What Is Sociology?

Sociology is the study of social behaviour and human groups, such as a society. A society is a large group of people who live in the same area and who share a distinctive culture and institutions. This group provides protection, stability, security, and identity to its members. Sociologists attempt to answer key questions about why certain social behaviours exist and how different societies function. They study individual behaviour within the context of groups, the behaviour of groups, and a society as a whole to understand the complex world around us, investigate existing problems, and examine issues. In this chapter, you will be introduced to sociology, the different schools of thought in sociology, and the contributions made by key theorists. You will also learn about behaviour and socialization, as well as how sociologists begin their research.

Chapter Expectations

By the end of this chapter, you will:

- summarize and compare the major theories, perspectives, and methods in sociology
- identify the significant contributions of influential sociologists
- summarize the key ideas about the major sociological schools of thought and explain how they can be used to analyze social behaviour
- identify and explain the main research methods that are used for conducting sociological research

Key Terms

agents of socialization
anticipatory
  socialization
bureaucracy
empirical
feral
functional
  differentiation

isolate
macrosociology
microsociology
norm
positivism
primary group
primary socialization
rationalization

resocialization
role
secondary socialization
social influence
socialization
survey
values

Landmark Case Studies

William Foote Whyte: Street Corner Society

structural
functionalism

Auguste Comte
(1798–1857)

Emile Durkheim
(1853–1917
Talcott Parsons
(1902–1979)

```
                    Macrosociology ─────┐      ┌───── Microsociology
                                        └──┬───┘
                                   ┌─── Sociology ───┐
                                   │        │         │
                              conflict    feminist   symbolic
                              theory      sociology  interactionism
                                   │        │         │
                              Karl Marx   Dorothy    Charles Cooley
                              (1818–1883) Smith      (1864–1929)
                              C. Wright-Mills (1926–) George Herbert Mead
                              (1916–1962)            (1863–1931)
                                                     Max Weber
                                                     (1864–1920)
```

Energy Drinks and Risky Behaviour
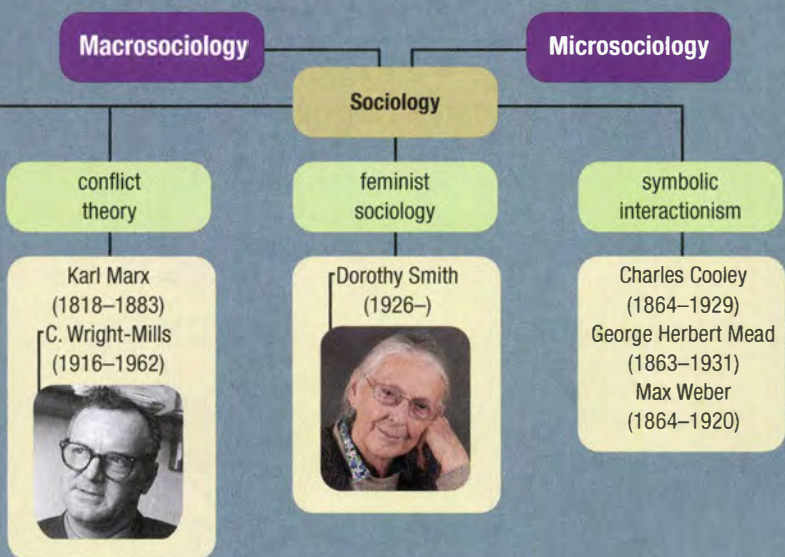
Before You Read

Do you drink energy drinks on a regular basis?
Do they affect your behaviour?

Since Health Canada lifted the ban against energy drinks in 2004, these highly caffeinated beverages have become increasingly popular, especially among young people. Sociologists have begun to study the effect of these beverages on behaviour, particularly their impact on social behaviour and peer relationships. In one of these studies, Kathleen E. Miller, a sociologist at a college in Buffalo, examined the relationship between energy-drink consumption and risk-taking among 18 to 25-year-olds. Miller's research validates existing concerns about energy-drink consumption. "The principal target demographic for energy drinks is young adults, but they're nearly as common among younger teens," she explains. "This is a concern because energy drinks typically contain 3 times the caffeine of a soft drink, and in some cases, up to 10 times as much" (University of Buffalo, 2008, para 4).

↑ **FIGURE 3-2** Why might people consume energy drinks?

In results published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Miller identified links between energy-drink consumption, risky substance use, and sexual risk-taking. Frequent energy-drink consumers (those who consume energy drinks six or more days a month) were approximately three times more likely than less-frequent energy-drink consumers or nonconsumers to have smoked cigarettes, abused prescription drugs, and been in a serious physical fight in the prior year. They reported drinking alcohol, having alcohol-related problems, and using marijuana about twice as often as nonconsumers. They were also more likely to engage in other forms of risk-taking, including unsafe sex, not using a seatbelt in vehicles, and participating in extreme sports (CBC, 2008). A total of 795 Western New York undergraduate students participated in the study (University of Buffalo, 2008).

According to Miller, frequent energy-drink consumption may serve as a useful way to identify students at risk for problem behaviours. However, it does not necessarily follow that consuming energy drinks leads to more serious health-compromising activities. Miller cautions, "It is entirely possible that a common factor, such as a sensation-seeking personality or involvement in risk-oriented peer sub-cultures, contributes to both. More investigation is needed to study these relationships further, over longer periods of time" (University of Buffalo, 2008, para 13).

As a result of several recent deaths linked to energy drinks, a number of countries have introduced restrictions on their use. Some countries, such as France, Turkey, Denmark, and Iceland, have banned the high-caffeine/taurine energy drinks altogether. Canada requires warning labels on these beverages advising that children and pregnant women should avoid drinking them and that they should not be consumed by anyone in large doses or in combination with alcohol.

QUESTIONS

1. **Why do you think sociologists are interested in energy-drink consumption?**

2. **How did Miller conduct her research? What are some possible limitations to this research?**

3. **Discuss with other students in the class whether there is evidence in your community of risky behaviour associated with energy-drink consumption. Is this relevant to this research topic?**

Surveys

Once social scientists develop their central research question (see Chapter 1), they follow specific steps to make sure their research is completed scientifically and systematically. **Surveys** are important tools to help social scientists collect **empirical** evidence.

survey:
a set of questions used on a sample of the population study about opinions, values, or actions

empirical:
based on facts, statistics, and data

A survey is a set of questions created to find out more information about an issue, usually using a wide range of people. Surveys are examples of quantitative research and allow a researcher to gather large amounts of information at one time. They must be conducted following certain guidelines to ensure accurate results. When surveying people, it is important that you:

- be objective (Don't just select people who think as you do.)
- select people randomly
- survey a large sample of the population
- inform survey takers about the purpose of the survey
- keep the identity of the survey taker confidential

Activities

1. How would you set up a survey to obtain the most accurate results?

2. If you saw a headline in a newspaper that read "64% Admit to Cheating on High-School Test," what questions do you have about the survey?

Assessing and Recording Sources

When using secondary sources, it is important to be certain that they are reputable. Reputable sources can include textbooks; journal, magazine, and newspaper articles; and research reports. It's also important to review what the leading experts have written about the subject you are researching. Finding reputable sources is especially important when researching online. You should select Web sites that come from trustworthy organizations, such as universities and governments. After you've selected your sources, it is important to cite your sources. In the social sciences, it is common to use the style of the American Psychological Association (APA) style.

Citing a Source Using APA Style

To avoid plagiarism, you need to cite the ideas, as well as the exact words and phrases that you have taken from another source. When you are citing an idea within your report (called an *in-text citation*), include the author and date in parentheses. If it is a direct quote, also include the page number. If your statement included the author, then include only the date and page in parentheses.

The following are general rules for creating the reference list added to the end of your report:

- Use alphabetical order by author's last name.
- Capitalize only the first word of the title and subtitle and any proper nouns.
- If the source has no author, use the title first, and place the reference in the proper place alphabetically.
- Double-space your references.
- If the reference requires more than one line, indent the second and all following lines.

Follow the format and style below for each reference.

- *Books*
  Author's last name, First initial of first name. (Year of publication). *Title of book*. City of Publication: Name of Publisher.
- *Journals and Periodicals*
  Author's last name, First initial of first name. (Year of publication). Title of article. *Title of Journal or Periodical, volume number* (issue number), page numbers.
- *Electronic Sources*
  Authors' names/Name of Sponsoring Institution or Organization. (Date of publication). Title of article. Title of site or page. Editor. Retrieval information including date retrieved, Web site address in full.

Activities

1. Rewrite these citations correctly.
   a) *Anthropology and Education*. 36(2) 132–148. (2005). Merten, Don E. Transitions and Trouble: Rites of Passage for Suburban Girls.
   b) 2003. Worth Publishers. *Thinking About Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*. New York. Charles T. Blair-Broeker and Randal M. Ernst.

2. Select a paragraph in this chapter. Rewrite it in your own words and include the proper citation.

Schools of Thought

I s understanding society important? How do we create society, and how does it affect us? Sociology developed as a discipline as scholars looked to society to understand the world around them and address social problems. Sociologists study the organization, institutions, and development of society, especially changing relationships between individuals and the collective behaviour of groups. In this section, you will learn about sociologists and schools of thought to help you understand the world you live in today.

🟢 Sociology: Past and Present

The Roots of Sociology

Ibn Khaldun was a fourteenth-century philosopher of history who wrote about the world around him. Khaldun's writings contain valuable information about the political events and social problems of the Muslim world in the fourteenth century. His work is a record of the pre-modern world and filled with observations about society and social conditions. Although sociology had not developed as a discipline during Khaldun's time, his methods and observations are very recognizable to modern sociologists, and today he is considered a forefather of sociology.

