

Sociology Course Study Guide!!

Sociology: The study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society.

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Unit 1: Introduction to Sociology & the Sociological Perspective

Key Terms:

- Sociological perspective - the special point of view of sociology that sees general patterns of society in the lives of particular people.
- Sociological imagination - An awareness of the relationship between an individual and the wider society, both today and in the past.
- Verstehen - empathetic understanding of human behavior.
- Structure - the distinctive, stable arrangement of institutions whereby human beings in a society interact and live together.
- Agency - the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices.
- Social construction of reality - theory of knowledge that examines the development of jointly-constructed understandings of the world that form the basis for shared assumptions about reality. The theory centers on the notion that meanings are developed in coordination with others rather than separately within each individual.
- Scientific method - a method of research in which a problem is identified, relevant data are gathered, a hypothesis is formulated from these data, and the hypothesis is empirically tested.
- Conventional wisdom - a generally accepted belief or theory.
- Demography - the study of human population dynamics.

- Demographic transition - a model that describes population change over time. It suggests that populations grow along a predictable five-stage model.
- Population explosion - a sudden, large increase in the size of a population.
- Theoretical perspectives - a set of assumptions about reality that inform the questions we ask and the kinds of answers we arrive at as a result.
 - Symbolic interaction - a micro-level theory that focuses on the relationships among individuals within a society.
 - Conflict theory - a theory that society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources.
 - Feminist theory - the extension of feminism into theoretical, fictional, or philosophical discourse. It aims to understand the nature of gender inequality.

The Foundations of Sociology

- Sociology was created by philosopher Auguste Comte in the 1800s
 - Auguste Comte wanted a systematic way to study society and solve its basic problems.
 - Society: a group of people that share a culture and a territory.
 - While we may think that when we are alone we are away from society, everything around us, down to the music that we listen to, is a product of society.
 - For that reason, nothing is purely ours. What we claim to be ours is mostly influential of those around us.
- The main goal of sociology is to understand the social world through controlled and repeated observation.
 - It is the scientific study of society and human behavior!
 - In sociology, it is important to look for patterns or recurring characteristics and events.

Sociological perspective

1. Seeing the general in the particular
2. Seeing the strange in the familiar

Seeing the general in the particular is a way of trying to understand social behavior by placing it in its wider social context.

- Ex: You get stopped at a light next to a car that is playing music super loud. While you may just notice the song, a sociologist would notice how that choice may be a direct representation of that person's class, neighborhood, gender, or age.

Seeing the strange in the familiar means approaching the everyday world as if you were seeing it for the first time.

- Ex: Why do we raise our hands in class but not at the dinner table? Why does red mean stop and green mean go?
- Seeing the strange in the familiar is a LOT harder to do because we are so familiar with our own society that everything seems normal.
- It is important to do these things because if we lead ourselves solely with common sense we will be misled.
 - For example: It was common sense and knowledge that it is not right for women to vote and for segregation to exist. If we use sociology, it can help us to understand problems like this and prevent them from happening in the future.
 - Sociology brings us depth, understanding, and an explanation as to why things exist the way they do.

Social location

- Social location: a map of society composed of different social groups and their relationship with each other. A person's social location is a way of classifying themselves by race, social class, gender, religion, etc. Social location is important because a person's life and the choices they make will be heavily influenced by their social location.
- Can contribute to the marginalization of a social group.
 - This means that this group occupies a position outside the centers of power. These are often racial, ethnic, or religious minorities, that tend to have a deeper understanding of how power operates.
- For some, their social location may limit their choices.
 - Some groups have legal rights and privileges that others don't.
 - The decision to go to college is also dependent on social location

- Example: Does the class you grew up in view college as important or necessary?
- Social location also affects what others have learned, and are taught, about you.
- There are many different kinds of power and many different kinds of inequality.
 - One lesser known example is of people that speak non standard accents commonly being viewed as less intelligent and judged more harshly than an English speaking counterpart. The English speaking person would not realize the power that they have for simply speaking without an accent while the person with a non standard dialect would be subjected to inequality.
- The main goal of sociology:
 - To use human behavior and societal characteristics to improve how we live and work with one another! The first sociologists looked around at their quickly changing societies and were driven to scientifically understand them.

Paradigms

- Paradigm: a model for how you think about things. It is basically a set of concepts or theories that frames your perspective on a certain topic.
- Theoretical paradigms are the fundamental assumptions that sociologists have about the social world. This guides their thinking and research.
- All scientific disciplines make assumptions about the world and they use different perspectives depending on the given topic! Raw facts always need some kind of perspective in order to make them useful. So while being unbiased is never wrong bias and perspective is needed in order to make assumptions/interpret information.

Macro and Micro

- A perspective shifted toward the Macro means looking at the bigger picture.
 - This means that you are looking at the overall picture of the structures that shape societies.

