Chapter 1 Instructor’s Manual

# Chapter Summary

## An Overview

* Sociology is a social scientific discipline that draws on a distinct set of concepts and methodologies to study the relationship between individuals and society. Specifically, it is concerned with establishing an understanding of “social facts,” “social actions,” and “social relationships.”
* At the heart of sociology is the concept of the “sociological imagination”. This term, coined by C. Wright Mills, described both the potential and promise of sociology: an ability to connect the individually lived experience and the social structures that affect it.
* Sociology is different than most types of knowledge people draw upon. It shares with other social scientific disciplines a core body of knowledge and methods in support of systematic analysis. Where sociology differs from the other social sciences is that it attempts to build a science of society instead of studying a specific part of it.

## Levels of Analysis

* Sociologists study all facets of society, large and small. The “Level of Analysis” refers to the scale of what is being studied:
  + macrosociology: large scale structural patterns and historical trends
  + microsociology: individual and small group interactions
  + institutional perspectives: falling on the continuum between macrosociology and microsociology, this refers to highlighting the rules and strategies defining how people relate to one another in a specific social domain.

## Thinking Relationally

* Sociologists find it useful to think how social forces intersect with one another. Since the social world can rarely, if ever, be recreated in a controlled setting, it is not always useful to think of a *single* social force, as if it exists in isolation. Rather, there are several paired concepts that form a useful foundation for learning, analyzing, and studying the social world. These five paired concepts underscore the principles (points) of sociological study.

### Solidarity and Conflict

* **Solidarity:** The sense of belonging and the connection that we have to a particular group.
* **Conflict**: Disagreement, opposition, and separation between individuals or groups.

### Power and Resistance

* **Power:** A social relationshipin which one individual or group is able to influence the conduct of other individuals or groups either directly through force or indirectly through authority, persuasion, or cultural expectation.
* **Resistance:** Opposition to the exercise of power.

### Inequality and Privilege

* **Inequality:** The uneven distribution of social resources.
* **Privilege:** Greater resources possessed by some individuals and groups compared to others.

### The Global and the Local

* **Global:** The interconnection of social life on the planet.
* **Local:** The specific settings of everyday life, including face-to-face relationships.

### Structure and Contingency

* **Structure:** The seen and unseen regular, organized patterns of social life.
* **Contingency:** Openness in social life produced by human choices and actions.

## Why Sociology?

* There are many good reasons to pursue sociology. Two skills deal with information literacy. These will be useful regardless of the career path pursued. Understanding sociological concepts helps people better identify how social forces intersect with lived life. In turn, this will help refine critical thinking abilities to help us ask the right questions and get the facts right when providing answers.

# Learning Objectives (“Learning Goals”)

## Define the Sociological Imagination

* The sociological imagination is the ability to connect “biography with history,” that is, to connect our individual life story with the historical and cultural patterns of the society in which we live.
* The sociological imagination shows us how individual choices, like the decision to get divorced, might be affected by wider social forces, such as economic change and the availability of jobs.
* The sociological imagination shows us that people’s lives are sometimes shaped in surprising ways by social change, for example, William Julius Wilson’s classic work showed the influence of structural change in race relations on inner city poverty.
* The sociological imagination shows that people can resist larger social forces too by acting in ways that change or challenge the social structure, like the Jamaican bobsled team did or by forming social movements for social change.

## Understand that There Are Different Levels of Social Things: Individuals, Relationships and Institutions

* Early sociologists defined sociology as a new science of social facts, social action, and social relationships. They identified a special social domain that was different than the level of individuals alone.
* Sociologists identify different levels of analysis and different levels of scale in research. They define microsociological, macrosociological, and institutional levels of analysis.
* Sociologists are interested in how causes at one level affect causes and outcomes at other levels. For example, sociologists ask: how do small-scale interactions in classrooms or job interviews sustain or reinforce large-scale social structures? Or, how are local actions connected to global outcomes?

## Understand that Sociologists Are Committed to the Norms of Scientific and Intellectual Community and Different Methods for Exploring the Social World

* Early sociologists like Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Albion Small were committed to the systematic and scientific study of social facts, social actions, and social patterns.
* Social-scientific knowledge is different than ordinary, everyday knowledge about the world because it self-consciously uses systematic strategies to collect accurate and useful information.
* Sociological research strategies are designed to eliminate or reduce bias, particularly confirmation bias, where people are more likely to think something is true because it confirms prior beliefs.
* A focus on research methods is one of the defining features of social science, including sociology.
* Sociology is distinct from the other social sciences that may focus on the political system or the economic system, because it is committed to multiple research methods to study the intersections between different dimensions of social life.

