

# CHAPTER 5

## Social Structure and Society



# U S I N G

## Your Sociological Imagination

Because we are deeply involved in our own social world, we forget that our ability to participate in daily life is based on years of socialization. In the play, *As You Like It*, William Shakespeare wrote a line reminding us of the place of social learning in our lives: “All the world’s a stage. And all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts.”

All members of a group (including you) have parts they are expected to play. Students are expected to attend class, listen to the instructor, and participate in class activities. Teachers are expected to be in the classroom when students arrive, hold class, teach and guide the class, and make assignments. In any American high school, you will find similar relationships between students and staff. Interactions are orderly and predictable. In most cases, the teacher knows what the student expects of her and the student knows what the teacher expects of him.

If, however, you suddenly found yourself in a class where the teacher raised his hand to talk and brought his dog to class; where students played frisbee and took naps on the floor, you might wonder what planet you had beamed down to. Missing the order and predictability you expected, you would wonder how you should act in this unfamiliar setting. To fit in, what you would need is some awareness of the underlying *social structure*. This chapter will discuss concepts that underlie social structure.

### Sections

1. Social Structure and Status
2. Social Structure and Roles
3. Preindustrial Societies
4. Industrial and Postindustrial Societies

### Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to

- ❖ explain what sociologists mean by *social structure*.
- ❖ discuss how statuses and roles are related to social structure.
- ❖ identify and illustrate the concepts of social structure.
- ❖ explain how culture and social structures are related.
- ❖ describe the means of subsistence in preindustrial societies.
- ❖ discuss the characteristics of industrial society.
- ❖ compare and contrast preindustrial, industrial, and postindustrial societies.



#### Chapter Overview

Visit the *Sociology and You* Web site at [soc.glencoe.com](http://soc.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 5—Chapter Overviews** to preview chapter information.

# Section 1

## Social Structure and Status

### Key Terms

- social structure
- status
- ascribed status
- achieved status
- status set
- master status

### Section Preview

The underlying pattern of social relationships in a group is called social structure. Status is one very important element of social structure. Ascribed statuses are assigned at birth; achieved statuses are earned or chosen.

**social structure**  
the underlying patterns of relationships in a group

**status**  
a position a person occupies within a social structure

### Social Structure Is All Around You

You learned in Chapter 4 that culture shapes human social behavior. In the absence of biological pre-programming, culture guides us in our thinking, feeling, and behaving. Without culture, humans would have no blueprint for social living. This chapter helps explain the relationship between culture and social structure.

**So, what is social structure?** The chapter opening described a situation in which unexpected classroom behavior resulted in confusion for a newcomer. We are usually spared such confusion when entering a new group because we bring some knowledge of how people will normally relate to one another. In our minds, we carry a “social map” for various group situations. We have mental images of the new group with its patterns of social relationships. This underlying pattern is called **social structure**.

### Everyone Has Status

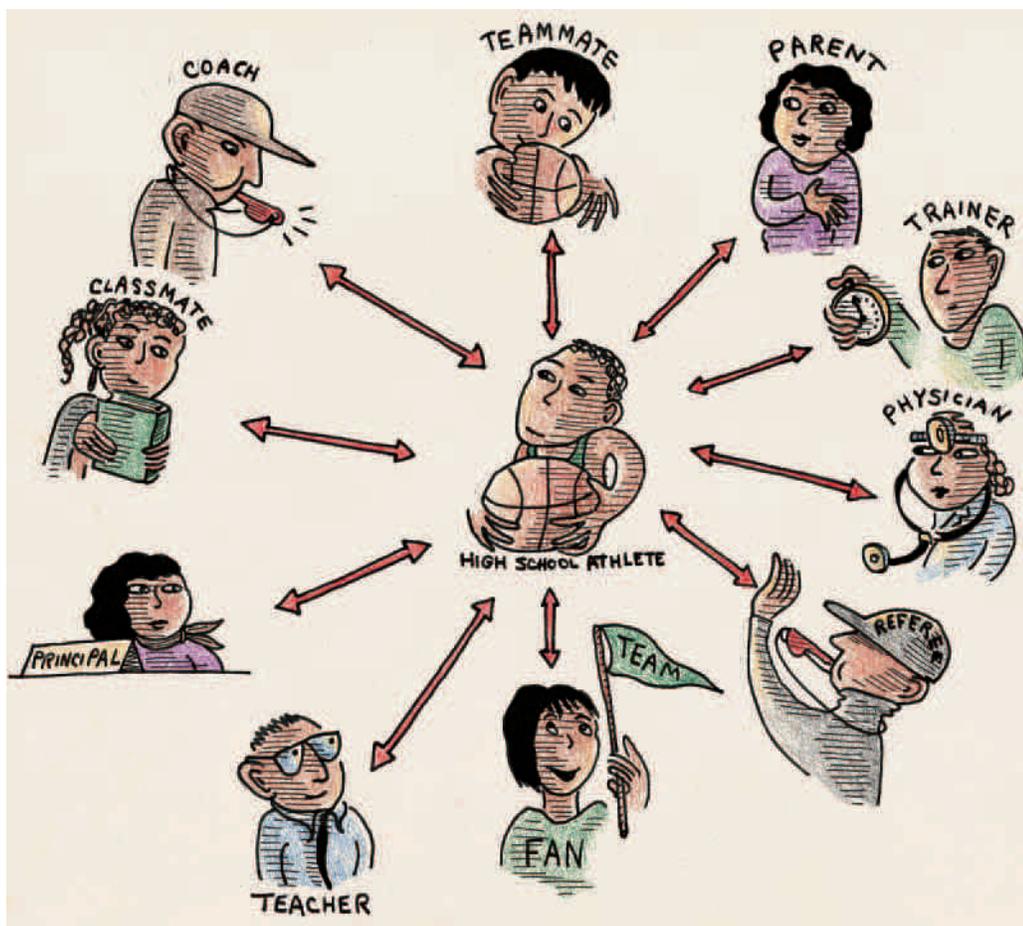
We are not born with mental maps of social structure; we must learn them from others. In the process, we learn about *statuses* and *roles*—major elements of social structure.

**What do sociologists mean by status?** People may refer to themselves as students, doctors, welders, secretaries, mothers, or sons. Each of these labels refers to a **status**—a position a person occupies within a social structure. Status helps us define who and what we are in relation to others within the same social structure. Some social statuses are acquired at birth. For example, a newborn female instantly becomes a child and a daughter. From then on, she assumes an increasingly larger number and variety of statuses.

Sociologists are interested in the relationships among social statuses. A sociologist investigating delinquency, for example, may focus on the status of social worker in relation to the statuses of the police officer, judge, and teacher. Figure 5.1 illustrates the status of a high

*The two different status people in this photograph are behaving exactly as most people would expect.*





school athlete related to various other statuses. There are two basic types of social statuses—*ascribed* and *achieved*.

**What is an ascribed status?** An **ascribed status** is neither earned nor chosen; it is assigned to us. At birth, an infant is either a male or a female. We do not choose our gender. Age is another example of an ascribed social status. In some societies, religion and social class are ascribed by the family of birth. If you were born into a lower-class home in India, for example, you would not be permitted to rise to a higher social class.

**How is status achieved?** An **achieved status** is earned or chosen. Achieving statuses is possible where people have some degree of control and choice. In most modern societies, for

**Figure 5.1 The Interrelationships of Social Statuses.** Social statuses do not exist in isolation. All statuses are interrelated with other statuses.

**ascribed status**  
a position that is neither earned nor chosen but assigned

**achieved status**  
a position that is earned or chosen



*Pictured is an African Masai man in traditional clothes. Do you think that his clothing reflects an ascribed or an achieved status?*

example, an individual can decide to become a spouse or a parent. Occupations are also achieved statuses in modern societies where people have freedom to choose their work. Plumber, electrician, sales representative, nurse, executive, lawyer, and doctor are examples of achieved statuses.

**What is a status set?** A person who is a social worker does not occupy only one status. This person holds various other statuses that may be totally unrelated to that of social worker. A **status set** is all of the statuses that a person occupies at any particular time. One social worker may be a wife, mother, author, and church choir director. Another may be a single parent, service club leader, and jazz musician. Another status set might be that of a student, a brother, a tennis player, a tutor, and a store clerk. Each of these statuses is part of another network of statuses. Assume, for example, that in addition to being a social worker, an individual is also a part-time jazz musician. In this status, she might interact with the statuses of nightclub owner, dancer, and fellow musician, among others.

**status set**

all of the statuses that a person occupies at any particular time

**master status**

a position that strongly affects most other aspects of a person's life

**Are all of a person's statuses equal?** Among the statuses held by an individual, some are more important than others. **Master statuses** are important because they influence most other aspects of the person's life. Master statuses may be achieved or ascribed. In industrial societies, occupations—achieved statuses for the most part—are master statuses. Your occupation strongly influences such matters as where you live, how well you live, and how long you live. “Criminal” is an achieved master status, since it affects the rest of your life.



“I hunt and she gathers—otherwise, we couldn't make ends meet.”

*Expected behavior is often based on master statuses such as gender.*



Explain why the status of a lawyer is a master status.

Age, gender, race, and ethnicity are examples of ascribed master statuses. These statuses are master statuses because they significantly affect the likelihood of achieving other social statuses. When will the United States have a female president? Would you let a nineteen-year-old or a ninety-year-old handle your case in court? Or remove your appendix?

## Section 1 Assessment

1. Briefly define the term *social structure*.

Match the definition with the type of status (a–d) it best describes.

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 2. wife, mother, author, church choir director               | a. ascribed status |
| 3. electrician, spouse                                       | b. achieved status |
| 4. the presidency of the United States, professional athlete | c. master status   |
| 5. sex, gender, race   | d. status set      |
| 6. daughter, son   |                    |
| 7. quarterback, coach, fan, trainer                          |                    |

### Critical Thinking

8. **Categorizing Information** On a separate piece of paper, make a diagram of your life—the statuses you possess and the responsibilities or role expectations for each. Examples of statuses include son/daughter, student, band member, etc.
9. **Applying Concepts** What is the most important master status you have held? Has the master status helped or hindered you? What master status would you like to achieve? Why?

CLICK HERE



**SOCIOLOGY**  
*Online*

### Student Web Activity

Visit the *Sociology and You* Web site at [soc.glencoe.com](http://soc.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 5—Student Web Activities** for an activity on social status.



Our individual lives cannot generally be works of art unless the social order is also.