- Looking at the Micro means focusing on the smaller details.
 - This would mean focusing more on interactions between people.
- While these are two different focuses they are always connected!
- Asking micro questions can help to understand bigger macro patterns or observations.

The Main Theoretical Paradigms of Sociology

1. Structural Functionalism - Originated with Emile Durkheim. This perspective makes the assumption that society is a complex system with parts that work together to promote stability and social order. One of the problems of this is that it sees society as functionally stable. This means that it will always be hard to undergo change especially since many parts rely on each other in order to function. This focuses on how large structures fit together.
2. Conflict Theory - The perspective where society is seen as being made up of different groups that struggle over specific resources like power, money, food, or status. In this perspective, change is necessary for society and is driven by change as a result of these conflicts. This focuses on how society defines sources of inequality and wealth.
3. Symbolic Interactionism - Associated with the work of Max Weber. This perspective understands sociology as the product of everyday social interactions. There is a large focus on the shared reality that people make through interacting with others. It looks at the world we create when we assign meaning to interactions and objects (For example, waving your hand essentially means nothing but since we all have mutually agreed it is a sign of hello/goodbye we associate waving our hand with saying hello/goodbye).

Important Theorist & their contributions to Sociology

Emile Durkheim

- Founder of the structural functionalist paradigm. Durkheim lived in France from 1858-1917.
- He lived in France during a time where the country was going through a lot of economic, technological, and cultural changes during the start of industrialization. As a witness to

this, Durkheim was concerned with what kept societies together because he didn't want to see it fall apart again. He wanted to study society and what made it thrive or fall. He viewed society as a big organism that had different parts but in order to survive needed to work together in order to function successfully.

- His book “suicide” is the first book to use statistics to back up sociological research and arguments.
- He developed the idea of the common consciousness which is basically all of the beliefs, morals, and ideas that are social facts within a society (ex: Christmas). These beliefs hold coercive power. Not everyone may believe in these beliefs but because the majority do, many do not object it. Common consciousness holds a society together.
- Durkheim argued that crime strengthens the common consciousness. To him punishment served as public lessons of right and wrong. When a person is punished we are shown society's morals and how strong they are.
- He came up with the idea that social dysfunction is something that conflicts with the normal function of society.
- Durkheim argued that there is a strong link between societal structure and suicide due to social integration. He came to the conclusion that when people know their place in society and how they relate to others around them they are less likely to take their own life. When people are less strongly bound to their society they feel out of place. In his book “suicide”, he makes the point that suicide is heavily influenced by the structure of society

Karl Marx

- Karl Marx set the foundation for the paradigm theory in sociology. His main focus was on the topic of freedom and this pushed him to explore topics like power, inequality, and how these things can lead to change.
- Marx believed that humans were poorly adapted to the natural world. In order for humans to survive we need to change our environment and Marx saw this as labor. He saw that in order to survive we need to work together to free ourselves of natural constraints (hunger, dying of thirst, things we must do to survive). However, by freeing ourselves of natural constraints we create social ones.

- He created the perspective of historical materialism. This looks at change over time, and it's materialism because it is concerned with how production is organized, and who has things like food, or money in terms of social class.
- He felt that politics or religion were secondary to the production and control of basic necessities like food and water. He believed that in order to even understand politics or religion, you needed to understand the material reality they were based on.
- Marx came up with the term superstructure to describe the view of the economy being the foundation of a society and politics, culture, and family ranking secondary.
- Known for his views on capitalism: working class (proletariat) vs. capitalists (bourgeois). The proletariat are defined by the fact that, while they work in the factories and use resources to make things, they don't own the factories or the things they make. The bourgeoisie are defined by the fact that they do own the factories and the things that are made in them. Marx believed that this divide in society leads to exploitation.

W.E.B Dubois

- One of the earliest American sociologists and was also one of the first proponents of the race-conflict theory.
- Dubois was born in Massachusetts in 1868. During that period of time, race was considered a biological construct. Slavery and Segregation was seen as “natural consequences” of the “inferiority of” African Americans to white people. As he travelled for college, Dubois saw how differently black people were treated in different areas.
- His work reveals the idea of double-consciousness. He said that “living as a member of a non-dominant race, creates a fracture in your sense of identity within that society”. His personal feeling of double-consciousness fueled his work which was centered around the disparities/conflicts of people of different races (AKA race-conflict theory).
- Dubois took a position at the University of Pennsylvania in 1896 conducting a study of the city's Seventh Ward, published in 1899 as *The Philadelphia Negro*. The study is considered one of the earliest examples of statistical work being used for sociological purposes, with extensive fieldwork resulting in hundreds of interviews conducted door-to-door by Dubois.

