

table 1.1 Minorities in the U.S. Population

Percent of Total Population	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
White alone ¹	79.3%	77.6%	75.8%	73.9%	72.1%
Black alone	13.1	13.5	13.9	14.3	14.6
Asian alone	4.6	5.4	6.2	7.1	8.0
All other races ²	3.0	3.5	4.1	4.7	5.3
Hispanic (may be of any race) ³	15.5	17.5	20.1	22.3	24.4
White alone, not Hispanic	65.1	61.3	57.5	53.7	50.1

Note: The U.S. census counts race and Hispanic ethnicity separately. Thus Hispanics may fall into any of the race categories. As a result, only the percentages for White alone, Black alone, Asian alone, and all other races add to 100%.

¹The U.S. Census Bureau uses this designation to refer to those who indicated on the census form that they were only of one race.

²Includes American Indian and Alaska Natives alone, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders alone, and those of two or more races.

³See Note above.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2004. "U.S. Interim Projections by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin." www.census.gov/pc/www/usinterimproj/

she pursues a career. On the one hand, these are individual experiences for all three people, but they are linked in a pattern of globalization that shapes the lives of all three. The Latina domestic may have

a family whom she has left in a different nation so that she can afford to support them. The corporation for which the Los Angeles woman works may have invested in a new plant overseas that employs cheap labor, resulting in the unemployment of the man in Peoria. The man in Peoria may have seen immigrant workers moving into his community, and one of his children may have made a friend at school who speaks a language other than English.

Such processes are increasingly shaping many of the subjects examined in this book—work, family, education, politics, just to name a few. Without a global perspective, you would not be able to fully understand the experience of any one of the people just mentioned much less how society is being shaped by these processes of change and global context. Throughout this book, we will use a global

perspective to understand some of the developments shaping contemporary life in the United States.

The Development of Sociological Theory

Like the subjects it studies, sociology is itself a social product. Sociology first emerged in western Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this period, the political and economic systems of Europe were rapidly changing. Monarchy, the rule of society by kings and queens, was disappearing in western Europe. These changes generated new ways of thinking. Religion as the system of authority and law was giving way to scientific authority. At the same time, capitalism grew. Contact between different societies increased, and worldwide economic markets developed. The traditional ways of the past were giving way to a new social order. The time was ripe for a new understanding.

The Influence of the Enlightenment

The **Enlightenment** in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe had an enormous influence on the development of modern sociology. Also known as the Age of Reason, the Enlightenment was characterized by faith in the ability of human reason to solve society's problems. Intellectuals believed that there were natural laws and processes in society to be discovered and used for the general good. Modern science was gradually supplanting traditional and religious explanations for natural phenomena with theories confirmed by experiments.

The earliest sociologists promoted a vision of sociology grounded in careful observation. **Auguste Comte** (1798–1857), a French philosopher who coined the term



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Globalization brings diverse cultures together, but it is also a process by which Western markets have penetrated much of the world.