

Basic Sociological Concepts

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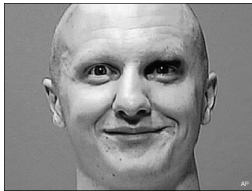
What is sociology?

- ▶ Sociology is the systematic study of human society. The main focus is on the patterns and institutions in society, and how they affect groups.
- ▶ Its not social work!
- ▶ Focuses less on individuals abilities and actions, and more on societal influences
- ▶ Groups tend to be more important than individuals
- ▶ Tries to explain through hypotheses and predictions

What is sociology?

Individuals are not important

Patterns repeat themselves



What is sociology?

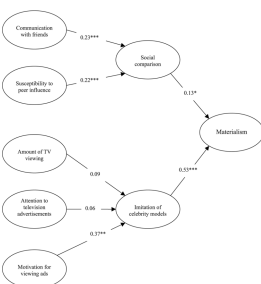
Society is the test tube



Looks at the not so obvious



What is sociology?



Sociology is extremely complex

- ▶ Many variables effect an outcome
- ▶ Predictions or explanations can never be entirely accurate

What is sociology?

Sociology

- ▶ Focuses on the patterns and institutions in society. Sociologists study these patterns and institutions and explore how they affect groups.

Differences from other social sciences

- ▶ **Anthropology** focuses on human culture
- ▶ **Psychology** focuses on the individual
- ▶ **Economics** focuses on economic institutions
- ▶ **Political science** focuses on political institutions
- ▶ **Criminal justice** (Justice studies) focuses on crime and deviance

What is sociology?

Patterns and Institutions

- ▶ Discrimination (pattern)
- ▶ Fashion (pattern)
- ▶ Internet use (pattern)
- ▶ Sexual behavior (pattern)
- ▶ Educational system (institution)
- ▶ A religion (institution)
- ▶ The family (institution)
- ▶ The economy (institution)

Groups

- ▶ Races
- ▶ Ethnicities
- ▶ Classes
- ▶ Religious Groups
- ▶ Subcultures – single mothers in Toronto, college students who are full time workers



How sociologists study patterns and groups?

Society's groups are in conflict

Social-Conflict

- ▶ Some groups in society can take advantage of the new technology while others cannot



How sociologists study patterns and groups?

Society's parts work together

Structural-Functional

- ▶ New technologies lower the costs of communication for people struggling economically.



How sociologists study patterns and groups?

How are patterns generated and interpreted?

Symbolic Interaction

- ▶ Blacks and whites understand new technology differently, and use it for different purposes.



How do sociologists study patterns and groups?

Quantitative



Qualitative



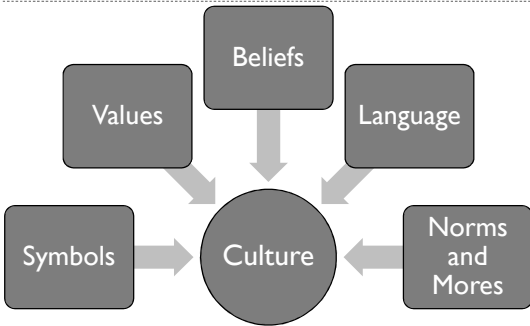
What are the building blocks of sociology?

Culture

The ways of thinking, the ways of acting, and the material objects that together form a people's way of life



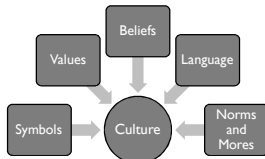
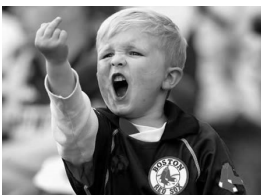
What are the building blocks of sociology?



What are the building blocks of sociology?

- ▶ **Symbols**
 - ▶ Anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by people who share a culture
- ▶ **Language**
 - ▶ A system of symbols that allows people to communicate with one another
- ▶ **Values**
 - ▶ Culturally defined standards that people use to decide what is desirable and good
- ▶ **Beliefs**
 - ▶ Specific statements that people hold to be true
- ▶ **Norms**
 - ▶ Rules and expectations by which a society guides the behavior of its members
- ▶ **Mores ("more-ayz")**
 - ▶ Norms that are widely observed and have great moral significance

What are the building blocks of sociology?

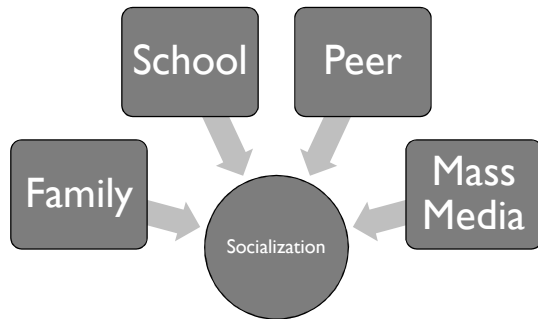


What are the building blocks of sociology?

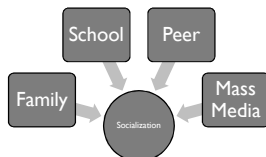
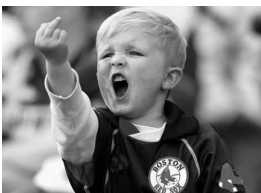
Socialization

The lifelong social experience by which people learn culture

What are the building blocks of sociology?



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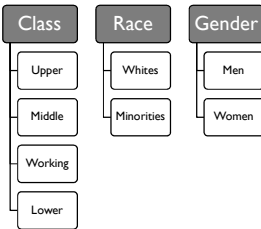
What are the building blocks of sociology?

Social Stratification

A system by which a society ranks and categorizes people in a hierarchy. Groups at different spots in the hierarchy have different experiences and outcomes.

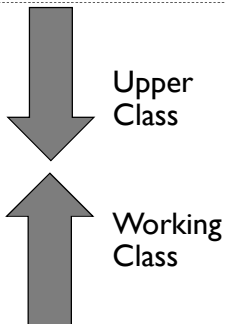
What are the building blocks of society?

Social Stratification



A system by which a society ranks and categorizes people in a hierarchy. Groups at different spots in the hierarchy have different experiences and outcomes.

What are the building blocks of society?



- ▶ Classes are often in conflict politically (social conflict)
- ▶ People born into different classes tend to take different occupations, making society work (structural functional)
- ▶ Classes in society have different cultures (symbols, values, beliefs, norms, etc.)
- ▶ Classes have different socialization experiences (different parental styles, different educational experiences)

Summing Up...

- ▶ Sociology is the systematic study of human society. The main focus is on the patterns and institutions in society, and how they affect groups
- ▶ Sociologists...
 - ▶ Study patterns and try to explain these patterns or predict future patterns
 - ▶ Conduct research using, among other things, surveys and observations
 - ▶ Understand that society's parts can often be in conflict or often work together
 - ▶ Also understand that these patterns can develop in micro-interactions, and that different groups can interpret these patterns in different ways

Summing up...

- ▶ Some main building blocks of the study of sociology are:
 - ▶ Culture
 - ▶ Symbols, values, beliefs, language, norms, mores
 - ▶ Socialization
 - ▶ Family, mass media, peers, school
 - ▶ Social Stratification
 - ▶ Class, race, gender
