

Sociology & US

Pre Reading: pp 431-432 & 434

The Global Identity

If the world were a village of 100 people, there would be:

- 60 Asians
- 14 Africans
- 12 Europeans
- 8 people from Central and South America, Mexico & Caribbean
- 5 people from the United States & Canada
- 1 person from Australia or New Zealand
 - 82 would be non-white; 18 would be white

Globalization

- with increased technology & ease of travel, events that happen outside of ones culture, are **as likely** to influence behaviour as local events
 - eg. 9/11 - Terrorist Attacks in NYC & Washington
- these events changed the sociological landscape as much as they did world culture
 - eg. more challenging to fly due to restrictions on what you can bring on board
- ***For this reason - globalization must be considered when we discuss social identity***

Globalization is...

the integration of government policies, cultures, social movements and financial markets on a worldwide scale affecting countries and cultures around the world.

Globalization has brought global culture to the individual.

gLOCALization

A new way of viewing the social world.

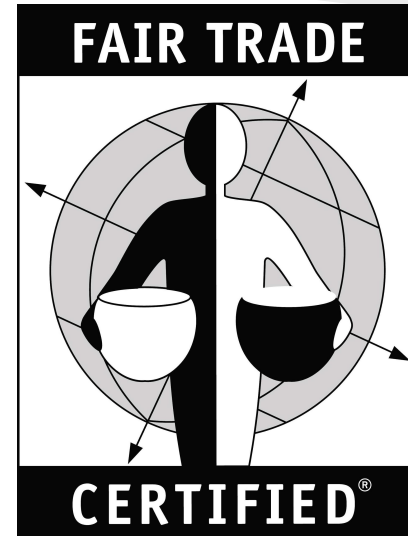
- the practice of addressing global issues by taking local action or,
- a way of thinking globally about a group's interests, but acting locally
 - eg. Fair Trade certified products

Think Globally, Act Locally: *Fair Trade*

- An organized social movement that aims to help producers in developing countries to make better trading conditions and promote sustainability
- It advocates the payment of a higher price to exporters as well as higher social and environmental standards
- It focuses in particular on exports from developing countries to developed countries → eg. coffee, cocoa, sugar, tea, bananas, honey, cotton, wine, fresh fruit, chocolate, flowers, and gold

“Fair Trade Certified”

- ensures producers are paid a fair price for the goods
 - *Lets look at coffee:*
 - Canadians drink 40 mill cups/day
 - In traditional economic model, for every \$1.00 spent on coffee, producers were only making \$0.11
 - Under Fair Trade model, producers are paid \$0.28
 - Workers must also be paid a fair wage, and work in safe conditions
 - child labour and forced labour are not permitted
 - EVERY PURCHASE MATTERS



Canadian Social Structures

Institutions

- when most people hear the word “institution”, they think about a building (school, hospital, prison etc.)
- in sociology, a **social institution is an organization or social framework whose function is to meet the basic needs of its members by providing direction and operating principles for society**
 - **example1:** a prison is a physical institution, but it’s a social institution as well— it’s part of the institution of government, which is responsible for maintaining public order
 - **example2:** school is a public institution and part of the social institution of education

Functions of Social Institutions

- satisfy the **basic needs** of society`s members
(healthcare)
- demonstrate **dominant values and beliefs**
(Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms)
- establish enduring patterns of **social behaviour**
(caring for children)
- **define roles** for individuals to emulate (husband vs. wife)

Goals:

- the underlying goal of all social institutions is to ***satisfy individual needs and provide an orderly structure for the benefit of all society***
 - social institutions also provide a way for different agents of socialization to ***transmit important beliefs and attitudes*** to the population
 - although distinct in their roles and overall purpose, social institutions perform the basic function of ***promoting social cohesion****

Multiculturalism

- Canada is an individualistic society, but has long opened door to immigrants from collectivist societies
- As a result, most Canadians have learned to accept different values from both social models and can live in harmony
- ***Multiculturalism is the political and social belief that ethnic and cultural diversity is the ideal***
- Policies of multiculturalism tend to foster more social cohesion

Social Cohesion

- a way of integrating economic and social policies in order to allow citizens to easily interact with one another
 - ongoing process in Canada
 - goal is to eliminate any inequality and social challenges that some groups experience in society
 - But, how successful are we with this?

