitions of values, norms, and institutions. They not only encountered how social problems evolve from conflicts within institutions, but they also experienced how organizations and new kinds of institutions evolve to impact changes in values, norms, and institutions themselves.

MEDIA BOX: SOCIOLOGISTS ON THE BIG SCREEN

Unless you are watching some sort of talking heads documentary, you don't see sociologists in films very often. According to John Conklin (2009), his study of 32 Hollywood films released between 1915 and 2006 "shows that sociology is often portrayed as a discipline that focuses on the useless, the trivial, and the obscure. Undergraduate students of sociology are sometimes presented as academically untalented and weakly motivated, but at other times as thoughtful and capable of good work. Graduate students are depicted as flawed researchers who are more interested in romance than the completion of their degrees. . . . Sociologists occasionally appear in brief classroom scenes that contain little of substance" (p. 199). Typical examples of this perspective appear in films such as *R.P.M.* (Revolutions per Minute) (1970), where a drunken and despondent sociology professor asks his graduate student what her field of study is. She answers, "Sociology," and he replies, "Sociology. What the hell good is that? You should have chosen something relevant, like auto mechanics." Another college senior in *The One and Only* (1978) asks her boyfriend, "So I have this degree in sociology and, um, well, what'll I do with it?" He answers, "Open a sociology store" (p. 199).



Image 1.2 Sociology grad student Helen Lyle (Virginia Madsen) and the Candyman (Tony Todd) await the spoils of research.

Source: © Bureau L.A. Collection/CORBIS.

Our favorites are the horror genre, though, where you often find faculty, in general, as either the progenitors of slasher mania, as in *The Faculty*, or as casual victims in movies like *SAW*. In *Candyman*, a sociology graduate student unwittingly unearths the legend of a serial killer—a dead artist who now kills urban youth with a hook. But she ends up getting framed as the killer herself. She dies along with the Candyman killer in a climactic funeral pyre. Beware of the revenge of the sociology professors!

SOCIAL THEORIES

Social theories are analytical frameworks that help us interpret the meaning of social life and determine how and why the world works the way it does. For example, we may look at data on increasing poverty rates in the United States, but they don't explain what causes them to increase or why we have poverty to begin with. Theories give us a systematic way to create a story (hopefully nonfiction) using data and research to explain the social world around us. It is important to note that no theory is perfect or explains everything, and that most sociologists use different theories to address different aspects of examining the world around them.

Sociologists have long divided their discipline into three major *paradigms* (or ways of thinking) about society: *functionalism*, *conflict sociology*, and *symbolic interactionism*. These are not the only theoretical approaches, nor are they mutually exclusive. Again, most sociologists recognize that different theories can be integrated or combined to analyze a particular social problem or phenomenon more effectively. By separating them here, we hope to offer a clearer explanation of these approaches and how they differ from one another. Students should feel free to explore all manner of mixing and matching these ideas to best grapple with the social world.

Functionalism

Inspired by the early works of Comte, the later works of Durkheim, and the more recent works of Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton, **functionalism** is based on the idea that society is an increasingly complex organism that must fulfill certain basic functions to continue its survival. These functions include the economic, political, and social realms of the social world and are experienced by people primarily through institutions (Merton 1978), as described below.

- *Economic*—sometimes called the *adaptive* function because it represents how a society adapts to its physical environment and produces its survival. All societies have an “economy,” and they must be able to make and distribute the food, clothing, and shelter necessary to keep people alive and healthy. Historically, societies have moved from hunting and gathering to agricultural to industrial means of economic production. They have also shifted from slave systems to feudal systems to capitalist forms of organizing economic activity.
- *Political*—sometimes called the *goal attainment* function because it represents how societies act collectively and make decisions for the entire group. Societies establish some form of government to make decisions and manage the ongoing integration of various institutions. The forms of government may differ, but every society must have some formal mechanisms for choosing social policies, maintaining social values, and regulating social norms of behavior.
- *Social*—individuals must be socialized into the values and norms of any given society. Functionalists often divide this category into two kinds of socialization. The first—*latent pattern maintenance* functions—relates to *ways that institutions like the family and church pass on their values and norms*. The second—*integrative* functions—entails institutions like schools and courts where the values and norms of a larger society are taught or enforced. Values represent shared ideas of good and bad, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly. Norms represent the shared expectations for behavior that a society would consider appropriate or not. In smaller, homogenous societies, families and churches play the dominant role in socializing young people. In larger, diverse, and more complex societies, schools and the justice system must step in to teach appropriate behaviors or at least enforce compliance (Parsons 1966).

The most important aspect of these functions, especially of the socialization functions, is to create the solidarity necessary for social order to continue. Functionalists often assume solidarity comes naturally from a shared sense of values that emanate from mutual interests in economic competition or success; political unity; and the common set of values produced by family, church, and state. However, functionalists also recognize that solidarity can be created, maintained, or even coerced by social regulation and control.