Throughout history, poets, artists, theologians, and scholars such as Ibn Khaldun have documented and recorded the political, economic, religious, and cultural practices of their society. But the discipline of sociology did not formally exist until the Industrial Revolution, a period of massive change in agriculture and manufacturing that began in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The changes caused by the Industrial Revolution significantly altered the social, economic, and cultural conditions in England. Every aspect of daily life was affected by these economic changes, especially how people worked and how people lived. While the Industrial Revolution benefited the middle class, significantly increasing their wealth, it had disastrous consequences for the working class. Many people lost their jobs as machines began to replace skilled workers. Those who did have jobs were often working long hours for low wages in unsafe working conditions. Child labour increased during this time, as they could be paid less than adult workers. Children were forced to work in horrible conditions. As more people moved to urban areas to find work, cities became overcrowded. Living conditions deteriorated and the crime rate rose. Many scholars began to write about and document the social problems they observed. In fact, many theories about social inequality that are still important today came out of the Industrial Revolution. You will learn more about some of these theories in this section.

FIGURE 3-3 The Industrial Revolution caused significant changes in England. Why did the discipline of sociology develop during this time?

Defining Sociology

Sociologists study the interactions among people living together in a society and their actions, beliefs, and behaviours in order to understand the society. Sociologists also compare and contrasts human interactions and behaviours between different societies. They examine a wide range of issues and topics to investigate problems and developing issues, including the following:

- gender roles
- criminal behaviour
- ethnicity
- family structure
- social institutions
- sexuality
- social classes

Studying society can be very complex, and sociologists often rely on knowledge from other disciplines, such as political science, economics, and history, to help answer their questions about society.

? Why do sociologists look to other fields and disciplines in order to study society? Why do sociologists study individual actions, beliefs, and behaviours if they want to understand a society as a whole?

"I love our lunches out here, but I always get the feeling that we're being watched."

↑ **FIGURE 3-4** What predictions can you make about what sociologists do?

Auguste Comte (1798–1857)

The term *sociology* was first used by the French philosopher Auguste Comte who defined sociology as the systematic study of society. He believed that society is constantly changing and observed that individuals and groups struggle to adapt to these changes. He believed that ultimately these changes are positive for society as a whole. Comte developed theories about social inequality that influenced other theorists, including Karl Marx. One of his most important contributions to sociology is the notion of **positivism**, the strict application of the scientific method in order to obtain concrete, measurable, and testable data to understand society.

positivism:
the application of the scientific method to obtain quantifiable data in order to understand society

What Do Sociologists Do?

Sociologists observe and conduct practical research into key social issues and behaviours to explain why a society functions as it does. Sociologists must ask broad questions and look at different elements to make sense of them as a whole. The questions should be broad enough to have implications in other societies. For example, studying criminal activity in a single Canadian city will not necessarily tell us what produces criminal behaviour in other parts of the world, but it can add to research about North American crime, which can then be compared to information about criminal activity in other countries around the world.

? Why is it important for sociologists to consider how their conclusions affect other societies?

Skills **Focus**

According to Comte's theory of positivism, data should be testable and measurable. A good survey is made up of questions whose answers can be converted into quantifiable, or measurable, information. When writing survey questions, ensure that you will later be able to tally the results.

Cultural Expressions

Ultimately, a sociologist is interested in the cultural expressions of a society— the shared symbols and learned behaviours that everyone in a society recognizes and understands. For example, the maple leaf and beaver are national symbols that appear on flags, logos, and money and are understood to represent Canada. Learned behaviours come from the particular **values**, **norms**, and **roles** held by members of a particular society. The values of society are shared ideas and standards that a society or a specific group considers acceptable and binding. For example, in Canada equality is a value. Norms are expectations about how people should behave in particular contexts. For example, at a concert it's expected that you will scream, cheer, and applaud loudly. But if you behaved the same way in a library, other people would find your behaviour unacceptable. The role of an individual refers to the expected behaviour of a person in a particular social position. For example, if you visit the dentist, you expect him or her to examine your teeth.

? Why do you think it is important for sociologists to study social roles? How might studying cultural symbols be useful in a multicultural society such as Canada?

Objectivity and Universality

When studying society, it is important for sociologists to approach their research objectively, set aside their own beliefs, and avoid making judgments when they encounter a situation that conflicts with their personal views. It is also important for sociologists to recognize elements of the universality of their research and break down cultural and geographic boundaries. For example, a study on parenting conducted in a remote African village can have important applications to a study on the same topic completed in a large North American city. All societies rely on some form of family structure to help teach their young the rules of society. There are some aspects of human societies that are similar in every culture. Sociologists compare societies to explain trends and behaviours and weave together the common threads among cultures in order to make sense of issues that affect all societies.

↑ **FIGURE 3-5** The beaver and the eagle are respective national symbols of Canada and the United States. What do the national symbols of the United States and Canada imply about the people who live in these countries?

← **FIGURE 3-6** An African mother and child on the left and a Canadian mother and child on the right. Why would a sociologist try to understand how families function across different cultures?

In the documentary *Babies*, director Thomas Balmès tracks four babies from four different cultures in their first year of life. The film is shot from their point of view and follows the babies through the year as they reach the common milestones of infancy (for example, sitting up, crawling, walking) while discovering the world around them. The result is an illustration of how all human beings are fundamentally the same, yet how our physical and cultural environment shapes us from the moment we are born.

IN FOCUS **Sociologists and the Fall of the Berlin Wall**

Studying historical events can be a very useful tool for sociologists who are researching issues in modern society. Events that happened in the past can have a tremendous impact on the structure of a society and how people behave. The relationship between historical events (particularly economic and political events) and social behaviour is a popular theme for many researchers.

East and West Berlin were two societies which greatly interested sociologists. After the Second World War, Berlin was divided in two, with East Berlin becoming a socialist society under control of the Soviets, and West Berlin becoming capitalist society under the occupation of the Americans, British, and French. In 1961, the Soviets built a wall to stop the exodus of East Berliners into the west and eliminate any cultural contact between the two societies. Neighbours, friends, and even family members were completely cut off from one another. Until 1989, when the wall was torn down, the people in East and West Berlin had separate political systems, economies, cultures, institutions, and experiences.

When the Berlin Wall was torn down, sociologists and the rest of the world watched, as families and the city were reunited. As the city began the process of re-unification, sociologists were interested in recording the social changes, tensions, and differences so they could later study how social change and social institutions affected behaviour. The political and economic events of the day were just as important to a sociologist as they were to a historian or an economist.

FIGURE 3-7 East and West Germans meeting for the first time in decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall. How would sociologists study the social habits and culture of occupants on either side of the wall?

QUESTIONS

1. Is it important for sociologists to understand the history of the societies they study? Explain why or why not.

2. How can historical events explain current social issues? Give an example and explain how the event affected the society where it occurred.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. What is positivism? Why is it an important concept in the development of sociology?

2. Give an example of a value, norm, and role. Why do sociologists examine the values, norms, and roles of the society they are studying?

3. How do other disciplines, such as history and economics, help sociologists?

4. What should sociologists consider when they approach their research?

Sociological Schools of Thought

In sociology, schools of thought provide different ways of observing, studying, and understanding society. The schools of thought and key theorists that you will explore in the following pages are part of the foundations of sociology and have helped sociologists understand society and further develop the discipline. The chart below illustrates the different sociological schools of thought that you will learn about in this section.

School of Thought	Theorist	Purpose
structural functionalism	Emile Durkheim Talcott Parsons	• to study how social structures function to serve the needs of society
conflict theory	Karl Marx C. Wright Mills	• to study how power forms the basis of the relationships between different groups and creates social conflict
feminist sociology	Dorothy Smith	• to examine conflicts created by gender
symbolic interactionism	Charles Cooley George Herbert Mead Max Weber	• to study the individual's role and place within the wider society and how people create their world through social interactions • to examine how a physical environment and social structures determine individual behaviour

FIGURE 3-8 Pilgrims praying at Mecca, the holiest site for Muslims. How does this image reflect a macrosociologist perspective?

macrosociology:
an approach of sociology that analyzes social systems on a large scale

microsociology:
the study of small groups and individuals within a society

Macrosociology

All perspectives in sociology can be classified as either *macrosociological* or *microsociological*. **Macrosociology** takes a wide perspective and is concerned with studying society as a whole. Macrosociologists analyze social systems and populations on a large scale. They examine larger social institutions that individuals belong to, such as a country or a place of worship. For example, a macrosociologist studying religion would try to learn a great deal about religious worship as a large structure or institution in society.

Microsociology

Microsociologists are interested in understanding the bases of social action and interaction among individual members and their place in society. **Microsociology** is concerned with the role and interactions an individual or small group of people may have in society. For example, a microsociologist would study religious worship by looking at the role and beliefs of a single worshipper or small group of worshippers within a religion.

FIGURE 3-9 An individual praying. How does this image reflect a microsociologist's perspective?

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. Define the microsociological and macrosociological approaches to society, and suggest some advantages and disadvantages for each approach.

Structural Functionalism

Structural functionalism states that a society is stable when social institutions (for example, the family, religion, politics, schools) meet the needs of its citizens. According to this theory, these institutions, or structures of a society are interdependent and work together to meet the needs of individuals. Structural functionalists study how these structures work together to help society to function. Structural functionalism places a great deal of emphasis on the power of social structures to create harmony and happiness among its members and reflects optimism that society can meet the various needs of its members.

One criticism of this theory is that it does not account for destructive forces within society. Structural functionalists believe institutions exist because they have a positive function in society—to serve a particular need or benefit individuals. Because they believe social structures are positive for society, structural functionalists tend to overlook important issues such as poverty and racism, which often have roots within the structures of society. Focusing on the positive functions of a society can cause people to ignore social injustices.