**Charles Horton Cooley**  
American sociologist



CONTENTS



# Focus on Research

## Experiment: Adopting Statuses in a Simulated Prison

**Social psychologist Philip Zimbardo and his colleagues designed an experiment to observe the behavior of people without criminal records in a mock “prison.” They were amazed at the rapidity with which statuses were adopted and roles fulfilled by the college students playing “prisoners” and “guards.” This experiment reveals the ease with which people can be socialized to statuses and roles. Zimbardo’s own words describe the design and results of this experiment.**

In an attempt to understand just what it means . . . to be a prisoner or a prison guard, Craig Haney, Curt Banks, Dave Jaffe and I created our own prison. We carefully screened over 70 volunteers who answered an ad in a Palo Alto city newspaper and ended up with about two dozen young men who were selected to be part of this study. They were mature, emotionally stable, normal, intelligent college students from middle-class homes. . . . They appeared to represent the cream of the crop of this generation. None had any criminal record. . . .

Half were arbitrarily designated as prisoners by a flip of a coin, the others as guards. These were the roles they were to play in our simulated prison. The guards . . . made up their own formal rules for maintaining law, order and respect, and were generally free to improvise new ones during their eight-hour, three-man shifts. The prisoners were unexpectedly picked up at their homes by a city policeman in a squad car, searched, handcuffed, fingerprinted, booked at the Palo Alto station house and taken

*Students on the right in Zimbardo’s mock prison experiment held very low statuses.*



blindfolded to our jail. There they were stripped, deloused, put into a uniform, given a number and put into a cell with two other prisoners where they expected to live for the next two weeks. . . .

At the end of only six days we had to close down our mock prison because what we saw was frightening. It was no longer apparent to most of the subjects (or to us) where reality ended and their roles began. The majority had indeed become prisoners or guards, no longer able to clearly differentiate between role playing and self. There were dramatic changes in virtually every aspect of their behavior, thinking and feeling. . . . We were horrified because we saw some boys (guards) treat others as if they were despicable animals, taking pleasure in cruelty, while other boys (prisoners) became servile, dehumanized robots who thought only of escape, of their own individual survival and of their mounting hatred for the guards. We had to release three prisoners in the first four days because they had such acute situational traumatic reactions as hysterical crying, confusion in thinking, and severe depression. Others begged to be paroled, and all but three were willing to forfeit all the money they had earned [\$15 per day] if they could be paroled. By then (the fifth day) they had been so programmed to think of themselves as prisoners that when their request for parole was denied they returned docilely to their cells. . . .

About a third of the guards became tyrannical in their arbitrary use of power, in enjoying their control over other people. They were corrupted by the power of their roles and became quite inventive in their techniques of breaking the spirit of the prisoners and making them feel they were worthless. . . . By the end of the week the experiment had become a reality. . . .

Excerpted with permission of Transaction, Inc., from *Society*, Vol. 9, No. 6.  
Copyright © 1972 by Transaction, Inc.

### *Working with the Research*

1. If you were asked to discuss Zimbardo's experiment in light of one of the three major theoretical perspectives, which would you choose? Why?
2. One of Zimbardo's conclusions, not stated in the above account, is that the brutal behavior found in real-life prisons is not due to the antisocial characteristics or personality defects of guards and prisoners. Can you argue, sociologically, that he is right in this conclusion? How?
3. There was some controversy over the ethics of this experiment. Do you think this experiment could be carried out today under the ASA Code of Ethics? Why or why not?



# Section 2

## Social Structure and Roles

### Key Terms

- role
- rights
- obligations
- role performance
- social interaction
- role conflict
- role strain

### Section Preview

People interact according to prescribed roles. These roles carry certain rights and obligations. Sometimes conflict or strain occurs when an individual has too many roles to play.

### Rights and Obligations

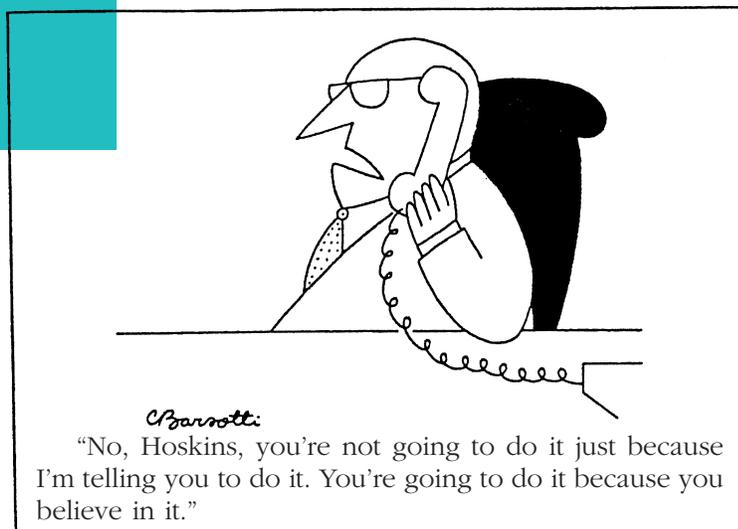
An expected behavior associated with a particular status is a **role**. Any status carries with it a variety of roles. The roles of a modern doctor, for example, include keeping informed about new medical developments, scheduling office appointments, diagnosing illnesses, and prescribing treatments.

Roles can be thought of as statuses “in action.” Whereas statuses describe positions, roles describe behaviors. These behaviors are based on the rights and obligations attached to various statuses. **Rights** are behaviors that individuals expect from others. **Obligations** are behaviors that individuals are expected to perform toward others. The rights of one status correspond to the obligations of another. Doctors, for example, are obligated to diagnose

**role**  
an expected behavior associated with a particular status

**right**  
a behavior that individuals can expect from others

**obligation**  
a behavior that individuals are expected to perform toward others



*Hoskins is being forced to follow roles whether he wants to or not. Are such cues ever sent your way?*

their patients' illnesses. Correspondingly, patients have the right to expect their doctors to diagnose to the best of their ability. Teachers have an obligation to be prepared to teach the daily lesson. Students have a right to expect that teachers will be adequately prepared to explain the material. Correspondingly, teachers have a right to expect that students will make the attempt to learn. Students have the obligation to make that effort.

Recall that this chapter began with a quotation from Shakespeare's play *As You Like It*. In terms of a play, roles are the part of the script that tells the actors (status holders) what beliefs, feelings, and actions are expected of them. A playwright or screenwriter specifies the content of a performer's part. In the same way, culture underlies the parts played in real life. Mothers, for instance, have different maternal "scripts" in different cultures. Most American mothers emphasize independence more than most Iranian mothers.



It is never too late to be what you might have been.

George Eliot  
English author



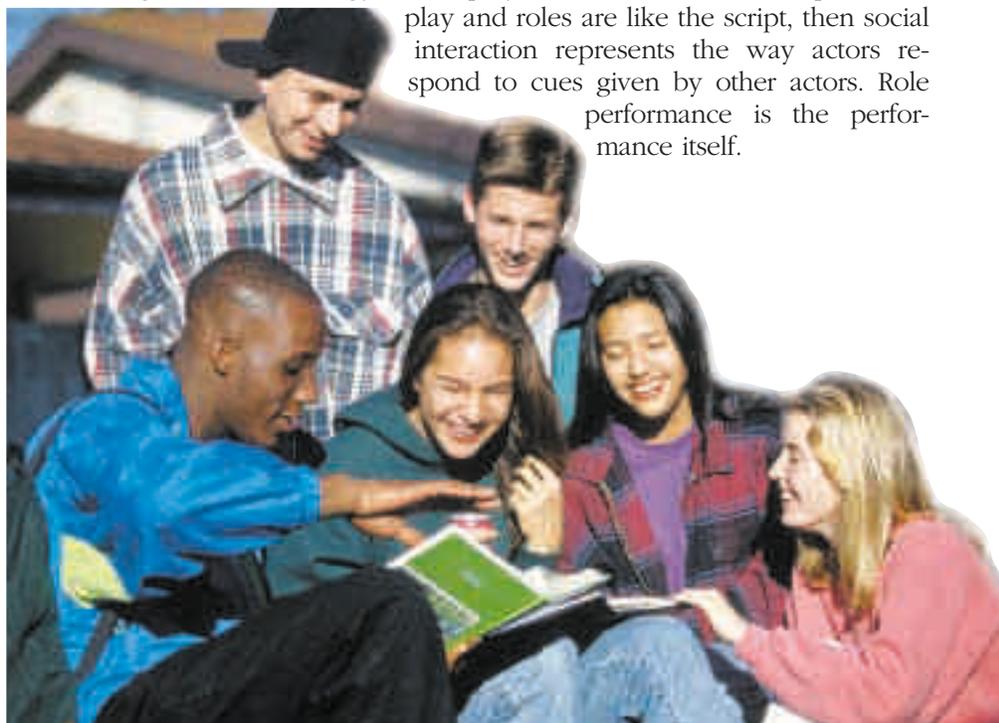
## Role Performance and Social Interaction

Statuses and roles provide the basis for group life. It is primarily when people interact with each other socially that they "perform" in the roles attached to their statuses.

**Role performance** is the actual conduct, or behavior, involved in carrying out (or performing) a role. Role performance can occur without an audience (as when a student studies alone for a test). Most role performance, though, involves social interaction.

**Social interaction** is the process of influencing each other as people relate. For example, before two boys begin to fight, they have probably gone through a process of insulting and challenging each other. Fortunately, most social interaction is not as negative and violent, but the same process of influence and reaction to others is involved.

Think again of the analogy of the play. If statuses are like the parts in a play and roles are like the script, then social interaction represents the way actors respond to cues given by other actors. Role performance is the performance itself.



*These students each have particular roles and statuses within their group.*

**role performance**  
the actual behavior of an individual in a role

**social interaction**  
the process of influencing each other as people relate

### How does play-acting differ from social interactions?

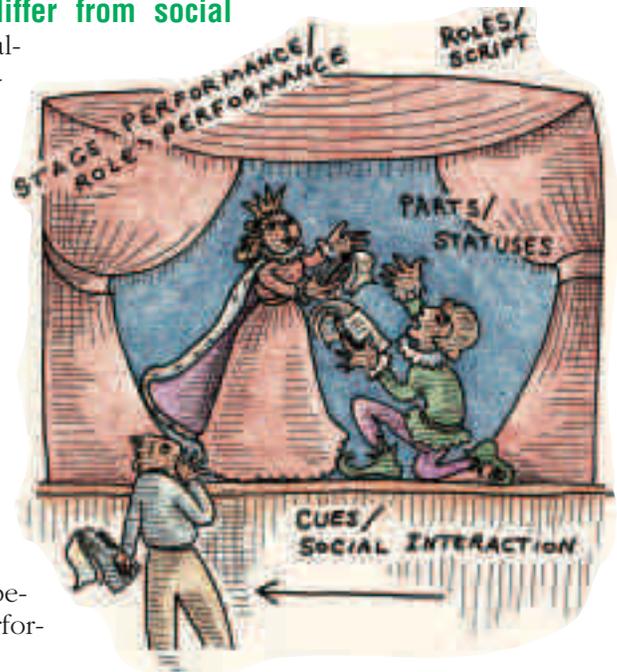
The play analogy is a valid one, but it is dangerous to take it too far. For one thing, “delivery of the lines” in real life is not the conscious process used by actors. Unlike stage performances, most real-life role performance occurs without planning.