Functionalism's approach to social problems involves three basic ideas. The first is that of **social dysfunction**. According to Robert Merton (1966), social dysfunction "*refers to a designated set of consequences of a designated pattern of behavior, belief, or organization that interfere with a designated functional requirement of a designated social system*" (p. 780, emphasis added). In other words, while various institutions fulfill the role of meeting a particular set of social needs, actions that interfere with the effort to carry out these essential functions would be dysfunctional. For example, an economic market system that resulted in the poverty and hunger of many could be thought of as dysfunctional given that the job of an economy is to produce and distribute food, clothing, and shelter to everyone.

A second source of social problems (from a functionalist perspective) comes from the **unintended or hidden functions** that institutions produce. Distinguished as *manifest* (overt) and *latent* (covert or hidden), these two types of functions contribute to a system's adaptation to various conditions. Yet latent functions are often unintended and unrecognized. For example, education in the United States serves three overt purposes—teaching students social skills, intellectual skills, and career skills—with the ultimate goal being a democratic society with equal opportunities. Schools not only serve the *integrative* function of providing students with the knowledge and experiences they need, but they also aid in the *adaptive* function by providing increasingly skilled workers for the economy (Merton 1978). Such institutional goals lead politicians and pundits to claim that education produces social mobility and democracy. Yet schools also produce latent functions that further inequality and limit opportunity. As researchers such as Jonathan Kozol (1992), Caroline Hodges Persell (1977), and Stanley Aronowitz (2001) have demonstrated, unequal funding and biased expectations based on race, class, and gender often result in reinforcing discrimination and disadvantages.

Our experiences teaching simultaneously at Worcester State College and at Harvard University demonstrated that students' expectations of college have been almost completely shaped by their class backgrounds. Working- and middle-class students, by and large, want to get direct training for middle-class jobs, while wealthy students expect a broader education that prepares them for professional careers and a culture of leadership (Trumpbour 1989). The latent function of education is to reproduce a stratified society where upper-class students are trained with the knowledge, skills, and expectations to be upper class, and lower-class students with the knowledge, skills, and expectations to be lower class. Social problems arise from the contradictions between the dominant ideological role that education serves (that of democracy and equal opportunity) and the actual structural impact of unequal schools.

Finally, the Chicago School of Sociology coined the term **disorganization** to explain the phenomena of social problems that come about when rapid changes overwhelm people and their institutions. The industrial revolution, urbanization, and massive waves of immigration all radically transformed traditional ways of life. Dirty, overcrowded city streets with poor workers and their families living in unhealthy conditions and struggling for survival resulted in a variety of social problems including poverty, crime, and disease. The social systems and policies necessary to address these problems did not yet exist. William Fielding Ogburn (1950) coined the phrase “cultural lag” to describe this situation where the technological developments of a society have surpassed its moral and legal institutions. Of course, many of the Chicago School Sociologists thought that policy changes could address these problems and became active reformers (Fischer 1975).

CASE STUDY #1

Applying Functional Analysis: The Policy Research Action Group

For many poor, urban communities, reinvestment results in displacement. Gentrification, neighborhood beautification, and upscale commercial development often have the unintended consequences of forcing poor people and people of color out of communities in transition. From a functionalist perspective, even a successful market has dysfunctions, and rapid redevelopment can result in a variety of disorganization. In fact, displacing poor people and people of color could be considered one of the latent functions of the capitalist market system as it reinvests in poorer communities.

Thus, in cities around the United States, the story of economic development has also been a story of “urban removal,” “white flight,” and rising homelessness. Working-class, Chicago neighborhoods were particularly hard hit during the post–World War II period of suburbanization, the post-1970s period of deindustrialization, and the post-1990s cuts in social welfare spending (Herring 1998). Since the early 1990s, the Policy Research Action Group (PRAG) has brought university faculty and students together with community organizations in Chicago to work on research projects developed by neighborhood groups. Many of the projects involve opposing gentrification; preserving racially diverse communities, determining effective strategies for community-led economic development, and studying the impact of the transition from industrial to service employment. The goal of these projects is to make the economic system work in favor of those who already live in the community and not result in the dysfunctions of displacement and disempowerment.

One project in particular has involved Loyola University and the Organization of the Northeast (ONE)—an umbrella association for community-based groups on Chicago’s northern lakefront. These are working- and middle-class neighborhoods whose populations are increasingly diverse. Their proximity to downtown, however, marks them as easy targets for gentrification and upscale commercial development. To help fight off these phenomena and respond with a local development plan that is built on the human capital already present in the community, Loyola and ONE embarked on a variety of collaborative research and service projects to strengthen the organizing and policy efforts (Axel-Lute 1999; Nyden, Adams, and Zalent 1997).

