

Society in Focus

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

NINTH EDITION

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PREFACE

In this ninth edition of *Society in Focus*, we emphasize how society and social forces affect everything from globalization and international policies to day-to-day activities in our personal lives. This makes the subject matter of this book seemingly familiar and ordinary. Beware, however. Sociologist Peter Berger's admonition, "The first wisdom of sociology is this—things are not what they seem," serves as a challenge to our teaching and provides special inspiration and the overriding principle for this book. Prepare to be surprised, and sometimes even shocked, to discover how many of the taken-for-granted assumptions you may have about your social world may be shattered. The questioning of "common sense notions" and the "official interpretation" of issues and events is at the heart of the sociological enterprise, and we emphasize this in the opening vignettes to each chapter as well as throughout the text. *Society in Focus* shows students that sociological thinking is much more than an ivory-tower enterprise. Because sociology is about all of us, and our daily lives, it is an eminently practical and useful discipline for understanding our social world.

The authors' diverse research interests and experiences illustrate the fact that, for sociologists, the entire world is a laboratory. Individually and collaboratively, our research projects include field studies of the Fulani in West Africa, American cowboys, African American settlements, ethnic communities, kindergarten classrooms, modern American motorcycling, and the Old Order Amish in Oklahoma and Kansas. Individually, we have also worked in a beef slaughtering plant, interviewed topless dancers and morticians, taught kindergarten and first grade, and even played Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny at suburban shopping malls. More than sixty years of combined experience in teaching introduction to sociology courses has taught us what "works" and what does not work in class.

In this edition, we go beyond merely posing questions about issues to take a closer look at the social world in which we live. We provide an integrated approach that uses sociological thinking to help students analyze and understand every chapter from the opening vignette, which is the chapter focus, to theoretical perspectives, boxed material (Sociological Focus), and even the photographs, maps, and cartoons. To focus increased attention on sociological thinking and research methods, we have chosen four key themes that experience, reviewers, teachers, and students have told us are of the greatest interest and are most useful for understanding sociology: media and technology, globalization, cultural diversity, and trends for the future.

THEMES

Media and Technology

In earlier editions of *Society in Focus*, we pioneered a critical analysis of mass media—especially television—to help students grapple with and better understand complex sociological concepts and methods. In this edition, we continue and expand our critical analysis of media and technology. Whether these various forms of media use technology to collect, interpret, and disseminate information or misinformation or merely to provide entertainment, they shape and give meaning to the world in which we live. Virtually all sociologists recognize student interest in this area as well as the potency of the media and social media, which broadcast standard as well as highly individualized messages to widespread and/or specialized audiences in shaping, defining, and influencing our social world.

Globalization

Modern technology and economic development have facilitated the flow of people, goods, ideas, and money across old national boundaries and from one end of the earth to the other. This process of globalization has altered social relations and societies everywhere. Today, people reside and work in geographic locations far removed from where they were born. Recent worldwide financial and economic developments illustrate how today's complex global economy has blurred not only the lines that once distinguished one major corporation from another but also the political and economic boundaries that once separated nations.

Cultural Diversity

In an effort to acknowledge and affirm the rich tapestry of human culture and achievement, in this edition we expand the emphasis on social and cultural diversity. Reflecting fundamental changes in the social composition of American cities and most other major cities of the world, we have expanded our coverage of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and many other forms of cultural diversity. At the same time, we illuminate social inequality and what it means to be at the margins or even outside of the cultural mainstream in various parts of the world. We have expanded the application of feminist theory in every chapter to recognize the importance of gender diversity and the contributions of that theoretical perspective in sociology.

