INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY (1)

NORMS AND VALUES

Norms: Expectations or unwritten rules about how we should behave.
Values: What's important to us and society – helps us determine what is right or wrong.
Norms and values vary over time and between places.
Universalistic values: A set of core beliefs and principles that is shared across society.

CULTURE

Culture: Shared way of life of a society or group within a society.
Sub-culture: A small group within society with its own norms and values (that sometimes go against traditional norms and values).
Cultural diversity: A variety of cultural or ethnic groups within a society.
Cultural universal: A trait or institution that is common to all human cultures.
Cultural relativity: The idea that a person's beliefs, values, and practices should be understood based on that person's own culture, rather than judged against another.

STATUS

Achieved status: Status that is earned on merit, e.g. getting a good job through hard work and qualifications, or excelling at sport.

Ascribed status: Status that is given to you at birth, e.g. being born into wealth or royalty.

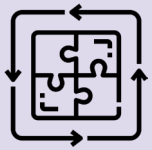
ETHNICITY VS RACE

Race: An outdated term that describes the physical and social characteristics of a group.
Ethnicity: Describes a group that defines itself based on a common heritage, nationality, culture or religion – with shared characteristics, customs and ceremonies.

CLASS

Upper class: Elite group in society – own the means of production and considered the ruling class (the bourgeoisie).
Middle class: Traditionally based on non-manual labour or professions, e.g. doctors, teachers, civil servants, etc.
Working class: Traditionally based on manual labour, e.g. cleaners, construction workers, etc.

MAIN PERSPECTIVES



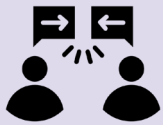
Functionalism: Suggests that society is made up of institutions that serve a range of functions – these interact and ensure that society works as a whole.

Marxism: Suggests that society is in a state of conflict between the ruling class and working class because of exploitation.

Feminism: Suggests that society is patriarchal and structured to best serve the needs of men and allow for male dominance.
New Right: More traditional conservative views on social issues, e.g. family life, school discipline and law and order.
Interactionism: Studies interactions between people and how these interactions shape society.

CONSENSUS VS CONFLICT

Consensus theories: See people in society as having shared interests and society functioning on the basis of there being broad consensus on norms and values – most associated with functionalism.
Conflict theories: See society as being made up of two or more groups with competing and incompatible interests –most associated with Marxism and feminism which see society divided by social class and gender respectively.



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INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY (II)

SOCIALISATION

Agencies/agents of socialisation: Institutions that pass on the culture of a society to its members, e.g. the family and education system.

PRIMARY SOCIALISATION:

- First stage of socialisation that takes place in infancy
- Parents will instruct and demonstrate to their children how to behave
- Children will begin to imitate the
- behaviour of those around them
- Use sanctions and rewards, e.g.
- naughty step and pocket money

NATURE VS NURTURE

Nature: Behaviour is mostly determined by our genetic make-up what we inherit biologically from our parents – differences in behaviour are due to natural differences at birth, not the way individuals have been brought up.

Nurture: Much of human behaviour is learned – individuals are socialised into the culture of their family, e.g. clever adults will encourage their kids to be clever.

Feral child: A child who has been isolated from human contact from a young age – i.e. not socialised

SECONDARY SOCIALISATION:

Second stage of socialisation – performed by institutions outside of the family

Schools: Teaches children how to behave, skilled need for the future, and universalistic values

Peer group: Role models, peer pressure (both good and bad), informal sanctions, e.g. being left out.

Work: Professional standards for behaviour and dress, positive and negative sanctions, e.g. promotions/bonuses or written warnings.

Media: Sends messages a mass audience and influences how we think about things, e.g. what we should look like, the political views we should have.

Religion: Written and moral codes, e.g. Muslim women dressing modestly, Christian belief that abortion is wrong; and positive sanctions, such as promise of Heaven or being removed from the church.

GENDER ROLES

Characteristics/behaviours that are considered appropriate for males and females in society, e.g. women seen as gentle/caring; men seen as strong.

Socially constructed – vary from place to place, e.g. in some societies men wear a lot of jewellery and women shave their heads.

Socialisation into gender roles through:

Family: Parents teach gender through…

- **Canalisation –** the process of giving different toys to boys and girls, e.g. girls get dolls – encourages them to be caring
- **Manipulation –** parents encourage different behaviour from boys and girls, such as taking care with appearance

School: Some subjects are seen as more feminine and more masculine

Sport: Seen as more masculine. Sportsmen are judged on skill, but sportswomen often judged on looks

Media: TV, films and games targeted at girls and boys, e.g. boys' feature aggression

Religion: Often have strong beliefs about how men and women should act.