Sociology Understanding and Changing the Social World Brief Edition Version 2 0 2nd edition Barkan Solutions Manual

SKU: 9781453384893-SOLUTIONS

Sociology Understanding and Changing the Social World Brief Edition Version 2 0 2nd edition Barkan Solutions Manual

Chapter 2
Culture and Society

2. Culture and the Sociological Perspective

1. Describe examples of how culture influences behavior.
2. Explain why sociologists might favor cultural explanations of behavior over biological explanations.

Section Outline

- Culture is a critical component of any society and even a natural act such as kissing seems best understood as something we learn to enjoy from our culture.
- Culture influences even the gestures we use when we interact, how far apart we stand from each other when we talk, and the values we consider most important for our children to learn, to name just a few.
- Because humans have such a large, complex central nervous system, we are less controlled by biology.
- The major reasons sociologists favor culture over biology are,
    - Many behaviors differ greatly among societies in ways that show the strong impact of culture.
    - Second, biology cannot easily account for why groups and locations differ in their rates of committing certain behaviors.
- Many sociologists also warn of certain implications of biological explanations.
    - First, these explanations implicitly support the status quo. Because it is difficult to change biology, any problem with biological causes cannot be easily fixed.
    - Earlier, perceived biological differences among races and religions were used to justify forced sterilization and mass violence, including genocide, against certain groups.
    - Some scholars also fear that biological explanations of human behavior might be used to support views of biological inferiority.

Key Takeaways

- Culture refers to the symbols, language, beliefs, values, and artifacts that are a critical part of any society.
- Because culture influences people's beliefs and behaviors, culture is a key concept to the sociological perspective.
- Many sociologists are wary of biological explanations of behavior, in part because these explanations implicitly support the status quo and may be used to justify claims of biological inferiority.

Exercises

1. Have you ever traveled outside the United States? If so, describe one cultural difference you remember in the nation you visited?
   Answer: Students needs to identify a country they have visited outside the United States and describe a cultural difference they have observed. For students who have not visited

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any other country, invite them to research using the Internet in order to learn about some cultural differences.

2. Have you ever traveled within the United States to a very different region (e.g. urban vs. rural, or another part of the country) from the one in which you grew up? If so, describe one cultural difference you remember in the region you visited?
   Answer: The students are supposed to compare the culture of the place they live in to that of another place in the United States. Students should be able to identify various aspects of culture, material and nonmaterial while discussing the cultural differences.

3. Do you share the concern of many sociologists over biological explanations of behavior? Why or why not?
   Answer: Many sociologists warn of certain implications of biological explanations. First, they say, these explanations implicitly support the status quo. Because it is difficult to change biology, any problem with biological causes cannot be easily fixed. The second concern of the sociologists is that the biological explanations may be used to justify claims of biological inferiority. Locating historical instances where biological explanations conflicted with sociological explanations would help drive the point better. Instances from world history should be researched (for example, the Nazi movement).

Additional Exercises

1. Many sociologists believe that human behavior is more the result of culture than it is of biology. Provide an example that supports this viewpoint.
   Answer: Students should be able to identify examples through research on the Internet. Generally accepted biological tendencies like food, sex, etc. are subordinated to practices specific to particular tribes or communities. Some studies examine the cultural difference in behavior as a result of intoxication. It has been found that it varies from culture to culture. Student responses will vary.

2. What are the possible implications of biological explanations for human behavior?
   Answer: Many sociologists are wary of biological explanations of behavior, in part because these explanations implicitly support the status quo and may be used to justify claims of biological inferiority. Biological factors cannot be altered whereas the social factors can be altered for betterment. Biological explanations may also lead to problems such as the eugenics movement in the early twentieth century.

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3. The Elements of Culture

1. Distinguish material culture and nonmaterial culture.
2. List and define the several elements of culture.
3. Describe certain values that distinguish the United States from other nations.

Section Outline

- There are two basic components of culture, ideas and symbols on the one hand, and artifacts—material objects—on the other.
  - The first type is called nonmaterial culture, which includes the values, beliefs, symbols, and language that define a society.

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    - The second type is called material culture, which includes all the physical objects in a society, such as its tools and technology, clothing, eating utensils, and means of transportation.
- Probably all societies have nonverbal **symbols** we call **gestures**. However, the same gesture can mean one thing in one society and something quite different in another society
- Perhaps our most important set of symbols is **language** and differences in languages can make it quite difficult to communicate.
- Cultures differ widely in their **norms**, or standards and expectations for behaving.
- Norms are often divided into two types, formal norms and informal norms.
    - Formal norms, also called mores (MOOR-ays) and laws, refer to the standards of behavior considered the most important in any society.
    - Informal norms, also called folkways and customs, refer to standards of behavior that are considered less important but still influence how we behave.
- Different cultures have different **rituals**, or established procedures and ceremonies that often mark transitions in the life course.
- Different cultures have different norms, even if they share other types of practices and beliefs. It is also true that norms change over time within a given culture. Two obvious examples here are hairstyles and clothing styles.
- **Values** are another important element of culture and involve judgments of what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. A culture's values shape its norms.
- Major values that distinguish the United States include individualism, competition, and a commitment to the work ethic.
- The last element of culture is the **artifacts**, or material objects, that constitute a society's material culture. In the simplest societies, artifacts are largely limited to a few tools, the huts people live in, and the clothing they wear.

Key Takeaways

- The major elements of culture are symbols, language, norms, values, and artifacts.
- Language makes effective social interaction possible and influences how people conceive of concepts and objects.
- Major values that distinguish the United States include individualism, competition, and a commitment to the work ethic.

Exercises

1. How and why does the development of language illustrate the importance of culture and provide evidence for the sociological perspective?
   Answer: Children learn language from their culture. Humans have a capacity for language that no other animal species possesses. Our capacity for language in turn helps make our complex culture possible. Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, named after two linguistic anthropologists, argues that people cannot easily understand concepts and objects unless their language contains words for these items (Whorf 1956). Language thus influences how we understand the world around us. Language is closely linked to culture and provides evidence for sociological perspective.

2. Some people say the United States is too individualistic and competitive, while other people say these values are part of what makes America great. What do you think? Why?

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Answer: The American culture extols the rights of the individual and promotes competition in most areas of life. If the Japanese value harmony and group feeling, Americans value competition and individualism. Benefits of individualism in terms of improved standard of living and more equitable social space should be contrasted to community feeling and sharing of resources in other societies.

Additional Exercises

1. What are artifacts? Provide a few examples of cultural artifacts.
   Answer: An important element of culture is the artifacts, or material objects, that comprise a society's material culture. In the simplest societies, artifacts are largely limited to a few tools, the huts people live in, and the clothing they wear. Smartphones, tablets and laptops are examples of modern day artifacts. The students may provide similar examples of cultural artifacts.

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4. Cultural Diversity

1. Define subculture and counterculture and give one example of each.
2. Distinguish cultural relativism and ethnocentrism.