## Understand that Sociology Is Used in the Worlds of Work, Politics, and Other Domains of Social Life

* Sociologists are found in many different careers, including law, medicine, education, social work, the arts, public service, business.
* Sociology teaches a literacy of concepts and a literacy of data and information. Both these literacies involve concrete skills that are of interest to employers in many fields.

## Many Sociologists Pursue Sociology as a Way to Pursue Human Freedom and Social Justice

* Sociology is a perspective on social life that promotes understanding, human empowerment, and freedom. This has been true from the early years of the discipline, and many sociologists pursue sociology as a way to pursue human freedom and social justice.
* Sociologists understand humans as individuals with free will who make judgments about good and bad and right and wrong. Sometimes people will choose to support the social structures and other times they will act to change them.

# Lecture Outline

## The Study of Society … But What Is Society?

We can find more clues about what sociology is by looking at what the early sociologists studied. French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858–1917**),** for example, defined sociology as a scientific discipline devoted to the discovery of *social facts* (Durkheim 1895). He argued that these facts described a level of reality, external to individuals, that influences their lives. For Max Weber (1864–1920), co-founder of the German Sociological Association, the goal of sociology was to understand *social actions*. He wanted to understand how people share meanings and act together. For Albion Small (1854–1926), who created the first American sociology department at the University of Chicago, sociology was the science of *social relationships*. Small saw that while our individual lives are patterned by the organization of group life, they are also capable of change. All three of these founding figures were committed to collecting facts about social actions and social relationships so they could explain why they occurred in the particular way they did, and not in other ways.

Other influential sociologists have emphasized the useful resources that sociology offers that people can use in their everyday lives. C. Wright Mills (1916–62), for example, promised that sociology could help us to understand the problems we face, by showing how personal troubles are often connected to larger social issues. Zygmunt Bauman (1925–2017) believed that sociology should help us to understand the hopes, desires, and worries of other people. This understanding is important, he thought, because it is the foundation for making positive social connections and living peacefully with those around us. Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) argued that sociology is a “martial art.” He meant that sociology is a method for defending ourselves in the face of powerful, dominating social forces. For these three sociologists, sociology is an intellectual perspective that promotes social understanding, human empowerment, and freedom.

Society includes any relationship which involves human beings and in which there is social meaning. Sociology is primarily concerned with analyzing the following:

* *social acts*: a level of reality, external to individuals, that influences their lives (Durkheim 1895);
* *social actions*: how people share meaning and act together (Weber, Baehr, and Wells 2002);
* *social relationships*: individual lives are patterned but we also make choices (Small and Vincent 1894).

## The Sociological Imagination

The moral perspective shared by Mills, Bauman, and Bourdieu asserts that sociology should be a force for good. It holds that sociology should help us to recognize and challenge structures of domination and inequality; encourage greater understanding, tolerance, and empathy for different points of view; enable us to recognize that larger social forces shape our successes and failures; and prompt us to think critically about how the world around us came to be organized the way it is.

For Mills, this kind of thinking defines the **sociological imagination**. “The sociological imagination,” Mills (1959: 6) wrote, “enables us to grasp history and biography and the relation between the two in society.” Mills wanted us to be able to connect our own private troubles to larger public issues. To do that, we need to understand not only how our society is organized, but how it is different both from other societies in the past and other places in the present. Mills argued that we need to understand why certain types of people tend to be successful in our society, asking how successful people are selected and in what ways the characteristics of successful people change over time. Mills believed that sociologists were in the best position to provide good answers to these questions.

Sociologists often use the idea of the sociological imagination to explain why what they do is important. Mills and the sociological imagination are featured in every sociological textbook written in the United States, and books like William Julius Wilson’s *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987) are held up as examples of the kind of deep, systematic sociological research that needs to be part of the public conversation about important social issues

## The Discipline of Sociology

As one of the main social science disciplines in the university, sociology has always been committed to the idea that systematic and scientific research is the best way to understand the social world. Almost all of the early proponents of sociology were attracted to the prospect of developing a science of society. While most of the early sociologists were trained in other disciplines, such as philosophy, law, and theology, they embraced sociology because they believed that it offered a more scientific way of understanding the social world.