The work began with meetings between Professor Phil Nyden from Loyola and Josh Hoyt from ONE who designed a study of race and ethnic relations in three local subsidized apartment buildings. The research, carried out by a graduate sociology class in qualitative methods, included 43 in-depth interviews and a telephone survey. The findings were eventually published as *Racial, Ethnic, and Economic Diversity in Uptown's Subsidized Housing: A Case Study of Its Present Character and Future Possibilities* (Nyden et al. 1990). Some of the findings included the following:

1. Affordable housing provided families with the financial and social foundation upon which to build self-sufficiency.
2. Residents were attracted to the neighborhood's diversity and found it a comfortable place to live because people were tolerant of one another.
3. Community institutions—ranging from churches to community-based groups—increase the interactions among different racial and ethnic groups.
4. Tensions did exist between renters and middle-income homeowners, single adult families and families with children, and African Americans and newly arrived African immigrants.

The collaborative effort led to other long-term research projects that studied youth and diversity, the impact of diversity on local economic development, and the struggle to save affordable housing. Nyden et al. (1997) conclude that these research efforts had three notable impacts: They

provided documentation of the ways in which different racial and ethnic groups were already cooperating and the areas where community organization intervention could improve relations. . . . [They] enhanced the capacity of the community to use research for its own benefit . . . [and they presented] documentation of community organization struggles and the analysis of the effectiveness of these struggles. (p.16)

Other projects emanating from PRAG included Loyola educators working with inner-city schools to develop a science curriculum that incorporated collaborations with community organizations to do soil sampling near a solid waste incinerator. Another collaborative effort provided the groundwork for saving Theresa's, an old blues club, targeted to be an anchor for the creation of a Black Historic District. The overall goal remains to demonstrate that successful economic development can be achieved with the cultural and human capital already present in the community. In addition, hundreds of students every semester conduct internships and fieldwork through PRAG, helping neighborhood development groups, immigrant aid organizations, environmental and land-use agencies, and a host of other locally based service and political action efforts. PRAG's work challenges the latent functions and dysfunctions of economic development and urban revitalization by working with community-based groups to develop knowledge, strategies, and actions that protect the integrity of poor and working-class communities while still trying to improve their conditions. Although rapid economic and demographic changes continue to threaten the stability of these neighborhoods, PRAG has remained a powerful source for organizing and solidarity, as well as student learning and community building.

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Case Study Questions

1. How did theory help explain the causes of displacement and disempowerment?
2. How did these explanations help inform strategies to address social problems?
3. How did projects challenge the latent functions or dysfunctions of the mainstream market system? Were they successful?

Symbolic Interaction

Unlike the more macro sociological approaches of functionalism and conflict sociology, symbolic interaction examines the social world from the small-scale perspective of how people interact with one another on an everyday level. The basic element of **symbolic interactionism** is *the individual and his or her own construction of identity that takes place in small groups and organizations*. Larger structures such as institutions are important primarily for the ways in which they shape and condition peoples' interactions. But institutions and structures only exist, according to symbolic interactionists, because people continue to recreate them through ritual activities, conversations, and encounters.

On the symbolic level, the interactionist approach relies on the notion that people participate in patterns of behavior governed by what W. I. Thomas (Thomas and Thomas 1928) called the "definition of a situation." Here, *individuals think and act in coordination with the traditions, customs, values, and beliefs of the social life surrounding them*. For example, people who live in poor communities with few job opportunities and little access to public services tend to vote in smaller numbers than do people in middle-class or wealthy communities who have good schools and clean, safe neighborhoods. People who historically see little improvement in their family's living conditions do not define the democratic procedure of voting as empowering. For African Americans who, until the 1960s, were often prohibited from voting by law, and who have more recently been victimized by efforts to hinder their electoral efforts through intimidation, misinformation, and a variety of other "dirty tricks," voter participation levels remain disproportionately low (Piven and Cloward 1989, 2002). For middle- and upper-class individuals with greater access to politicians and their policies, voting seems to be an opportunity to influence decisions that do affect their lives. Different histories, experiences, and identities impact how people define situations and engage in public activities.

According to another interactionist, George Herbert Mead (1940), these definitions are learned through the process of **socialization**. *Socialization represents the ways in which we internalize cultural values and norms, as well as come to know the social expectations we must*

meet and the roles we must play. Thus, like functionalism, families, churches, and schools teach people social norms and behaviors—giving them the tools to know how to act. Unlike functionalism, however, most symbolic interactionists recognize that microanalysis demonstrates a variety of tensions and struggles that characterize these encounters.

For symbolic interactionists, social problems come from a variety of these tensions. Georg Simmel (1964) studied the effects of rapid urbanization. He noticed how drastically the increased pace, density, and rationalization of city life altered the quantity and intensity of people's social interactions. At the same time that they encountered a rapidly growing and increasingly diverse population, their relationships grew less emotionally intense and personally satisfying. Combined with the increased stimuli of urbanization, the loss of significant interpersonal connections left people with what Simmel called a "blasé" attitude. For him, social alienation resulted from a dramatic change in the day-to-day interactions of individuals that remarkably shaped their own sense of the social world.