Section Outline

- The cultural differences between societies are often referred to as **cultural diversity**. Cultural diversity also occurs within a single society, where subcultures and countercultures can both exist.
- A **subculture** refers to a group that shares the central values and beliefs of the larger culture but still retains certain values, beliefs, and norms that make it distinct from the larger culture.
- A **counterculture** is a group whose values and beliefs directly oppose those of the larger culture and even reject it. Perhaps the most discussed example of a counterculture is the so-called youth counterculture of the 1960s, often referred to as the "hippies."
- The fact of cultural diversity raises some important but difficult questions of cultural relativism and ethnocentrism.
    - **Cultural relativism** refers to the belief that we should not judge any culture as superior or inferior to another culture. In this view, all cultures have their benefits and disadvantages, and we should not automatically assume that our own culture is better and "their" culture is worse.
    - **Ethnocentrism** is the opposite view, and refers to the tendency to judge another culture by the standards of our own and to the belief that our own culture is indeed superior to another culture.

Key Takeaways

- Subcultures and countercultures are two types of alternative cultures that may exist amid the dominant culture.
- Cultural relativism and ethnocentrism are often in tension, and it is sometimes difficult to determine whether it is appropriate to condemn behaviors that one's own culture finds repugnant but that another culture considers appropriate.

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Exercises

1. This section discussed the eating of dog meat in some other cultures. Many Americans and Europeans condemn this practice. Do you think it is appropriate to condemn eating dog meat, or do you think such criticism violates cultural relativism and is thus inappropriate? Explain your answer.
   Answer: Cultural relativism refers to the belief that we should not judge any culture as superior or inferior to another culture. In this view, all cultures have their benefits and disadvantages, and we should not automatically assume that our own culture is better and "their" culture is worse. Ethnocentrism is the opposite view, and refers to the tendency to judge another culture by the standards of our own and to the belief that our own culture is indeed superior to another culture.

Additional Exercises

1. Some scholars think cultural relativism is an absolute. Provide an example that supports this viewpoint.
   Answer: When we think of cow worship in India, it is easy to be amused by it. Famous anthropologist Marvin Harris's analysis has provided some logical explanations to show that cow worship is in fact very important for the Indian way of life. Similar examples could provide a broader framework to discuss the cultural differences across various nations.

2. What is counterculture? Provide an example for counter culture.
   Answer: A counterculture is a group whose values and beliefs directly oppose those of the larger culture and even reject it. Perhaps the most discussed example of a counterculture is the so-called youth counterculture of the 1960s, often referred to as the "hippies" but also comprising many other young people who did not fit the "tuned out" image of the hippies and instead were politically engaged against U.S. government policy in Vietnam and elsewhere. The students could provide a similar example.

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5. The Development of Modern Society

1. Define Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.
2. List the major types of societies that have been distinguished according to their economy and technology.
3. Explain why social development produced greater gender and wealth inequality.

Section Outline

- Many sociologists have distinguished societies according to their type of economy and technology. The major features of each type are outlined below.

Type of Society	Key Characteristics
Hunting and Gathering	These are small, simple societies in which people hunt and/or gather food. Because all people in these societies have few possessions, the societies are fairly egalitarian, and the degree of inequality is very low.
Horticultural and Pastoral	Horticultural societies grow crops with simple tools, while pastoral societies raise livestock. Both types of societies

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	are wealthier than hunting and gathering societies, and they also have more inequality and greater conflict than hunting and gathering societies.
Agricultural	These societies grow great numbers of crops, thanks to the use of plows, oxen, and other devices. Compared to horticultural and pastoral societies, they are wealthier and have a higher degree of conflict and of inequality.
Industrial	Industrial societies feature factories and machines. They are wealthier than agricultural societies and have a greater sense of individualism and a lower degree of inequality.
Postindustrial	These societies feature information technology and service jobs. Higher education is especially important in these societies for economic success.

- **Hunting and gathering** societies are the oldest ones we know of, and few of them remain today.
- In **horticultural societies**, people use a hoe and other simple hand tools to raise crops. In **pastoral societies**, people raise and herd sheep, goats, camels and other domesticated animals and use them as their major source of food and also, depending on the animal, as a means of transportation.
- Pastoral societies tend to be at least somewhat nomadic, as they often have to move to find better grazing land for their animals. Horticultural societies, on the other hand, tend to be less nomadic, as they are able to keep growing their crops in the same location for some time.
- Horticultural and pastoral societies often manage to produce a surplus of food from vegetable or animal sources respectively, and this surplus allows them to trade their extra food with other societies.
- The surpluses and trade both lead to degrees of wealth unknown in the earlier types of societies and thus to unprecedented inequality. Also, agricultural societies' greater size and inequality also produce more conflict.
- **Industrial societies** emerged in the 1700s as the development of machines and then factories replaced the plow and other agricultural equipment as the primary mode of production.
- This Revolution has had enormous consequences in almost every aspect of society, some for the better and some for the worse.
    - On the positive side, industrialization brought about technological advances that improved people's health and expanded their life spans. There is also a greater emphasis in industrial societies on individualism, and people in these societies typically enjoy greater political freedom than those in older societies. Compared to agricultural societies, industrial societies also have lower economic and gender inequality.
    - On the negative side, industrialization meant the rise and growth of large cities and concentrated poverty and degrading conditions in these cities.
- This urbanization changed the character of social life by creating a more impersonal and less traditional **Gesellschaft** society. It also led to riots and other urban violence that, among other things, helped fuel the rise of the modern police force and forced factory owners to improve workplace conditions.
- In **postindustrial societies**, then, information technology and service jobs have replaced machines and manufacturing jobs as the primary dimension of the economy.

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- Software companies were dominant industries at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Industrial Revolution has been replaced by the Information Revolution, and we now have what has been called an **information society**.
- Some scholars fear that the information age will aggravate the disparities we already have between the "haves" and "have-nots" of society, as people lacking a college education will have even more trouble finding gainful employment than they do now.

Key Takeaways

- The major types of societies historically have been hunting and gathering, horticultural, pastoral, agricultural, industrial, and postindustrial.
- As societies developed and grew larger, they became more unequal in terms of gender and wealth and also more competitive and even warlike with other societies.
- Postindustrial society emphasizes information technology but also increasingly makes it difficult for individuals without college educations to find gainful employment.

Exercises

1. Explain why societies became more unequal in terms of gender and wealth as they developed and became larger.
   Answer: Industrialization meant the rise and growth of large cities and concentrated poverty and degrading conditions in these cities. Wealthy people became wealthier and could provide better education to their children. It became increasingly difficult to find jobs for people who lacked a college education. The hard, physically taxing work in the fields, much of it using large plow animals, lead to the dominance of males. Students can source examples of skewed development from across the world.

2. Explain why societies became more individualistic as they developed and became larger.
   Answer: Technological advances have aided in the development of the individual and to the fragmenting of communal ties. Students should be able to identify both the material and nonmaterial aspects of modern civilization that has led to such fragmentation. Also to be considered is the impact of globalization and the expanded marketplace.

3. Describe the benefits and disadvantages of industrial societies as compared to earlier societies.
   Answer: Industrial revolution has had enormous consequences in almost every aspect of society, some for the better and some for the worse. On the positive side, industrialization brought about technological advances that improved people's health and expanded their life spans. There is also a greater emphasis in industrial societies on individualism, and people in these societies typically enjoy greater political freedom than those in older societies. Compared to agricultural societies, industrial societies also have lower economic and gender inequality. In industrial societies, people do have a greater chance to pull themselves up by their bootstraps than was true in earlier societies, and "rags to riches" stories continue to illustrate the opportunity available under industrialization.