FIGURE 3-10 Long commutes are a source of major frustration but are an unfortunate result of the intricate road systems needed to help people get around in cities. How might a structural functionalist explain traffic jams?

Emile Durkheim (1858–1917)

Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist influenced by Comte, formally established sociology as an academic discipline. Along with Karl Marx and Max Weber, he helped to propel sociology forward, and his influence is seen today in the work of modern sociologists. Durkheim in particular is remembered for establishing the sociological method still practised today. His theories provided the foundation of structural functionalism. His work centred on the belief that society functions logically and protects the interests of its members. He was interested in studying the forces that unite individuals in society. Durkheim observed that humans are social creatures and define themselves by their social interactions at home, work, play, and worship.

FIGURE 3-11 Emile Durkheim is considered the "first sociologist." How did Durkheim's work contribute to sociology?

functional differentiation:
divisions that are created to help deal with a complex environment; these divisions operate independently but are connected to one another
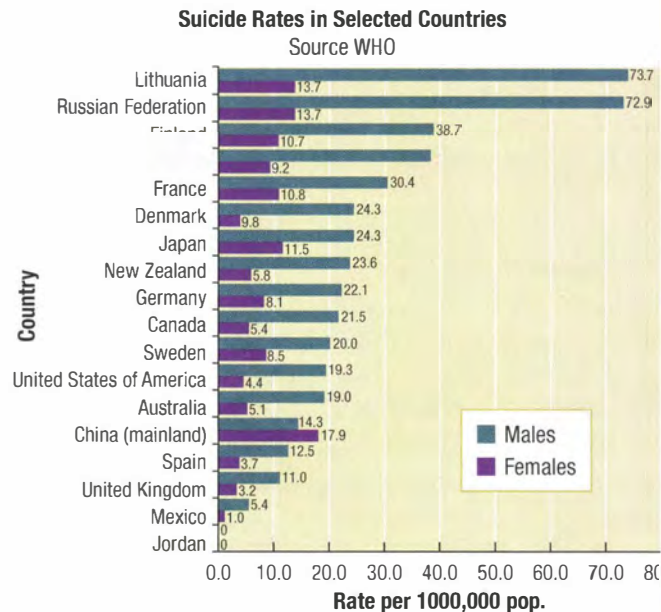
According to Durkheim, the constant change he observed meant that society was becoming more diverse. He viewed this diversity as positive and necessary. He called the emerging diversity in society **functional differentiation** and believed it would allow groups to work together more productively and peacefully. Through his work, he established himself as an authority on social issues and rightfully earned the title of "first sociologist."

Durkheim on Suicide

In his controversial book, *Suicide*, Durkheim attempted to answer the difficult question, Why do people commit suicide? His book was impressive for the way in which he organized, examined, and explained the statistical information he had gathered from a number of sources, including government records. He went about his research systematically and scientifically by studying what he termed *social facts* (i.e., the values, cultural norms, and social structures and trends external to the individual) about a group and then comparing them to the social facts of other groups. In the end, his work on suicide revealed that, although the decision to commit suicide is a highly personal and individual choice, the causes of suicides are rooted very deeply in society.

As you learned on page 96, the Industrial Revolution and the movement of people from rural to urban areas caused a great deal of upheaval within society. Looking at the Industrial Revolution in Durkheim's study on suicide, he described the importance of community and stability to a person's happiness. He found that during the Industrial Revolution, people were increasingly disconnected from their communities and that this social upheaval had a greater effect of suicide rates than other factors such as wealth.

FIGURE 3-12 Suicide rates as studied by the World Health Organization. How would a sociologist use this data?

Suicide Rates in Selected Countries
Source WHO

Country	Males	Females
Lithuania	73.7	13.7
Russian Federation	72.9	13.7
Finland	38.7	10.7
		9.2
France	30.4	10.8
Denmark	24.3	9.8
Japan	24.3	11.5
New Zealand	23.6	5.8
Germany	22.1	8.1
Canada	21.5	5.4
Sweden	20.0	8.5
United States of America	19.3	4.4
Australia	19.0	5.1
China (mainland)	14.3	17.9
Spain	12.5	3.7
United Kingdom	11.0	3.2
Mexico	5.4	1.0
Jordan	0	0

Rate per 1000,000 pop.

During his research, Durkheim pioneered the modern method of statistical analysis. He recorded his observations in charts and compared and contrasted these observations to identify and explain his research. Durkheim's study also suggested the infinite possibilities of sociology to provide explanations for some of the more devastating issues affecting society. By approaching suicide scientifically, Durkheim set a precedent for future generations of sociologists to follow as they conduct research into controversial issues.

(?) What are some possible links between Durkheim's work on suicide and historical or current examples of suicide bombers?

Talcott Parsons (1902–1978)

Like Durkheim, Talcott Parsons was a structural functionalist. Responsible for developing the structural functionalist school of thought in the United States, Parsons examined social behaviour as a single entity or mass. He emphasized that all social phenomena and relationships could be explained through their functions in society. That meant that individuals and specific groups in society could be defined by the purpose that they served. He argued that if something existed in many societies, then it must exist to serve a necessary purpose. In Parson's interpretation, people act according to their values and the values of the people around them and this created stability within a society. Although he found that people acted in their own self-interest, Parsons concluded that there is a strong desire among people to get along with each other and cooperate to achieve goals based on these shared values. It was clear from his work that Parsons believed in social evolution and social Darwinism. This idea was controversial since it suggests that the negative aspects of society, such as discrimination, serve a purpose.

FIGURE 3-13 How would Parsons justify social inequality?

Herbert Spencer (1820–1920) and Social Darwinism

Spencer was a British philosopher and sociologist who was an influential figure during the Victorian era (1837–1901). A supporter of Darwin's evolutionary theory (you learned about Darwin's evolutionary theory in Chapter 1), Spencer applied the theory to the study of society. He compared society to a living organism or body with the different parts (for example, the family, the economy, the political system, religion) all working together to keep it alive and functioning. He applied the notion of natural selection to society in what he called "survival of the fittest." According to his theory, the fittest people in society should survive and flourish while the weak (or unfit) either deserve to live in unfortunate circumstances or be allowed to die. For example, under social Darwinism, the poor, elderly, or disabled should not receive any financial assistance since they aren't fit enough to survive on their own.

Social Darwinism was also used to justify colonialism and slavery. Some people claimed that because white people were superior to other races and cultures, they were justified in taking over other countries or enslaving people. Spencer's theory was used as a basis for some of history's most notorious figures, such as Adolf Hitler who used the theory to justify the Holocaust. Spencer's theory is also connected to the concept of eugenics, a movement that advocated for the "improvement" of the species by either selective breeding (positive eugenics) or the sterilization or killing of "undesirable" humans (negative eugenics). These concepts were also used in Canada by Helen MacMurchy, who became Ontario's Inspector of the Feeble-Minded in 1915. She led the National Council of Women to endorse sterilization as a means of preventing mothers from "filling the cradles with degenerate babies." The Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act was passed in 1928, which led to the creation of a Eugenics Board. This board had the power to order the sterilization of individuals. Between 1929 and 1972, 2822 individuals were sterilized, many of them without their knowledge, before the practice was abolished.

EUGENICS IS THE SELF DIRECTION OF HUMAN EVOLUTION

EUGENICS DRAWS ITS MATERIALS FROM MANY SOURCES AND ORGANIZES THEM INTO AN HARMONIOUS ENTITY.

↑ **FIGURE 3-14** What does this image tell you about eugenics?

QUESTIONS

1. Why is social Darwinism a problematic theory?
2. How is social Darwinism connected to eugenics?
3. Would eugenics be supported by the Canadian government today?
4. What lessons can we learn from theories such as Social Darwinism?

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. Is structural functionalism a macro or micro theory? Explain your answer.
2. How did Durkheim and Parsons contribute to the theory of structural functionalism?

●● Conflict Theory

Unlike the structural functionalist theory, which focuses on how the structures of society work to maintain equilibrium, the conflict theory studies competition between different groups for power. This competition is a result of the constant struggle between those who have economic and political power and those who do not. The conflict theory is modelled on the work of Karl Marx. Marxist understanding of society focused on conflict within the economic system between two distinct classes, the wealthy class of owners and the poor class of workers. The imbalance between these two groups is the source of constant conflict in society. Those who have power seek to keep it away from those who do not. Institutions tend to further alienate the poor, making them feel powerless. The conflict theory generally focuses on economic conflicts between the rich and the poor, but it can be applied to gender (the power imbalance between men and women in society) and race (the power imbalance between two or more racialized groups in a society).

(?) How would the conflict theory explain a rivalry between a sports team that was well funded and one that did not have a lot of money?

Karl Marx (1818–1883)

Karl Marx, author of the *Communist Manifesto,* was a German philosopher interested primarily in economic history. His views and beliefs have been used as the basis for theoretical perspectives by many different disciplines, especially political science and sociology. Marx's theories concentrate on the idea of class conflict, its role in social evolution, and its usefulness in understanding social issues. Marx was living in London during the Industrial Revolution and witnessed how factory owners exploited workers who worked long hours for little pay and had very poor living conditions. He predicted that the workers would one day revolt against the factory owners.

Marx examined societies through their economic organization and found that Western society is based on a system of property ownership and labour exploitation, particularly in the capitalist economic systems. He saw that society was based on a fierce competition for power and wealth. The wealthy class would make it impossible for the poor to ever achieve economic equality, and the only way for the working class to achieve equality would be to topple the wealthy class out of power. In his view, the conflict between social classes created isolation which would lead to disruption and change. Marx saw this kind of conflict and revolution as the only way societies evolved from one system to the next. In the same way that feudal societies became capitalist, capitalist societies would become communist.