Second, although actors may sometimes ad-lib, change lines to suit themselves, and so forth, overall they stick pretty closely to the script. Departures are fairly easy to detect and control. This is not the case with differences between a role and a role performance.

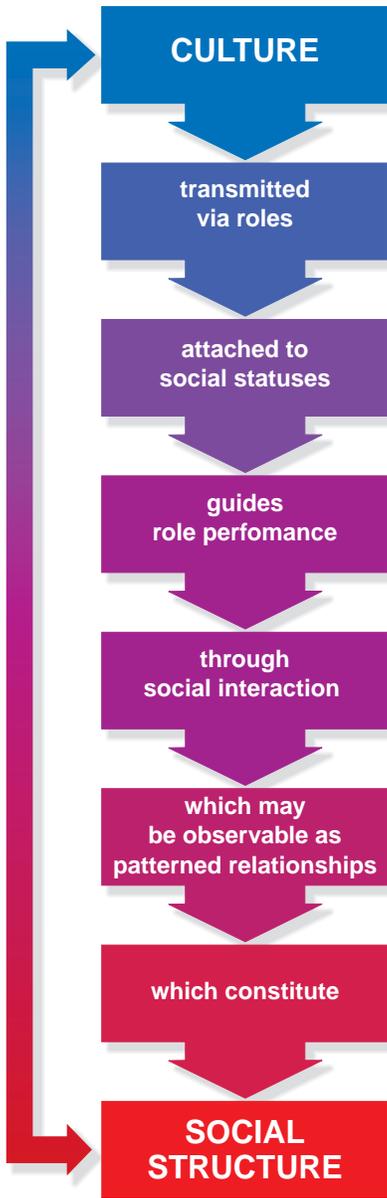
Third, on the stage, there is a programmed and predictable relationship between cues and responses. One performer’s line is a cue for a specific response from another actor. In life, we can choose our own cues and responses. A student may decide to tell a teacher that her tests are the worst he has ever encountered. On hearing this, the teacher may tell the student that it is not his place to judge, or the teacher may ask for further explanation so that improvement may be made. In effect, the teacher can choose from several roles to play at that time. Likewise, the student can choose from a variety of responses to the teacher’s behavior. If the teacher tells the student he is out of line, the student may report the matter to a counselor, or he may decide to forget it altogether. The process of choosing the role and then acting it out occurs in nearly all instances of social interaction.

Keep in mind, however, that the range of responses is not limitless. Only certain responses are culturally acceptable. It is not an appropriate response for the teacher to bodily eject the student from her classroom, and the student would be very foolish to pound the teacher’s desk in protest.

Figure 5.2 outlines the connection between culture and social structure. As you can see at the top of the figure, the first link between culture and social structure is the concept of role (behavior associated with a status). Roles are in turn attached to statuses (a position a person occupies within a group). Yet people do not always follow roles exactly. The manner in which roles are actually carried out is role performance, the third link in the conceptual chain. Role performance occurs through social interaction. This is the fourth link between culture and social structure. Social interaction based on roles is observable as patterned relationships, which make up social structure. In turn, existing social structure affects the creation of and changes in culture.

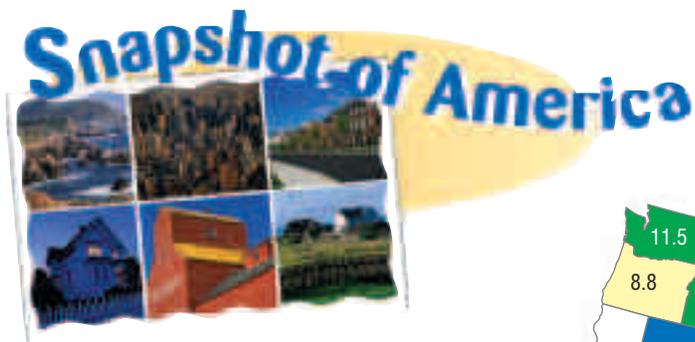


*This illustration draws an analogy between rehearsed behavior on the stage and real social behavior. How do community cultural standards affect the role behavior of students and teachers?*



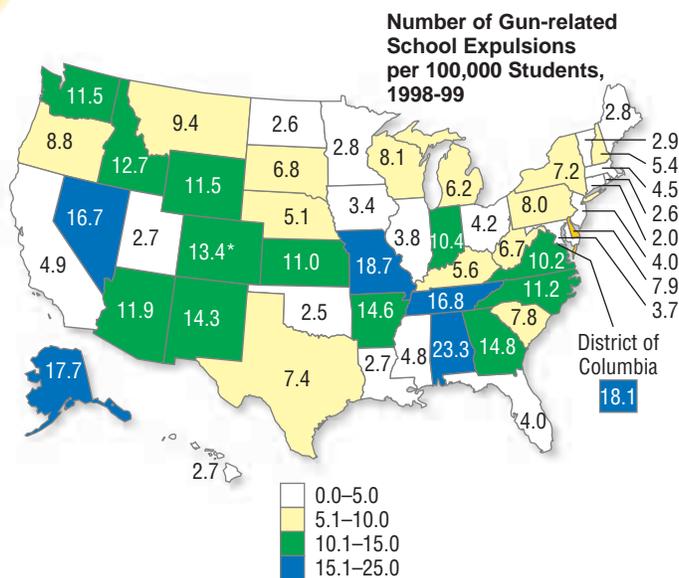
**Figure 5.2 The Links Between Culture and Social Structure.**

*Sociologists concentrate on the study of social structure. They have developed a set of concepts and an understanding of their relationships in order to examine the basic nature of social structure.*



## Guns in School

Bringing firearms to school is a major violation of the student role. Teachers have a right to expect students to come to school unarmed. Students are obligated not to bring weapons to school. This map gives us some idea of the relative extent to which this role is being violated and punished in various states. In total, 3,523 students were expelled during the 1998–99 school year for carrying guns to school. The good news—this number represents a substantial drop over the two previous survey years.



Source: U.S. Dept. of Education, 2000.

\*Includes all weapons, not just firearms.

### Interpreting the Map

1. Which states reported the most expulsions per 100,000 students in the 1998–1999 school year? (Which states fall in the over 15.0 range?)
2. Explain why violation of a law can also be a role violation.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Education

**CLICK HERE**



**Online UPDATE**

Visit [soc.glencoe.com](http://soc.glencoe.com) and click on **Textbook Updates—Chapter 5** for an update of the data.

## Role Conflict and Role Strain

The existence of statuses and roles permits social life to be predictable and orderly. At the same time, each status involves many roles, and each individual holds many statuses. This diversity invites conflict and strain.

**What are role conflict and role strain?** **Role conflict** exists when the performance of a role in one status clashes with the performance of a role in another. Many teenagers, for example, hold the statuses of student and employee. Those who do often find it difficult to balance study and work demands.

**role conflict**  
 condition in which the performance of a role in one status interferes with the performance of a role in another status

## Figure 5.3 Focus on Theoretical Perspectives

**Illustrating Social Structure Concepts.** This table illustrates how each theoretical perspective might approach the study of social structures. The concepts could be switched to any other theoretical perspective and illustrated from that perspective. Associate each concept with a different theoretical perspective and provide your own example.

Theoretical Perspective	Social Structure Concept	Example
Functionalism	Role	Social integration is promoted by culturally defined rights and obligations honored by group members.
Conflict Theory	Ascribed Master Status	Ascribed master statuses such as gender and race empower some to subjugate others.
Symbolic Interactionism	Social Interaction	Roles are carried out by individuals on the basis of the symbols and meanings they share.

**role strain**  
condition in which the roles of a single status are inconsistent or conflicting

**Role strain** occurs when a person has trouble meeting the many roles connected with a single status. College basketball coaches, for example, have to recruit for next year's season while trying to win games in the current season. Besides preparing daily lessons, high school teachers often are required to sponsor social clubs. Each of these roles (coach and recruiter or teacher and advisor) is time consuming, and the fulfillment of one role may interfere with the performance of the others. If your expectations as a high school student require you to perform well academically, join a social organization, pursue a sport, date, and participate in other school activities, you will probably experience some degree of role strain as a result of these expectations.

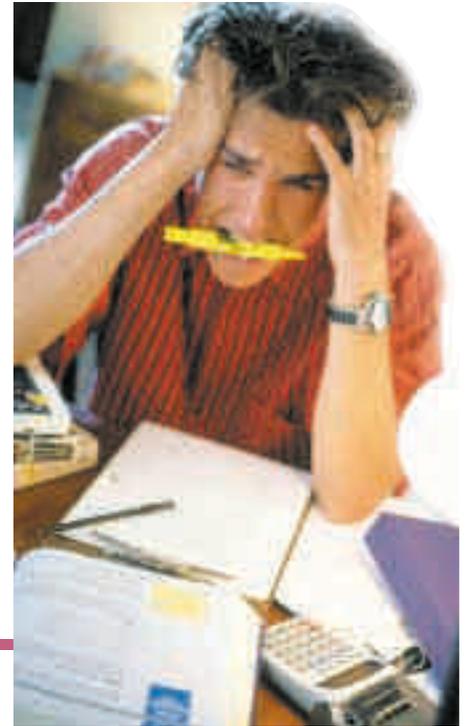
**How do we manage role conflict and strain?** Role conflict and strain may lead to discomfort and confusion. To feel better and to have smoother relationships with others, we often solve role dilemmas by setting priorities. When roles clash, we decide which role is most important to us and act accordingly. For example, a student who frequently misses school-related activities because of work demands will have to assess her priorities. She can eliminate the role conflict completely by quitting work and putting a priority on school activities. If she remains in both statuses, she can reduce work hours or cut down on extracurricular school activities.