Interactionists also look at how individual behavior becomes problematic. Howard Becker (1997) argues that deviance comes from the ways in which social groups make rules about appearance and behavior and then "label" people who can't or won't conform. Such labeling *stigmatizes individuals or small groups, often resulting in their social alienation.* Isolation often leads to the amplification of nonconformity or deviance, as those labeled begin to define themselves by whatever characteristics have been deemed "different." In the book *Teenage Wasteland*, Donna Gaines (1998) studies a group of youth that have been labeled as "burnouts." This designation stigmatized the youth as "losers," resulting in teachers giving up on them in school and police harassing them in town. Eventually, these youth used the term themselves, but proudly, creating a subculture based on their experience of alienation and sense of "difference." After some of these burnouts carried out suicide pacts, leaving notes about how isolated and outcast they felt, Gaines wondered whether they hadn't been "labeled to death."

CASE STUDY #2

Applying Symbolic Interactionist Analysis and Solutions: A Self and Society Course Assignment

Professor Barbara Vann of Loyola University in Maryland teaches a course called Self and Society.² In the course, Dr. Vann's students explore how power and deference, especially as they are shaped by race, gender, ethnicity, and class, impact social interactions. Vann (1999) gives students the following assignment:

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²All of the information on this assignment comes from Dr. Vann's (1999) article "Service Learning as Symbolic Interaction," as well as from e-mail discussions with Dr. Vann.

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Assignment: Gender, Class, and Racial Ethnic Inequality: The Effect of Position in the Stratification Structure of Interaction

For this assignment, choose a setting in which to observe interaction among individuals of different backgrounds based on gender, race/ethnicity, or social class. A likely setting would be a meal program such as Beans and Bread or Our Daily Bread, or some setting in which people who are "cultural strangers" meet. Observe long enough to determine what patterns of behavior, norms, etc., are in operation. After gathering your data, write up your analysis in terms of how position in the stratification structure affected interaction. Pay particular attention to such things as demeanor, appearance, setting, props, gestures, and language. Be sure to address the role power plays.

While doing Vann's assignment, students experience the ways in which physical and behavioral "cues" inform how they judge poor people they meet at meal programs, and how their interactions with them proceed from that initial encounter. Thus, as one student explained, "The first subject I observed was a white, working-class male, in his mid-40s, dressed in dirty clothes and rather unkempt. He wore a cheap, stained baseball cap and filthy generic tennis shoes" (p. 86). Without any intimate knowledge of this person, Vann's student had no problem in using such negative terms as "dirty, unkempt, cheap, filthy, and stained" to label the first meal recipient. His depiction relies on prevailing assumptions and labels.

Through Vann's assignment, students gain an analytical framework that helps them understand how appearance, props, and demeanor might impact interactions. Vann contends that these students develop "more empathy, and engage in less judgment and negative stereotyping." In fact, some students understood how "they themselves manage others' impressions" (p. 87). Thus, one white male student explained,

When a group of African-American men were talking while eating their sandwiches, I approached them and asked how they were doing. At first, they were fairly reticent in talking to me, but as the conversation continued, I found that they had tried to bring me in. I found that I was talking in a streetwise fashion rather than a more refined and educated manner than I usually did. (p. 87)

This student not only recognizes the potential that stereotypes might have in limiting conversation and relationships, but he also understands all the participants' ability to manipulate the situation's cues and cultural frameworks.

Overall, Vann suggests that students working with poor and homeless people begin to understand the power inherent in different "symbolic backgrounds." Thus, students could "view themselves as those they are serving view them" and begin to comprehend, if not actually take on, the role of

"the other" (p. 90). More importantly, Vann argues that students start to overcome the limitations on both learning and political engagement that result from differences in status positions. By grasping the way that power is exercised in being able to control what Thomas and Thomas (1928) called the "definition of a situation," students also captured "not only the power inherent in roles in this particular context but also interactional struggles for power that play out through language and demeanor" (Vann 1999). For example, one student describes the soup kitchen by claiming that

it was evident that the volunteers and the security guards were in power in this structure. . . . [S]ome guests tried to reverse the power by their use of language and bearing a demeanor that put them in charge. But in the end, the security guards would have the last word, having ultimate power in being able to tell people to leave (p. 90).

Service learning projects such as Vann's not only make theory and concepts of symbolic interactionism "come alive," but they also help students examine how such interpretations can be applied to change social conditions and human relationships. Such an analysis, however, leads us to ask whether students who worked in these projects didn't, in the end, get more out of the encounters than those served. In fact, their ability to understand the elements of manipulating roles and symbolic resources may only enhance the status power they held to begin with. Vann responds to this situation by hoping that "students are better citizens for their experience" (p. 91). Whether students have challenged their own blasé attitudes, become more adept at deconstructing discriminatory and demeaning social labels, or been inspired to take political action to break down the structure of status inequalities and their ramification, Vann's hopes do not seem unreasonable.

Case Study Questions

1. How did theory help explain the limitations students experienced while providing services?
2. How did the explanation help inform Professor Vann's strategies for teaching social problems?
3. How did these assignments attempt to challenge students' and society's labels? Were they successful? If so, how?
4. What are the advantages and limitations of such projects?