Earlier, you learned about the connection between historical events and sociology. Marx studied historical events to understand what was happening in society. From Marx, we learned that it is important to study the economy if we want to understand social changes. Sociologists have borrowed from Marx's ideas in order to explain many social phenomena. Marx's work is important to sociology because his ideas about power and exploitation help explain the existence of a number of inequalities in all human societies.

Before You Read

What causes conflict between two different people or two different groups?

VOICES

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.
Karl Marx, *Communist Manifesto* (1848)

More to Know...

You learned about the Industrial Revolution and the development of sociology on page 96.

FIGURE 3-15 How would Marx view the treatment of the Chinese immigrants who were enlisted to build the Canadian railway, a dangerous job for which they were paid very low wages?

William Foote Whyte and the Street Corner Society

William Foote Whyte (1914–2000) was an economist who, through a study of a poor Boston neighbourhood in the 1930s, created the model for urban ethnography and set the standard for this methodology in sociology, becoming a pioneer in participant observation. His book, *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*, remains one of the best-selling works to be produced for urban sociology and is a classic reference for all sociologists.

For more than three and a half years in the 1930s, Whyte lived in a poor Boston neighbourhood inhabited by first- and second-generation Italian immigrants. The neighbourhood had a high crime rate, was considered dangerous, and was often referred to as a *slum*. He called his neighbourhood Cornerville for anonymity and his research Street Corner Society. While in Cornerville, Whyte lived in the community, observing and recording the tensions between different groups in the neighbourhood. He studied two groups: "corner boys" and "college boys." The corner boys were those who hung out on street corners and around shops, while the college boys were those who wanted and had the means to get an education and to get out of the slum.

Whyte was particularly interested in finding out more about the corner boys and their relationship to other groups. The college boys enjoyed a position of privilege in the neighbourhood, and certain college boys viewed the corner boys negatively. Whyte mapped the intricate social relationships of the corner boys, recording their stories and interactions and documenting the complex nature of urban life in their neighbourhood with a great deal of accuracy. He was able to peer into their daily lives and make sense of their world.

In his study of Cornerville, Whyte demonstrated that a poor community was socially organized. He put a human face to the neighbourhood with his vivid portrayals of real people in real situations. His research changed the landscape of sociology forever. Like the pioneering work of anthropologists Malinowski and

↑ **FIGURE 3-16** Sunday morning, Napoli Square in Boston, 1950. How did participant observation help Whyte understand the corner boys?

Goodall, Whyte's study challenged the way in which society could be studied. His work not only enhanced the understanding of social groups and networks, it revolutionized the way sociologists conduct their work in the field and how sociology is studied today.

QUESTIONS

1. What did Whyte's study reveal about the social realities of living in a neighbourhood?

2. How have Whyte's methods revolutionized the way research is conducted in the field?

3. Compare Cornerville to your own neighbourhood. How are they the same? How are they different?

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. Why did Marx focus his theories around class conflict?

2. How did studying historical events help Marx develop his ideas?

Feminist Sociology

Just as Marx looked at economic inequality, feminist sociologists examine gender inequality. In the twentieth century, female sociologists expanded their study on how men controlled women's lives—their jobs (what kind of jobs women could hold or if they could work at all), their finances (paying women less money than men doing the same job, not allowing them to have control over their own money), and their bodies (limiting their reproductive choices). They concluded that women were marginalized, deprived of power, and without equal membership in society. Examining the symbols, values, and norms of their society, they found it to be patriarchal, favouring men above women, concluding that much of society is based on male authority and constructed to favour men. Historian Gerda Lerner argues that patriarchal systems are historical. In her book, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, Lerner explains that class for men is based on their relationship to their economic role, while women's class is determined through their sexual connection to men. Many female scholars were frustrated by the double standard they experienced. They had less access to tenured positions and to funding they needed for their research. As the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s progressed, many people began advocating for change.

Dorothy Smith (1926–)

Dorothy Smith, a Canadian sociologist, contends that women have long been marginalized in society. Smith argues that sociologists should develop the discipline of sociology so it is capable of reaching and speaking to all members of society. The starting point for Smith's analysis was that culture is socially constructed, and since society is constructed to favour men, it does not operate in women's best interests. In her publication *The Everyday World Is Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (1987), Smith examines how women are "alienated from their experience" and deprived of an authority to speak because of the ideas imposed on women in a society constructed on concepts that favour men. Smith and others like her are working toward a sociology that reflects the realities and experiences of all people regardless of race, gender, or economic status.

"Just do as you're told young lady. Don't you want to grow up to be a strong independant woman?"

↑ **FIGURE 3-17** How does this cartoon demonstrate the notion that young girls struggle to find a voice in their society?

? What does Smith mean when she says women are "alienated from their experience?"

Current Research

Feminist sociology began by studying issues relevant to upper-class white women, but as the discipline developed, feminist sociologists began to examine gender in the context of race, class, and sexualities. Sociologist Chandra Talpade Mohanty examines race within feminist theory and how Western feminism has constructed the "Third World Woman," an idea that portrays diverse women from different cultures and different countries as having one identity and implies that they all suffer from oppression in the same way. In her published work, including "Under Western Eyes: Feminist

Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" (1986) and *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003), Mohanty points out the ethnocentrism of this view and explores the diverse ways women from other countries are oppressed by their geography, history, and culture.

Sociologist Judith Stacey studies the changing forms and meanings of gender, family, and sexuality, and is best known for her research on same-sex families. Her most recent research, "(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?" (2001), examined 21 studies of children of gay and lesbian parents and found that such children tend to function as well as children who grow up with heterosexual parents, concluding that sexual orientation has little to do with successful parenting. The work of feminist sociologists has contributed to debates about rights of women in society and led to changes in public policy.

IN FOCUS   M. N. Srinivas (1916–1999)

Mysore Narasimhachar (M.N.) Srinivas is one of the most noted scholars on Indian sociology in the twentieth century. His work focused on the caste system in India. The caste system is a complex social system that organizes people into social classes that determine status, occupation, culture, marriage partners, and political power. Although caste-based discrimination is outlawed by the Indian constitution, caste-based barriers still exist in rural communities.

Srinivas's work challenged colonial and Western assumptions about Indian society. When Srinivas began his career, the dominant belief was that the caste system in India was rigid and unchanging, implying that Indian society did not change over time. His fieldwork proved that the caste system was a fluid and dynamic social institution that had a tremendous impact on society. In particular, he studied the importance of caste in the electoral process as democracy developed in India.

Srinivas had a tremendous impact on the development of sociology in India, moving researchers away from classic texts and into the contemporary world they were studying. "He moved sociology from the so-called `book view' toward

FIGURE 3-18 Mayawati, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. Mayawati the first Dalit (a caste typically discriminated against) chief minister of any Indian state. How would Srinivas's work explain her success?

the `field view,'" one of Mr. Srinivas's students, A. M. Shah, said. "Earlier generations explained society from descriptions in the ancient texts. M.N. Srinivas encouraged his students to look at society in the raw, to get out into the villages, hospitals and trade unions" (Bearak, 1999, para 3). Srinivas developed new ways of understanding Indian society.

QUESTIONS

1. How did Srinivas's work affect perceptions of Indian society?

2. Are there any similarities between the work of M. N. Srinivas and that of Chandra Talpade Mohanty?

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. Why did feminist sociology develop? To what extent is it still relevant today?
2. How has the work of Mohanty and Stacey contributed to the discipline?

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism studies human interaction at the micro level. This approach emphasizes the individual living within a larger society. According to this theory, the individual is at the centre of understanding society, since social values and roles are formed by individual interpretation. An individual creates a sense of self by the reactions of others. Social life depends on our ability to imagine ourselves in our social roles but also the ability to see ourselves reflected in the experiences of those around us. The behaviour of others in society is deeply rooted in our response and reaction to it, and this dependent relationship is what allows society to function smoothly. Unlike both structural functionalism and conflict theory, symbolic interactionism does not focus on social systems but on the way that individuals, through their interpretations of social situations and behavioural negotiation with others, give meaning to social interactions.

We accept roles for ourselves in order to fit into the society in which live; different societies have defined these roles differently. Thomas and Znaniecki's (1918–1920) historic study, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, was an early application of some of the main themes and concepts of symbolic interactionism. Thomas and Znaniecki examined Polish peasant families as they immigrated to the United States and focused on the adjustments and transformations in personality and family patterns that took place as they adjusted to North American society.

(?) How would a symbolic interactionist interpret the experiences of immigrants adjusting to life within a new society?

Max Weber (1864–1920)

German scholar Max Weber believed that social life is rife with examples of conflict and cohesion. In his writings, he laid out a theory he called **rationalization**, which he defined as social actions motivated by efficiency or benefit, rather than morality, custom, or emotion. According to Weber, rationalization helps society to function more efficiently.

Like Marx, Weber saw many faults in the capitalist system and argued that it trapped and restricted individuals. Unlike Marx, Weber thought that people could be liberated through **bureaucracy** rather than revolution. He envisioned a society in which the bureaucracies would improve social problems. In sociological terms, a bureaucracy is a form of administration that is found in organizations pursuing a wide variety of goals. According to Weber, a bureaucracy is an organization where people are given specialized tasks and where each role is supervised in a hierarchy. A person holds a job based on his or her competence. People are treated impersonally so that everyone is treated the same. Rules and regulation guide the organization and reliability is guaranteed by written communication. Weber proposed an ideal bureaucracy, but recognized that they wouldn't function this way in reality. He was aware that bureaucracies in reality could be an "iron cage," reducing people to cogs in a machine.

rationalization:
social actions motivated by efficiency or benefit, not custom or emotion

bureaucracy:
a large administration that pursues a wide variety of goals

While bureaucracies are common in our world today, they were new systems during Weber's time. The Canadian civil service is an example of a modern bureaucracy. Although bureaucracies sometimes have a negative reputation, governments often need these to provide services that meet the needs of its citizens.