Unit 2: Social Stratification: Race, Gender & Age

Key Terms:

- **Social stratification** - a system by which a society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy.
- **Race** - a grouping of humans based on shared physical or social qualities into categories generally viewed as distinct by society.
- **Models of urban growth** - models have been developed and extensively adopted to study urban expansion and its impact on the ambient environment.
- **Central business district** - the commercial and business center of a city.
- **Hyperghettoization** - the extreme concentration of underprivileged groups in the inner cities.
- **Suburbanization** - a population shift from central urban areas into suburbs, resulting in the formation of (sub)urban sprawl.
- **Gender & sex** - the roles, behaviors, activities, attributes and opportunities that any society considers appropriate for girls and boys, and women and men.
- **Glass ceiling** - a metaphor used to represent an invisible barrier that keeps a given demographic (typically applied to minorities) from rising beyond a certain level in a hierarchy.
- **Pay gap** - the difference between the amounts of money paid to women and men, often for doing the same work.
- **Domestic violence** - violence or other abuse in a domestic setting, such as in marriage or cohabitation.
- **Heteronormativity** - the belief that heterosexuality, predicated on the gender binary, is the norm or default sexual orientation.
- **Poverty threshold** - dollar amounts set by the U.S. government to indicate the least amount of income a person or family needs to meet their basic needs.
- **Wealth** - An abundance of valuable material possessions or resources; riches.
- **Welfare reform** - changes in the operation of a given welfare system, with the goals of reducing the number of individuals dependent on government assistance, keeping the welfare systems affordable, and assisting recipients to become self-sufficient.

- **Social mobility** - the movement of individuals, families, households, or other categories of people within or between social strata in a society.
- **Privilege** - a right, immunity, or benefit enjoyed by a particular person or a restricted group of persons.

Gender, Race, and Age

- **Gender**: refers to the personal and social characteristics but not the biological traits that we associate with different structures.
 - Gender is considered a social construct by many sociologists because it is something that we as a society creates and enforces.
 - Gender is very influential! It influences how we organize society and even how we distribute power.
 - Gender stratification refers to the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and privilege across genders.
 - Example - Women were not allowed to vote for a long time in many countries. In the United States, women were given that right in 1920 and in Saudi Arabia women were only recently allowed to vote in 2015!

Patriarchy

- **Patriarchy**: a form of social organization where men have more power and dominate over other genders.
 - Most societies throughout human history have been patriarchies. These societies are maintained by specific attitudes, behaviors, and systems.
 - These attitudes usually favor men and encourage society to believe that one gender (normally men) are innately better than others. This idea of thought is commonly associated with sexism.

Common examples of sexism in society include:

- Women being told to avoid heavy lifting because men are “stronger”
- Young girls being encouraged to be tomboys
- Boys being shamed for liking pink or anything stereotypically feminine
- Women being encouraged to wear ‘revealing’ clothing in an attempt to “get what she wants”

- Boys being told that they need to man up
- Women being told that it would be better for them to stay home and care for their family rather than pursue a lucrative career.

Hegemonic masculinity & Emphasized Femininities

- Discovered by sociologist Raewyn Connell
- It is the process of society defining and celebrating certain characteristics as being masculine.
- Hegemonic masculinities are linked to power within societies. This plays into patriarchal dividends.
 - This is a term used to describe the benefits that men receive simply because they are male.
 - Emphasized Femininities is the exact opposite of hegemonic masculinity.
 - Emphasized femininities are forms of femininity that conform to what the ideal female is in men's eyes. The social reality is that femininities come in many different forms and may or may not be constructed in ways that emphasize stereotypical notions of gender.

Gender Expectations

- The first people to teach us about gender are our parents.
- Growing up, many daughters are given dolls to play with and sons are given cars or toy hammers.
- From this, kids associate taking care of others as a feminine act and building/fixing things as a masculine one.
- This is very similar to the societal expectation that men are the breadwinners in families and women will take care of the home and children.
- Studies have even shown that as more women become equal earners outside the home, they still tend to do more work in the household as well.
- Sociologist Arlie Hochschild called this phenomenon the 'second shift'.

- This term refers to the common occurrence in which women come home from work to more work (ex: cooking, laundry, childcare) whereas men are more likely to spend their time in leisure after work.
- These gender dynamics are often further reinforced by corporate and governmental policies that set aside parental leave only for women. There are also other less formal influences, like commercials or TV shows that depict fathers who can't do the laundry or take care of their own kids for a weekend.
- The media also plays a big role in gender ideals because it often promotes ideas like, encouraging women to value youth, beauty, and thinness. It also encourages women to be desirable to men.