Conflict Sociology

Conflict sociology works from a different premise than functionalism. Functionalists focus on the social integration of institutions and the shared sense of values and norms within a society. Instead, **conflict sociology** contends that *inequality and the struggle over resources, different interests, and different values shape society*. Social order comes not from consensus but through the authority and the power of a ruling class to bring about compliance. Such

management can take the form of rewards or punishment, ideological indoctrination or seduction, promises of good things or threats, persuasion, intimidation, or force. Collins (1975) concludes that conflict sociology's vision of social order "consists of groups and individuals trying to advance their own interests over others whether or not overt outbreaks take place. . . . What occurs when conflict is not openly taking place is a process of domination" (p. 114).

Most sociologists consider Marx and Engels (1955) to be the founders of conflict sociology. This duo argued that *those who owned the means of economic production were in a constant struggle to maintain and increase their power over those who did not*. The shape of society evolves from the ways in which those in power negotiate their control. Those without such power struggle too, and their efforts also impact social structure and ideology. For example, capitalists own the means of production, and workers generally have to accept wage-labor jobs in order to survive. Owners and their managers set wages and compensation at the lowest level possible in order to maximize profits. Workers, meanwhile, organized unions, which effectively increased pay, benefits, and worker safety. While most unions have contracts that regulate the wages and conditions of their members' employment, these agreements must be constantly negotiated. Thus, even though strikes and lockouts occur only from time to time, labor relations are marked by constant conflicts of class interest.

Max Weber (1978), one of the most sophisticated sociologists on the nature of power, expanded the idea of **social stratification**. First, Weber argued that, despite the significance of economic stratification in determining social order, *political power and social status were also important forms of social hierarchy*. Political power can be gained through election, selection, or through mass organization. While financial resources certainly help facilitate political power, the opposite could also occur where a person uses his or her political power to gain economic resources. Similarly, cultural stratification can result in people having significant social status and then using this status to gain either political or economic resources or both. For example, church leaders have social status in certain communities. These leaders often try to influence their constituents' political activities. The more they can guarantee their followers' support, the more political power they wield. The more social status and political clout they acquire, the more likely they are to successfully increase institutional fund-raising, grant writing, and their own public appearances complete with paid honoraria and even television shows.

Second, Weber (1978) dissected how modern organizations distribute power along all three of these axes—economic, political, and social or cultural power. Like the functionalists, Weber recognized that people experience social dynamics primarily through organizations and institutions. As a conflict sociologist, however, Weber argued that these *sites for collective behavior were all sites for conflict over power and authority*. On the one hand, corporations, schools, and social agencies all have an organizational chart that clearly demarcates who has what power over whom. Yet both formal and informal networks within the organization allow for subordinates to gain either social or political power that might transcend their position. Similarly, subordinates often have control over materials or processes that empower them with either specialized knowledge or simply the trust of coworkers. Despite the fact that

bureaucracies represent highly efficient and rationalized entities for distributing power, struggles over power remain an inherent part of all social life and social organizations.

C. Wright Mills (1956) effectively synthesized Marx and Weber in his discussion of the “power elite.” Mills described how “ordinary” people live in “everyday worlds” where modern society “confines them to projects not their own.” Most people “feel that they are without purpose in an epoch in which they are without power” (p. 3). In contrast, however, Mills explains that some people come to occupy positions of great power and control over the major hierarchies and organizations of modern society. He concludes,

[T]hese people rule the big corporations. They run the machinery of the state and claim its prerogatives. They direct the military establishment. They occupy the strategic command posts of the social structure in which are now centered the effective means of the power and the wealth and the celebrity which they enjoy. (pp. 3–4)

Power, although partly diffused throughout society and always being recast by various kinds of struggles, rests primarily with elite members of economic, political, and cultural institutions. The stronger the consolidation of power, the more that ordinary people lack control over their conditions and life chances.

In general, conflict sociology argues that social problems develop from an inequality of resources and power. Whether the problem is poverty or illness, conflict sociologists begin from the premise that one’s relation to power and resources will determine the likelihood that one suffers from such problems. In fact, such an approach generally assumes that the source of social problems begins with the notion that those in power work to maintain their control and privilege. Yet those without power can organize and strategize to gain power in a variety of ways.

More recently, sociologists interested in race, ethnicity, and gender have applied the precepts of conflict sociology to look at the impact of social stratification by personal, cultural, or institutionalized identity. In the United States, race has always been a category that privileges one group and discriminates against another—even ethnic groups, such as Irish and Jewish immigrants, that were considered neither white nor black. But over time, these groups have negotiated mainstream identities and acquired power by “becoming” white (Brodkin 1998; Ignatiev 1996). Despite affirmative action and other remedial policies, the distribution of power, money, and other resources in the United States remains disproportionately in the hands of white people. Similarly, men have historically controlled both the institutions of power and the social conditions of everyday life. Whether women were disenfranchised because they couldn’t vote, possessed no property rights, or simply had to defer to men when making major decisions, patriarchy limited their access to power.