Weber believed, however, that social inequalities and disparities could not be explained in only economic terms as suggested by Marx. To Weber, inequality meant unequal access to society's resources. He believed that government bureaucracies could better manage these resources by ensuring that all essential social services, such as education, would be available to all. Weber believed the bureaucracies could theoretically lessen the tensions in society and potentially eliminate existing inequality.

? How are the theories of Marx and Weber the same? How are they different? Create a chart to organize your ideas.

The Chicago School

Another perspective on social behaviour and society emerged from some American scholars at the University of Chicago. Their theories became known as the *Chicago school.* The Chicago school furthered the development of the symbolic interactionist approach, with much of the research centering on how physical environment and social structures determine individual behaviour. The researchers focused on how a community shapes how people act and behave.

Sociologists from the Chicago school were also pioneering a new and exciting way of researching social issues. They believed a great deal could be learned about society by immersing themselves in urban environments

FIGURE 3-20 The Chicago school relies on participant observation and ethnographies to study society. What problems might someone encounter with this mode of research?

and conducting ethnographies supported by participant observation. Their qualitative methodology allowed them to study urban social trends in a natural setting. Their findings were intimately linked with the subjects and groups they studied and had implications for public policies. However, relying on qualitative methods, to the exclusion of reasonable quantitative measures, later became one of the Chicago school's greatest liabilities.

Charles Cooley, George Herbert Mead, and the Looking-Glass Self

Charles Cooley studied the relationship between the individual and society in great depth. He believed that the two are interconnected and that their functions cannot be separated. One cannot be studied without some consideration of the other, because they influence each other constantly. To Cooley, the individual is just as capable of shaping society as society is of shaping the individual. One important concept attributed to Cooley is the **primary group**, which is the set of people with whom an individual has the most intimate and important interactions. The primary group typically includes family and friends. Cooley believed the constant interaction with members of one's primary group is crucial to developing a social identity. The individual becomes a reflection and representative for the primary group. The most important idea to come from Cooley's work is the *looking-glass self,* which is the way in which the individual's sense of self is mirrored and reflected by others. An avatar is an example of this idea. People create an avatar, a customized symbol, to represent themselves online. This symbol can represent what someone actually looks like but it can also represent how a person would like to be seen by others.

Cooley's colleague George Herbert Mead, added details about the importance of symbols, language, and communication in human relationships. Like Cooley, Mead believed in the looking-glass self as a way of explaining how individuals see themselves through the eyes of those with whom they interact. Mead took the notion one step further and claimed that, depending on the circumstances, the individual assumes a variety of different social roles and learns early on which "mask" to wear.

Of all the ideas to emerge from the Chicago school, the looking-glass self most came to represent the important influence of the individual on overt social behaviour. Many people can easily identify with this approach since it provides a way of placing themselves into the studies about society that can sometimes be impersonal. This concept earned Mead the title of "founding theorist for symbolic interaction." As you've read, this view sees human actions as being governed by the meanings that the individual gives to his or her particular social situation. This idea proved to be a valuable framework for many future analyses of individual **socialization** with implications in the areas of class, race, and ethnicity. Thanks to their ideas, Cooley and Mead made it possible to examine social inequalities and differences more clearly.

primary group:
a set of people with whom an individual has strong emotional and personal connections

socialization:
the continuing process where an individual learns the appropriate behavioural patterns, skills, and values for his or her social world

(?) How do Cooley's and Mead's theories highlight the role of the individual in sociology? What are the benefits of including the individual perspective when trying to understand an entire society?

C. Wright Mills and Sociological Imagination

C. Wright Mills was a sociologist who was influenced by both Marx and the conflict school and Weber's ideas. Mills's most influential work was developing the concept of *sociological imagination*, the ability to connect individual experiences to social realities. This ability is required to understand the society in which we live, including the structures and the people who live in it and the historical forces that created it. Without this understanding, individuals cannot understand either themselves or their role and place within society. Sociological imagination provides this insight, allowing an individual to recognize and understand the larger forces at work within the society. For Mills, this exchange between the individual and society is crucial to understanding the forces that shape our behaviour and our social world in general.

Mills and Parsons: Conflicting Ideas

One of the most well-known rivalries in sociology is between Parsons and Mills. Mills and Parsons (you learned about his theories on page 103) went head to head on a number of issues, mostly stemming from Mills's accusation that Parsons's ideas about society were too rigid and conservative. Mills refuted Parsons's belief that society is static and that one needs to look at it only as a whole to understand it. According to Mills, society is a living organism capable of great change and social problems such as poverty, crime, and racism can be eradicated in time. So Mills considered the suggestion that these social problems serve a function, as Parsons believed, an unfortunate error in judgment.

(?) What are the fundamental differences between Mills's and Parsons's theories? Suggest reasons why Parsons may be too strict in his view of society. Whom does he risk leaving behind in his views? Who does not have voice in his ideal society?

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. Create a visual timeline/graphic organizer that includes all the major theorists of sociology presented in the chapter, and indicate one important contribution made by each theorist to the study of society.

2. How does sociology attempt to break down issues of geography and culture in order to get a more accurate picture of society shared by all humans? Provide examples.

3. Inequality seems to be a key issue for many sociologists. Why do sociologists study inequality? Identify and explain the various kinds of inequality presented by two sociologists.

4. Choose a social issue (for example, crime, poverty). Create a mind map explaining the factors that contribute to a social issue, who it affects, and the agencies who deal with the issue.

Socialization and Social Development

Socialization is a process where someone learns the attitudes, values, and behaviours that are valuable and necessary for the society in which he or she lives. It starts in infancy and continues throughout a person's life. Socialization and social development begin in the family but are also influenced by many forces other than your family, such as peers, school and work, media, religion, and gender. The process of learning how to behave according to the values and norms of society also includes how to behave in different situations.

> **Before You Read**
>
> Think about lunch time in the school cafeteria. How do you know how to behave or sit? How did you learn these "rules?" What are the consequences if you don't follow the rules? How is this similar or different from lunch in your home?

What Is Social Behaviour?

In general, human behaviour can be defined as the observable responses to external and internal stimuli. Each individual in a society responds to these stimuli simultaneously. Social behaviour is the interaction among members of the same group responding to external and internal stimuli. For example, when you are dining in a restaurant, how do you know how to behave? You might remember what you learned from your family or how you've seen people on television behave in the same situation, which would be an example of internal stimuli. You might also be guided by what other diners in the same restaurant are doing. Are they speaking quietly? Are they moving from table to table? Observing the people around you provides clues for how you should behave, which is an example of external stimuli. In this section, you will learn what influences social behaviour.

↑ **FIGURE 3-21** Families shape our social behaviours. What messages did you receive from your family about eating and dining?

What Influences Behaviour?

When studying social behaviour, it is important to understand **social influence**. Social influence is the effect of other people on a person's thoughts and actions. Social influence can affect someone directly and indirectly. For example, joining your friends at a sushi restaurant for lunch when you really want a burger is an example of a direct influence. An example of an indirect influence is basing your decision to date someone on the reactions you *think* you will get from your family or avoiding dating a specific type of person because of real or imagined family pressure. Based on these two categories, sociologists are able to measure the frequency and classify the importance of certain influences on social behaviour.

social influence:
the effect of other people on a person's thoughts and actions

> **Skills Focus**
>
> Sociologists can measure the frequency and rate the importance of certain influences on social behaviour through surveys. They then draw conclusions by examining their data.

↑ **FIGURE 3-22** Gender influences your social behaviour. What are the risks of not conforming to the expectations attributed to your gender?

The Family

The first force to shape the individual's behaviour is the family. An individual learns values and acceptable behaviours from his or her family and often exhibits these learned values and behaviours in social settings. A person's first social interactions happen with his or her parents or caregivers. Parents and caregivers act as custodians, caring for us until we reach independence. Ideally, families teach a child how how to act and the necessary skills to act appropriately in their absence. Our social behaviours are a product of inter-actions, customs, and rituals observed in the home and are reflected in our interactions with others in society.

Gender

Most of us are born male or female, which is regarded as our biological sex. How we behave as either a male or a female is determined by the role given to our gender by the society in which we live. Therefore, if you live in a society that values strength in men and sensitivity in females, you are likely to internalize the qualities attributed to your gender. You will be expected to demonstrate those qualities yourself and expect to see them exhibited by others of your gender in society. For this reason, it is often said that your gender is culturally constructed, or created by forces at work in your particular society. Your gender will also influence your views and behaviours as you interact with others in society. We usually talk about biological sex and gender in terms of male and female. However, some people are born intersex and are sometime referred to as *third* (and sometimes *fourth*) *gender*. Intersex means someone who was born with both male and female sexual characteristics and organs). Definitions of *third gender* vary, but the term is used to describe people who don't identify themselves as completely male or completely female either because biologically they are both or because their gender identity differs from their assigned biological sex. You will learn more about gender in later chapters.

? How do we learn about gender roles? How do they influence behaviour?

THE LANGUAGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Sex and Gender

The terms *sex* and *gender* are often used inter-changeably, but each term has a distinct meaning in social science. The term *sex* refers to the biological and physical characteristics that define someone as female, male, or intersex. The term *gender* refers to socially constructed roles, actions, behaviours, and attitudes that a society considers appropriate for men and women. Our view of gender is influenced by interactions with family, peers, and culture and determines expectations for how people should think and behave, and even what they are capable of. A society's construction of gender can determine what kind of job an individual should have, what chores they are responsible for, and even what kind of toys children should play with. For example, boys are often encouraged to play with toy trucks, while girls are encouraged to play with dolls.

QUESTIONS

1. How does society inform your ideas of gender?

2. How do children's toys reflect your society's view of gender? Do toys reflect or reinforce a society's ideas about gender?