Gender in Society

- Since the 1970s, the number of women pursuing higher education has increased dramatically.
- Women now make up the majority of all college graduates. What is also interesting is to see how gender can even play a role in education.
- Men are often heavily represented in fields like computer science, economics, and engineering, while women are more likely to go into fields like biology, psychology, or sociology because these degrees often lead to jobs in service or care positions like, education, health care, and administrative roles.
- These jobs are known as “pink collar jobs” because they have the highest concentrations of women in the field while also having less prestige and lower pay.
- The glass ceiling is a term used by sociologists to describe the invisible barrier that stops women from advancing to the top levels of an organization.
 - Despite laws like Title IX, that are set in place to prevent discrimination on the basis of sex and gender, women are often held back through less visibly seen kinds of sexism.
- For example, men who are assertive or overly confident in salary negotiations are more successful in getting a higher salary. But when a woman is seen behaving in a similar

manner they tend to be viewed in a negative light, some even consider them to be overconfident or proud.

- One of the results of gender stratification is gender wage gap (which is a direct effect of the example provided above). According to a survey done in 2016, “white women earn about 80 cents for every dollar that white men make”. This gap is wider for non-white women, with Black women earning 65 cents and Hispanic women earning 58 cents for every dollar that white men make.
- While that 20 cent gap isn’t all due to gender discrimination, a lot of it can be explained by differences in education, choices of careers, differences in the hours worked, and differences in experience. However, the last two factors – hours worked and career experience – are often related to the decision to leave the workforce to care for children, which is way more normative for women than for men.

Race/Ethnicity

- Race is about more than just the color of someone’s skin. Much like gender, race is a socially constructed category. It’s used to categorize people who share biological traits that a society thinks are important.
 - The big question: What’s the difference between ethnicity and race?
- For many people this can be a confusing question because they are very similar. Ethnicities are socially constructed categories based on cultural traits that a society finds important, rather than strictly biological traits. As mentioned prior, race is social grouping that is based on shared physical or social qualities. An ethnic group has a shared cultural heritage like language, traditions, and religion. Two people of different races might share an ethnicity and two people of the same race might be of totally different ethnicities.
- Example: Japanese and Vietnamese people are both considered Asian (the same race), but they come from different cultural backgrounds.

- Unlike race, which is based on observable, physical traits, ethnicities aren't, and two people of the same ethnicity can be entirely different races.
- A person's race influences a whole host of social outcomes, from their education to their income to their experiences with the criminal justice system.
- Sociologists define a minority as any category of people, who are distinguished by physical or cultural difference, that a society sets apart and subordinates. In sociology, a minority group's relative size isn't important.
- For example, women are considered a minority, even though they make up about 51% of the United States.

The US Census 6 Categories of Race

The US Census uses six different categories of race when collecting data about the demographics of the country.

- White refers to anyone who reports their origins as being from Europe, the Middle East, or Northern Africa (People of Middle Eastern descent are categorized as White by the Census, even if they often aren't treated as if they're white).
- Black or African Americans are the second largest racial group in the United States and are defined as individuals with African heritage, including those who are Afro-Caribbean. Since many African Americans' ancestors were forcibly brought to the United States as slaves, the countries that their ancestors originated from are often unknown.
- The third racial category used in the Census is 'American Indian or Alaska Native,' which refers to anyone whose origins are indigenous to the contiguous United States and Alaska.
- The fourth Census category for race, Asian, refers to origins in Eastern Asia, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including China, India, Japan, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Vietnam.
- The fifth Census category is Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, which refers to people whose origins are from Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- The last Census category is just 'Some Other Race.'

Social Stratification

- The question of what it means to deserve wealth, or success, or power, is a matter of social stratification.
- Social stratification is a fancier word used to describe what is commonly known as **inequality**.
 - It's a system where society categorizes people, and ranks them in a hierarchy. Everything from social status and prestige, to the kind of job you can hold, to your chances of living in poverty, are affected by social stratification.
 - One of the principles of social stratification is that it's universal, but variable.
 - This means that It shows up in every society on the planet, but it is different by how it divides and categorizes people, and the advantages or disadvantages that come with that division.
 - Stratification is a characteristic of society, and not a matter of individual differences. It is simply just another way to classify people into groups. We know that people are different because of choices or backgrounds so we might assume that stratification is just a natural outcome of those differences, but it isn't.
 - We know this because we can see the effects of social stratification on people, independent of their personal choices or traits:
- For example, children of wealthy families are more likely to live longer, be healthier, attend college, and excel in school than children that are born into poverty.

Social & Horizontal Mobility

- Stratification also persists across generations.
 - Social stratification serves to categorize and rank members of society, resulting in different life chances. But generally, society allows some degree of social mobility, or changes in position within the social hierarchy. People sometimes move upward or downward in social class. A group of people that have obtained generational wealth are likely to be wealthy across many generations because of where they are in the social hierarchy and how that money passes on over time. A

group of people born into poverty may likely remain in that position or slightly move up but when it comes to social hierarchy it is unlikely or very rare that there is any change. This can be described as horizontal mobility because that group can change positions (like a slight increase in pay) without changing your standing in the social hierarchy.