We also segregate roles. That is, we separate our behavior in one role from our behavior in another. This is especially effective for reducing the negative



effects of conflicting roles. A college coach experiencing the role strain associated with coaching and recruiting simultaneously can decide to give priority to one over the other. He may, for example, let his assistant coach do most of the recruiting until the season ends. Ranking incompatible roles in terms of their importance is a good way to reduce role conflict and strain. An organized-crime member may reduce role conflict by segregating his criminal activities from his role as a loving father.

Because of role conflict and role strain, meeting the goals and expectations of all our roles is impossible. This poses no problem as long as role performance occurs within accepted limits. Professors at research-oriented universities may be permitted to emphasize teaching over research. Coaches may accent fair play, character building, and scholarship rather than a winning record. Professors at research universities who do too little publishing or coaches who win too few games, however, usually will not be rewarded for very long. At some point they will be judged as failing to meet expected role performance. (For more on handling role conflict, see *Sociology Today* on the next page.)



*Do you think this young man is suffering from role conflict or role strain?*

## Section 2 Assessment

Match each situation below with the key term (a–e) it illustrates.

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. A husband and wife discuss the disciplining of one of their children.  | a. role               |
| 2. A mother is expected to take care of her children.   | b. role conflict      |
| 3. A businessman has no time for his children.  | c. role performance   |
| 4. A school principal hands out diplomas at a graduation ceremony.  | d. role strain        |
| 5. A corporate chief executive officer is economically forced to terminate employees who are his friends.                                 | e. social interaction |
| 6. Which of the following is <i>not</i> one of the differences between a play and social life?  |                       |
| a. There is considerably more difference between roles and role performance in social life than between a script and a stage performance. |                       |
| b. Unlike the stage, there are no cues and responses in real life.  |                       |
| c. Role performance in real life is not the conscious process that actors go through on the stage.  |                       |
| d. In social life, the cues and responses are not as programmed and predictable as on the stage.  |                       |

### Critical Thinking

7. **Applying Concepts** Are you presently experiencing role conflict or role strain? If you are, analyze the source. If not, explain why at this time you are free from role conflict and role strain, making clear the meaning of the concepts.



# Sociology Today

## Reducing Conflict in Two-Career Families

Families with two working adults have special strains. While in 1960, less than 20 percent of married women with young children worked outside of the home, by 2000, the figure was about 65 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census). This increase has resulted in added role conflict for women. In a two-career family, the woman is more likely to suffer from conflict because she is still generally expected to balance her traditional homemaker roles with her career roles. The women are not the only ones who suffer, however. The effects of this conflict are felt by husbands and children, as well. Since you will likely be faced with the stress associated with dual-career families, you would be wise to learn now some techniques for reducing role conflict.

### 1. Focus on the Positive

Conflict can be reduced when couples define their situation positively. If both partners are working from choice rather than necessity, it can be helpful to remember some of the reasons why they first made the choice for both to work. These reasons might include additional income or personal satisfaction.

### 2. Put Family Needs First

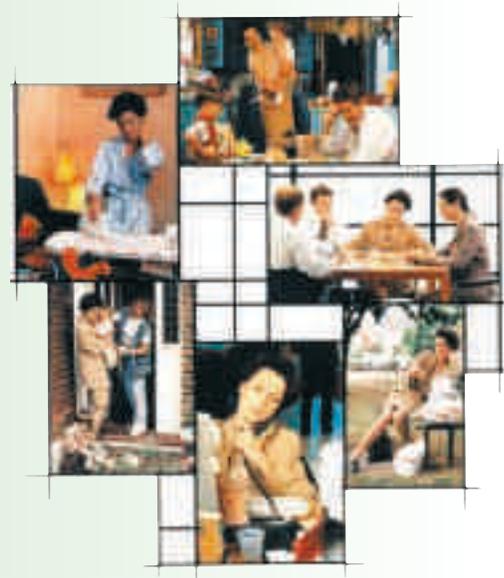
Role conflict can be most effectively managed when family roles are placed ahead of working roles. When a baby-sitter fails to show up, when a child is sick, or when a parent-teacher conference is called, one of the parents can place these demands above work-related demands. Placing a higher priority on family needs will help keep the family support structure intact.

### 3. Assume One Role at a Time

Conflict can be reduced if a person focuses on only one role at a time. Leaving job-related problems at work and family issues at home is often difficult but is very effective in reducing role conflict.

### 4. Find the Compromise Balance

Although many men take active roles in child care today in order to meet family obligations, women still make the most compromises in their careers. With the increasing number of women in better-paying professional careers, we should expect more equality in career compromises between husbands and wives.



## Doing Sociology

Identify three ways that you believe would help reduce role conflict in dual-career families. Provide specific examples not given in the text.



# Section 3

## Preindustrial Societies

### Key Terms

- society
- hunting and gathering society
- horticultural society
- pastoral societies
- agricultural society



Through mostly grunts and exaggerated gestures, two fishermen/gatherers attempt to communicate.

*Even the earliest societies had patterned and predictable social relationships.*

### Types of Society

The culture and social structure of a society are greatly affected by the way the society provides for basic needs. A **society**, as you may remember from Chapter 3, is composed of people living within defined territorial borders who share a common culture. Societies meet their members' basic needs, such as the needs for food and shelter, in different ways. These differences form the basis of a system anthropologists often use to classify societies. In this system, societies are classified as preindustrial, industrial, or postindustrial. We will look at preindustrial societies in this section and examine industrial and postindustrial societies in the following sections.

In theory, a society is independent of outsiders. It contains enough smaller social structures—family, economy, and so forth—to

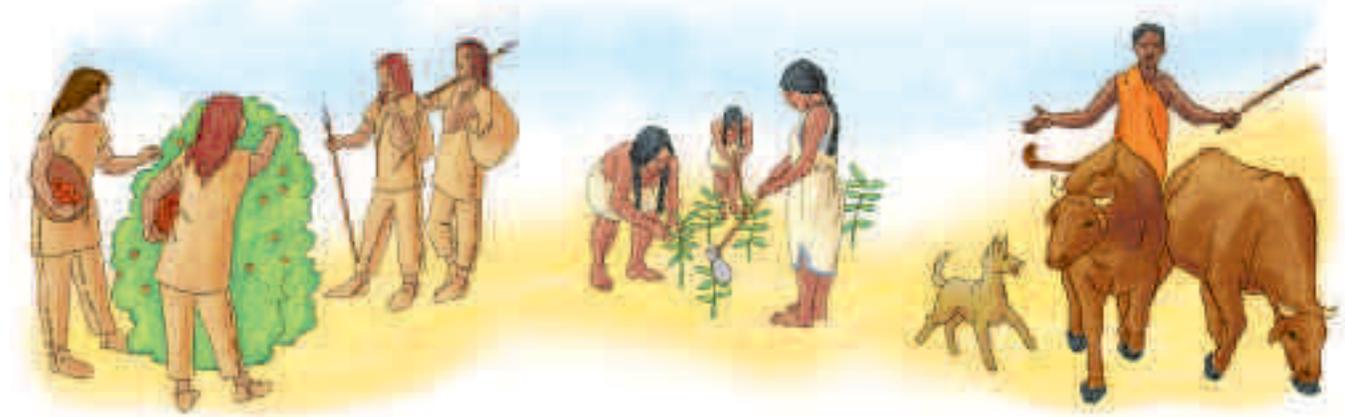
meet the needs of its members. As you will see, preindustrial societies actually could be independent and self-sufficient. Modern societies, although capable of caring for most members' needs, must have political, military, economic, cultural, and technological ties with other societies. In fact, modern societies are rapidly moving toward the creation of a global society.

In the next few pages, several basic types of societies will be distinguished. Each type of society is unique in important ways. All societies, however, are comprised of social structures. Members in each type of society know what is expected of them and what they can expect from others. Members of a particular type of society engage in the same basic social patterns time after time because they share patterned and predictable social relationships that are passed from generation to generation.

### Section Preview

The way a society provides for basic needs greatly affects its culture and social structure. Preindustrial, industrial, and postindustrial societies meet basic needs in different ways. Preindustrial societies include hunting and gathering, horticultural, pastoral, and agricultural societies.

**society**  
people living within defined territorial borders and sharing a common culture



### Preindustrial

Hunting and gathering  
2 million to 10,000 years ago

Horticultural gardening  
12,000 to 10,000 years ago

Pastoral herding  
12,000 to 10,000 years ago

## Hunting and Gathering Societies

**hunting and gathering society**  
a society that survives by  
hunting animals and gathering  
edible plants



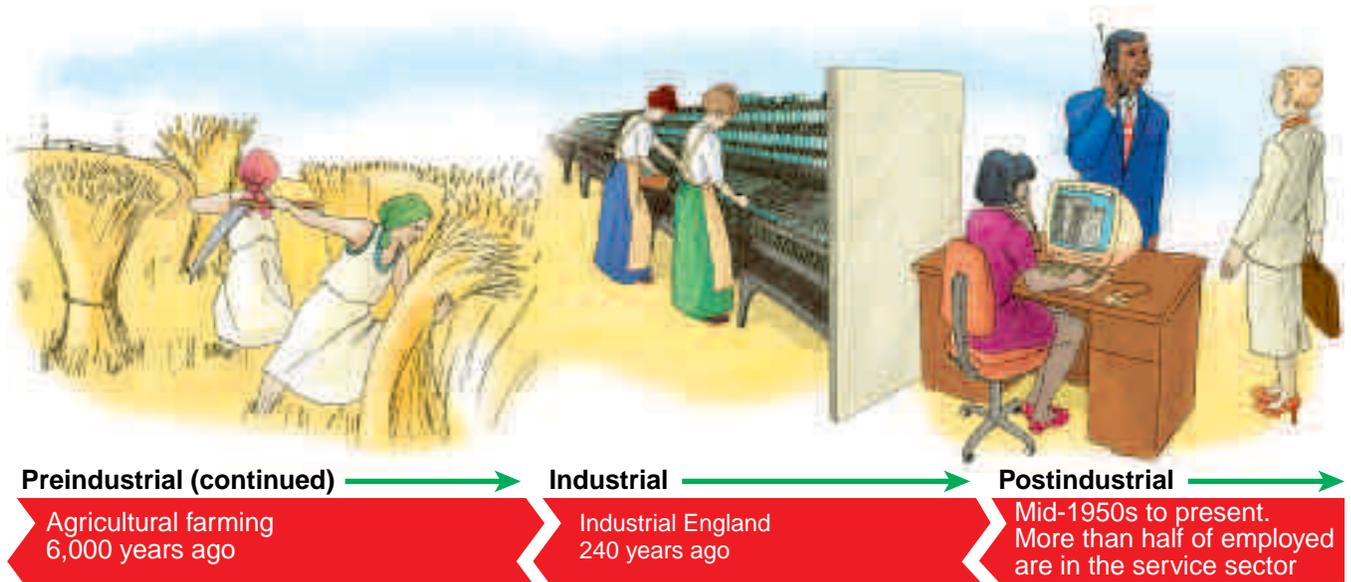
*Judging from this photograph, to what type of society do these Navajo women belong?*

The **hunting and gathering society** survives by hunting animals and gathering edible foods such as wild fruits and vegetables. This is the oldest solution to the problem of providing for the basic need for food, or subsistence. In fact, it was only about nine thousand years ago that other methods of solving the subsistence problem emerged.

