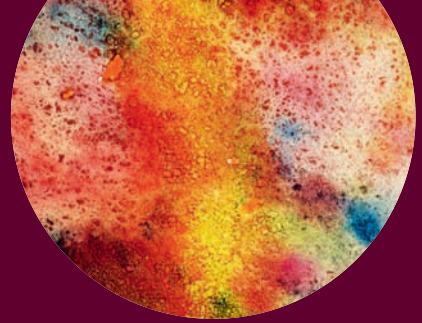


5TH EDITION

# SOCIOLOGY

A GLOBAL INTRODUCTION

JOHN J MACIONIS & KEN PLUMMER

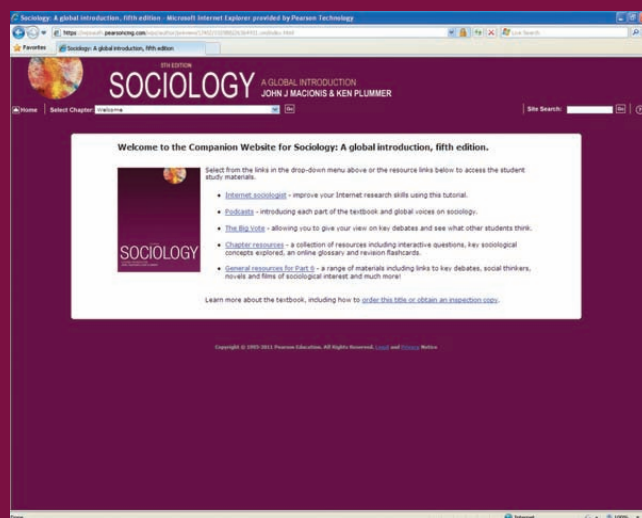


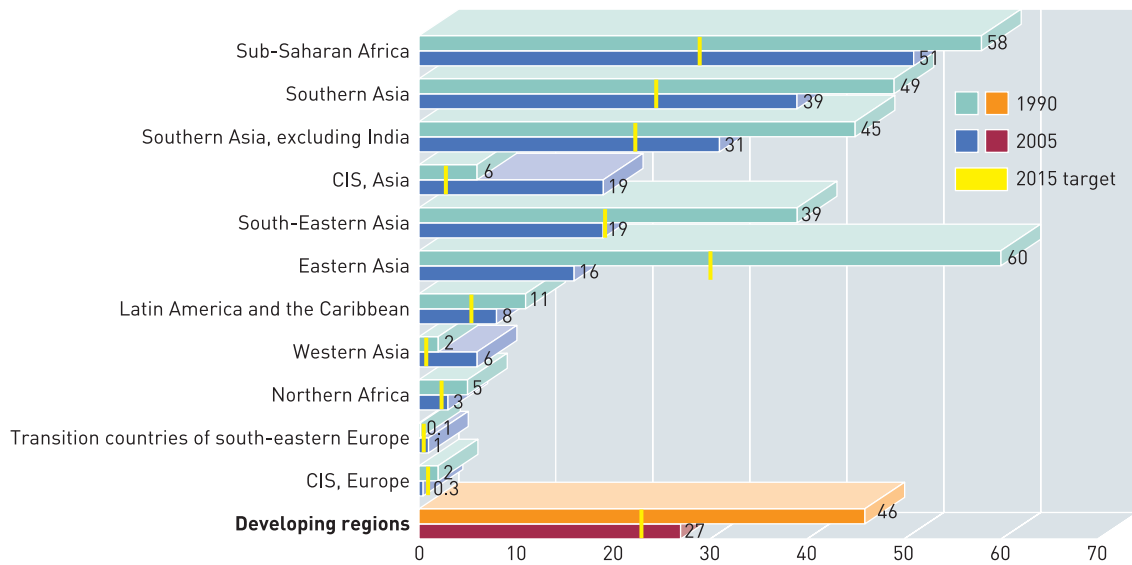
## THE SOCIOLOGY FILES

[www.pearsoned.co.uk/plummer](http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/plummer)

Select from the links in the drop-down menu to access the student study materials.