   On the negative side, industrialization meant the rise and growth of large cities and concentrated poverty and degrading conditions in these cities. Urbanization changed the character of social life by creating a more impersonal and less traditional Gesellschaft society. It also led to riots and other urban violence that, among other things, helped fuel the rise of the modern police force and forced factory owners to improve workplace

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conditions. Today industrial societies consume most of the world's resources, pollute its environment to an unprecedented degree, and have compiled nuclear arsenals that could undo thousands of years of human society in an instant.

Additional Exercises

1. The members of hunting and gathering societies were fairly equal in terms of power and wealth. What do you think is the reason for this?
   Answer: The members of hunting and gathering societies had few possessions. Their members were also fairly equal in terms of wealth and power, as virtually no wealth existed. Everyone was expected to help find food and also to share the food they found. Students can refer to resources from popular culture, including the Internet or even movies, to find some of the cultural practices of such communities. The structure of the family and the community should also be examined to provide a more comprehensive picture of the society.

2. What are the major differences between horticultural and pastoral societies?
   Answer: In horticultural societies, people use a hoe and other simple hand tools to raise crops. In pastoral societies, people raise and herd sheep, goats, camels and other domesticated animals and use them as their major source of food and also, depending on the animal, as a means of transportation. Some societies are either primarily horticultural or pastoral, while other societies combine both forms. Pastoral societies tend to be at least somewhat nomadic, as they often have to move to find better grazing land for their animals. Horticultural societies, on the other hand, tend to be less nomadic, as they are able to keep growing their crops in the same location for some time.

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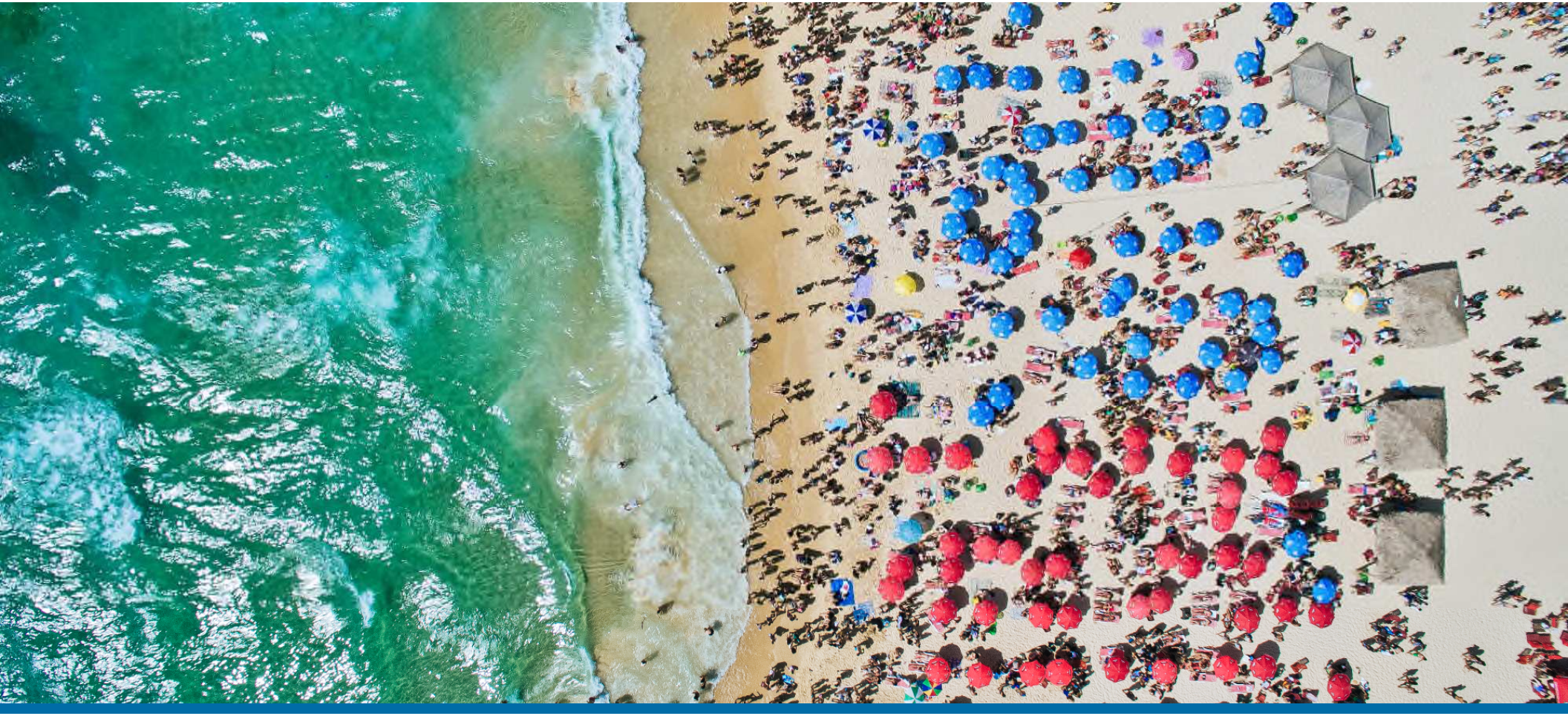

Sociology: Understanding and Changing the Social World, Brief Edition, v2.0

Steven E. Barkan

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CHAPTER 2
Culture and Society

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Culture and the Sociological Perspective

Learning Objectives

1. Describe examples of how culture influences behavior.
2. Explain why sociologists might favor cultural explanations of behavior over biological explanations.

Culture and the Sociological Perspective

- **Culture:** The artifacts and ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that are part of any society
  - It is a key concept to the sociological perspective — It influences people's beliefs and behaviors
  - The profound impact of culture becomes most evident when we examine behaviors that are biological in nature

Culture and the Sociological Perspective

- Sociologists favor culture over biology for two reasons:
  - Differences from one society to the next in various behaviors underscore the importance of cultural differences for behavioral differences
  - Biology cannot easily account for why groups and locations differ in their rates of committing certain behaviors
- Implications of biological explanations
  - The explanations implicitly support the status quo
  - The explanations of human behavior might still be used to support views of biological inferiority

The Elements of Culture

Learning Objectives

1. Distinguish material culture and nonmaterial culture.
2. List and define the several elements of culture.
3. Describe certain values that distinguish the United States from other nations.