Hunting and gathering societies are usually nomadic—they move from place to place as the food supply and seasons change. Because nomads must carry all their possessions with them, they have few material goods. Hunting and gathering societies also tend to be very small—usually fewer than fifty people—with members scattered over a wide area. Because the family is the only institution in hunting and gathering societies, it tends to all the needs of its members. Most members are related by blood or marriage, although marriage is usually limited to those outside the family or band.

Economic relationships within hunting and gathering societies are based on cooperation—members share what they have with other members. Members of hunting and gathering societies seem simply to give things to one another without worrying about how “payment” will be made. In fact, the more scarce something is, the more freely it is shared. Generosity and hospitality are valued. Thrift is considered a reflection of selfishness. Because the obligation to share goods is one of the most binding aspects of their culture, members of hunting and gathering societies have little or no conception of private property or ownership.

Without a sense of private ownership and with few possessions for anyone to own, hunting and gathering societies have no social classes, no rich or poor. These societies lack status differences based on political authority because they have no political institutions; there is no one to organize and control activities. When the traditional Inuit in Canada and Alaska, for example, want to settle disputes, they use dueling songs. The people involved in the dispute prepare and sing songs to express their sides of the issue. Their families, as choruses, accompany them. Those listening to the duel applaud their choice for the victor (Hoebel, 1983).



The division of labor in hunting and gathering societies is limited to the sex and age distinctions found in most families, since the family is the only institution. Men and women are assigned separate tasks, and certain tasks are given to the old, the young, and young adults. There is more leisure time in hunting and gathering societies than in any other. Today, few true hunting and gathering societies remain other than the Khoi-San (Bushmen) in Southern Africa, the Kaska Indians in Canada, and the Yanomamö of Brazil. (See Another Place on page 158.)

## Horticultural Societies

A **horticultural society** solves the subsistence problem primarily through the growing of plants. This type of society came into being about ten to twelve thousand years ago, when people learned they could grow and harvest certain plants instead of simply gathering them. The gradual change from hunting and gathering to horticultural societies occurred over several centuries (Nolan and Lenski, 1999).

The shift from hunting and gathering to horticulture, or gardening, led to more permanent settlements. People no longer needed to move frequently to find food. Even without plows and animals to pull them, they could work a piece of land for extended periods of time before moving on to more fertile soil. This relative stability permitted the growth of multicomunity societies averaging one thousand to two thousand people each.

The family is even more basic to social life in horticultural societies than in hunting and gathering societies. In hunting and gathering societies, the survival of the group usually has top priority. In horticultural societies, primary emphasis is on providing for household members. This is because producing food in horticultural societies can be handled through the labor of family members. With the labor necessary for survival, households depend more on themselves and less on others outside the family unit for their subsistence.

**horticultural society**  
a society that survives  
primarily through the growing  
of plants

## Pastoral Societies

### pastoral society

a society in which food is obtained primarily by raising and taking care of animals

Most horticultural societies keep domesticated animals such as pigs and chickens. They do not, however, depend economically on the products of these animals the way *pastoralists*, or herders, do. In **pastoral societies**, food is obtained primarily by raising and taking care of animals. For the most part, these are herd animals such as cattle, camels, goats, and sheep, all of which provide both milk and meat. Since grains are needed to feed the animals, pastoralists must also either farm or trade with people who do (Nanda and Warm, 1998; Peoples and Bailey, 2000).

There is more migration in pastoral societies than in those based more fully on cultivation of land. However, permanent (or at least long-term) villages can be maintained if, as seasons change, herd animals are simply moved to different pastures within a given area. In such societies, the women remain at home while the men take the herds to different pastures. With men being responsible for providing food, the status of women in pastoral societies is low. These societies are male dominated.

Because both horticultural and pastoral societies can produce a surplus of food, they usher in important social changes unknown in hunting and gathering societies. With a surplus food supply, some members of the community are free to create a more complex division of labor. People can become political and religious leaders or make goods such as pottery, spears, and clothing. Because nonedible goods are produced, an incentive to trade with other peoples emerges.

The creation of a surplus also permits the development of social inequality (class or caste), although it is limited. Even a relatively small surplus, however, means that some families, villages, or clans have more wealth than others.

### agricultural society

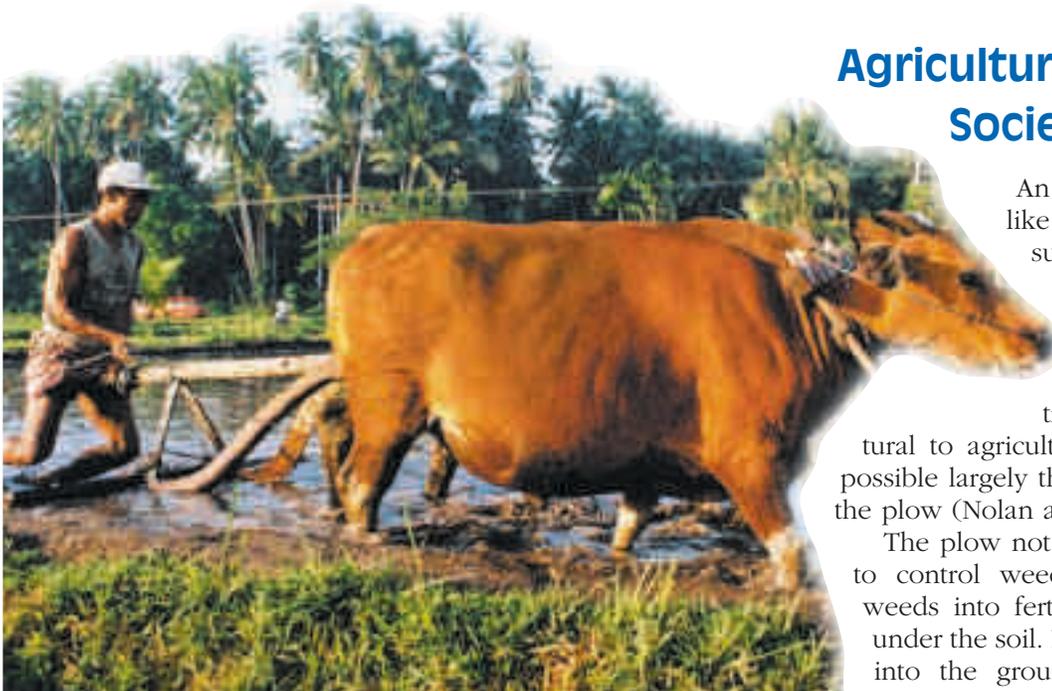
a society that uses plows and draft animals in growing food

## Agricultural Societies

An **agricultural society**, like a horticultural society, subsists by growing food.

The difference is that agricultural societies use plows and animals. In fact, the transition from horticultural to agricultural society was made possible largely through the invention of the plow (Nolan and Lenski, 1999).

The plow not only allows the farmer to control weeds but also turns the weeds into fertilizer by burying them under the soil. By digging more deeply into the ground than was possible with sticks, hoes, and spades, the plow is able to reach nutrient-rich dirt that had sunk below root level. The result is more productivity—more food per unit of land.



*This Bali farmer lives in an agricultural society. How does his society differ technologically from a horticultural society?*



*This medieval manuscript shows a noble instructing villeins on crop harvesting. Why would this type of superior-subordinate behavior first appear in an agricultural society?*

Using animals also increases productivity, because larger areas can be cultivated with fewer people. As a result, more people are free to engage in noneconomic activities such as formal education, concerts, and political rallies. Cities can be built, and occupations appear that are not directly tied to farming, such as politician, blacksmith, and hat maker. New political, economic, and religious institutions emerge. Although family ties remain important, government replaces the family group as the guiding force for agricultural societies.

In the past, agricultural societies were headed by a king or an emperor. Distinct social classes appeared for the first time. Wealth and power were based on land ownership, which was controlled by the governing upper class. These elites enjoyed the benefits of the work done by the peasants. Urban merchants were better off than peasants, but they, too, worked hard for their livings. An economy based on trade began to emerge as an identifiable institution during this time. Monetary systems, which use money rather than goods for payment, began to be used as well. Increasingly, religion and government became separate as institutions. Rulers were believed to be divinely chosen, but few of them were also religious leaders.

### Section 3 Assessment

1. Briefly restate the chief traits of each type of society: hunting and gathering, horticultural, pastoral, and agricultural.
2. In which type of society did a marked class system first appear? Explain why.

#### Critical Thinking

3. **Synthesizing Information** Using information from this section, develop a theory that would explain why conflict increases as society becomes more complex.



Money is the most egalitarian force in society. It confers power on whoever holds it.