The goals of a scientific sociology are based on two related ideas: (1) if we want to understand a social issue, it is important to get the facts right; and (2) it is often quite difficult to get the facts right.

## Sociology and Everyday Knowledge

Social-scientific knowledge is different than ordinary, everyday knowledge about the world. In most of social life, people tend to look for information that reinforces the beliefs they already have. This tendency to look for information that reinforces personal beliefs is known as **confirmation bias**. As an antidote to confirmation bias, sociology and the other social-science disciplines are an important part of your college education.

While the discipline of sociology is part of the social sciences, it is also distinct from the other social science disciplines. The main difference is that sociologists want to understand how different social things are related to one another, and sociologists combine different levels of analysis to achieve that understanding.

Sociology has always had grand ambitions. Rather than trying to understand a particular part of social life, sociology aims to develop a science of society itself.

## Levels of Analysis

Sociologists think about social issues in terms of historical trends and structural patterns. Instead of relying on their own personal observations and opinions, they collect data systematically in order to identify patterns that were not obvious at the outset. They are also interested in combining different **levels of analysis** in their research. A level of analysis refers to the size or the scale of the research you are conducting.

Sociologists commonly define three levels of analysis. Microsociology is the level of individuals and small group interaction. Macrosociology is the level of large-scale structural patterns and historical trends, including the workings of the economic, political, and cultural systems. In between microsociology and macrosociology is the intermediate or institutional level of analysis. This is the level of analysis of specific institutions and social relationships.

### Microsociology

Microsociology examines the everyday interactions of individuals and small groups. It emphasizes all of the things that we have to do to coordinate our actions with the people around us to establish what sociologists call “a shared definition of the situation.” In particular, microsociology focuses on the rules that we follow in social situations, as well as the strategies we use to bend those rules to our advantage.

Macrosociology explores how large-scale historical trends and structural patterns influence social life. We do not choose the society into which we are born. The opportunities we will have and the challenges we will face in our lives are not entirely of our own making. This is why the sociological imagination tells us to look at the relationship between biography and history. The choices we make in our lives matter, but they are structured by the society into which we are born as well as our own position in that society.

### Institutional Perspectives

An established system of rules and strategies that defines how people are related to each other and how they should act in a given social situation. Sociologists use the term in two ways: to refer to the coordinated activities of many different kinds of organizations in a particular domain (the overall social organization of religion, the family, or the economy), and to refer to specific organizations within a domain that follow and contribute to wider institutional logics.

## Thinking Relationally: The Paired Concepts

The social world is complicated. The choices we make in one part of our lives have a cascading effect on the rest of our lives. This is why sociologists focus on the relationships between different social forces.

When we encourage you to think relationally, this means that we want you to try to avoid thinking about any *single* social force as if it exists in isolation. To help you to begin thinking relationally, we offer you five sets of paired concepts. These paired concepts include many of the key terms that sociologists have developed for thinking about the social world.

### Solidarity and Conflict

When people make moral judgments between in-groups and out-groups, they create categories of “us” and “them.” **Solidarity** is the sense of belonging and connection that we have to a particular group. It is the sense of “us” feeling connected. But solidarity also produces **conflict** because it always produces a “them.” We can only feel connected to a group by drawing boundaries around it, and these boundaries only work by creating a division between inside and outside.

The relationship between solidarity and conflict is easy to see in everyday life and can range from the mundane to the very serious. The point is that solidarity and conflict are deeply interconnected and the relationship between solidarity and conflict produces some of the most powerful social forces in our lives.

### Power and Resistance

Sociologists understand **power** as a social relationshipin which one individual or group is able to influence the conduct of other individuals or groups (Scott 2006: 127). **Resistance** is the other side of power. The exercise of power always produces resistance. People resent being forced to do things. They dislike feeling trapped. They do not like to feel powerless.

The relationship between power and resistance is a very complicated and open-ended relationship, which plays itself out in small-scale interactions, in social institutions, and in larger social structures. It is organized very much like a game, because each “move” by one player will influence the next move by the other. Making things more complicated is the fact that the different moves are not equally available to all players.