The Elements of Culture

- Two basic components of culture
  - Ideas and symbols
  - Artifacts
- **Nonmaterial culture:** Values, beliefs, symbols, and language that define a society
- **Material culture:** Physical objects in a society

The Elements of Culture

- The elements of culture are:
  - **Symbols**
    - Types of nonverbal communication — Gestures
    - Material objects
  - Language
    - Most important set of symbols
    - **Sapir-Whorf hypothesis:** Argues that people cannot easily understand concepts and objects unless their language contains words for these items

The Elements of Culture

- **Norms**
  - **Formal norms:** Standards of behavior considered the most important in any society
  - **Informal norms:** Standards of behavior that are considered less important but still influence how we behave
- **Rituals**
  - Function in many kinds of societies to:
    - Mark transitions in the life course
    - Transmit the norms of the culture from one generation to the next

Figure 2.1 The Presence of Written Language (Percentage of Societies)

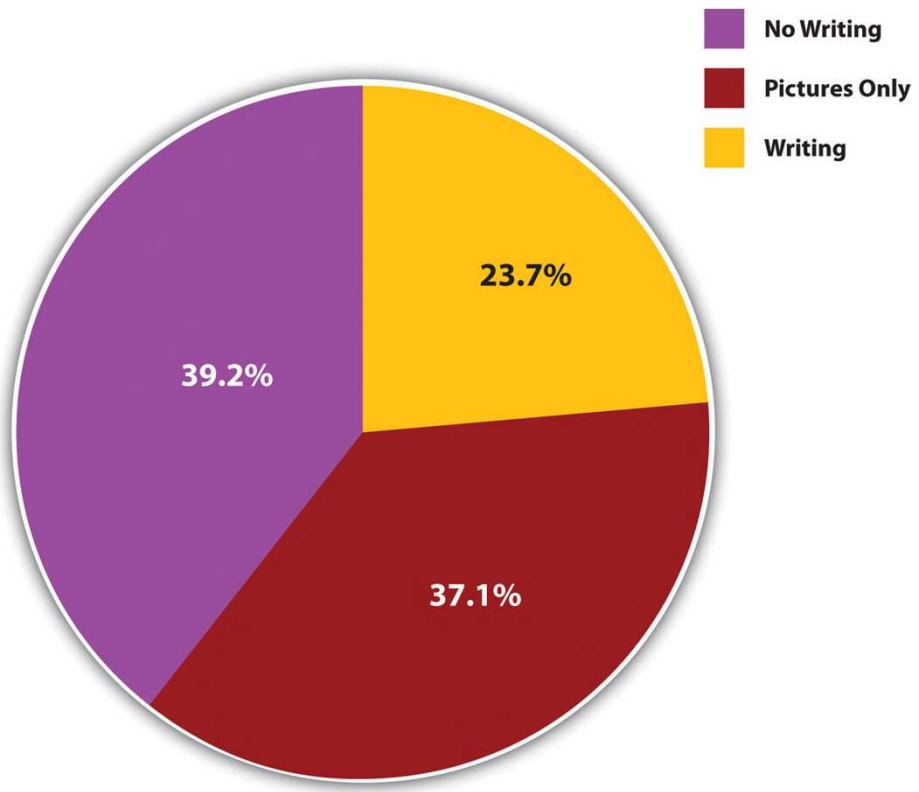


Table 2.1 Examples of Sexist Terms and Nonsexist Alternatives

Term	Alternative
Businessman	Businessperson, executive
Fireman	Fire fighter
Chairman	Chair, chairperson
Policeman	Police officer
Mailman	Letter carrier, postal worker
Mankind	Humankind, people
Man-made	Artificial, synthetic
Waitress	Server
He (as generic pronoun)	He or she; he/she; s/he
"A professor should be devoted to his students"	"Professors should be devoted to their students"

Figure 2.2 Percentage of People Who Say They Would Vote for a Qualified African American for President

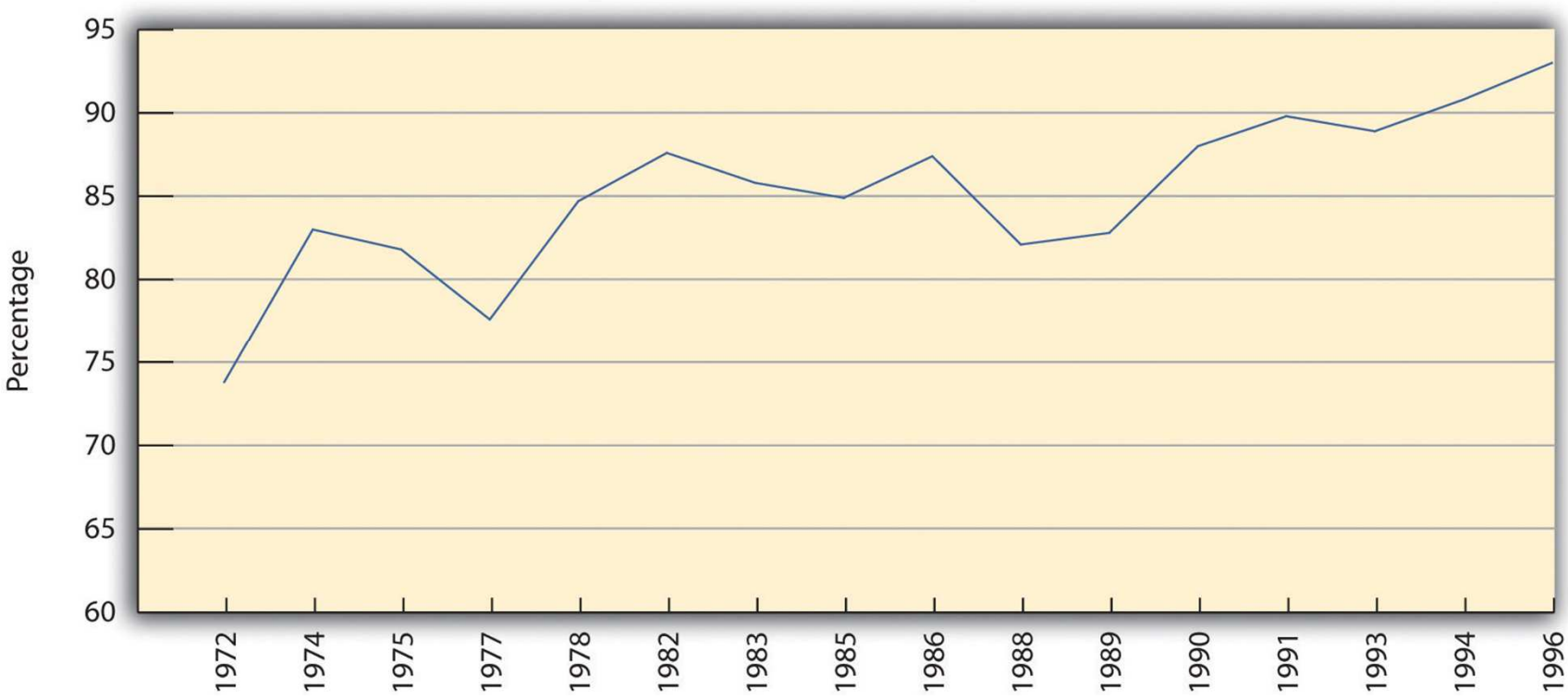
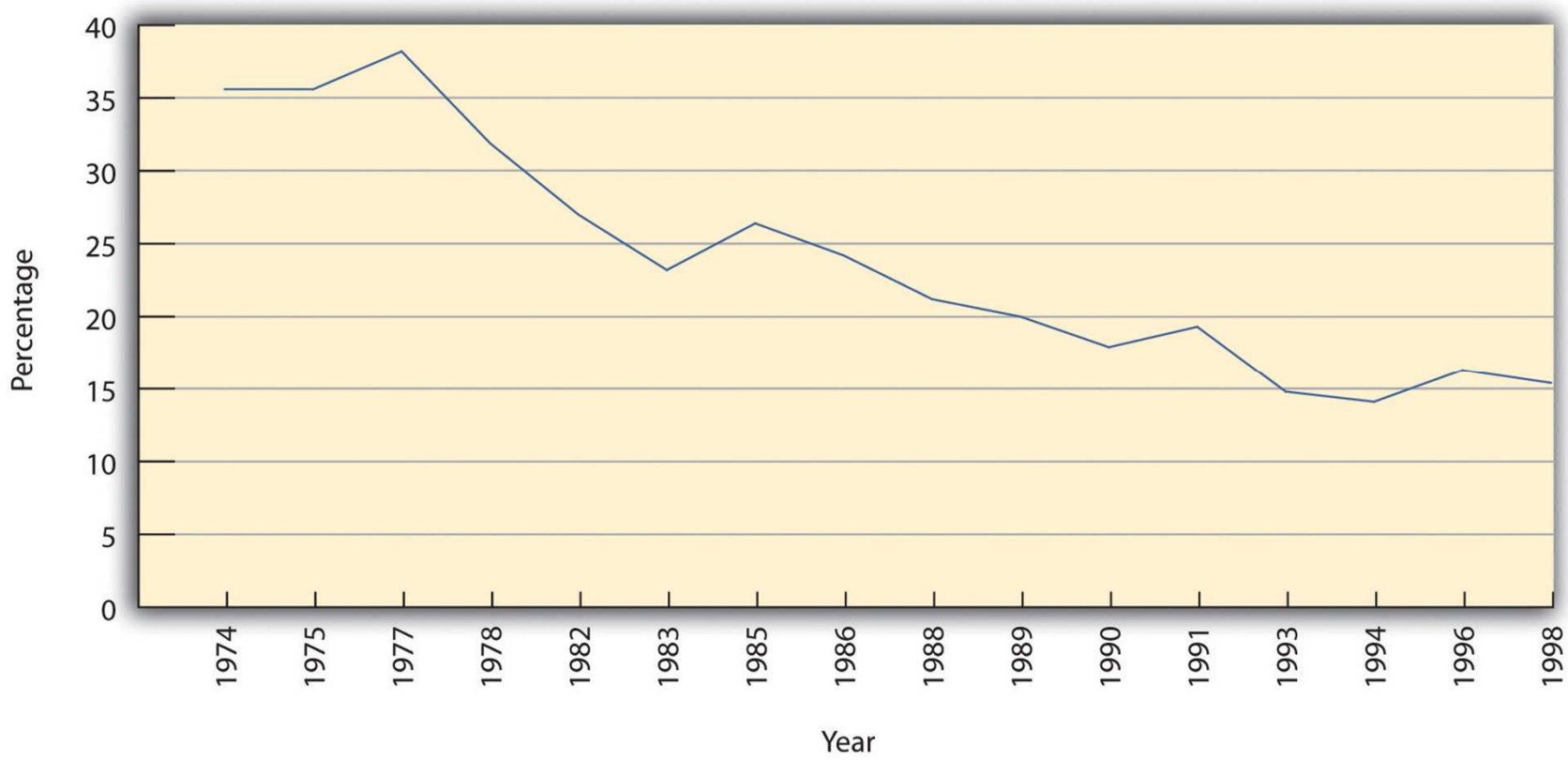