**Roger Starr**  
American economist



# Another Place

## The Chest-Pounding Duel



**A description of the “chest-pounding” ritual that takes place among the Yanomamö tribe in Southern Venezuela was recorded by anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon. It provides a good example of social structure in a preindustrial society. All of the participants in this activity—even those merely observing—know exactly what is expected of them and what to expect of the others. This is what sociologists mean by *social structure*.**

. . . There were about sixty adult men on each side in the fight divided into two arenas, each comprised of hosts and guests. Two men, one from each side, would step into the center of the milling, belligerent crowd of weapon-wielding partisans, urged on by their comrades. One would step up, spread his legs apart, bare his chest, and hold his arms behind his back, daring the other to hit him. The opponent would size him up, adjust the man’s chest or arms so as to give himself the greatest advantage when he struck and then step back to deliver his close-fisted blow. The striker would painstakingly adjust his own distance from his victim by measuring his arm length to the man’s chest, taking several dry runs before delivering his blow. He would then wind up like a baseball pitcher, but keeping both feet on the ground, and deliver a tremendous wallop with his fist to the man’s left pectoral muscle, putting all of his weight into the blow. The victim’s knees would often buckle and he would stagger around a few moments, shaking his head to clear the stars, but remain silent. The blow invariably raised a “frog” on the recipient’s pectoral muscle where the striker’s knuckles bit into his flesh. After each blow, the comrades of the deliverer would cheer and bounce up and down from the knees, waving and clacking their weapons over their heads. The victim’s supporters, meanwhile, would urge their champion on frantically, insisting that he take another blow. If the delivery were made with sufficient force to knock the recipient to the ground, the man who de-

livered it would throw his arms above his head, roll his eyes back, and prance victoriously in a circle around his victim, growling and screaming, his feet almost a blur from his excited dance. The recipient would stand poised and take as many as four blows before demanding to hit his adversary. He would be permitted to strike his opponent as many times as the latter struck him, provided that the opponent could take it. If not, he would be forced to retire, much to the dismay of his comrades and the delirious joy of their opponents. No fighter could retire after delivering a blow. If he attempted to do so, his adversary would plunge into the crowd and roughly haul him back out, sometimes being aided by the man’s own supporters. Only after having received his just dues could he retire. If he had delivered three blows, he had to receive three or else be proven a poor fighter. He could retire with less than three only if he were injured. Then, one of his comrades would replace him and demand to hit the victorious opponent. The injured man’s two remaining blows would be canceled and the man who delivered the victorious blow would have to receive more blows than he delivered. Thus, good fighters are at a disadvantage, since they receive disproportionately more punishment than they deliver. Their only reward is . . . [prestige]: they earn the reputation of being fierce.

Source: Excerpted from Napoleon A. Chagnon, *Yanomamö: The Fierce People* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977), pp. 113–115.

### Thinking It Over

Describe an activity in your culture that illustrates patterned social relationships. Explain the statuses and roles involved.

# Section 4

## Industrial and Postindustrial Societies

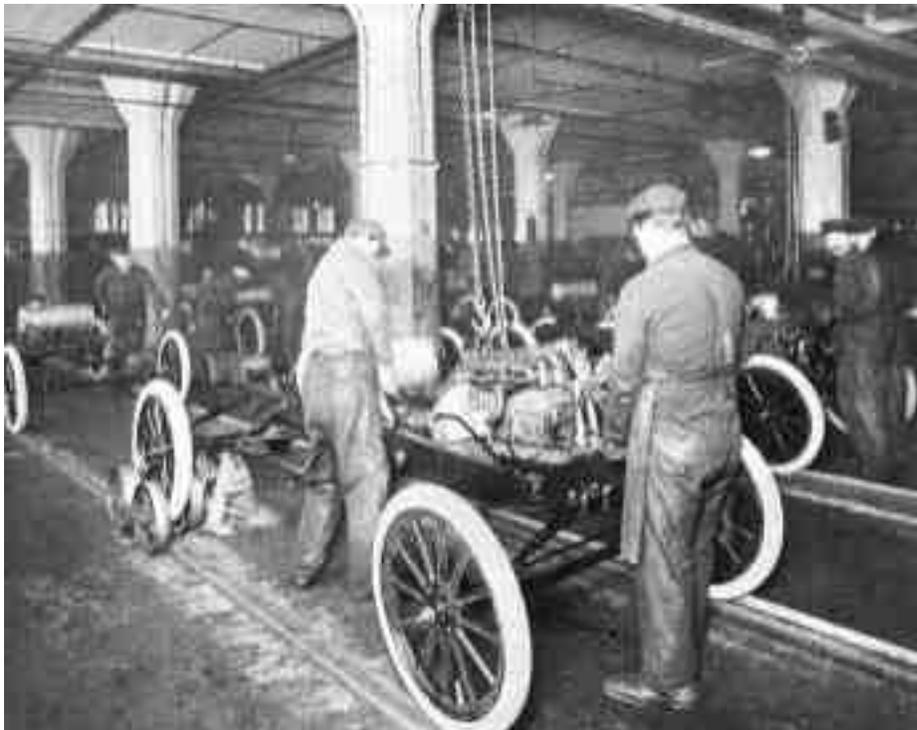
### Key Terms

- industrial society
- mechanization
- urbanization
- Gemeinschaft
- Gesellschaft
- social solidarity
- mechanical solidarity
- organic solidarity
- postindustrial society

### Basic Features of Industrial Societies

The Industrial Revolution created a society that is dependent upon science and technology to produce its basic goods and services. Sociologists call this an **industrial society**.

**What happens when agricultural societies become industrial societies?** Neil Smelser (1976) has identified some basic structural changes that occur in societies shifting from an agricultural to an industrial base. Industrialism brings with it a change—*away* from simple, traditional technology (plows, hammers, harnesses) *toward* the application of scientific knowledge to create more complex technological devices. Early examples of



### Section Preview

The Industrial Revolution created a new type of society, called industrial society. Characteristics that distinguish this society from all earlier ones include the growth of large cities and a wide-spread dependence on machines and technology. Postindustrial society has a predominately white-collar labor force that is concentrated in service industries. Social instability has been linked to the transition from an industrial to a postindustrial society.

#### industrial society

a society that depends on science and technology to produce its basic goods and services

*Ford Motor Company employees work on the Model T assembly line. What technology underlies industrial society?*

**mechanization**

the process of replacing animal and human power with machine power

**urbanization**

the shifting of population from farms and villages to large cities



*Job skills in an industrial society, like those needed here, cannot be learned in the home. What does this mean for education in an industrial society?*

**Gemeinschaft**

preindustrial society based on tradition, kinship, and close social ties

**Gesellschaft**

industrial society characterized by weak family ties, competition, and impersonal social relationships

**social solidarity**

the degree to which a society is unified

industrial technology include the steam engine and the use of electrical power in manufacturing. More recent technological developments include nuclear energy, aerospace-related inventions, and the computer.

In industrial societies, intensive animal and human labor is replaced by power-driven machines, a process known as **mechanization**. These machines are operated by wage earners who produce goods for sale on the market. With the help of machinery, farmers are able to produce enough food to support themselves and many others. This surplus allows people to move away from farms and villages, adding to the growing population in large cities. **Urbanization**, then, is also a basic feature of industrial societies.

**How does the role of the family change?** With industrialization, family functions change in many ways. Economic activities, once carried out in the home, move to the factory. Similarly, the education of the young, which in agricultural societies centered on teaching farming, moves from the home to the formal school. An industrial society requires a more broadly educated and trained labor force, so young people can no longer be prepared for the work force by their families. Blood relationships decline in importance as families begin to separate socially and physically due to urbanization and the necessity of taking jobs in distant locations where factories have been built. Personal choice and love replace arranged marriages. Women, through their entrance into the work force, become less subordinate to their husbands. Individual mobility increases dramatically, and social class is based more on occupational achievement than the social class of one's parents. Because the United States has been an industrial society for so long, its characteristics are taken as a given. The effects of industrialization are easier to observe in societies currently moving from an agricultural to an industrial economic base. For example, Vietnam and Malaysia are experiencing mechanization and urbanization at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Singh, 1998; Phu, 1998).

## A Conversation with Two Sociologists

Ferdinand Tönnies and Emile Durkheim were two early sociologists who wrote about preindustrial and industrial societies. Sociologists today still study their writings.

**What did Tönnies write?** Ferdinand Tönnies (1957, originally published in 1887), was an early German sociologist. In his writing, he distinguished between *gemeinschaft* (ga MINE shoft) and *gesellschaft* (ga ZELL shoft). **Gemeinschaft** is German for “community.” It describes a society based on tradition, kinship, and intimate social relationships. These are the types of communities found in preindustrial societies. **Gesellschaft** is the German word for “society.” This concept represents industrial society and is characterized by weak family ties, competition, and less personal social relationships.

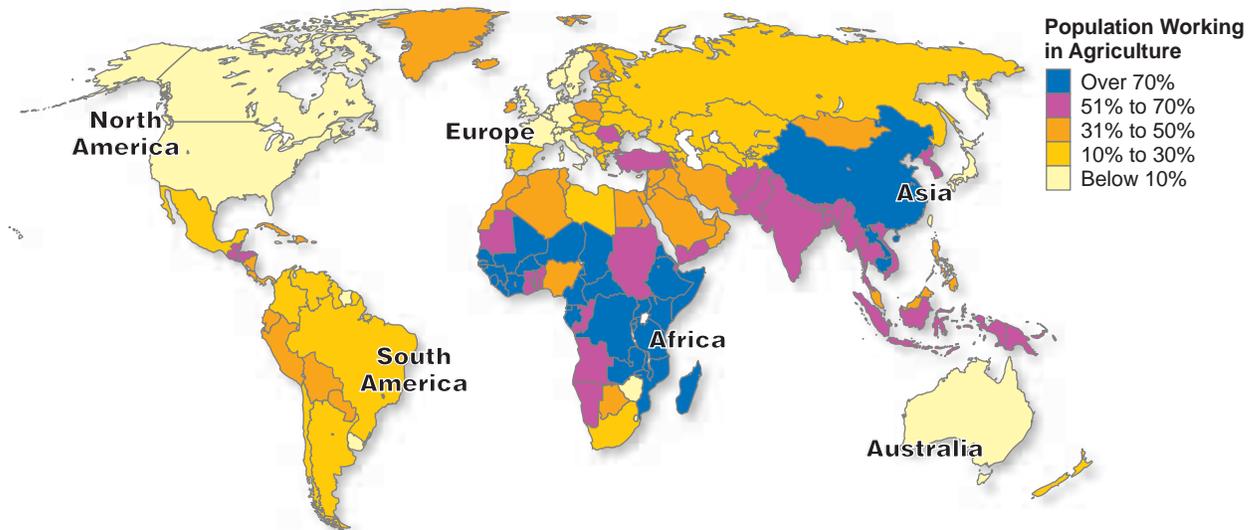
**What were Durkheim's views?** Shortly after Tönnies published his theory, Emile Durkheim (1964a, originally published in 1893) made a similar observation. He distinguished the two types of societies by the nature of their social *solidarity*. **Social solidarity** is the degree to which a society is unified or can hold itself together in the face of obstacles.

## World View



## Agricultural Employment

As societies move from the preindustrial to the postindustrial stage, fewer people are required to raise food to feed the population. This map shows the percentage of each country's population involved in the production of agricultural products.