1. **Internet sociologist** – improve your internet research skills using this tutorial.
2. **Web resources for critical thinking** – links to Part Six of the book. A range of materials that link to films, art and novels of sociological interest. It also includes links to the websites.
3. **Website links** – a major listing of websites of interest to sociologists.
4. **Chapter resources** – a collection of resources including PowerPoint slides for use in classes, interactive questions, an online glossary and revision flashcards.
5. **Reading supplements** – a selection of short pieces to read which will add to each chapter.
6. **Tutor's section** – some comments chapter by chapter which may be of particular interest to tutors.
7. **Podcasts** – introducing each part of the textbook and global voices on sociology.
8. **The Big Vote** – allowing you to give your view on key debates and see what other students think.
9. **The Sociology Blog** – check this regularly for current and 'hot' topics to update your knowledge.
10. **Pearson** – learn more about the textbook, including how to order this title or obtain an inspection copy.



**Figure 9.4**

Proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day, 1990 and 2005 (%)

Source: UN Millennium Development Report 2010, p. 6.

Official agencies spend fortunes on their statistical work in poorer countries, but much of it lies in the sophisticated handling of data in faraway government offices. The nitty-gitty data themselves simply may not be very good.

- Closely allied to this is the time problem. As world expectations change, and indeed as conditions in countries change with various economic crises, can measurement measures easily hold across time? Most significantly, populations over the 15 years of the project will all increase significantly, and as the goal is for a proportion rather than an absolute number of people to escape poverty, it seems likely that even if the proportion goal is met, the actual numbers in poverty may increase significantly due simply to rising populations.
- Fourthly, there is an ideological element to all of this. Time and time again in reading the reports, we can be led to a sense of celebration that progress is being made on most objectives (at least until the financial crisis of 2008–9). It is in the interest of funders and career developers to tell good stories of progress with the project. But critics are sceptical.



Some 40 per cent of people have no access to sanitation. This lack of hygienic facilities experienced by 2.6 billion people is a fundamental cause of disease which leads to 2 million deaths – mainly children – each year (see over)

Source: © HJB/Alamy.



## How the other half shits

Across the world of nearly 7 billion people, some 40 per cent of people have no access to sanitation. This lack of

hygienic facilities experienced by 2.6 billion people is a fundamental cause of disease which leads to 2 million deaths – mainly of children – each year. Every year, around 60 million children in the developing world are born into households without access to sanitation; and children

living in such households are twice as likely to get diarrhoea as those with a toilet. It is the seventh Millennium Development Goal to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

**Table 9.5** The worst places in the world for sanitation provision

As a percentage of population lacking access

Country	Ranking	Percentage lacking sanitation
Afghanistan	1	92
Chad	2=	91
Eritrea	2=	91
Burkina Faso	4=	87
Ethiopia	4=	87
Niger	4=	87
Cambodia	7	83
Ghana	8=	82
Guinea	8=	82
Namibia	10=	75

As a total number of people lacking access to sanitation (above 10 million)

Country	Ranking	Total population lacking sanitation
China	1	732,480,000
India	2	728,357,000
Indonesia	3	99,045,000
Bangladesh	4	84,912,000
Nigeria	5	72,072,000
Ethiopia	6	65,772,000
Pakistan	7	63,468,000
Brazil	8	45,975,000
Democratic Republic of Congo	9	39,130,000
Vietnam	10	32,409,000

Source: Water Aid, *The State of the World's Toilets*; [www.wateraid.org/uk](http://www.wateraid.org/uk).

See also: *New Internationalist*, 'We need to think about toilets', August 2008.



Boy scavenging on rubbish dump, Manila

Source: Pearson Education Ltd/Digital Vision.

## Who are the global poor?

Figure 9.4 (p. 297) suggests the areas where inequalities can be found to have made most impact. In this section, we highlight four key groups who become most vulnerable to poverty. Although there are others, our main focus will be on children, women, refugees and the elderly.

### 1 Children and poverty

Poverty hits children hardest, and the extent and severity of child poverty are greatest in low-income countries. As we have already explained, death often comes early in poor societies, where families lack adequate food, safe water, secure housing and access to medical care. In many cases, too, children in poor countries leave their families because their chances to survive are better on the streets.

Organisations combating child poverty in the world estimate that poverty forces some 100 million city children in poor countries to beg, steal, sell sex or serve as couriers for drug gangs in order to provide income for their families. Such a life almost always means dropping out of school and places children at high risk of illness and violence. Many street girls, with little or no access to medical assistance, become pregnant – a case of children who cannot support themselves having still more children.

Some 100 million of the world's children have deserted their families altogether, sleeping and living on the streets as best they can. Roughly half of all street children are found in Latin America. Brazil, where much of the population has flocked to cities in a desperate search for a better life, has millions of street children – many not yet teenagers – living in makeshift huts, under bridges or in alleyways. The public response to street children is often anger directed at the children themselves. In Rio de Janeiro, police try to keep the numbers of street children in check. When this unrealistic policy fails, however, death squads may sweep through a neighbourhood, engaging in a bloody ritual of 'urban cleansing'. In Rio, several hundred street children are murdered each year. Often, too, children can become orphaned at an early age. Some may also be sold into slavery. We look at this further in Chapter 13.