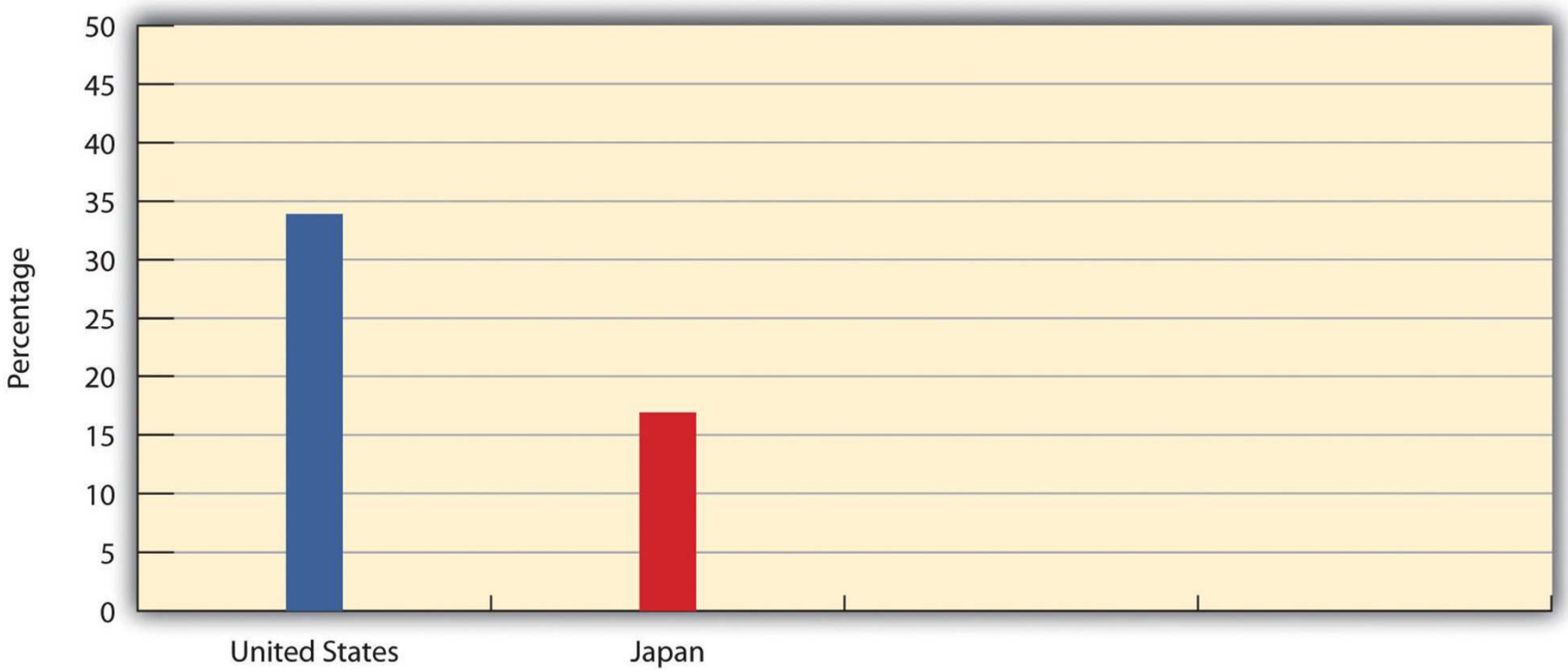
Figure 2.3 Percentage of People Who Agree Women Should Take Care of Running Their Homes



The Elements of Culture

- **Values**
  - Involves judgments of what is:
    - Good or bad
    - Desirable or undesirable
- **Artifacts**
  - Society's material culture
  - Technological development has played an important role in creating today's artifacts

Figure 2.4 Percentage of People Who Think Competition Is Very Beneficial



The Elements of Culture

- What distinguishes America from other nations?
  - The American culture extols the rights of the individual and promotes competition in the business and sports worlds and in other areas of life
    - Work ethic
    - Individualism

