

How Societies Work

Human Social Life Across Time and Space

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Volume 1

Outline

Introduction Understanding How Societies Work

I. Beginning

- **Where Did Modern Humans Come From?**
- **Why Is the Human Brain So Large?**
- **Was There An Ancient Cognitive Revolution?**
- **Is There a Language Instinct?**

II. Eating

- **Do Humans Have Innate Tastes?**
- **What Determines Human Dietary Habits?**
- **Why are Cows Sacred and Pigs Abominable?**
- **Dining on Dogs and Cats? You Can't Be Serious?**

- **Are Bugs and Worms Tasty?**
- **Why Do People Sometimes Eat Each Other?**
- **Why Do Some Like it Hot?**
- **Who Invented Milk Drinking?**

III. Working

- **What Was Hunting and Gathering Like?**
- **And Was It a Good Way to Live?**
- **Were Hunter-Gatherers Environmentalists?**
- **Why Agriculture?**
- **From Digging Sticks and Hoes to the Plow: Why Did Agriculture Become Intensified?**
- **Why Animal Herding?**
- **Do Humans Have a Natural Predilection for Economic Exchange?**
- **Are Premodern Peoples Economically Rational?**

IV. Copulating

- **Why Do People Like to Copulate?**
- **What Kinds of Partners Do Men Want?**
- **What Kinds of Partners Do Women Want?**
- **Do Dominant Males Leave More Offspring?**
- **Why Homosexuality?**
- **Why Eunuchs?**

- **Why Does Beauty Matter?**
- **Why Sexual Jealousy?**
- **Why are Men Unfaithful?**
- **Why Do Men Rape?**
- **Why Female Genital Mutilation?**
- **Why Masturbation, Bestiality, Celibacy, and Other Exotic Sexual Practices?**

V. Mating and Relating

- **Why Are Families So Important?**
- **Why is There an Incest Taboo?**
- **Who Are the Relatives?**
- **Which Ones to Live With?**
- **How Many Children? Hunter-Gatherer Birth Spacing**
- **How Many Children? Agricultural and Industrial Societies**
- **Why Marry a Cousin?**
- **Why Do Some Men Have Many Wives?**
- **Why Do Some Women Have Many Husbands?**
- **Why, Then, Are Some Societies Monogamous?**
- **Why Favor Sons over Daughters (or Vice Versa)?**
- **Why Do Sex Ratios Vary?**
- **Why Do Women Marry Up (and Men Don't)?**
- **Why Do Some Men Pay to Get Wives?**
- **Why Do Some Women Pay to Get Husbands?**

- **Why Do Mothers Monopolize Child Care?**
- **How and Why is Maternal Love Contingent?**
- **Is Childhood a Modern Invention?**
- **Why Infanticide?**
- **What Do Fathers Do (And What is Life Like Without Them)?**
- **Is There a War Over the Family?**
- **Why Divorce?**
- **How Does Divorce Affect Children?**
- **Why Cinderella?**
- **Why Are Some Men Violent Toward Women?**
- **Why Do Radical Family Experiments Invariably Fail?**

VI. Striving, Achieving, and Dominating

- **Do Humans Naturally Seek Status, Wealth, and Power?**
- **Is Inequality Universal?**
- **Which Societies Are the Most Unequal?**
- **How Do Chiefs Come to Power?**
- **And Kings, Emperors, and Other Monarchs?**
- **Why Oriental Despots?**
- **Is Slavery an Ancient Practice?**
- **Why Slavery in the New World?**
- **Was American Slavery Worse than Other Slave Systems?**
- **Were Some American Slaveholders Black?**
- **Why Was Slavery Abolished?**

- **Why Colonies?**
- **Why Did Colonialism End?**

VII. Engendering

- **Why Male Domination?**
- **Why Female Seclusion?**
- **Why Have Women Become Emancipated?**
- **Is There a Glass Ceiling?**
- **Why Do Women Live Longer than Men?**
- **Is Masculinity Just a Cultural Construct?**
- **Is There a War Against Boys?**
- **Are Males in Decline?**
- **Why Sexual Harassment?**
- **What Would a Gender Balance Sheet Look Like?**
- **Is Complete Gender Equality Possible?**

VIII. Fighting and Killing

- **Demonic Males: Are Humans Evolved Chimps?**
- **Why Homicide?**
- **Why War? (Meat, Women, or Something Else)?**
- **When is War a Business?**
- **How Did War Become Industrialized?**
- **Why Cruelty?**