## 2 Refugees and the displaced

There are a large number of people who have no 'home' in the world – who have been displaced. In 2009, the United Nations estimated that there were:

- 43.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide
- 15.2 million who were refugees
- 983,000 asylum seekers
- 27.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).

**Displaced peoples** are *those who often find themselves homeless in their own land*. This may be due to civil war, or to some environmental catastrophe through which they lose whatever home and possessions they may have had. An estimated 50 million people live off land that is rapidly deteriorating. After a time they will be unable to live or work off it, requiring them to move on. In 2009, there were estimated to be some 27 million people in this situation worldwide.

**Refugees** are people who *'flee their own country for political or economic reasons, or to avoid war and oppression'* (New Internationalist, 1998: 221).





Muddy brown floodwaters by shanty town huts, Dhaka, Bangladesh, South Asia

Source: Pearson Education Ltd/Digital Vision.

They are a central feature of the global world, and they usually experience a well-founded fear of persecution (Marfleet, 2006). In leaving their 'home', often with no choice, they leave behind most of their worldly possessions.

Asylum seekers flee their own country and seek sanctuary in another state. The number of claims has been increasing in recent years, but in 2009 there were nearly a million seeking asylum whose claims had not yet been adjudicated. Many came from Afghanistan, Colombia, Ethiopia, Myanmar and Zimbabwe seeking international protection.

Table 9.6 shows where the refugees are most likely to come from and go to. Most stay within their region of origin and by far the largest movements are in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Afghanistan has – for over 30 years – been the country with the greatest numbers leaving: one in four of all refugees and nearly 3 million in 2009. Neighbouring Pakistan is the country which received most refugees. Many are children (around 40 per cent in 2009). About a third live in camps and half flee to new urban areas.

There are also large movements from Iraq, Somalia, the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Renewed armed conflict and human rights violations in DRC and Somalia led to new refugee outflows and the movement of 277,000 people primarily to the Republic of the Congo (94,000) and Kenya (72,500).

Refugees are always politically controversial. On the one hand, they symbolise humanitarian need; and on the other, they raise in potent ways issues of racism and the symbolic boundaries of a nation-state (see Chapter 11). Refugees test the willingness of governments and their people to provide asylum. They can also lead to human trafficking, where people are sold their illegal passage into a new country. Some have estimated this to be the largest industry in the world (see Chapter 16).

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in 1950–1 to provide a major world structure for responding to the needs of refugees and to provide standards of protection under international law. Initially it

**Table 9.6** The world flow of refugees, 2010

WHERE THE REFUGEES GO TO . . .		WHERE THE REFUGEES COME FROM . . .	
Country/territory of asylum	Total refugees and people in refugee-like situations	Country of refugee/asylum seeker	Total refugees and people in refugee-like situations
Pakistan	1,740,711	Afghanistan	2,887,123
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	1,070,488	Iraq	1,785,212
Syrian Arab Rep.	1,054,466	Somalia	678,309
Germany	593,799	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	455,852
Jordan	450,756	Sudan	368,195
Kenya	358,928	Viet Nam	339,289
Chad	338,495	Myanmar	406,669
China	300,989	Eritrea	209,168
United States of America	275,461	Serbia	195,626
United Kingdom	269,363	China	180,558

Source: This is a simplified table of figures based on data in UNHCR, *Global Trends*, 2010.

focused on the displacement of Europeans caused by the Holocaust, the Second World War and the onset of the Cold War. It employed 33 staff and had a budget of \$300,000. Over the years it has come to deal with the displacement of large groups of the world's population. It now has a budget of over \$1 billion, employs 5,000 staff, has offices in 120 countries around the world and produces a major annual report (see, for example, *2009 Global Trends Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons* (online).

### 3 The ageing

We will see in Chapter 13 how the twenty-first century is confronting a major increase in elderly people. It is often believed that this 'age explosion' is predominantly to be found in Western societies. But in fact the figures are substantial for low-income societies. They are often ignored and rendered invisible in debates about international policy and aid: and if noticed, they can be seen as unproductive, uncreative, sick, dependent and passive. But ageing is occurring at a far greater pace in low-income societies and it raises severe problems. We consider this in Chapter 13 (see Harper, 2006: Ch. 8).