Systems

- Sociologists classify stratification systems as being either closed or open.
 - Closed systems tend to be extremely rigid and allow for little social mobility. In these systems, social position is based on ascribed status, or the social position you inherit at birth.
 - On the other hand, open systems of stratification allow for much more social mobility, both upward and downward. Social position tends to be achieved, not ascribed.
- Examples of Closed Systems: The Caste Systems (India & Feudal Europe) and South African System of Apartheid.
- Example of an Open System: Class Systems
- The main difference between caste and class systems is that class systems are open and social mobility is not legally restricted to certain people
 - In class systems, the boundaries between class categories are often blurred and there's greater opportunity for social mobility.
 - The American system of stratification is actually founded on this very idea. The American Dream is the common idea held that it's possible, through hard work and perseverance, to move up the social hierarchy, to achieve a higher class standing.
 - This highlights another area in which the American class system. It puts a small emphasis on meritocracy, meaning that social mobility is based on personal merit and individual talents. One of the ideals of the American dream is that anyone, no matter how poor, can "pull themselves up" and become wealthy.

- Not every society is strictly a caste system or a class system. Modern Britain is a good illustration of a mixed system of stratification. It still maintains a limited caste system of nobility as a legacy of the feudal system of estates, which survives alongside, and helps reinforce, a class system similar to what we have in the U.S.

Unit 3: Socialization & Group Life

Key Terms:

- **Culture** - the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.
- **Material and non-material culture** - Material culture refers to the physical objects, resources, and spaces that people use to define their culture. Non-material culture refers to the nonphysical ideas that people have about their culture, including beliefs, values, rules, norms, morals, language, organizations, and institutions.
- **Culture shock** - an experience a person may have when one moves to a cultural environment which is different from one's own
- **Ethnocentrism** - the belief in the inherent superiority of one's own ethnic group or culture.
- **Cultural relativism** - the idea that a person's beliefs, values, and practices should be understood based on that person's own culture, rather than be judged against the criteria of another.
- **Countercultures** - a culture whose values and norms of behavior differ substantially from those of mainstream society, often in opposition to mainstream cultural mores.
- **Subcultures** - a small segment of the larger culture, which is usually defined by shared socioeconomic status or a common cultural interest.
- **Cultural universals** - elements, patterns, traits, or institutions that are common to all human cultures worldwide.
- **Socialization** - the process of internalizing the norms and ideologies of society.
- **Nature versus nurture** - Nature is what we think of as pre-wiring and is influenced by genetic inheritance and other biological factors. Nurture is generally taken as the influence of external factors after conception, e.g., the product of exposure, life experiences and learning on an individual.

- **Resocialization** - the process by which one's sense of social values, beliefs, and norms are re-engineered.
- **Ageism** - prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age.
- **Age cohorts** - A group of people born around the same time period from a particular population that typically shares certain events and experiences over their life course.
- **Disengagement theory** - A group of people born around the same time period from a particular population that typically shares certain events and experiences over their life course.
- **Activity theory** - claims that staying mentally and physically active preserves older adults happier.
- **The “sandwich generation”** - middle-age adults (often in their 40s and 50s) who are caring for both elderly parents and their own children.

Social Class

- A social class can be defined as a group that's similar in terms of income, education, power, and prestige in society.
 - The American society can be split into five social classes: upper class, upper middle class, average middle class, working class, and lower class.
- The upper class is the top of the income and wealth distribution. They are the ones who earn at least \$250,000/year and control much of the country's wealth. This group tends to wield a lot of political and social power. The upper-upper class mostly includes those who derive their wealth from inheritance rather than work.
- The Upper middle class families typically have incomes between \$115,000 and \$250,000 per year and make up about 15% of income earners. About 2/3 of the adults here have college degrees – and many have post-graduate degrees. Adults in this group tend to have jobs that are considered prestigious – doctors, lawyers, and engineers.
- Families in the middle of the middle class make between \$50,000 and \$115,000. This bracket makes up about 35% of income earners. About half of this group is college-educated and average middle class jobs are typically so-called white collar jobs – think office workers, teachers, middle-managers.

- About 30 percent of Americans are in this category, with incomes ranging from about 25 to 50 thousand dollars a year. Lower middle class families are less likely to own their own homes and typically hold little to no wealth. Most blue-collar workers, or those whose work is primarily based in manual labor, fall into this bracket which is why they are also known as the working class because they do a lot of manual labor.
- Lower class Americans are blue-collar workers at the bottom of the income distribution. They make less than \$25,000 a year and tend to work hourly jobs that are part-time, with unpredictable schedules and no benefits, like health insurance. About 20% of Americans, or the bottom quintile, fall into this group.
- Social class is a very big determining factor of many of the most fundamental aspects of modern life – from education, to beliefs, as well as values.
- A large component of class differences plays out through educational attainment and its consequences for success later in life.
- Education is sometimes called the “Great Equalizer.” The more people who have access to quality education, the more equal a society gets. Mortality and disease rates also vary by social class.
- Upper class Americans tend to live longer and healthier lives.
- Class gaps in health outcomes are about more than just having the money to pay for better healthcare.
 - It’s about occupation, neighborhood, income, education, and even about simply just having the time.
 - Those in the working class have less leisure time to cook healthy meals and often live in food deserts where there is little access to fresh foods.
 - Those in the upper class tend to have more flexible jobs and live in neighborhoods where organic foods and fresh produce are readily available.
- Social institutions are mechanisms or patterns of social order focused on meeting social needs, such as government, economy, education, family, healthcare, and religion.