But ordinary people and those discriminated against based on race, ethnicity, or gender do resist and challenge the power elite and their institutions. Sometimes these protests are individual acts of bravery, subversive acts of theft or sabotage, or simple moments of saying “no” in desperation or exhaustion. Sociologists, however, focus more on *the collective efforts of*

subordinate groups to organize and challenge for power—a social phenomenon we call “social movements.” The term *social movements* encompasses the study of everything from abolitionism and labor unions to the civil rights movement and the moral majority. Recently, sociologists have coined the phrase “social movement organizations” (SMOs) to refer to organized efforts by smaller groups who may not be affiliated with large-scale movements but still represent collective attempts to empower subordinate groups and change public policy or institutional conditions. Regardless of size, however, the key aspect in all social movement cases is that they recognize the inherent nature of conflict within society and represent the intersection of collective agency and social structure (Fitzgerald and Rodgers 2000; Morris and Mueller 1992).

CASE STUDY #3

Applying Conflict Theory to Solutions: United Students Against Sweatshops

By the end of World War II, most people thought sweatshops were a thing of the past. Yet in the mid-1990s, the problem of worker exploitation in the garment industry reappeared with a vengeance. In 1995, the U.S. Department of Labor raided a sweatshop in El Monte, California, where, according to Medea Benjamin (2000), 72 Thai immigrants made garments in a “state of virtual slavery.” A year later, the National Labor Committee went public with evidence that underpaid child laborers in Honduras made Kathie Lee Gifford’s line of clothing for Wal-Mart. Her “teary denial on national TV would help reintroduce ‘sweatshop’ to the global vocabulary. After that, media exposes about sweatshops swept the nation” (p. 3).

Anti-sweatshop campaigns followed as workers and consumers pressured corporations to change policies to improve workers’ conditions. Students played a crucial role in these campaigns, arguing that they should have “the power and the right” to influence how school logos were used in the production and marketing of college-branded clothing—a \$2.5 billion industry in the late 1990s. Companies responded quickly by creating “codes of conduct” prohibiting child labor and forced labor, while improving health and safety standards and wage rates. But most codes ended up being weak and poorly enforced. Soon, labor and religious groups, who had initially supported these attempts at corporate responsibility, backed out. Students around the country moved into the void, and the organization United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) erupted on the scene (Featherstone 2002).

This group successfully linked local and global issues by demonstrating the integral connection between what students wore on campus and the people who made those products, often halfway around the world. An activist student from Princeton University, David Tannenbaum, explained, “This is an issue that really moves a lot of people. The workers making our clothes are thousands of miles away, but in other ways we’re so close to it—we’re wearing these clothes every day” (quoted in Benjamin 2000:238). In fact, as Rachel Paster from the University of Michigan stated,

One reason we’ve been so successful is that opposition to sweatshops isn’t that radical. Although I’m sure lots of us are all for overthrowing the corporate power structure, the human rights issues are what make a lot of people get involved and put their energies into rallies, sit-ins, etc. (p. 238)

But students who got active in the anti-sweatshop campaigns did more than go to rallies. Students constructed mock sweatshops in central campus locations to illustrate the actual conditions. They organized mock fashion shows where students modeled "college apparel" while voiceovers described the working conditions under which the clothing was made. Student leaders, along with groups like the National Labor Committee, have visited factories around the world to examine the actual conditions and report back to campuses as well as policy makers. But the most effective tool to pressure college campuses and corporations alike has been the boycott.

As part of a national strategy to have college administrations pressure apparel makers into full disclosure of working conditions, students coordinated campus-by-campus boycotts of clothing with college logos. Despite the claim by university officials at places like Duke University that their "hands were tied . . . because the U.S. companies would never agree to full public disclosures" (Benjamin 2000: 239–240), Duke students won just such a demand from the corporations that produced their university's clothing line. In fact, by the spring of 1999, "every university where students organized a sit-in (Duke, Georgetown, Arizona, Michigan and Wisconsin) . . . wrested agreements to require licensees to disclose the specific location of their factory sites" in order to allow for independent monitoring (pp. 239–240).

United Students Against Sweatshops recognized that a conflict over power lay at the heart of economic production and global commercial relationships. American corporations moved their factories overseas to avoid union-negotiated wages, safety and health laws, as well as environmental safety regulations. Corporations used their power and wealth to reduce costs and increase profits, as foreign workers were kept from organizing by the governments and militaries in their own countries. Students therefore decided to intervene in corporate profit-making by using the power that consumers could generate by refusing to purchase certain products, and thereby making sure the institutions they were a part of didn't buy sweatshop-made goods. While individual or small-group boycotts would have had little impact, institutional boycotts along with large-scale and highly publicized tactics such as demonstrations and sit-ins could have great impact and change university purchasing policies. Thus, United Students Against Sweatshops formed a social movement organization that mobilized enough power to counter the economic, political, and even military power of corporations and foreign nations to impact the labor conditions of workers around the world.