### 4 Women and poverty

Women in Sikandernagar, one of India's countless rural villages, begin work at 4.00 in the morning, lighting the fires, milking the buffalo, sweeping floors and walking to the well for water. They care for other family members as they rise. By 8.00, when many people in Europe are just beginning their day, these women move on to their 'second shift', working under the hot sun in the fields until 5.00 in the afternoon. Returning home, the women gather wood for their fires, all the time searching for whatever plants they can find to enrich the evening meal. The buffalo, too, are ready for a meal and the women tend to them. It is well past dark before their 18-hour day is over.

In rich societies, the work women do is typically unrecognised, undervalued and underpaid; women receive less income for their efforts than men do. In low-income countries, this pattern is even more pronounced. Women do most of the work in poor societies, and families depend on women's work to provide income. At the same time, just as tradition keeps many women from school, it also accords them primary responsibility for child-rearing and maintaining the household. In poor societies, the United Nations estimates, men own 90 per cent of the

## What the poor say

According to the World Bank, 'the poor are the true poverty experts'. In a major study, *Voices of the Poor* (2000), Deepa Narayan heard the voices of approximately 60,000 poor men and women from over 60 countries around the world. With striking similarity, poor people describe repeatedly and in distressing detail the impact of poverty. The large majority of poor people included in *Voices* said they are worse off now, have fewer economic opportunities, and live with greater insecurity than in the past. Here are a few of the things they said (look at the website for full details):

*Poverty is pain; it feels like a disease. It attacks a person not only materially but also morally. It eats away one's dignity and drives one into total despair.* A poor woman, Moldova

*Children are hungry, so they start to cry. They ask for food from their mother and their mother doesn't have it. Then the father is irritated, because the children are crying, and he takes it out on his wife. So hitting and disagreement break up the marriage.* Poor people in Bosnia

A group of young men in Jamaica ranked lack of self-confidence as the second biggest impact of poverty: *Poverty means we don't believe in self, we hardly travel out of the community . . . so frustrated, just locked up in the house all day.*

*My children were hungry and I told them the rice is*

*cooking, until they fell asleep from hunger.* An older man, Egypt

*Poor people cannot improve their status because they live day by day, and if they get sick then they are in trouble because they have to borrow money and pay interest.* Tra Vinh, Vietnam

*Security is knowing what tomorrow will bring and how we will get food tomorrow.* Bulgaria

*There is no control over anything, at any hour a gun could go off, especially at night.* A poor woman in Brazil

*The rich is the one who says: 'I am going to do it' and does it. The poor, in contrast, do not fulfil their wishes or develop their capacities.*

A poor woman in Brazil  
*Poverty is like living in jail, living under bondage, waiting to be free.* A young woman in Jamaica

*It is neither leprosy nor poverty which kills the leper, but loneliness.* Ghana

*When you are poor, nobody wants to speak with you. Everyone's sorry for you and no one wants to drink with you. You have no self-esteem and that's why some people start drinking.* A middle-aged man in Bulgaria

*Now there are hungry children, and before it was not so evident. There are children that knock on your door and ask for bread, children without shoes. This one would never see before.*

La Matanza, Argentina

*If we knew that there would be an end to this crisis, we would endure it somehow. Be it for one year, or even for*

*ten years. But now all we can do is sit and wait for the end to come.* A woman from Entropole, Bulgaria

In slums in Malawi, the physical conditions were so bad and hopeless that the poor said *the only way we can get out of poverty is through death.*

*The sewage runs in your front door, and when it rains, the water floods into the house and you need to lift the things . . . the waste brings some bugs, here we have rats, cockroaches, spiders, and even snakes and scorpions.*

A resident of Nova California, a slum in Brazil

In the Kyrgyz Republic, poor people said that they were forced to take many risks to survive, including stealing (with the risk of getting caught) or borrowing money (with the risk of becoming indebted). *The rich do not have to take this risk, they have money to protect themselves, and they also have power.*

*You grow up in an environment full of diseases, violence and drugs . . . you don't have the right to education, work or leisure, and you are forced to 'eat in the hands of the government' . . . so you are easy prey for the rulers. You have to accept whatever they give you.* A young woman, Padre Jordano, Brazil

Poor people describe four pervasive and systemic problems that affect their lives adversely almost everywhere: *corruption, violence, powerlessness and insecure livelihood.*

Source: [www.worldbank.org/poverty/data/trends/poorsay.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/data/trends/poorsay.htm).