### Interpreting the Map

1. After examining this map, what generalizations about types of societies around the world would you make? Explain.
2. Which countries do you think could be ready to move from one type of society to another? Be specific about countries and types of societies.
3. What parts of the world are least likely to change in the near future? Explain your answer.

Adapted from *Compact Peters Atlas of the World*. Essex, England: Longman Group UK Limited.

Social solidarity, Durkheim contended, is a result of society's division of labor. In societies in which the division of labor is simple—in which most people are doing the same type of work—**mechanical solidarity** is the foundation for social unity. A society based on mechanical solidarity achieves social unity through a consensus of beliefs, values, and norms; strong social pressures for conformity; and dependence on tradition and family. In this type of society, which is best observed in small, nonliterate societies, people tend to behave, think, and feel in much the same ways, to place the group above the individual, and to emphasize tradition and family.

In contrast, in an industrial society, members depend on a variety of people to fulfill their needs—barbers, bakers, manufacturers, and other suppliers of services. This modern industrial society is based on **organic solidarity**. It achieves social unity through a complex of specialized statuses that make members of the society interdependent.

#### mechanical solidarity

a type of social unity achieved by people doing the same type of work and holding similar values

#### organic solidarity

a type of social unity in which members' interdependence is based on specialized functions and statuses

The term *organic solidarity* is based on an analogy with biological organisms. If a biological organism composed of highly specialized parts is to survive, its parts must work together. Similarly, the parts of a society based on organic solidarity must cooperate if the society is to survive.

## Major Features of Postindustrial Society

Some societies, such as the United States, have passed beyond industrial society into **postindustrial society**. In this type of society, the economic emphasis is on providing services and information rather than on producing goods through basic manufacturing.

Sociologist Daniel Bell (1999) identifies five major features of a postindustrial society, a society based on a service economy.

1. *For the first time, the majority of the labor force are employed in services rather than in agriculture or manufacturing.* These industries emphasize services (banking, medical care, fast food, entertainment) rather than producing tangible goods, such as oil or steel. They include organizations in the areas of trade, finance, transportation, health, recreation, research, and government. In 2000, about 75 percent of all employed workers in the United States were in service jobs.
2. *White-collar employment replaces much blue-collar work.* White-collar workers outnumbered blue-collar workers in the United States for the first time in 1956, and the gap is still increasing. The most rapid growth has been in professional and technical employment.
3. *Technical knowledge is the key organizing feature in postindustrial society.* Knowledge is used for the creation of innovations as well as for making government policy. As technical knowledge becomes more important, so do educational and research institutions.
4. *Technological change is planned and assessed.* In an industrial society, the effects of a technology are not assessed before its introduction. When the automobile engine was invented, no one asked whether it would have an effect on the environment. In postindustrial societies, the effects—good and bad—of an innovation can be considered before it is introduced.
5. *Reliance on computer modeling in all areas.* With modern computers, it is possible to consider a large number of interacting variables simultaneously. This “intellectual technology” allows us to manage complex organizations—including government at national, state, and local levels.

**postindustrial society**  
a society in which the economic emphasis is on providing services and information



*The New York Stock Exchange symbolizes the shift from production-based work to knowledge-based work in postindustrial society.*

## Social Instability in Postindustrial Society

Historian Francis Fukuyama (1990) believes that the transition to a service economy has increased social instability in nations undergoing this change. He writes the following about deteriorating social conditions that began in the mid-1960s.

*Crime and social disorder began to rise, making inner-city areas of the wealthiest societies on earth almost uninhabitable. The decline of kinship*



*as a social institution, which has been going on for more than 200 years, accelerated sharply in the second half of the twentieth century. Marriages and births declined and divorce soared; and one out of every three children in the United States and more than half of all children in Scandinavia were born out of wedlock. Finally, trust and confidence in institutions went into a forty-year decline (Fukuyama, 1999:55).*

**Will social instability continue?** According to Fukuyama, this social instability is now lessening. He sees current indications of a return to social stability. The establishment of new social norms, he believes, is reflected in the slowing down of increases in divorce, crime, distrust, and illegitimacy. In the 1990s, Fukuyama notes, many societies have even seen a reversal of these rates—crime, divorce, illegitimacy, and distrust have actually declined.

*This is particularly true in the United States, where levels of crime are down a good 15 percent from their peaks in the early 1990s. Divorce rates peaked in the early 1980s, and births to single mothers appear to have stopped increasing. Welfare rolls have diminished almost as dramatically as crime rates, in response both to the 1996 welfare-reform measures and to opportunities provided by a nearly full-employment economy in the 1990s. Levels of trust in both institutions and individuals have also recovered significantly since the early 1990s (Fukuyama, 1999:80).*

**What has caused the return to social stability?** Fukuyama believes that humans find it difficult to live without values and norms:

*The situation of normlessness . . . is intensely uncomfortable for us, and we will seek to create new rules to replace the old ones that have been undercut (Fukuyama, 1999:76).*

Because culture can be changed, it can be used to create new social structures better adapted to changing social and economic circumstances.

## Section 4 Assessment

1. Explain why blood relationships are less important in an industrial society than in a preindustrial society.
2. State whether each of the following is or is not a major feature of a postindustrial society.
  - a. emphasis on technical knowledge
  - b. employment of the majority of the labor force in service industries
  - c. reliance on advanced technology
  - d. increased dependence on skilled blue-collar workers
  - e. shift toward the employment of white-collar workers

### Critical Thinking

3. **Analyzing Information** Explain from your own observation why family relationships would probably weaken in an industrial society.
4. **Making Predictions** As the United States becomes a more complete information society, how may life for you change?



We live in a moment of history where change is so speeded up that we begin to see the present only when it is disappearing.

**R.D. Laing**  
Scottish psychiatrist



# Tech Trends

## The Dark Side of Workplace Technology



*A video camera has been implanted inside the smoke detector above. These tiny cameras are part of the technological revolution that is currently changing society. Would you want one of these in your school?*

According to a business visionary, one of the most important changes that will occur in the postindustrial workplace is the “virtual organization.” The virtual organization is a workplace of digital technologies, wireless transfer of information, computer networks, and telecommuting. In this picture, the worker has more freedom, independence, and job satisfaction than ever before (Barner, 1996).

If this optimistic view of new technology is correct, workers in high-tech jobs should be much happier than employees doing low-tech work. However, in a survey of 1,509 workers in California’s Silicon Valley (an area where high-tech industry is concentrated), researchers found no differences in job satisfaction between employees in high-tech companies and those in more traditional manufacturing firms. They also found that there are still large social class differences within the workplace. These findings challenge the belief that work in high-tech society will be more satisfying and economically fair (Gamst and Otten, 1992).

Other researchers found that job security decreases in high-tech positions. Employees are forced to learn new skills and upgrade present skills throughout their careers; lifelong learning is the key to economic survival. Management positions are also at risk. Functions that managers have been performing for centuries, such as decision making and training, will be done by technology rather than humans.

Another feature of the high-tech workplace is the use of technology to monitor employee performance. This practice can make employees feel helpless, manipulated, and exploited. Many workers feel that their managers are spying on them, constantly looking over their shoulders (Barner, 1996). In fact, there has been a dramatic rise in employer workplace surveillance. Over two-thirds of U.S. companies now engage in electronic cybersnooping of employees: reviewing e-mail, examining computer files, documenting web sites visited each day (Naughton, 1999). How would you feel if all of your actions at work were being monitored by a computer, creating a record of your behavior that can be replayed and reexamined? (Remember the discussion in Chapter 2 about the ethics of researchers’ use of video cameras.)

Digitally based technology offers many benefits. It has boosted productivity and created many new employment opportunities. Like any technology that has wide-ranging effects on society, there are some undesirable consequences. Postindustrial societies are just beginning to deal with the dark side of a very bright technology.

### Analyzing the Trends

1. Which theoretical perspective do you think underlies this research and speculation? Indicate specific features of the research to support your conclusions.
2. Does the use of technology to monitor employees clash with any values in American society? Explain.

# CHAPTER 5 ASSESSMENT

## Summary

### Section 1: Social Structure and Status

**Main Idea:** The underlying pattern of social relationships in a group is called social structure. Status is one very important element of social structure. Ascribed statuses are assigned at birth; achieved statuses are earned or chosen.

### Section 2: Social Structures and Roles

**Main Idea:** People interact according to prescribed roles. These roles carry certain rights and obligations. Sometimes conflict or strain occurs when an individual has too many roles to play.

### Section 3: Preindustrial Societies

**Main Idea:** The way a society provides for basic needs greatly affects its cultural and social structure. Preindustrial, industrial, and postindustrial societies meet basic needs in different ways. Preindustrial societies include hunting and gathering, horticultural, pastoral, and agricultural societies.

### Section 4: Industrial and Postindustrial Societies

**Main Idea:** The Industrial Revolution created a new type of society, called industrial society. Characteristics that distinguish this society from all earlier ones included the growth of large cities and a widespread dependence on machines and technology. Postindustrial society has a predominantly white-collar labor force that is concentrated in service industries. Social instability has been linked to the transition from an industrial to a postindustrial society.



#### Self-Check Quiz

Visit the *Sociology and You* Web site at [soc.glencoe.com](http://soc.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 5—Self-Check Quizzes** to prepare for the chapter test.

## Reviewing Vocabulary

Complete each sentence using each term once.

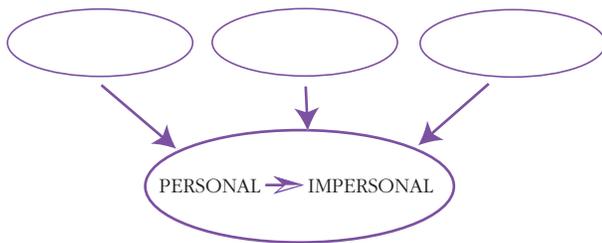
- |                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. social structure      | h. hunting and gathering society |
| b. achieved status       | i. agricultural society          |
| c. ascribed status       | j. industrial society            |
| d. roles                 | k. organic solidarity            |
| e. role conflict         | l. mechanical solidarity         |
| f. society               |                                  |
| g. horticultural society |                                  |

- The underlying pattern of social relationships is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is the social unity achieved through interdependence based on specialized functions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is status that is assigned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is a society that solves the subsistence problem by learning to grow and harvest plants.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is a nomadic society characterized by economic cooperation.
- Status that can be earned is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- People living within defined territorial borders and sharing a common culture are called a \_\_\_\_\_.
- Culturally defined rights and obligations attached to statuses are known as \_\_\_\_\_.
- The society that releases some people from the land to engage in noneconomic activities is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ occurs when the roles of a single status are inconsistent or conflicting.
- Social unity accomplished through a consensus of values, beliefs, and norms is known as \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is a society characterized by the replacement of human labor with mechanical labor.