### Inequality and Privilege

**Inequality** refers to the uneven distribution of social resources. Inequality exists in all societies, and for virtually every resource that people care about. Patterns of social inequality reflect key social divisions, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, social class, and geography. Inequality creates the social conditions for **privilege** because of the advantages that flow to people at the top of the hierarchy. People with privilege have more resources, and are able to segregate themselves from the less fortunate. Sociological research helps to show how inequality and privilege are inextricably related to each other, locally, globally, and historically.

### The Global and the Local

Social life on our planet is increasingly interconnected. Sociologists refer to this international integration of social life and increasing global interconnection as globalization. Despite increased globalization, we still live much of our lives in specific local places. We spend months and years at a time without ever leaving the city in which we live. We spend most of our time with a small number of friends, family, and work colleagues.

Sociologists emphasize that the local and the global do not exist in isolation, but are related to one another. Global influences can be seen in almost every local setting, and they are themselves shaped by and adapted to local conditions. People in today’s world live globally and locally at the same time.

### Structure and Contingency

While social life is patterned in many important ways, this does not mean that the patterns control us completely. As we move through the world, we are continually reading and interpreting the social cues around us. There is contingency, or openness, in action––outcomes are not completely determined by the regular patterns in social life that sociologists call **social structures**. Because social structures have to be reproduced in our everyday actions, this means that they are connected to the openness of social life.

## Why Sociology?

There are many reasons to pursue a sociological life, but two literacy skills acquired by a study of sociology are especially important. First, sociology teaches a literacy of concepts. Second, sociology teaches data and information literacy, by developing a range of research methods that help you to think critically and creatively about how to get the facts right when asking social questions. Third, and perhaps most important, is the larger promise of sociology: that it will inform the pursuit of human freedom and social justice. How? The goal is not to tell people what to think, but rather to help us all think more clearly and comprehensively about our shared social life.

# Key Terms and Definitions

**Confirmation bias**: The tendency to look for information that reinforces prior beliefs.

**Conflict**: Disagreement, opposition and separation between individuals or groups.

**Contingency**: The seen and unseen regular, organized patterns of social life.

**Globalization**: The interconnection of social life on the planet.

**Inequality**: The uneven distribution of social resources.

**Institution**: An established system of rules and strategies that defines how people are related to each other and how they should act in a given social situation.

**Institutional level of analysis**: Intermediate level of analysis focused on specific institutions and social relationships

**Level of analysis**: The size or scale of the objects sociologists study.

**Local**: The specific particular settings of everyday life, including face-to-face relationships.

**Macrosociology:** Level of analysis exploring how large-scale historical trends and structural patterns influence social life.

**Microsociology**: Level of analysis focused on examining the everyday interactions of individuals and small groups. It emphasizes all of the things that we have to do to coordinate our actions with the people around us to establish what sociologists call “a shared definition of the situation.”

**Power**: A social relationshipin which one individual or group is able to influence the conduct of other individuals or groups either directly through force or indirectly through authority, persuasion, or cultural expectation.

**Privilege**: The greater resources possessed by some individuals and groups compared to others.

**Research methods**: Strategies to collect accurate and useful information about the world.

**Resistance**: Opposition to the exercise of power.

**Social structures**: The seen and unseen regular, organized patterns of social life.

**Sociological imagination**: The ability to see the connections between individual lives, wider social structures, and the way they affect each other.

**Solidarity**: The sense of belonging and the connection that we have to a particular group.

# Discussion/Essay/Critical Response Prompts

This section revisits the Review Questions that appear at the end of each chapter in the text and elaborates or expands on them with additional exercises or critical response prompts. These are intended to be modular in that they can be used in a face-to-face class, in a hybrid course, or in a fully on-line course. They can also be used as prompts for discussions, essay, or critical response type questions.

**What is sociology? Describe the three basic elements of sociology.**

Have students watch and/or listen to the following (videos/podcasts/articles) as prompts to highlight the points below:

Sociology is interested in social facts, social actions, and social relationships. It looks at how individual actions are shaped by larger patterns that structure people’s social lives. (Zygmunt Bauman: Behind the world's “crisis of humanity” : https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/2016/07/zygmunt-bauman-world-crisis-humanity-160722085342260.html.)

Sociology is based on systematic research. Sociologists collect facts about the social world and are interested in explaining why things happen the way they do, and not otherwise. (See Pew Research Center’s Social & Demographic Trends: https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/. Have students review any number or combination of articles available.)