Figure 2.5 Percentage of People Who Take a Great Deal of Pride in Their Work

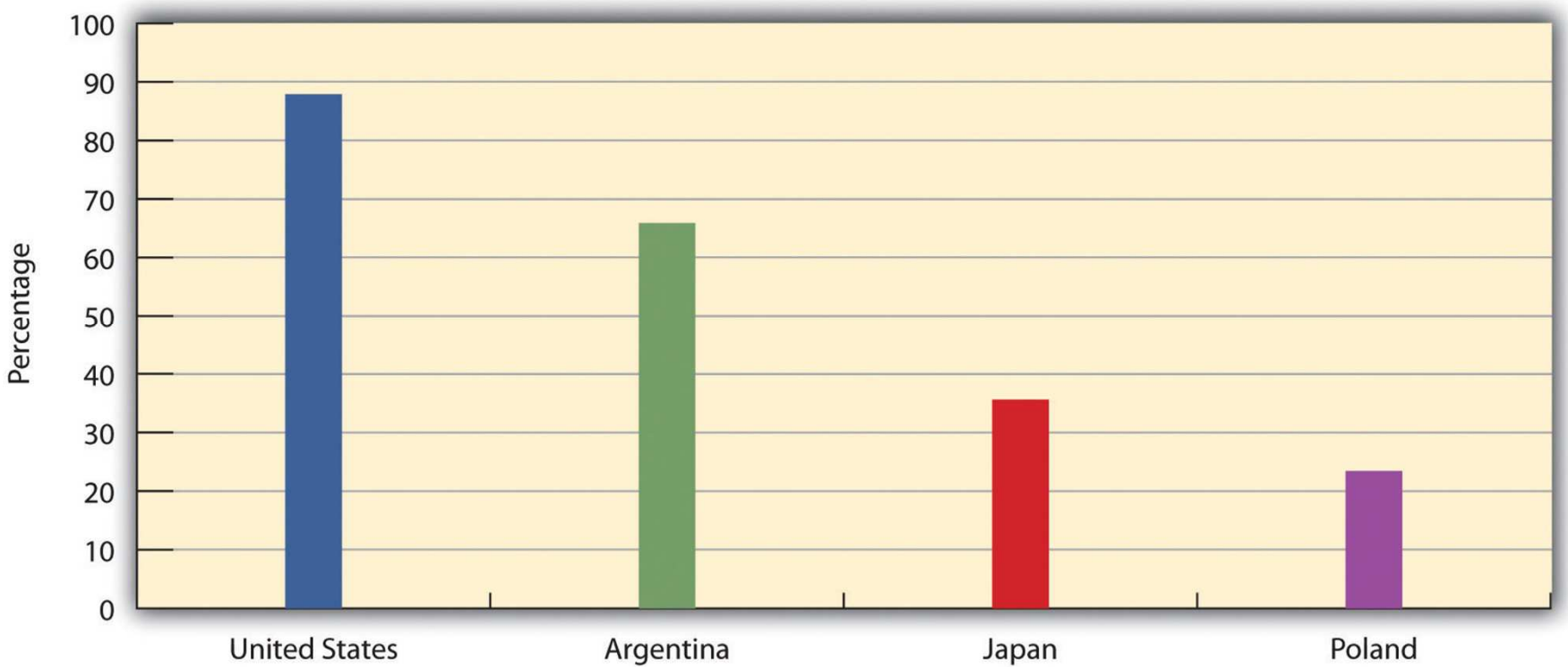


Figure 2.6 Percentage of People Who Think Hard Work Brings Success

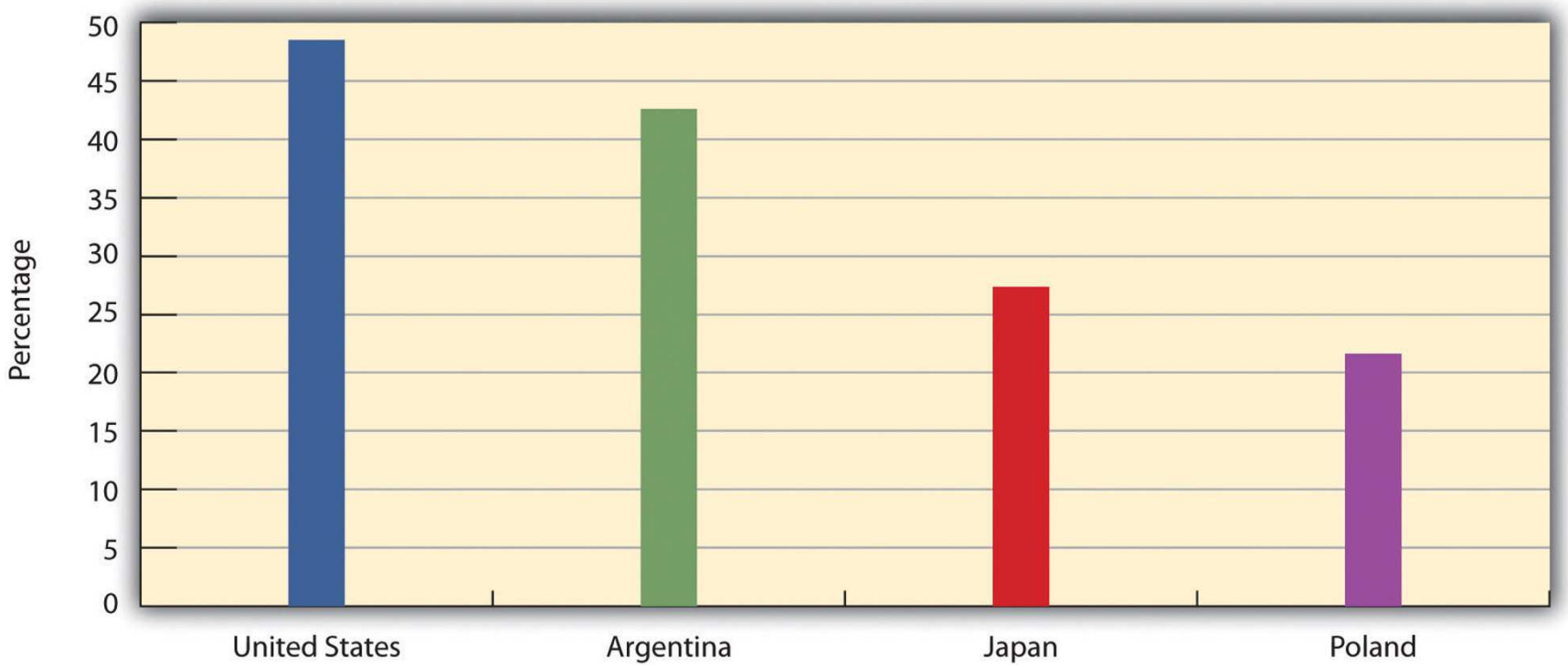


Figure 2.7 Percentage of People Who Attribute Poverty to Laziness and Lack of Willpower