Traditionally, social movements concerning labor conditions and workers' rights have emerged from what's called the "point of production." In other words, the workers themselves have organized unions to battle poor wages and working conditions. However, the anti-sweatshop movement has recognized that students as consumers not only shoulder responsibility for contributing to the profitability of sweatshops by buying clothes made in them, but they also possess a substantive amount of power as a collective force to change college and corporate ways of doing business. In countries where unions are illegal and organizing efforts are met with death threats, workers must rely on the conscience and political will of consumers. Students, recognizing the complexity of global capitalism and power relations within the global marketplace, have stepped up the work of challenging corporate powers and the college administrations that make deals with them. Their efforts have significantly changed the lives of thousands of workers around the world.

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The long-term success of these workers will depend on their own ability to control working conditions for themselves. Such efforts have been limited by the ability of factory sites to garner government support for using military force to repress and intimidate workers, as well as by the fact that most sweatshop labor is composed of young women in cultures where patriarchy is strong. But student efforts to gain disclosure and improve international workers' rights have begun to help these women gain the ability to organize and protect themselves. By analyzing the specific structure of new global markets and using collective forms of pressure to challenge both corporate and university power elite, students have demonstrated a powerful understanding of social problems, as well as the possibility for social solutions.

Case Study Questions

1. How does conflict theory help explain sweatshops and labor rights violations?
2. How does this explanation inform strategies to address these social problems?
3. Did USAS challenge relations of production, consumption, or both? Did it do so successfully? Explain your answer.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Interview with Camilo Romero, the USAS National Organizer for Outreach. He began working for USAS in July of 2004, after receiving his undergraduate degree in sociology from the University of California - Berkeley. Camilo led the campaign to have the University of California system cut its contract with Coca-Cola due to extensive human rights abuses in its bottling plants in Colombia. These excerpts come from an interview with *Fellowship Magazine*, a publication of the Fellowship For Reconciliation—For a World of Peace, Justice, and Non-Violence.

Fellowship: What are some of the major successes USAS has achieved with these campaigns?

Romero: One was last March, when students were organizing in favor of workers in Immokalee, Florida, with the campaign against Taco Bell. These were mostly migrant and undocumented workers from Mexico, Guatemala, and Haiti [seasonal workers] who pick tomatoes for Taco Bell suppliers. [Workers] asked for a one-penny

increase per bucket of tomatoes—a minuscule increase, yet the growers said no. So these workers partnered with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), USAS, Student/Farmworker Alliance, MECHA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán), and other community groups to put pressure on Taco Bell. . . . Taco Bell was chosen since they are the ones with the power, who make the big bucks. It was a campaign that took several years. The student side focused on kicking Taco Bell off campuses because (1) they were abusing workers and (2) they were making money by exploitation. It was called “Boot the Bell.” The University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Chicago, and California State University at San Bernardino, among others, all kicked Taco Bell off their campuses. In March 2005, the campaign forced Taco Bell to sign a historic agreement with CIW recognizing all demands and setting a precedent for other companies like McDonald’s, Burger King, and Subway to respect those rights.

Fellowship: What are some challenges that USAS faces in these campaigns?

Romero: The funny thing is that initially it was the same with me. I was, like, “How do we take on such a huge company that invests millions of dollars in things like checking our website each day and trying to have interns hack into it?” I was, like, “Wow, this is too much!” But these companies are like anyone else and tend to screw up a lot as well. In the case of Coca-Cola, as well as with Nike, Reebok, and others, they have that big façade of being impenetrable, but there are several loopholes for targeting them. For example, with Coca-Cola, they were terrible when dealing with our campaign because they were addressing it as a PR [public relations] problem. They just brushed off not only the requests of students, but also the requests of institutions, the so-called “respected” individuals such as university administrators and city government officials. This showed clearly that Coca-Cola had never been challenged in this way. The bigger challenge is dealing with the larger culture. In activism, there are only a certain few who can get involved—but a type of movement that will truly change things around will be led by people who otherwise don’t have the time. Activism takes time and community: That’s one challenge. A second challenge is that in general, activism is almost a dirty word. People associate it with young hippie tree-huggers who don’t shower and eat granola, and that is certainly not true. The fact is that people construe activism as something kind of far-fetched, something you have to become—while I believe that all of us, to some extent, are activists. We all have values, morals, and ideals that, when they are challenged or hit by injustice, send us into action. When we put those thoughts, those passions into motion, that is really what activism is.

Fellowship: Was there a specific experience in college that sparked an interest in social justice work?

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Romero: Certainly the person that went into school and the one that left it were quite different—in terms of outlook on life, and perspective on how the world works, and politics and such. When I graduated and looked back on what I accomplished, I had the idea that, first, I was very lucky, very fortunate, very privileged to have had all these experiences, and second, that it was really a chance to get other people involved—to get them to realize that there is a heck of a lot that you can do inside the classroom, but there is a whole lot more you can do outside it. The message for getting other young people involved, whether they go to a four-year college or not, is that they must see there is a place for them to engage. Just as important as the work we do is the way we do it. It is critical to do our work in a way that is welcoming and inclusive. Our work needs to truly represent the realization that we all someday hope to achieve for people of the working class, women, people of color, people of different sexual orientations. We need to realize the struggles we have ahead of us—but the more people we have on board, the more likely we are to achieve success sooner.

