



Robert Bremner/PhotoEdit

Understanding diversity is important in a society comprising so many different groups, each with unique, but interconnected, experiences.

thinking sociologically

What are some of the sources of *diversity* on your campus? What questions might a sociologist pose about the significance of diversity in this environment?

Society in Global Perspective

No society can be understood apart from the global context that now influences the development of all societies. The social and economic system of any one society is increasingly intertwined with those of other nations. Coupled with the increasing ease of travel and telecom-

munication, this means that a global perspective is necessary to understand change both in the United States and in other parts of the world.

To understand globalization, you must look beyond the boundaries of your own society to see how patterns in any given society are increasingly being shaped by the connections between societies. Comparing and contrasting societies across different cultures is valuable. It helps you see patterns in your own society that you might otherwise take for granted, and it enriches your appreciation of the diverse patterns of culture that mark human society and human history. A global perspective, however, goes beyond just comparing different cultures; it also helps you see how events in one society or community may be linked to events occurring on the other side of the globe.

For instance, return to the example of unemployment that C. Wright Mills used to distinguish troubles and issues. One man may lose his job in Peoria, Illinois, and a woman in Los Angeles may employ a Latina domestic worker to take care of her child while

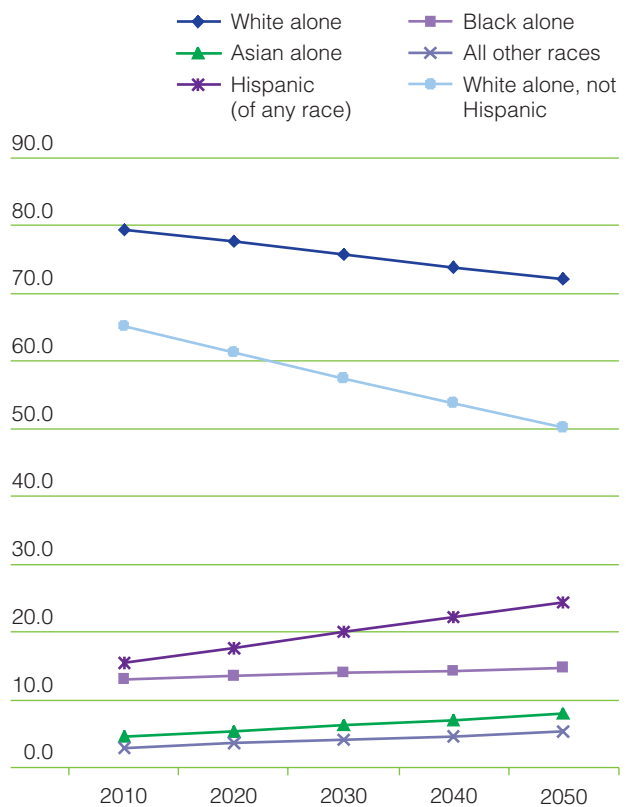


FIGURE 1.1 Percent of U.S. Population by Race and Ethnicity

It is a social fact that by 2050 White, non-Hispanics will make up half the U.S. population. Using the information above, what will the population percentages for different racial-ethnic groups be when you are thirty? Fifty? How do you think this will affect your life? How does this illustrate how social facts influence the lives of individual people and diverse groups in society?

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

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