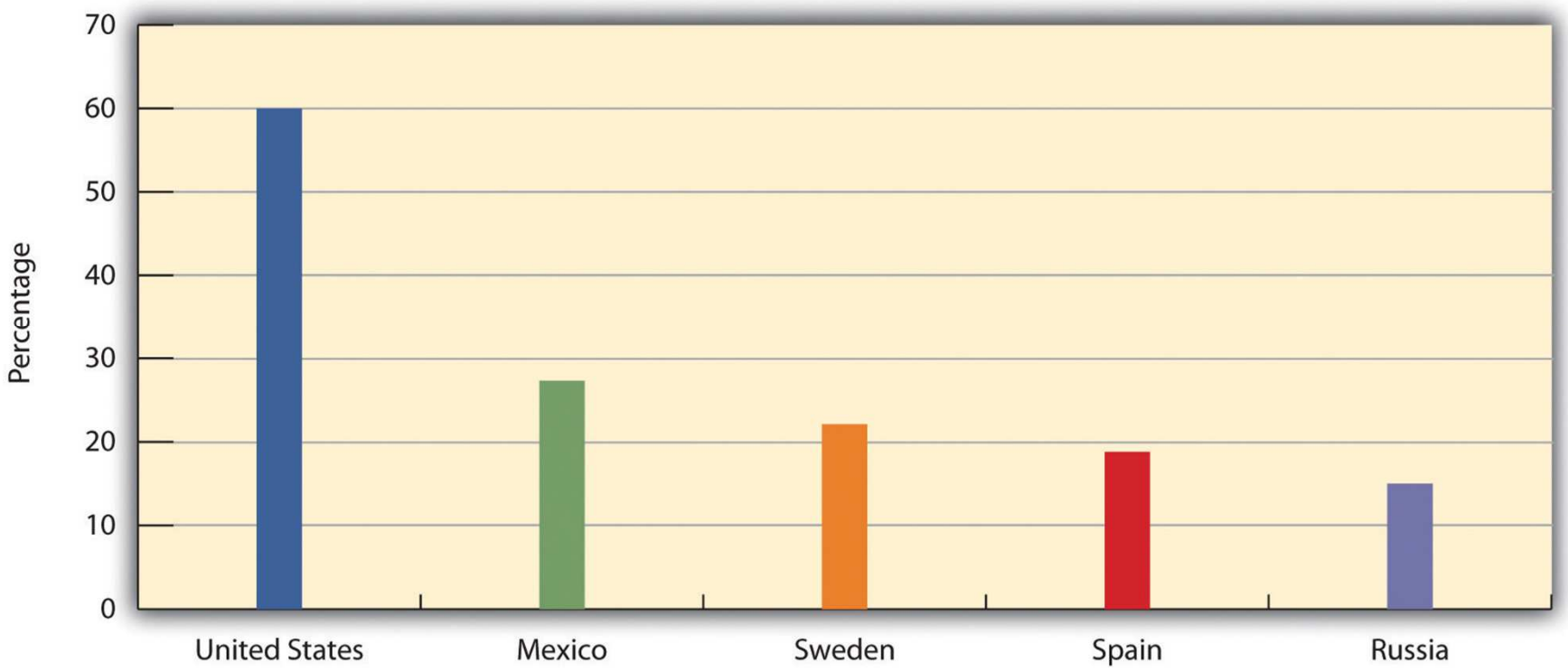


Figure 2.8 Percentage of People Who Agree That Men Have More Right to a Job Than Women When Jobs Are Scarce

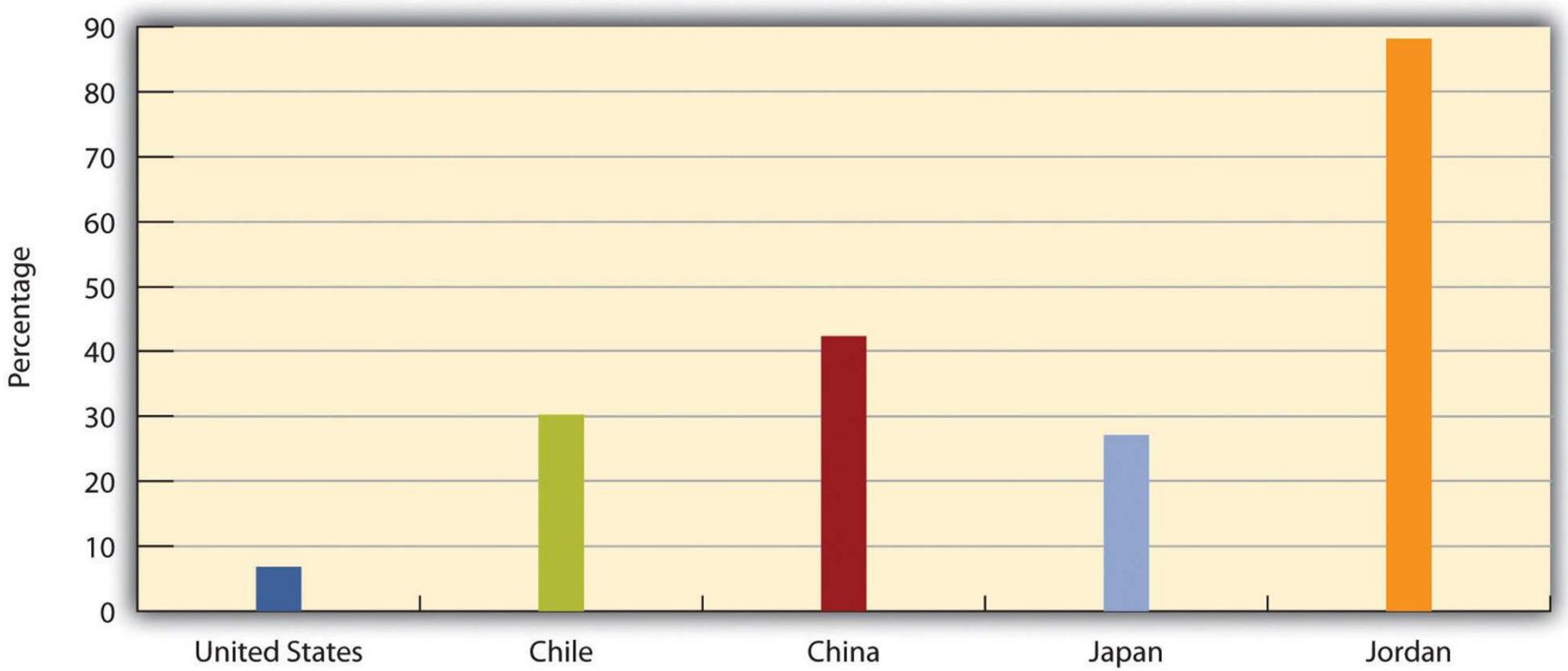
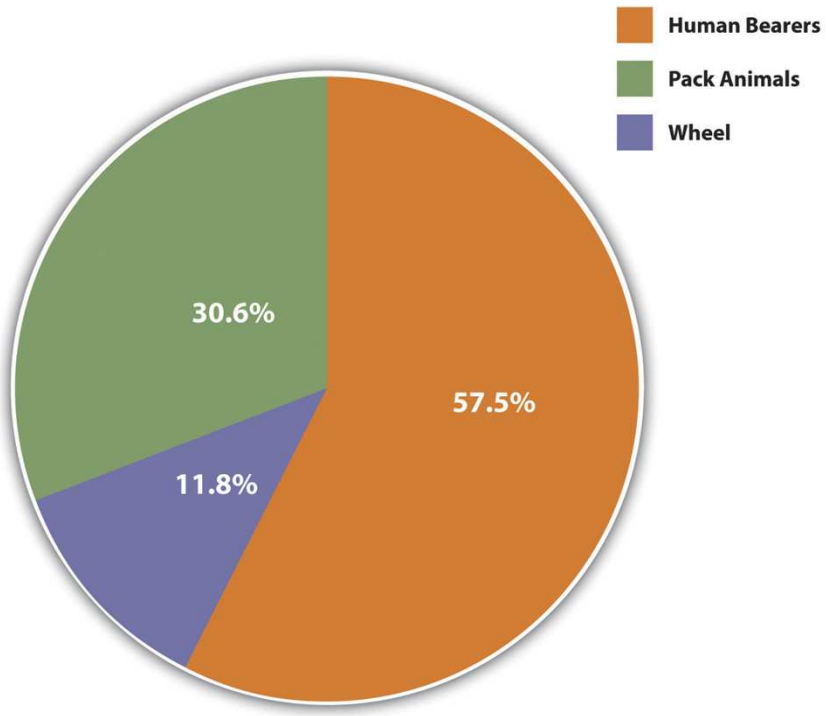