Sociology hopes to provide people with a deeper understanding about the world around them, so they can empower themselves and try to make the world a better place*.* (A special programme on Pierre Bourdieu: https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b07gg1kb.)

**What is the sociological imagination? Give an example of a research study that exemplifies the sociological imagination.**

Begin a discussion where you, the instructor, offer how you came to develop your sociological imagination. The nature of the anecdote and the level shared are at the discretion of the instructor but it should include (1) a genuine lived experience where a connection was made between something individually experienced and an awareness of broader social forces playing a role in that experience; (2) whether or not this was before any formal training /instruction in sociology; and (3) what is the “promise of sociology,” given the event? In other words, what can sociology add to your understanding of the event, and how can that insight be made actionable?

Any of the links offered in prompt 1 could be used here, but if specific examples are needed, thr Pew Center prompt is useful and continually updated.

**How is sociology different from other social sciences, such as psychology or economics?**

Share the following quote from Emilie Durkheim:

Sociological method as we practice it rests wholly on the basic principle that social facts must be studied as things, that is, as realities external to the individual. There is no principle for which we have received more criticism; but none is more fundamental. Indubitably for sociology to be possible, it must above all have an object all its own. It must take cognizance of a reality which is not in the domain of other sciences ... there can be no sociology unless societies exist, and that societies cannot exist if there are only individuals.

(Durkheim, E. 2013. *Suicide*. Available at: www Snowballpublishing Co.; Suicide: A Study in Sociology (1897), trans. J. A. Spaulding and G. Simpson (1952), 37–8.)

Use this quote by Durkheim to highlight how sociology is distinct from both common sense/popular knowledge as well as other academic disciplines. It would be helpful for the instructor to lead discussion by refreshing/asking students about key concepts like *social facts*.

If there is a desire to expand the conversation to include how sociology compares to the “physical” (not “hard”) sciences, use the following quote to prompt:

In science, when human behavior enters the equation, things go nonlinear. That’s why Physics is easy and Sociology is hard.

Neil deGrass Tyson. @ neiltyson. Twitter. 5 Feb 2016. https://twitter.com/neiltyson/status/695759776752496640

**What is macrosociology? Give an example of a macrosociological approach to the understanding of the world.**

We exist in a social world of the “big,” the “small,” and everything on the continuum in-between. The instructor should pick one mundane and quotidian routine that the majority of students are likely to go through on any given day the course is held. This could be something like their routines that take them from where they started their day to class. This would include actions like when to get up, how to dress, what to eat (if one does, and if so, what, how, and why, what route was taken to their class, etc.). For each, ask how micro, macro, and meso/institutional level factors played a role in their actions. For instance, ask students how one “arrived to class.” They should be asked to consider micro factors like timing, traffic/weather/interactions with other driver(s) and driving conditions. If telecommuting, how do they connect to the class digitally? Where do they work from, and how do they interact with (sometimes less than technologically savvy) professors and other students; institutional factors like tolls and traffic and rules, the industry of infrastructure production and maintenance (i.e. road work), automotive production and maintenance (i.e. gas stations and repair facilities), and campus parking (or in the case of our digital learners, ISPs and LMSs/CMSs campus academic computing/IT departments); and macro factors like accessibility to higher education and/or digital resources (i.e. the availability of broadband internet access).

**What is an institution? How do institutions shape our lives? Given an example of an institutional understanding of the world.**

Bring up the website for the school in which the course is being taught (www.newpaltz.edu; www.albany.edu; www.mtholyoke.edu could be used if needed). Gather evidence from the website and discuss how the school can be thought of as an institution, and prompt discussion about how it is folded into a broader institutional academic context within an even broader field of culture. Most schools will have an organizational chart to visualize the administrative structure available on their website. (If needed, the following is used for SUNY New Paltz: https://www.newpaltz.edu/media/president/Campus%20ORG%20Chart%20-%20Feb.2019.pdf.)

Instructors may want to consult the following for additional material:

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2008. *Homo Academicus*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

DiMaggio, Paul J., and Walter W. Powell. 2008. *The* *New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Weber, Max. 2001. Bureaucracy. In Gerth, Hans, and C. Wright Mills (eds.). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. London: Routledge.