Social Institutions

Family & Marriage

- Families are groups of people who are related by genetics, marriage, or choice.
 - They often share material, emotional, and economic resources. members of a family are held together by the commonly shared goal of the well-being and mutual support of its members and they organize people and power based on positions of social status within the family, like mother or daughter.
- Family relationships are created in a traditional sense or through legal bonds, like marriage or adoption. For many people, family is a matter of choice. Marriage is the #1 example of this. You choose who you get married to (in most cases).
- When close friends are considered family that relationship is considered to be a term called fictive kin. These families consist of people who have chosen to care for each other, share resources, and share their lives together. This can make a family bond as strong as any based in ancestry or law.
- The family that you grow up in is known as your **family of orientation**, because it orients you to the world and teaches you how families work. The family that you create when you are an adult is known as a family of procreation.
- Families often form around marriages. Marriage can be defined as a legally recognized relationship, usually involving economic, social, emotional, and sexual bonds. Cultural norms also limit romantic love by marking some people as acceptable spouses, or not. Some norms promote endogamy, or marriage between people of the same social category.
- For example, college-educated Americans are more likely to marry other college-educated Americans and people are more likely to marry others of the same race (this pattern is slowly changing).

- Exogamy is marriage between people of different social categories. Interracial marriage is a good example of this. Another example of exogamy is ‘marrying up’, where a person of a low socioeconomic status marries someone of a higher socioeconomic status.

Schools & Social Inequality

- Social-conflict theory helps to understand how the US educational system can disadvantage some people, while giving advantages to others, so that schools ultimately play a role in causing or perpetuating class differences.
- A meritocracy is a system where hard work and talent is recognized and rewarded. This plays into the idea that many hold where they believe that as long as they work hard they can be successful in life. This belief is heavily tied into the idea of the American Dream.
- Grades don’t just measure an individual student’s effort or ability, they’re also influenced by many factors outside of the student’s control, like the quality of their school or their access to resources like books or computers.
 - For example, In the US, there are large class gaps in educational attainment. 83% of students from high income families enroll in college after high school and only 63% of low income students do.
- Kids with parents who have more time or money to devote to education in the home are also the kids most likely to be in well-funded, high quality schools. But the US education system doesn’t just contribute to class gaps in educational achievement. There are also persistent achievement gaps by race in the US, and they’re made worse by elements of our education system that advantage white students.
- Kids who are suspended or expelled are more likely to engage in risky behaviors like drug use or other criminal behavior. This contributes to what’s known as the school to prison pipeline.
 - This is an informal ‘tracking’ for students that criminalizes deviant behavior in schools, even minor disciplinary issues, like talking back to teachers.

- For minority students, schools are more likely to escalate disciplinary issues to the juvenile justice system, putting students in contact with the criminal justice system at an early age.

Health & Medicine

- Many of the factors that determine your health aren't biological, they can be social or cultural. Factors like race or class, for instance, can both have huge outcomes on health outcomes.
- Medicine is the social institution responsible for treating disease and restoring or improving the health of a population. Medical sociology seeks to understand the ways that society approaches and shapes health, disease, and illness.
 - This is necessary because the diseases that society deems worthy of research, or even treatment, vary across societies.
- The Father of Ancient Medicine was known as Hippocrates.
 - He is credited as one of the first Western physicians to believe that disease was the result of a person's lifestyle habits and the social environment in which they lived.
- In 1847, the American Medical Association, or AMA, was founded to promote a more systematic approach to medical practice, by lobbying for Federal and state regulations in medical training. The AMA also worked to set standards for the professional practice of medicine. By incorporating a more scientific approach to practicing medicine, the AMA helped shape how we think about and treat disease.
- Health is a sociocultural phenomenon, where the boundaries between being 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' can vary a lot, depending on who you are or where you were raised.
 - Sick roles are the behaviors associated with having an illness. To be seen as sick – and get the treatment deserving of being sick – a person must act the way society expects a sick person to behave. The function of the sick role is to create a “social space” for non-normative social behaviors related to being ill in society.