Looking to the Future

While predicting the future is a risky venture, we are convinced that using critical thinking and sociological perspectives to understand today can improve the accuracy of anyone's forecasts for tomorrow. We pioneered this popular feature in our first edition, and we continue to provide cutting-edge and comprehensive sociological projections of the future in each chapter. This section also has another goal: It is designed to increase student awareness of the importance of collective actions and the ability of ordinary people to alter public policy and improve society.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

Society in Focus is designed to help students think clearly and critically about sociological issues, concepts, and methods. Every element of the text is designed to challenge students to evaluate social issues and, guided by the sociological imagination, to clearly formulate their own positions. By asking questions that demand sociological and creative thought, we want to remind students that their conclusions and decisions, as well as their nondecisions and inaction, may have important social consequences. The following features have been chosen to help students achieve these goals.

Special Features

Opening Vignettes Each chapter opens with an interesting case study, anecdote, or other example to capture the reader's interest and introduce the chapter topic. The material is also meant to stimulate sociological thinking by raising a variety of important social issues and questions. Opening vignettes illustrate our theme that things are not necessarily what they seem and introduce students to important concepts that follow, setting the tone for the entire chapter.

Theoretical Perspectives To enhance sociological thinking, we include a comprehensive examination of four major perspectives in sociology: *interactionism, functionalism, conflict, and feminist theory*. In addition, throughout the book, we present new paradigms, conflicting research findings, and controversial approaches. This encourages students to look beneath the surface of complex issues and recognize how the various perspectives alter both sociological questions and answers.

Sociological Focus: Controversial and Thought-Provoking Boxes We have revised boxes from previous editions and added new boxes to this edition that encourage students to take a closer look at society and selected social issues. Sociological Focus boxes challenge students to focus on major sociological concepts or examine contemporary social issues. These boxes ask students to peer beneath the surface of commonsense and official views and use their sociological skills to decipher and analyze the issue in question.

Photographs, Maps, Tables, Figures, and Cartoons

Full-color illustrations, tables, figures, photographs, maps, and cartoons have been selected to capture interest while visually underscoring major sociological concepts and ideas.

Pedagogical Features There are additional aids to reinforce and expand student learning.

- Each chapter begins with a list of **Learning Outcomes** and ends with questions that provide **Outcomes Assessment**.
- Every **Sociological Focus** box includes a section called **Taking a Closer Look** that promotes critical thinking and can serve as excellent prompts for in-class or online discussions.
- A **summary** that highlights the most important material for reflection and review is provided at the end of each chapter. Further, it helps boost sociological thinking skills by providing a thumbnail sketch of the most important components, with their logical connections within each chapter.
- **Key terms** are boldfaced and defined within the text at first mention and are listed at the end of each chapter with cross-reference page numbers. Key terms and their definitions are also positioned in the margin, generally at the bottom of the page or page spread at their point of usage.
- A comprehensive **glossary** and complete list of **references** are included at the end of the book.
- Separate **subject** and **name indexes** are included at the end of the book.

ANCILLARIES

This book is accompanied by a learning package designed to enhance the experience of both instructors and students.

- **Instructor's Manual.** For each chapter in the text, this valuable resource provides a chapter summary, student learning objectives, key terms with definitions, lecture outline, discussion questions, and Web resources. The Instructor's Manual is available to adopters for download on the text's catalog page at www.rowman.com.
- **Test Bank.** The Test Bank includes multiple choice questions marked with difficulty and skill levels and referenced by section. The true/false, fill-in-the-blank, matching, and essay questions are all referenced by section. The Test Bank is available to adopters for download on the text's catalog page at www.rowman.com.
- **PowerPoint Presentation.** The PowerPoint slides provide lecture outlines as well as the tables, maps, and figures from the text. The PowerPoint presentation is available to adopters for download on the text's catalog page at www.rowman.com.