**Why do sociologists insist that we think about the social world relationally?**

Select any pair of relational concepts (or multiple pairs of relational concepts) and see specific prompts below.

**How are *solidarity* and *conflict* connected to one another? Give an example of how *solidarity* produces *conflict*.**

Prompt discussion about paired concepts with the following:

For Whom the Cowbell Tolls: https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/whom-cowbell-tolls

**What is *inequality*? What are three ways that *inequality* is organized in society? How does *inequality* help to produce *privilege*?**

Prompt discussion about paired concepts above with the following:

“Plague of inequality” haunts U.S. 50 years after a landmark study on racial division: https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/plague-of-inequality-haunts-u-s-50-years-after-a-landmark-study-on-racial-division

How economic inequality might affect a society’s well-being: https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-economic-inequality-might-affect-a-societys-well-being.

**What is *globalization*? Give an example of how the *global* and the *local* are connected to each other.**

Prompt discussion about paired concepts above with the following:

How technological innovation could amplify income inequality: https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-technological-innovation-could-amplify-income-inequality

Additional exercises/critical response prompts:

Review the American Sociological Association’s “Careers In Sociology” website: https://www.asanet.org/career-center/careers-sociology. Use this as a prompt to discuss what one can do with a sociology major, minor, or even just exposure to the discipline for those who are fulfilling a requirement.

Review course offerings in your discipline, at your school (if a two-year school, it might be useful to also include schools that offer four-year and graduate degrees). Browse sections of the text’s table of contents and highlight the connections between what is going to be covered, and what other sociology courses are available for students to take. This can be highlighted more specifically throughout the semester as individual topics/chapters are engaged.

# In-Class Activities and Project Assignments

## Discovering Your Sociological Imagination:

As you read this book, you are most likely doing it in an academic setting, and as part of a course curriculum. Think about the actions and choices that brought you to this book. At the very least, you had to select a course and a time. There were probably several factors that went into that choice (e.g. Is this course a requirement? Does it fit in your schedule? What’s the reputation of the professor?). Can you generate five factors that brought you to this course? Compare these findings with other students in the course. What similarities and differences do you note between your factors and the factors described by others? Why do you think they are important?

## Levels of Analysis

Developing “sociological sight” takes practice, and it often begins with challenging previously held ideas about how the social world “works.” One useful place to start is to look at something you are intimately familiar with: yourself. We all are individuals making choices based on a variety of motivations. The choices we make are integral in forming the social relationships we engage in. In turn, these are connected to the institutions structuring collective social life. For instance, you are a student who chose to study a specific topic (sociology), most likely for a variety of reasons. However, you will study that topic in the company of others (faculty, staff, and fellow students), who also made choices that brought them here, which may be similar or dissimilar to your own. Moreover, this is all happening within a specific institutional setting (academic/education), operating under its own logic or sets of rules. What other examples from your life can you describe in terms of individual action, social relationships, and social institutions?

## Sociology and Public Life

Sociology has much to offer, but sometimes its utility has not been recognized. Read the following article. What is the central point being made by the author? Where do you see the paired concepts presented in the article, and what support can you provide? Why do you think sociology has not played a more prominent role in public life compared to other social sciences?

Neil Irwin. "What if Sociologists Had as Much Influence as Economists?; Economic View." *The New* *York Times*, March 17, 2017

## Applying Concepts to Analyzing the Text

Revisit the discussion on Colin Kaepernick at the beginning of the chapter. Use the five paired concepts to create a sociological description of the events and actions. How does a sociological description built from the five paired concepts differ from a description based on everyday common sense? What might you have to consider when comparing a sociological description of actions and events related to Colin Kaepernick to those accounts that come from non-sociological sources (e.g. a newspaper, talk show, blog, or social media post)?

## Media and Data Literacy

Many of us are increasingly coming across the information we use to make decisions and think about our world through social media. However, social media is in part designed to provide us with content that we are interested in. Although more information is available, the personalized curation of content online raises the chances that we only come across information we prefer. How does this relate to the issue of confirmation bias? What are some strategies you can think of to identify and avoid confirmation bias when viewing online information? In what ways do you think sociology might be able to provide useful tools to help you to this end?

Use the following podcast as a discussion prompt: The Curious Case of the Russian Flash Mob at the West Palm Beach Cheesecake Factory: https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/curious-case-russian-flash-mob-west-palm-beach-cheesecake-factory