- For example, when you don't feel well (or you just don't want to go to school) you have to convince your parents that you're really sick. This involves following social norms associated with being sick like staying in bed, throwing up, coughing, looking miserable, etc.
- To be 'properly' sick, a person must want to get better. They must also seek the care of medical professionals.
- When you fulfill the sick role, you get a pass on the normal social behavior expected of well people. But if people don't perceive you as being 'properly' sick, you might not get the same amount of respect or understanding. (This is a huge reason why people who have invisible illnesses (like mental illnesses) are often dismissed as just being 'lazy'.
- Some diseases, like HIV/AIDS are heavily stigmatized, this forces some people to hide their illness and "pass" as being well. Unfortunately, even medical professionals that we depend on may refuse to accept our claims of sickness, which basically withholds your ability to engage in the sick role.
- These things all prove that being "sick" is as much a social and cultural experience as it is a biological dysfunction.
- While a disease defines a dysfunction of the physical, an illness is the social and cultural response to a disease and your perception of an illness is likely to vary a lot depending on who you are.
- People have what are called illness beliefs. These are assumptions about the severity and nature of symptoms. An illness belief doesn't have to be accurate, but the accuracy matters less than how the beliefs make you feel.
- Illness beliefs help explain why some people seek treatment for symptoms while others may ignore them.
- Factors like race, social class, gender, or age can shape illness responses to disease as well.

- For example, women consult doctors significantly more than men. Men are more likely to ignore pain, or downplay the significance of symptoms.

Unit 4: Norms, Deviance, & Sanctions

Key Terms:

- **norms** - collective representations of acceptable group conduct as well as individual perceptions of particular group conduct.
- **laws** - the whole of legal norms in society as well as the practices and institutions that are associated with those norms.
- **Deviance** - the fact or state of departing from usual or accepted standards, especially in social or sexual behavior.
- **sanctions** - mechanisms of social control.
- **street crime** - any criminal offense in a public place.
- **white-collar crime** - a crime committed by a person of respectability and high social status in the course of his occupation.
- **incarceration** - the state of being confined in prison; imprisonment.
- **Jail** - a place for the confinement of people accused or convicted of a crime.
- **Prison** - a building in which people are legally held as a punishment for a crime they have committed or while awaiting trial.
- **deterrent** - a thing that discourages or is intended to discourage someone from doing something.
- **restitution** - a payment made by the perpetrator of a crime to the victims of that crime. Judges often order restitution be paid in cases where victims suffered some kind of financial setback as the result of a crime.
- **symbolic interactionist perspective** - viewing society as composed of symbols that people use to establish meaning, develop views about the world, and communicate with one another.
 - **differential association theory** - a theory that holds the proposition that through interaction with others, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques, and motives for criminal behavior.

- control theory - deals with the control of continuously operating dynamical systems in engineered processes and machines.
- labeling theory - posits that self-identity and the behavior of individuals may be determined or influenced by the terms used to describe or classify them.
- functionalist perspective - sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability.
- structural-strain theory - theory states that social structures may pressure citizens to commit crimes.
- conflict theory - perspectives in sociology and social psychology that emphasize a materialist interpretation of history, dialectical method of analysis, a critical stance toward existing social arrangements, and political program of revolution or, at least, reform.

Deviance

- Deviance simply means being non-normative or different. While this term does include some things that we might think of as bad or harmful like crime, it also includes things we might just think of as outside the mainstream.
- For example, if eating a burger on the 4th of July is considered 'normal' then being vegan and eating tofu is deviant.
 - Being vegan in a society where most people eat meat is deviant, because deviance is not just reliant on numbers. Deviance is anything that deviates from what people generally accept as normal.
 - Dying your hair rainbow is deviant and will get you strange looks from strangers. The strange looks are a form of social control which is an attempt by society to regulate people's thoughts and behaviors in ways that limit, or punish, deviance.
- Strange looks are what are known as negative sanctions, negative social reactions to deviance.
- The opposite, are positive sanctions – affirmative reactions, usually in response to conformity.

- Formal sanctioning of deviance occurs when norms are codified into law, and violation almost always results in negative sanctions from the criminal justice system – the police, the courts, and the prison system.
- The idea that deviance is essentially a matter of impulse control is called containment theory, or having a personality that contains deviant actions.
 - This theory has received support in recent research, including a 2011 study on 500 male fraternal twins that assessed their self-control, resilience, and ability to delay gratification. Researchers found that the brother that scored lower on these measures in childhood was more likely to be criminally deviant in adulthood.
- Deviance varies based on cultural norms. Nothing is inherently deviant and norms vary from culture to culture. Slavery is an example of this. In the early 1800s, slavery was considered so normal in America that rejecting it was considered deviant.
- Conflict theory posits that norms and laws reflect the interests of the powerful. So the powerful can defend their power by labeling as deviant anything that threatens that power.
- For instance, in capitalist societies, deviant labels are often applied to those who interfere with the way capitalism functions and since capitalism is based on the private control of wealth, stealing is clearly labeled as deviant.