Culture

Each of us is raised in a specific culture with its own characteristics and traditions. Cultural traditions may be simple or elaborate, involving complex symbols and values. A culture can be shaped by the history and laws of a country, television that people watch, and the music they listen to. We are all affected by cultural influences and view the rest of the world from our own cultural perspective. A person can also be influenced by more than one culture. In Canada's multicultural society, individuals can be influenced by the culture of their relatives and ancestors. They are also influenced by Canadian culture. They may have to adjust their cultural views to be able to function and make sense of the social norms and values around them.

↑ **FIGURE 3-23** How do our cultural traditions help shape our social behaviours?

Media

Think about all the media you access in a day: television, newspapers and magazines, radio, the Internet, and social networks. How difficult would it be to avoid any media for one day? The media have an important influence on social behaviour. New research suggests that Facebook friendships may improve real friendships. The findings were released in a study in 2009 and stated that 27.6 percent of American social media users said that their offline relationships are actually benefiting from online interaction using social media. People are using technology to shape new forms of human communication that are fascinating to sociologists. In all its forms, the media can help us understand social behaviour. While not all the world shares the same access to media, media have given the whole world access to how others around the world live. We will look more closely at this relationship in later chapters.

? Identify the major forces that influence social behaviour, and provide an example for each. Are there other factors that influence your behaviour? Explain and provide examples.

Different Cultures, Different Greetings

We have seen how family, gender, culture, and media influence how we function and interact with the world. Most of the time, we can apply what we've learned at home with a great deal of success to social situations. Sometimes, however, our understanding about how something is supposed to work in society may come into direct conflict with how it actually works. Consider something as simple as the act of greeting one another. Most countries around the world have a specific ritual or custom for greeting one another in different situations. A person growing up in that society learns very early in life how to greet someone, usually taught by parents, guardians, or elders in an attempt to prepare that child for the future.

For example, in India, people greet one another by pressing their own hands together close to the chest and slightly bowing or nodding. Sometimes handshakes are also exchanged, but men will rarely ever greet a woman in this manner unless she initiates the handshake. In North America, the handshake is the most common way to greet another person in public. The handshake seals many deals or agreements and is extended to people regardless of their age or station in life. Young children in North America, as a result, are often taught to have a firm handshake in order to show confidence and self-assurance. The handshake is also used in Nigeria to greet other people, along with a smile. In other parts of the world, it is customary to kiss and hug close friends and relatives. The greeting customs from around the world are as diverse as the cultures to which they belong.

Consult the chart below for more global greetings:

Culture	Greeting
Polynesian	• Place the other person's hands on your face and stroke.
Tibetan	• Stick your tongue out at the person you wish to greet.
Inuit	• Rub noses with the other person.
Western European	• Kiss the other person on the cheek.
Massai (tribe in Kenya)	• Spit on the other person, and when greeting an elder, spit in your hand before you offer it up to be shaken.

The chart above describes generalizations about greetings throughout the world. It's important to remember that these are generalizations about what people in other cultures do. Not everyone in Tibet will greet you by sticking out their tongue and if you meet someone from the Massai tribe in Kenya, you probably shouldn't spit on them. As we interact with other cultures, we also need to acknowledge that an action or gesture that is acceptable in one culture could be offensive in another.

FIGURE 3-24 The traditional Tibetan greeting. How might this greeting be viewed by someone living in North America?

Social Worker Egerton Blackwood

Egerton Blackwood was always a good listener. Growing up in Ottawa, Blackwood's friends came to him for help with their problems or just for a sympathetic ear. After completing an undergraduate degree at the University of Ottawa, Blackwood began volunteering at a distress centre where he could put those listening skills to good use. He quickly realized he wanted to have a career helping people and went back to school to pursue a Masters degree in social work. Blackwood then went on to work with the Peel Children's Aid Society before moving on to his current position as a social worker with the Toronto District School Board.

Social work is a profession that puts social science knowledge and methods into practice to help people solve problems in their relationships, face illness and disability, and resolve social problems. Some social workers help families adopt children or find foster homes for neglected and abused children, while others work in public health to help seniors and their families assess and arrange for services. Social workers who work in schools like Egerton Blackwood often work with parents, guardians, teachers, and other school officials. They help students deal with stress or emotional problems and address problems with misbehaviour and discipline. Social workers also conduct research and develop policies to promote social change. Educational requirements for social workers vary from province to province, but social workers usually have an undergraduate degree in social science or from a social work program at a university.

As a social worker, Blackwood develops programs and collaborates with the community to meet the needs of both elementary and secondary students. Since he works with students in all grade levels, he can watch students grow up and be involved in their lives throughout their education.

By far the most difficult challenge he has faced in his career was the murder of Jordan Manners in May 2007. Blackwood was the social worker for the school where Manners was shot and killed, as well as other schools in the surrounding area. Since he

FIGURE 3-25
Egerton Blackwood with students planning a *Shoot With This* production.

knew the students best, he was called in to work with the police, school trustees and superintendents, teachers and other staff, to help students cope with the tragedy and its aftermath.

Blackwood began developing an innovative program alongside Dameion Royes, CEO and president of BigItUp International. BigItUp provides financial and other support to various literacy and educational programs in Canada. Together Blackwood and Royes created the Shoot With This program. The program works to empower and motivate at risk youth by giving them resources to learn about video and photography. Taught by talented individuals who have experiences similar to their own, students learn how to plan and make a film, as well collaboration and conflict resolution skills. Many of the films have been shown in film festivals and the photos shown in galleries across the city.

Navigating through the bureaucracy of a large school board can be frustrating, but Blackwood thinks that it's worth it for the opportunity to help students. In his opinion, social work is a career for those who are good listeners, are empathetic, and non judgemental, and who recognize the need to be open minded and like people. He believes that social work will continue to change as institutions work together with the community to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

QUESTIONS

1. What skills are important for a career in social work?
2. How is sociology connected to social work?

Measuring Social Behaviour

So far, you have examined a number of important influences on social behaviour, as well as the greeting rituals of several different cultures. Can these influences be measured quantitatively or observed qualitatively? Sociologists agree that behaviour can be measured and observed with a certain degree of accuracy. Social interaction is a very important part of an individual's daily life. In fact, very few of us actually want to live in isolation. People continually develop new relationships. As an individual goes through different stages of life, such as high school, post-secondary school, and entering the work force, they interact with new people. Social networks, such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter make isolation less likely since staying connected to others is easy as long as your computers and cell phones are turned on.

Skills **Focus**

Sociologists rely on two research methods (quantitative and qualitative) in order to gather data for their studies. When studying social behaviour, it is important to determine whether the influences are direct or indirect. How would you go about studying those influences using one or both of the research methods available to sociologists?

FIGURE 3-26 How do you manage your social relationships?

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. Provide an example of how each factor (i.e., family, gender, culture, media) influences your social behaviour.

2. Why is the family crucial to our understanding of social behaviour?

3. How is our gender culturally constructed?

4. Can a person be influenced by more than one culture? Looking at how a culture influences behaviour, what kind of challenges do people living in multicultural societies face?

5. How does symbolic interactionism influence family decisions?

Socialization

In order to thrive as members of a particular society, individuals learn to think and act as others do in their society. Learning what is acceptable and unacceptable in one's society is part of the journey to becoming a well-adjusted adult and a participating member of that society. The process by which the individual learns the behavioural patterns, skills, and values of her or his social world is called socialization. Socialization begins at birth and continues throughout an individual's life. Earlier in the chapter, you learned about values and norms. Now we will consider the process by which those values and norms are internalized by the individual. Socialization occurs in every culture. The values and norms of each society may differ, but the process of socialization is the same. Socialization is the process of learning the following elements:

- basic skills (for example, how to take physical care of oneself)
- socially accepted goals (for example, employment, marriage)
- roles and behaviours (for example, how to act in specific conditions)

(?) What is the ultimate goal of socialization? Why is socialization so important? How can it be both positive and negative?

The Categories of Socialization

The process of socialization is often divided into distinct categories. **Primary socialization** is responsible for teaching the individual the basic skills needed to survive in society. These skills may include hygiene, eating with utensils, how to use language, and how to dress appropriately. **Secondary socialization** is responsible for teaching individuals how to act appropriately in group situations, such as at places of worship or school. **Anticipatory socialization** is concerned with teaching the individual how to plan ahead behaviour for new situations. For example, using your prior knowledge about certain social settings, you should be able to think ahead and anticipate the type of clothing, language, and behaviour required for an occasion. Finally, **resocialization** refers to the process by which an individual learns to transform old, sometimes unacceptable, behaviour into new, socially acceptable behaviour. For example, a criminal released from prison is given the opportunity to practise new behaviour or a new employee completes a training session to prepare him or her for a new job.

(?) What steps might a prisoner have to take to become resocialized? How does an individual learn to internalize the values of his or her society?

FIGURE 3-27 What did you learn as a child about being an adult?

primary socialization: the process of learning the basic skills needed to survive in society

secondary socialization: the process of learning how to behave appropriately in group situations

anticipatory socialization: the process of learning how to plan the way to behave in new situations

resocialization: the process by which negative behaviour is transformed into socially acceptable behaviour

More to Know...

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (see Chapter 2) provides us with a road map of the ultimate goal of socialization, which is becoming a self-actualized human being capable of living harmoniously in society.

Female Violence and The Murder of Reena Virk

On November 14, 1997, 14 year-old Reena Virk was headed back to her foster home when a group of acquaintances invited her to a party in a nearby park. Once there, the group swarmed Virk, punching and kicking her, burning her, and trying to light her hair on fire (Steinberg, 2009). Although severely injured, Virk was able to get away from the group, walking over a bridge in an attempt to reach a bus stop to make her way home (CBC, 2009). Two of her attackers, later revealed as Warren Glowatski, 17 and Kelly Ellard, 15, dragged Virk back into the park, beating her again and drowning her. Police didn't find her body until eight days after she was attacked.