- **Why Rebellions and Revolutions?**
- **Why Mafias?**
- **Why Terrorism?**

IX. Differentiating

- **Do Humans Have Genetic Interests?**
- **Where Does Racial and Ethnic Conflict Come From?**
- **Is Race Merely a Social Construct?**
- **Why Racism?**
- **Why Genocide?**
- **Why Apartheid?**
- **Why Are Jews So Successful?**
- **And the Chinese Too?**
- **Can Affirmative Action be Defended?**
- **Should We Pay Reparations for Slavery?**

X. Modernizing

- **Why Capitalism?**
- **Why Industrialism?**
- **How Did Slow Capitalism Become Fast?**
- **Does Capitalism Exploit People?**
- **How to Get Ahead in Modern Capitalism (Or, Who Ends Up Where?)**

- **Why the “Great Equalizing”?**
- **Is a New Cognitive Elite Emerging?**
- **And is it a “New Class”?**
- **Why Socialism?**
- **Why Leninism?**
- **Why Did Socialism and Leninism Collapse?**
- **Where Did the Modern Nation-State Come From?**
- **Why Democracy?**
- **Why is Democracy So Difficult to Maintain?**
- **Why Mass Education?**
- **Why Welfare States?**
- **What Accounts for American Exceptionalism?**
- **Why Are Some Countries Rich and Others Poor?**
- **Why Is East Asia Rising?**
- **And Is India Next in Line?**
- **Do We Have a Postindustrial Society?**
- **Why is Globalization Occurring?**
- **And is Globalization Good or Bad?**

Volume 2

Outline

I. Believing and Ritualizing

- **Why are People Religious?**
- **Why Rituals?**
- **Why Sacrifice?**
- **Why Shamans, Diviners, and Healers?**
- **Why Prophets and Priests?**
- **Why Polytheism?**
- **Why Monotheism?**
- **Why Are Eastern and Western Religions Different?**
- **Why Has Christianity Been So Successful?**
- **How Religious Were the Middle Ages?**
- **Why Protestants?**
- **Why Revitalization Movements?**
- **Is the World Becoming Secular?**
- **Is God a Delusion?**
- **Will Religion Disappear?**
- **Is There a Coming War Between Secularists and Religionists?**

II. Moralizing

- **How Do Philosophers Invent Moral Theories?**
- **Is Morality Relative?**
- **Or Is There a Natural Moral Sense?**
- **Why are Humans Self-Deceivers?**
- **Why Has Morality Changed?**
- **Why be Moral if the Universe Has no Purpose?**

III. Thinking

- **Does the Human Mind Have Innate Biases?**
- **Why Philosophy?**
- **What Was the Enlightenment?**
- **Why Science?**
- **Is Science a Phallogentric Social Construct?**
- **Is a “Theory of Everything” Possible?**
- **Are We Witnessing the End of Science?**
- **What is the Anthropic Principle?**
- **Can the Sciences be Unified?**

IV. Learning

- **Why Universities?**
- **Are Americans Anti-Intellectuals?**
- **Why is Our Educational System in Crisis?**
- **How Should Education Be Reformed?**
- **What Would an Ideal University Look Like?**
- **Why Human Achievement through the Ages?**
- **Why Do Some Individuals and Groups Achieve More than Others?**

V. Depicting

- **Why Art?**
- **Why Mass versus Elite Art?**
- **Why Impressionists, Cubists, and Surrealists?**
- **Why Music?**
- **Why Symphonies, Rock and Roll, and Jazz?**
- **Why Literature?**

VI. Postmodernizing

- **Have We Become Postmodern?**
- **What is the Self?**
- **Why Has the Self Become Sacred?**

- **Are We Becoming a Narcissistic Society?**
- **Why Do We Have a Sensate Culture?**
- **Are We Decivilizing?**
- **Have Grown-Ups Disappeared?**
- **How Did the Modern Family Emerge?**
- **Why Has the Family Changed?**
- **Why Have Children Become Priceless?**
- **And Also Less Common?**
- **How Has Intimacy Been Transformed?**
- **Why is World Immigration Accelerating?**
- **Is the World Becoming Borderless?**
- **Why Political Correctness?**
- **Can Multiculturalism Succeed?**
- **Has War Disappeared in the Rich Democracies?**
- **Can War Be Abolished?**
- **Is Global Warming Real?**
- **And If So, What Should be Done About It?**

VII. Changing

- **How and Why Do Societies Evolve?**
- **Why are Some Changes Cyclical?**
- **Why Do Societies Collapse?**
- **Is Western Civilization Headed for Collapse?**

VIII. Projecting

- **What Might the Future Hold?**
- **Is A World Government Possible? . . .**
- **. . . Or Desirable?**
- **Is the Singularity Near?**

IX. Imagining

- **Why is There Something Rather than Nothing?**
- **Does the Universe Have a Purpose?**
- **What is the Meaning of Human Existence?**
- **Then What Are You Doing Reading This Book?**