The Foundations of Society

- Culture is the way that non-material objects – like thoughts, action, language, and values – come together with material objects to form a way of life.
- Culture can be broken down into two components: things and ideas. Material culture is the culture of things.
 - Visible things like books, buildings, food, and clothing.
 - Nonmaterial culture is the culture of what we have grown to know over time, or the culture of ideas. This can include assigning red as a symbol for stop and green as a symbol to represent go.

- Nonmaterial culture is made up of the intangible creations of human society – values, symbols, customs, ideals.
- Language allows us to share the things that make up our culture, a process known as cultural transmission.
 - One view of language is that it not only lets us communicate with each other, but that it also affects how people within a culture see the world around them.
 - The theory, known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, argues that a person's thoughts and actions are influenced by the cultural lens created by the language they speak.
- Western countries like the United States tend to value individualism and stress the importance of each person's own needs, whereas Eastern countries like China tend to value collectivism and stress the importance of groups over individuals.
 - These different values are part of why you're more likely to see young adults in the US living separately from their parents and more likely to see multi-generational households in China.

Norms are the rules and expectations that guide behavior within a society. A few social norms include:

- Giving your seat up for an elderly person
- Shaking hands when you meet someone.
- Making direct eye contact with the person you are speaking with.

A norm simply relates to what we think is “normal”, whether something is either culturally accepted, or not. There are three types of norms: taboos, mores, and folkways.

Social Development

- Have you ever met a friend's parents and realized that they were exactly like their mom or dad?
- Some argue that the two may be alike because they are genetically related. Others may say that it's because that friend grew up around their mom/dad. This brings up the topic of nature vs. nurture, a commonly debated topic in sociology.

- Nature is the part of human behavior that's biologically determined and instinctive.
 - The nurture part of behavior is based on the people and environment you're raised in.
- There are lots of different theories about how we develop personalities, cognitive skills, and moral behavior, many of which come from psychologists.
 - Famous Psychologist Sigmund Freud, thought we were born with something called an id. The id is just the most basic needs like a desire for food, comfort, or attention. He believed that as we grow, we develop the ego and superego to balance the id. Ego is the voice of reason, your conscious efforts to rein in the pleasure-seeking id and your superego is made up of the cultural values and norms that you internalize and use to guide your decisions.
- Herbert Mead, who was one of the founders of the sociological paradigm, heavily focused some of his work on how we develop a "self". He believed that we figure out who we are through other people. All social interactions require you to see yourself as someone else might see you – something Mead described as "taking on the role of others."
- Every life stage from when you're born to when you die features different expectations that inform what is known as markers of social development. Moving out, getting married, having kids – they're all societal markers of social development as an adult.

Social Interaction

- Social interaction is simply the process by which people act and react in relation to others.
- Any place you find social interaction, you're going to find social structure. Social structure consists of the relationships among people and groups.
 - This structure gives direction to, and sets limits on our behavior.

- Ascribed statuses are those in which a person has no choice; they're either assigned at birth or assigned involuntarily later in life.
- An achieved status is earned, accomplished, or obtained with at least some effort on the person's part. A master status is the status others are most likely to use to identify you. This can be achieved, like "professor," or ascribed, like "cancer patient."
- If status is a social position, then roles are the sets of behaviors, obligations, and privileges that go with that status.
- By interacting with the people around you, and expecting certain behaviors in the context of roles, you actually create the social reality that shapes those interactions that you're having.
- This shows that your social reality is not just about you. It's about everyone you're interacting with, and their expectations, too. It's about maintaining a performance.
- The idea of social reality being a performance is central to a sociological understanding of how people interact. It's what's known as the dramaturgical analysis of social interaction.
 - This approach, by Canadian-American sociologist Erving Goffman, understands social interaction as if it were a play performed on stage for an audience. Goffman believed that people perform roles for each other, and the point of social interaction is always to maintain a successful interaction that's in line with expectations.

Social Groups

- A social group is simply a collection of people who have something in common and who believe that what they have in common is significant.
- A group is partly defined by the fact that its members feel like they're part of a group.
- Group dynamics are the way that individuals affect groups, and groups affect individuals.
 - A leader is just someone who influences other people in the group. There are generally two types of leadership:

- An instrumental leader that is focused on a group's goals, giving orders and making plans in order to achieve those goals.
- An expressive leader, by contrast, is looking to increase harmony and minimize conflict within the group.
- Group conformity is where members of a group hew to the group's norms and standards. Groupthink is the narrowing of thought in a group, by which its members come to believe that there is only one possible correct answer. Groups are very important to how society itself is organized!

**Credit to Crash Course Sociology and History.com!! While a good portion of the information here is from my sociology class, these were additional resources I used to help gain a deeper understanding ☺

<https://thecrashcourse.com/courses/sociology> / <https://www.history.com/topics>