Virk's murder made headlines across the country after it was revealed that seven of the eight adolescents involved in her death were girls. Six girls, ages 14 to 16 were charged in the initial beating and sentenced to one year. Glowatski was convicted of second-degree murder in 1999, while Ellard was convicted in 2005 of second-degree murder (CBC, 2009).

Virk's case was seen as an example of the rise of girl on girl violence in North American society. Statistics were cited that indicated that violence by adolescent girls was on the rise and "experts"

FIGURE 3-28 Reena Virk's parents leaving court

indicated female violence was caused by an increasingly violent culture, by angry girls no longer willing to channel their aggression in socially acceptable "feminine" ways, such as gossiping (CBC, 2008). Stories about Virk appeared in national newspapers and covered nationally on television, giving the impression that Canada was in the middle of an epidemic of female teenage violence. Even the federal government weighed in, indicating concern about the rise of female participation in violent activities.

In the years since Virk's murder, criminologists and sociologists examined the crime and the public's reaction to it. Using Statistics Canada data, they found that youth rate of violent crime dropped 5 percent in 1999, the fourth year in a row that the number declined (Statistics Canada, 2000). Although some statistics did indicate a rise in minor or moderate assaults by adolescent girls (in 1980, 710 women were charged compared to 4434 in 1995–1996), social scientists indicated that this increase reflected a change in policy and practices rather than a change in the behaviour of adolescent girls.

Why was there a discrepancy between what the media reported and what criminologists and sociologist concluded? Some argued that the media and the public were engaged in a "moral panic," reflecting an anxiety about the changing world and female roles with Canadian society. Barron and Lacombe also argue that the perception of an increasing problem can lead to changes in educational and legal priorities, such as more punitive policies for young offenders and zero tolerance policies in schools (Barron and Lacombe, 2005). Sociologists and criminologists examining the Reena Virk case were not only looking at the event itself, but also about the wider implications and meaning of the event on society.

QUESTIONS

1. Is it important to understand socialization in this case? Why or why not?

2. Why did the media and criminologists have different perspectives on the meaning of this event?

Socialization and Gender

From their very earliest social interactions, boys and girls tend to display differences in behaviours, attitudes, abilities, and interests. As you learned on page 114 when examining gender and behaviour, children are encouraged to play with gender-specific toys. Typically, young girls play with dolls while young boys play with toy cars and trucks. These forms of play represent the typical play for children growing up in North America and the Western world. Not all cultures around the world designate child's play to dolls for girls and toy cars for boys. In many parts of the world, children's first toys have little to do with their gender and more to do with religious traditions or the harsh economic realities their families face, which in many cases means toys of any kind are hard to come by.

Sociologists studying gender generally consult different cultural models and experiences to determine how gender roles are transmitted to children from diverse cultural backgrounds. The findings for such studies suggest the same results—that gender is socially constructed and gender roles are internalized very early on in the process of socialization. Interestingly, the biological distinctions between male and female behaviours are not labelled right or wrong, better or worse. Therefore, any labels we use to describe male and female behaviours are learned. The first lessons about gender are taught at home by family. Later, as children age and their world expands, their religion, peers, school, and media reinforce or introduce new information about what it means to be male or female.

In an article for the Globe and Mail, clinical psychologist Gregory Lehne discusses the idea of forcing a child to play with a certain kind of toy:

> Some parents may raise a concerned eyebrow when their sons want to play with dolls or their daughters want to play with army figures, but those who try to push their children into gender stereotypes may do more harm than good. "It's fairly common that children experiment with cross-gender behaviour in their play. It helps them understand their own gender role better, as well as the gender role of other kids. (Globe and Mail, 2010, para 5)

Abnormal Socialization

Ideally, children should be raised in a nurturing environment that promotes physical, emotional, and intellectual development. Children also need the attention, encouragement, and stimulation of a caregiver to develop healthy self-esteem and become productive, well-adjusted members of society. Sadly, some children are raised in very unfortunate circumstances where they may be completely neglected and, in even rarer situations, are outright abandoned by their parents and left to fend for themselves in the wild. In these cases, the crucial socialization that occurs in the first years of life is missing, resulting in rather disastrous consequences for the children.

More to Know...

Margaret Mead examined a number of distinct features about American and Samoan adolescent girls and concluded that gender roles are socially constructed and relative to the culture in which they are exhibited.
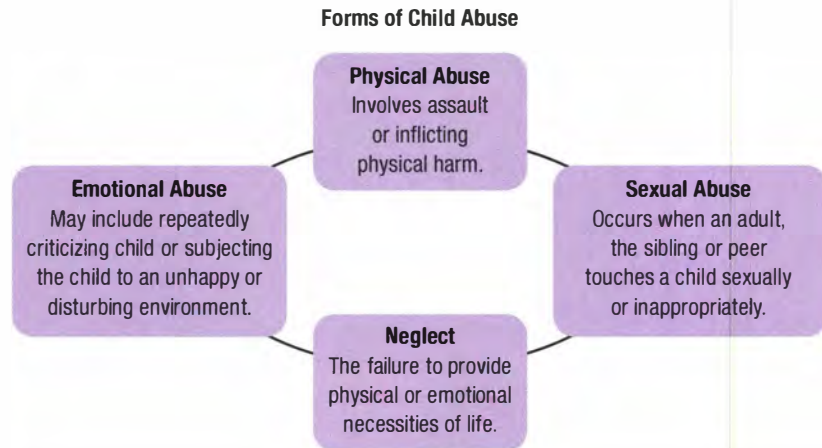
VOICES

Many parents are quick to try to change any atypical gender behaviour in their kids for fear that their children will be bullied at school or the target of ridicule from peers.
Gregory Lehne
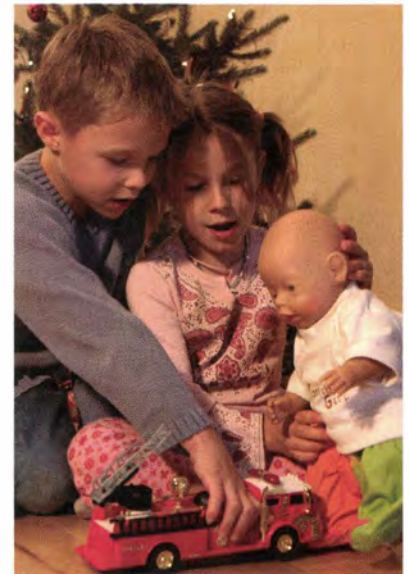
↑ **FIGURE 3-29** How are gender roles taught?

Child Abuse

There are devastating consequences for children raised in abusive homes. In cases of child abuse, children do not learn normal and healthy behaviours. The root causes of abuse are varied: the abusive parents may have been abused themselves, lack appropriate parenting strategies, or be unable to deal with their own frustrations and anger. Whatever the reason, the results are devastating and life-altering for the children living through abuse. Neglect and abuse can take on many different forms.

Forms of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse
Involves assault or inflicting physical harm.

Emotional Abuse
May include repeatedly criticizing child or subjecting the child to an unhappy or disturbing environment.

Sexual Abuse
Occurs when an adult, the sibling or peer touches a child sexually or inappropriately.

Neglect
The failure to provide physical or emotional necessities of life.

Feral Children

feral:
unwanted child deserted at a young age and raised by animals

Ferals are children deserted at a young age and raised by animals. These children are of particular interest to psychologists and sociologists alike. Sociologists who have studied feral children discovered that they appropriate the behaviours of the species that raised them and can perfectly imitate their gestures and sounds. In 1991, a disturbing discovery was made in Ukraine, where an eight-year-old girl named Oxana Malaya was found exhibiting dog-like behaviour. The neglected child of alcoholic parents, Oxana, also known as the "Ukrainian Dog Girl," spent much of her life between the ages of three and eight living and interacting with the dogs that lived in a kennel in the family's yard. Her five years of interaction left her fearful of humans. When she was discovered, she barked like a dog and preferred to move around on all four limbs. She drank from a bowl and viewed the world from the viewpoint of a dog.

FIGURE 3-30 Feral children lack basic skills because they are raised by animals. If a child's only interactions are with animals, what behaviour is he or she learning? What behaviour is he or she unable to learn? Why is the socialization of children so important?

By the age of 26, Oxana could speak and many of her behaviour problems improved. Oxana resides at a home for the developmentally delayed, where she helps look after the cows in the home's farm. She has stated that she is happiest when among dogs. By studying feral children, sociologists concluded that children need to learn social skills at a young age. It is during this critical period that children are able to develop and internalize social behaviours most readily.

Isolated Children

Isolates are children raised in near isolation within human households. The most famous isolate case was a young girl named Genie who was discovered living in California during the 1970s. Genie had lived most of her 13 years in severe isolation. Confined to a darkened room, Genie was constantly strapped to a potty chair with little to no human contact. When police discovered her, she could not speak and could barely walk or eat. Despite intensive rehabilitation, Genie was never able to make a full recovery from the trauma she lived through. You will learn more about Genie in Chapter 5.

In July 2005, another isolate case emerged in Plant City, Florida. Authorities were called in to investigate a woman and her two grown sons living in a quiet neighbourhood. Some neighbours suspected that the conditions in the home were unsafe. When authorities entered the home to investigate, they found a three-year-old girl lying on a mattress, her emaciated body covered in feces, insect bites, rashes, and sores, and her hair crawling with lice. She was naked except for a soiled diaper. Police removed the girl from the home. It was later discovered the girl's name was Danielle and that she lived most of her three years in a darkened room, lying on the dirty mattress. Danielle promptly received medical treatment and was adopted by a loving family in October 2007. Her birth mother was forbidden to see her. Although she still does not speak, she is learning to listen and can understand simple commands. She can walk, is almost fully toilet trained, can chew and swallow, and is learning about emotions, including what it means to be loved. To sociologists, Danielle's story is an opportunity to study the dangerous effects of improper or lack of socialization in a young child's life.