- **Enhanced eText.** The Enhanced eText allows students to access their textbook anytime and anywhere they want. The eText for *Society in Focus: An Introduction to Sociology*, Ninth Edition, features direct links to flash cards, self-quizzes, and additional activities designed to enhance the concepts in each chapter. The Interactive eText can be purchased at www.rowman.com or any other retailer of online texts.
- **Companion Website.** Accompanying the text is an open-access Companion Website designed to reinforce the main topics. For each chapter, flash cards, self-quizzes, and additional activities help students master the information they learn in the classroom. Students can access the Companion Website from their computer or mobile device on the text's catalog page at www.textbook.rowman.com/thompson.
- **Learning Management System (LMS) Cartridge.** Available for most learning management systems, this cartridge contains the test questions and Companion Website material that accompany *Society in Focus: An Introduction to Sociology*, Ninth Edition. This cartridge allows better integration of the materials with your course and makes it easy for student test results and graded assignments to flow into instructor gradebooks. The LMS Cartridge is available to adopters for download on the text's catalog page at www.rowman.com.
- **Respondus 4.0.** Respondus 4.0 is a powerful tool for creating and managing exams that can be printed to paper or published directly to the most popular learning management systems. Exams can be created offline or moved from one LMS to another. **Respondus LE** is available for free and can be used to automate the process of creating print tests. **Respondus 3.5**, available for purchase or via a school site license, prepares tests to be uploaded to an LMS.
- **Respondus StudyMate.** Respondus StudyMate helps students master the basics of course material through learning activities, self-assessments, and games. A dozen activities—such as flash cards, crosswords, and quizzes—engage students with course content in an individualized way. Students can access StudyMate activities using computers, smartphones, and tablets. StudyMate also integrates seamlessly with the most popular learning management systems.

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William E. Thompson
Joseph V. Hickey
Mica L. Thompson

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The cooperative writing efforts of William Thompson and Joseph Hickey began almost four decades ago, when they decided to explore the mall Easter Bunny and Santa Claus as well as other “taken-for-granted” roles, social settings, and everyday social interactions. Although Joe Hickey is now fully retired, this new edition still reflects his many contributions to previous editions and remains a collaborative work. Mica Thompson joined the research team more recently, helping to interview motorcyclists and providing an important younger and feminist perspective on all of the research topics.



WILLIAM E. THOMPSON was born and raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and was the first member of his family to receive a high school diploma. He received his bachelor's degree from Northeastern State University, a master's degree from Missouri State University, and a PhD from Oklahoma State University. Professor Thompson has authored and coauthored more than forty articles in professional journals, including several reprinted in sociology textbooks and readers. He has coauthored a textbook on juvenile delinquency, which is going into its tenth edition, and a textbook entitled *Deviants and Deviance: A Sociological Approach*, and he has coedited an anthology on juvenile delinquency. Thompson also is the author of *The Glass House*, a nonfiction account of his mother's two-year battle with cancer and the lessons about life and living learned from her death and dying, and in 2012, authored *Hogs, Blogs, Leathers, and Lattes: The Sociology of Modern American Motorcycling*. For fun and relaxation, Thompson plays the drums and rides motorcycles.



JOSEPH V. HICKEY received his bachelor's and master's degrees from George Washington University and his PhD in cultural anthropology from the University of New Mexico. A native New Yorker and Midwest transplant, Professor Hickey has won both writing and film awards. He has authored and coauthored two dozen articles and has written and produced numerous videotapes on such diverse subjects as popular culture, racial and ethnic communities, and cross-cultural studies. Joseph Hickey is professor emeritus in the Department of Sociology–Anthropology at Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas, where for more than two decades he taught introductory courses in sociology and cultural anthropology to undergraduates. Today, he is retired and lives on a farm in Tennessee.



MICA L. THOMPSON earned her bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University and her master's degree in sociology from Texas A&M University–Commerce. She has more than twelve years of public school teaching experience and teaches introduction to sociology at the university level. Her research interests include qualitative methods, feminist theory, education, and popular culture. In addition to having collaborated on articles published in professional journals, Mica has made significant contributions to previous editions of *Society in Focus*. In her spare time, Mica teaches arts and crafts as a volunteer at a center for HIV patients, and enjoys art, fitness classes, and spending time with her “best friend,” her nephew.