Figure 2.9 Primary Means of Moving Heavy Loads



Cultural Diversity

Learning Objectives

1. Define subculture and counterculture and give one example of each.
2. Distinguish cultural relativism and ethnocentrism.

Cultural Diversity

- **Subculture:** A smaller culture within a larger culture with distinctive ways of thinking, feeling, and acting
  - Example — The Amish in the United States
- **Counterculture:** A subculture whose norms and values directly oppose those of the larger culture
  - Example — The survivalists in the United States

Cultural Diversity

Cultural relativism

- The belief that no culture's norms, values, or practices are superior or inferior to those of any other culture.

Ethnocentrism

- The tendency to judge another culture by the standards of our own, and the belief that our own culture is superior to another culture.

The Development of Modern Society

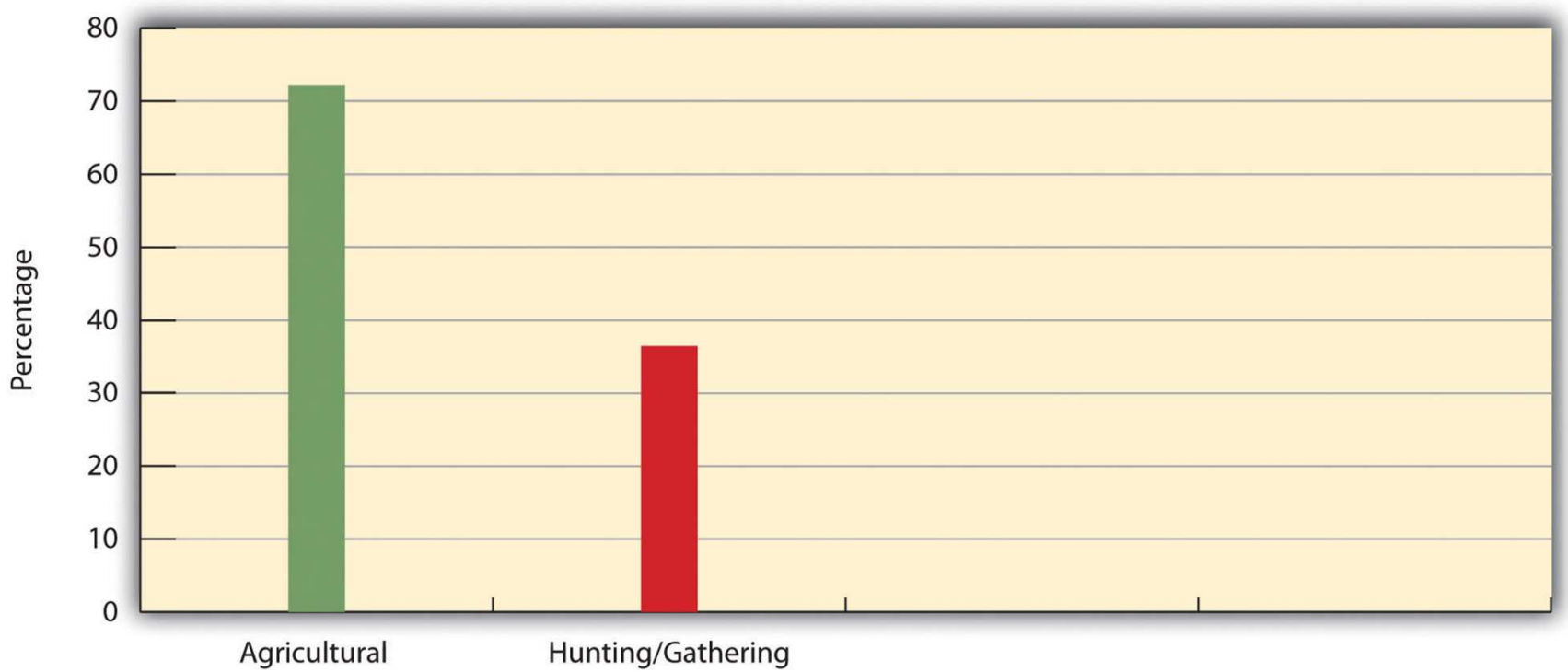
Learning Objectives

- List the major types of societies that have been distinguished according to their economies and technologies.
- Explain why social development produced greater gender and wealth inequality.

Table 2.2 Summary of Societal Development

Type of society	Key characteristics
Hunting-and-gathering	These are small, simple societies in which people hunt and gather food. Because all people in these societies have few possessions, the societies are fairly egalitarian, and the degree of inequality is very low.
Horticultural and pastoral	Horticultural and pastoral societies are larger than hunting-and-gathering societies. Horticultural societies grow crops with simple tools, while pastoral societies raise livestock. Both types of societies are wealthier than hunting-and-gathering societies, and they also have more inequality and greater conflict than hunting-and-gathering societies.
Agricultural	These societies grow great numbers of crops, thanks to the use of plows, oxen, and other devices. Compared to horticultural and pastoral societies, they are wealthier and have a higher degree of conflict and of inequality.
Industrial	Industrial societies feature factories and machines. They are wealthier than agricultural societies and have a greater sense of individualism and a somewhat lower degree of inequality that still remains substantial.
Postindustrial	These societies feature information technology and service jobs. Higher education is especially important in these societies for economic success.

Figure 2.10 Type of Society and Presence of Cultural Belief That Men Should Dominate Women



Key Terms

- **Culture**
- **Sociobiology**
- **Eugenics**
- **Nonmaterial culture**
- **Material culture**
- **Symbols**
- **Gestures**
- **Sapir-Whorf hypothesis**
- **Norms**
- **Formal norms**
- **Informal norms**
- **Rituals**
- **Values**
- **Artifacts**
- **Cultural diversity**
- **Subculture**
- **Counterculture**
- **Cultural relativism**

Key Terms

- **Ethnocentrism**
- **Hunting-and-gathering societies**
- **Horticultural societies**
- **Pastoral societies**
- **Agricultural societies**
- **Industrial societies**
- **Postindustrial societies**