Fellowship: A comment I often hear about students today is that they seem so apathetic, especially compared to students 30 or 40 years ago. How would you respond, and how do you get students interested and involved?

Romero: You have to make the campaign accessible and a little more real. If you show that activism isn't anything but people with conscientiousness about what is right and wrong putting this into action—that is the key.

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SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have examined social problems and society from three major theoretical frameworks that sociologists use to understand the world. Different theoretical perspectives may yield different understandings about what the root causes of social problems are, as well as what kinds of social actions or services might be effective to address those causes. By bringing these theories into the field, sociologists can also evaluate their effectiveness both as theories and as guides to action.

We have also explored particular service learning, action-oriented, and community-based projects where students were able to bring together intellectual and experiential work. In each case, sociological concepts and theories gave students certain tools to understand the social problems they witnessed as well as to evaluate the significance and depth

of their actions, both personally and for the larger society. The rest of the book will continue to present such case studies as a way to both analyze particular social problems and think about how to address them.

In the end, sociology does not promise to change the world. The promise is that it will help us to understand how the world makes us who we are as individuals and societies. But the goal of sociological analysis and practice does not stop at understanding. The history of sociology is the history of efforts to move from theory and research to practical application and social action. Service learning pedagogy and civic engagement call on students and teachers to integrate analysis with action in order to address social problems.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the term *social construction*? How would sociologists explain that both society and the self are socially constructed?
2. What is an institution? How do institutions shape social life?
3. What are values, norms, and beliefs? How do they compare/contrast with one another?
4. What is a social theory? How do different theories work to emphasize different aspects of the social world around us?

GLOSSARY

Agency: The ability to change the institutions in which people live. We might expand that to include all social relationships, both macro or large (economies and governments) and micro or small (personal intimacies, relationships, and encounters).

Conflict Sociology: A theory that contends societies are not unified single entities, but reflect and are shaped by inequality and the struggle over resources, competing interests, and different values. Any given society generally reflects the ability of one group to exert and maintain power over others, as well as the level of resistance against that bloc.

Disorganization: Social problems that come about when rapid changes overwhelm people and their institutions.

Functionalism: A theory premised on the basic idea that society is an increasingly complex organism that must fulfill certain basic functions to continue its survival. These functions include the economic, political, and social realms of the social world and are experienced by people primarily through institutions.

Institutions: Patterns of behavior that become formalized as structural or cultural entities. Examples are collective phenomena such as family, church, schools, legislatures, hospitals, and prisons. Some sociologists refer to institutions as “super-customs” and include the practices—not just the structural unit or physical place—as institutions. Thus, religion, law, and education can also be thought of as general institutions regardless of any specific church, court, or school.

Norms: The shared expectations of behavior—what people consider as doing the right thing.

Social Dysfunction: This refers to a designated set of consequences of a designated pattern of behavior, belief, or organization that interfere with a designated functional requirement of a designated social system. These can be manifest (overt) in or latent (hidden) from the everyday experience of social processes.

Social Facts: According to Émile Durkheim, a social fact is any way of acting, whether fixed or not, capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint; or, which is general over the whole of a given society whilst having an existence of its own, independent of its individual manifestations. In any given society, these facts may be exemplified through money, rules, laws, particular beliefs, institutions, and so forth.

Social Stratification: The process by which some people in a society are guided or forced into inferior (or superior) social positions; usually class, race, and gender inequality, but sometimes based on caste or other social and cultural identities.

Social Structure: The material and cultural conditions, such as economic and political systems, institutional networks, family, and religious practices, that shape our lives and our choices.

Socialization: The process through which people learn to think, feel, evaluate, and behave as individuals in relation to others and institutions within a given society.

Symbolic Interactionism: A theory focusing on the approach that has evolved from social behaviorism and that stresses the symbolic nature of human interaction; linguistic and gestural communication; and particularly the role of language in the formation of mind, self, and society.

Values: The strong, seemingly permanent dispositions shared by groups of people.

WEBSITES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SOCIOLOGY, SERVICE LEARNING, AND SOCIOLOGY “IN ACTION”

American Sociological Association (ASA): <http://www.asanet.org>

Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology: <http://www.aacsnet.org/wp/>

Association for Humanist Sociology (AHS): <http://www.humanistsociology.org>

Contexts—ASA journal of “interesting and relevant” sociology: <http://contexts.org/>

Project South: <http://projectsouth.org/>

Public Sociology: <http://www.publicsociology.com>

Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP): <http://www.sssp1.org>

Sociologists Without Borders: <http://www.sociologistswithoutborders.org/>

Transformative Studies Institute: <http://www.transformativestudies.org/>

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