? What do the cases of Oxana, Genie, and Danielle tell you about the importance of socialization in the early years of life?

More to Know...

You learned about the concept of the looking-glass self on page 111. The image reflected to feral children is so limited that they are unable to develop a self-concept beyond imitating the sounds and gestures of the animals that raised them.

isolate:
child raised in near isolation within a human household

FIGURE 3-31 How do children such as Danielle offer sociologists the opportunity to learn more about the importance of socialization?

Connecting
Sociology
to **Psychology**

You might see the connection between the isolates you've just read about and Harlow's Surrogate Mother experiment you learned about in Chapter 2. This classic experiment demonstrates the important role that social interaction plays in the development of healthy relationships. How does Harlow's experiment relate to Genie and Danielle?

Agents of Socialization

agents of socialization: people and institutions that shape an individual's social development

The people and institutions that shape an individual's social development are known as **agents of socialization**. Throughout your life, you will encounter situations where you will rely heavily on certain individuals and groups to help shape your behaviour and beliefs. These groups teach you how to participate. The role that these agents play is significant to your social, emotional, and physical development. Different agents of socialization have different levels of influence, depending on your age and stage in life. For example, when you were a young child, you relied on your parents to guide and shape your responses. As you get older, you may rely on your friends more than your parents to help you with what is happening in your life at the moment. The following are agents of socialization that have the most influence on you a different point throughout your life and help you to navigate the complex social world in which you live:

- family
- peer groups
- workplace
- media
- religion

↑ **FIGURE 3-32** Why is family so important for socialization?

The Primary Agent of Socialization: The Family

The primary agent of socialization is the family. The family is responsible for meeting an individual's most basic needs and providing the beliefs needed to survive in this world. It is within the family structure that you are first introduced to right and wrong, proper and improper, appropriate and inappropriate. The family teaches the individual about social behaviour. The family is the primary agent of socialization because it shapes behaviour throughout life, starting from the day an individual is born, especially during those crucial early years of development.

Family Structure and Socialization

In the past, a traditional and idealized family structure was made up of a father, a mother, and children. The family has undergone significant changes in the last 50 years. Families are more diverse than they have ever been, with divorce, remarriage, and same-sex marriages having a notable effect on how we define Canadian families today. There is no such thing as a typical family. There have been many changes to the structure and makeup of what is considered a traditional family, but all families are equally important for socialization.

According to the Vanier Institute of the Family, a family is any combination of two or more people who are bound together over time by ties of mutual consent, birth, and/or adoption or placement and who, together, assume responsibilities for some or all of the following:

- physical maintenance and care of group members
- addition of new members through procreation or adoption
- socialization of children
- social control of members
- production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services
- affective nurturance (love)

TYPES OF FAMILIES	
Family Structure	**Definition**
nuclear family	• a family that consists of spouses and their dependent children
extended family	• a family system in which several generations live together in one household
lone-parent family	• a family that consists of one parent living with one or more dependent children
blended family	• a family in which divorced partners with children from a previous union remarry
same-sex family	• a family that consists of two individuals of the same gender, with or without children

? What defines a family? What does the family teach an individual? Why are families so important for socialization?

Secondary Agents of Socialization

The secondary agents of socialization are the non-family people and institutions that teach an individual social behaviours and norms, such as schools, workplaces, peers, media, and religion. Typically, secondary agents of socialization begin to have an influence once a child enters school. Once there, the influence of school life and peers becomes increasingly more important as a socializing agent for the child. Increasing exposure to media further socializes the individual. Religion also provides a strong influence and can continue to do so throughout a person's life.

School

Schools transmit knowledge and skills to students. The education system in North America sets out to teach students a curriculum, a set of standard knowledge and skills that everyone should know. This is what you learn in class and what you are tested on. Schools also socialize students through a hidden curriculum as well. The hidden curriculum models a certain set of beliefs and attitudes and endorses specific behaviour in different situations. The hidden curriculum can often create advantages for some students and disadvantages for others. In order to function in groups, students need to internalize and demonstrate important behaviours such as punctuality, self-reliance, teamwork, competitiveness, and obedience. The goal of schools is to teach these skills and reinforce these values with praise and positive reinforcement.

↑ FIGURE 3-33 How do schools transmit knowledge and skills?

Peer Groups

Perhaps the most important lessons from school are learned from and through your peers. Peers are people of the same age. The influence of the peer group is especially pronounced during adolescence, sometimes becoming more important than the family as a major agent of socialization. The adolescent peer group creates the opportunity to learn such skills as communication, collaboration, and compromise. Often referred to as the *social curriculum of schools*, peer interactions provide ample opportunity for the individual to learn about gender and culture and to establish relationships with others from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds. The adolescent peer group is primarily responsible for teaching the individual about sexual relationships and, in some cases, stands in direct opposition to the values taught by the individual's family. The adolescent peer group is highly susceptible to the influence of media. In some cases, this reliance on the media for values and beliefs can have negative implications.

FIGURE 3-34 The adolescent peer group is a powerful influence. How do your peers influence you?

The Workplace

School is a very important agent of socialization for children and youth. But as they become adults, it is the workplace that becomes important. In much the same way that school is an important place where students learn how to behave in certain situations and work with others, the workplace is very important for adults to understand.

Children first learn about work at home through chores, play, and observation. Parents and other close adults help shape the values and attitudes of children toward work (Feij, 1998). In Grade 9, many students across Canada participate in "Take Our Kids to Work" Day. The purpose of this day is to give students a chance to explore their future and help them to understand a parent's role in making a living and supporting a family. Many students who work part-time or have co-op placements have first-hand experience of the workplace already.

? Identify and explain the goals of schools in socializing young children. At what point do peer groups exert more influence over the individual than family?

Media

Mass media includes television, radio, movies, books, and the Internet. The power of media to influence and shape behaviour is a fascinating subject for sociologists. Media can be particularly influential in a child's socialization. For children today, television viewing and playing video games have become part of the day's routine. Many children spend considerable amounts of time in front of the television while busy parents work or tend to the household. The consequences to a child's development are clear: time spent watching television means time away from others, playing and interacting, building social skills and relationships. As children get older, they spend more time online and visiting social networking sites. Perhaps the most pervasive messages to come from media are in the form of advertisements about what to wear, how to act, and what to aspire to. There is evidence that suggests that young people learn from the values, beliefs, and behaviours exhibited by television characters (Valkenburg, 2004). To some people, the media stands in direct opposition to the family, challenging the very values that the family tries to instill in its children.

FIGURE 3-35 How does the media influence behaviour?

Although studies have not linked exposure to violence to violent acts by males, the media does normalize violence, making it appear to be part of our culture. On television, males are shown committing most of the violence. Advertisers use violence to sell products to men, such as video games.

However, the influence of mass media is not entirely negative. New technologies have exposed people to other cultures and ideas and provided an outlet for creativity and expression. Mass media has also created new ways to connect with people around the world.

Religion

While fewer people are part of organized religious traditions today, religion continues to be an important agent of socialization for a number of reasons. Most religions have moral codes and often set standards of behaviour that they expect their members to follow. Religion can also teach people responsibility to others and the importance of charity, whether monetary donations to the poor or volunteering time and effort in social institutions such as hospitals.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

1. List the agents of socialization and give an example of how each one has influenced your social behaviour.
2. Does the socialization you experience in school prepare you for the workplace?
3. There is a lot of discussion and concern about how the media influences young people today. In your opinion, how important is the media in socializing children? Is the media always a negative influence? Why or why not?
4. If fewer people belong to organized religions than ever before, why do sociologists study their influence on socialization?

Knowledge and Understanding/Thinking

1. Define the terms *values*, *norms*, and *roles*, and describe the purpose of each in any given society.

2. Explain how sociologists conduct their research. Describe the initial steps of the sociological inquiry model, and suggest a possible topic sociologists might study.

3. Define the term *social imagination* and explain why it is important for understanding individual problems that are affected by social institutions. How can this help sociologists understand social issues such as poverty or unemployment?

4. Compare and contrast the ideas of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber in one of the following areas:
   - inequality
   - society's responsibility to its members

5. Identify the difference between direct and indirect social influence, and suggest an example for each.

Thinking/Communication

6. Describe and summarize the three main schools of thought (conflict theory, structural functionalism, symbolic interactionism) to analyze social behaviour differently. Write a brief statement explaining which of the schools of thought you find the most convincing.

7. Why are objectivity and universality important concepts for sociologists to understand?

8. How might society go about resocializing the victims of abnormal socialization in each of the following examples:
   a) feral children
   b) isolated children
   c) victims of child abuse

9. Identify and summarize the key ideas for feminist sociology. How is it connected to the conflict theory?

10. Using a current or historical event with which you are familiar, write a research question that a sociologist might ask about the event and suggest an appropriate research method with which to gather data. Write out a response to your research question.

11. Identify the social groups in your school. List several characteristics, norms, and values of at least two groups. To which groups do you belong? What sociological theory best explains how these groups operate?

12. Write an updated editorial about the contributions of one of the sociologists featured in this chapter and his or her relevance to sociology today.

13. Create a dramatization that reflects the categories of socialization and includes at least two agents of socialization for one of the following situations:
    a) a holiday meal with your family
    b) getting caught breaking a rule at school or at home
    c) dealing with a difficult customer at your part-time job
    d) responding to an invitation from a friend for an event you don't want to attend