# CHAPTER 5 ASSESSMENT

## Reviewing the Facts

1. What is the sociological term for the dilemma of women who have careers and who also must run households?
2. What do sociologists mean by social structure?
3. What is the difference between role strain and role conflict?
4. In what ways do workers in the “virtual organization” differ from low-tech workers? In what ways are the workers the same?
5. As people move away from agricultural societies to industrial societies, they also move from the personal to the impersonal. What sociological terminology did Emil Durkeim give to such a shift? Use the diagram below to illustrate the cause-and-effect relationship of the shift from personal to impersonal.



## Thinking Critically

1. **Making Inferences** The chapter suggests that society functions because social patterns are usually predictable. History records that John D. Rockefeller, the founder of Standard Oil Company, was so rich he would walk down the street and pass out dimes to children. Allegedly, he gave out three million dollars' worth of dimes before he died. Let's say you decided to go to the mall and hand out a dollar to all the children who passed by. How do you think people would react? Would they be suspicious? Do you think mall security would be concerned by your behavior? What has changed since the days of Rockefeller that would make your behavior suspect?
2. **Applying Concepts** What are some of the roles and statuses that you fill in the course of your day? List them, and describe the basic rights connected to each status.
3. **Analyzing Information** In hunting and gathering societies, resources are distributed equally. If one person eats, everyone eats. Is that the case in industrial and postindustrial societies? Should Americans be concerned whether everyone eats every day? Why might they *not* be concerned?
4. **Drawing Conclusions** Modern societies have been given the role of providing an education for all of their members. This education is conducted in schools. Some people, however, are returning to the ways of older societies and teaching their children at home rather than sending them to school. What are some of the role conflicts and strains that might exist for those who choose to home-school their children? What do you think some of the advantages and disadvantages of home schooling might be?

## Sociology Projects

1. **Role Performance** George Herbert Mead said that humans are social beings because they can “take on the role of another person.” Your task here is to create a one-minute improvisational skit in which you react to a basic statement through the “persona” of another individual. This person might be the school principal, a favorite teacher, a school liaison police officer, or a parent. If you are not confident that you can improvise, take the time to write out the lines of the statement you are reacting to: *Teenagers today need to assume more responsibility.*
2. **Social Cues** You have probably watched so much television over the course of your lifetime that you can watch it without really paying attention. Here's a twist on TV watching. Watch television tonight for ten minutes without turning the set on—that's right, sit in front of it without turning it on. Concentrate on everything that is happening as you focus on the TV. Next, actually turn on the TV, but turn the vol-

ume all the way down. Try to figure out what is going on by reading faces and nonverbal expressions. Try this for ten minutes. This activity might give you an idea of how good human beings are at grasping certain ideas without words. Next, try watching the news for ten minutes without the sound on. Then spend another ten minutes watching the news with the sound on but concentrating on the technical aspects of the program: camera changes, graphics, sound, music, voices, changes in color, and so forth. Identify and describe in a brief paragraph two or three cues or expressions that allowed you to correctly interpret a situation.

3. **Individuals as Players On a Stage** Create a collage entitled “Society” using pictures from magazines or old photographs. In this collage, depict yourself in various statuses. For example, if you are in a club at school or in a band, include that. If you are a sister or daughter, that is another status you hold. Then show how your statuses are related to society, family, education, religion, the economy (your job), and so forth. This collage should help you understand how individuals are players on a stage.
4. **Observation** As you learned in Chapter 2, observation is one method that sociologists use to accumulate data. In this activity, you will observe the structure and interactions of three groups (without drawing attention to your project!). Look for general patterns in the group that you observe, such as style of dress, language, status positions, values, routines, and social boundaries. You might want to try observing your family or a group at the mall, in the school cafeteria, or any other place that groups meet. Write down your observations, concentrating on patterns of behavior.
5. **Status Symbols** Roles are behaviors associated with certain statuses. Status symbols are products or items that represent a status, or position. For example, a luxury automobile or a vacation

home are status symbols for wealth. High school status symbols might involve a letter sweater, a trendy article of clothing, or a video game player. Search newspaper and magazine advertisements for examples of products that you believe are status symbols for a particular status or occupation. (It is not only wealthy and powerful people who possess status symbols.) Make a montage of these images.

6. **Status** Use newspapers and magazines to find pictures that can be used to make a visual explanation of the following terms: status, ascribed status, status set, master statuses, and social structure. Create a pictorial chart using the terms and pictures.

## Technology Activities



1. This chapter describes rights as the behaviors individuals can expect from others and obligations as the behaviors others expect from them. Different societies place emphasis on different rights and obligations, but there is a common understanding of some basic human rights. One organization that provides a list of these basic rights is the European Commission of Human Rights. Visit its web site at <http://194.250.50.201/>. From its home page, select the section entitled “organization, procedure and activities.” Then go to the document called “Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.” Scroll down to Section I Article 2 of this document.
  - a. What are the basic human rights listed there?
  - b. Are any of these rights built into some of the roles you are expected to perform? Explain.
  - c. Do you believe that these rights should be a part of the role prescriptions in any society? Why or why not?

## Chapter 5

## Enrichment Reading

## Social Functions of Malls

by Wayne S. Wooden



In *The Mall: An Attempted Escape from Everyday Life*, Jerry Jacobs presents an ethnographic account of a midsize, enclosed suburban shopping center. Karen Lansky's article, "Mall Rats," for *Los Angeles* magazine discusses what it means for teenagers when they "just hang out" at these "indoor shopping palaces."

In recent years several excellent books and magazine articles have been published on the **social phenomenon** of teenagers and suburban shopping malls.

The modern mall, Jacobs argues, provides three things for its participants. First, it offers people entertainment or just plain diversion. Second, it provides the public with convenient shopping. And, third, the mall offers public, social space—a place to meet and interact with others. In other words, the modern shopping center has become an "indoor street corner society."

Karen Lansky contends that kids spend so much time in the mall partly because parents encourage it, assuming it is safe and that there is adult supervision. The structured and controlling environment of the mall is ideal for them. According to Lansky,

*True mall rats lack structure in their home lives, and adolescents about to make the big leap into growing up crave more structure than our modern society cares to acknowledge.*

Lansky also believes that the mall has become the focus of these young people's lives.

*Malls are easy. Food, drink, bathrooms, shops, movie theaters—every part of the life-support system a modern kid needs is in the mall. **Instant gratification** for body and senses—and all of it close at*

*hand, since malls are designed to make life more comfortable by eliminating parking problems, long walks, heavy doors, hot sun, depressing clouds. It is ironic, in fact, that the mall is becoming all that many kids know of the outside world, since the mall is a placeless space whose primary virtue is that it's all inside. Kids come in from the cold (or heat) for a variety of reasons, of course. But the main reason kids seek the mall, especially in the summer when school's out, seems to be because they can't think of anything better to do.*

Lansky sees mall rats as kids with nowhere else to go.

*Their parents may drink or take drugs, be violent or just gone. Whatever, the mall becomes the home they don't have. For them, the mall is a rich, stimulating, warm, clean, organized, comfortable [social] structure—the only [social] structure in some of their lives.*

In gathering research for her article, Lansky interviewed several adolescents. Although teenagers in several high schools would be approached as well, the vast majority of the interviews and surveys gathered for the Youth Survey portion of this study were completed by over four hundred youths contacted in Southern California malls. The initial focus of this study, therefore, began with

my meeting and talking with these so-called teenage mall rats.

One male expressed the belief that the mall “belongs to the mall rats.” Arguing that the mall is *his* property, his mission in life, he said, is to become “top mall rat,” adding, “Without the mall, we’d be street people.”

Another female mall **habitué** interviewed by Lansky complained that the only place in the mall that is “theirs” is the arcade. She and her friends get kicked out of the other places. Security warns them to keep moving if they are not buying anything. It is these kids, according to Lansky, that the mall owners do not like. The managers resent having to set limits for these kids—limits that should be the responsibility of the community or the family. The owners discourage these kids because they often do not have much money to spend, yet drain the resources of the mall.

One of the first young men so contacted was Bob Bogan, or “Skidd Marx,” as he preferred to be called, who allowed me to spend several afternoons with him as he wandered through the Brea Mall. Seventeen and 5’10” tall, Skidd struck a mean pose. With his black hair spiked all over with three separate 1-foot tails in back, Skidd also sported eye makeup, a leather jacket studded with spikes, a white T-shirt with a punk band logo on it, black Levis rolled up high, and black Converse high tops. Skidd also sported four hanging earrings in each ear and a loop pierced into his right nostril. Skidd, decked out in full punk regalia, cut the swaggering image of the “young man about the mall.”

Skidd, like all of the teenagers studied in this book, resided in suburbia. He came from a middle-class background. Both of his parents worked. He defined himself as “a suburban punk bordering on the punk funk.” Skidd, in true mall-rat fashion, spent much of his free time and social life in the Brea Mall.

**Q:** *When did you first define yourself as being into punk or punk funk? How did the process occur?*

**A:** *It was in my third year of high school. I really wasn’t feeling that good*

*about myself at the time. I felt very self-conscious at school. I always kind of dressed differently. Being tall, people usually looked at me physically, and I used to be very insecure about that. So I kind of had the attitude, if I do something a little bit different, then that would be the reason why they’re staring at me. I can’t do anything about the fact that I’m tall.*

**Q:** *So it gave you a rationalization?*

**A:** *Right. The punk thing is when I just didn’t care what I looked like. My parents were always saying, “You’re such a nice looking young man. Why do you want to do that?” That really used to bother me.*

Source: Adapted from an article by Wayne S. Wooden, *Renegade Kids, Suburban Outlaws: From Youth Culture to Delinquency*, Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1994.

## What Does it Mean?

### ethnographic

the descriptive study of human cultures

### habitué

one who regularly visits a place

### instant gratification

the immediate satisfaction of wishes or wants

### social phenomenon

a fact or event of social interest subject to scientific interpretation or explanation

## Read and React

1. According to this reading, what effect do malls have upon teenage values?
2. Given what you have learned in this chapter, what does it mean to say that people have no social structure in their lives except in the malls? Could this really be true? Explain.
3. Do you agree with the claims in this writing? Why or why not?