Social Fragmentation

- the failure of society to fully integrate minority groups into the mainstream culture
 - Fragmentation forces some groups to see themselves as separate entities within society, who are not meant to enjoy the same privileges as others do
 - ***this view will no doubt lead to the disintegration of norms that govern social behaviour and relationships***

Case in Point - Canada's First Nations Populations

- **Despite being the ORIGINAL inhabitants of this land, they are a cultural minority and face many serious social issues**
 - racism & prejudice, low education, housing crises, unemployment, high crime rates (& imprisonment), drug & alcohol abuse, poor mental health, etc.
- *All of these issues are significant, and are sadly the result of the way these people have been marginalized over the past 100 years, in government attempts to strip them of their unique culture, through forced assimilation in Residential Schools*

Social Inequality

- One way sociologists account for the differences in a society's population is to study the inequality that exist

Social Inequality: the inability of some people, and the success of others, to attain access to the privileges, rewards or assets of society

→ In Canada, we cannot distinguish a single source of inequality, but, it seems that the more sophisticated the culture is, the more it's members are divided and classified

Conditions for Social Inequality

Wealth → family assets / possessions that result in social respect & power in society

Occupation → the level of prestige attached to a profession or job

Personal Credentials → belonging to influential groups or organizations that lead to increased social status

Postsecondary Education → ability to complete a degree that will lead to elite roles and prestige in business or academics

The “isms” in Sociology pp.432

Ableism - discrimination or social prejudice based on assumptions about people with disabilities

Ageism - discrimination against individuals or groups based on their age → affects all life stages, from **young** to **old**

Sexism - Individual or institutionalized discrimination based on gender

Racism - attribution of inferiority to a particular group and the use of the principle to justify this unequal treatment

Classism - discrimination based on social class; attitudes and policies that tend to benefit the upper class and exclude lower class

Social Institutions & Their Goals

- Their purpose is to “meet the needs of their members”
- Each social institution contains a set of social norms, roles, and behaviours expected of its members

But how are they viewed by different schools of thought within the field of sociology?

Conflict Theorists? Structural Functionalists?

Theoretical Perspectives of Social Institutions

- **Conflict theorists** (Marx) would agree that the purpose of social institutions is to meet the needs of their members
 - their greatest criticism would be that social institutions may have strayed from their original purpose to serve the individual; over time, they have come to represent the interests of the wealthy & privileged minority
 - **marginalised groups in society may not be fully recognized because social power is in the hands of the wealthy few** (*who allow minimal access to the social resources that were meant to serve all of society*)
- * **conflict theorists see institutions as roadblocks, hindering the general population from gaining equal access to social resources**

Theoretical Perspectives of Social Institutions - cont'd

- **Structural Functionalists** (Max Weber) would say that social institutions perform an integral function in modern life, and their core purpose is the welfare of the individual
 - ***functional theorists see the institutions as undisputable necessities for social living—they model social norms and provide positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour***

Social Institutions & Their Goals

- Each social institution contains a set of social norms, roles, and behaviours expected of its members
- there are many social institutions which guide public life, but there are only 5 that are discovered repeatedly in all cultures of the world
 - Family, Religion, Education, Government & Economy

Institution and Core Beliefs

Representatives of Institution

Individual Needs Served

FAMILY

- fidelity
- respect
- nurturance
- knowledge
- support
- loyalty

- individual members (father, mother, daughter etc.)
- families (nuclear, extended etc.)
- parents (adoptive, same-sex)
- relatives of a family

- socializes children
- responsible for reproduction
- perpetuates marriage
- establishes positive self-concept and self-esteem
- provides emotional nurturance

RELIGION

- worshipping
- faith
- charity
- tolerance
- ethics
- morals

- worshipper
- religious leaders of church, mosque, synagogue, temple etc.
- spiritual leaders and healers

- satisfies spiritual needs of individuals
- provides solace for life's crises and tragedies
- models altruistic behaviour
- promotes tolerance of other groups

Institution and Core Beliefs

Representatives of Institution

Individual Needs Served

EDUCATION

- obedience
- punctuality
- knowledge
- practical skills
- respect

- students
- teachers and administrators
- college and university professors

- transmits knowledge and skills from one generation to the next
- continues the socialization process begun at home with the family
- prepares students for the workforce

GOVERNMENT

- obedience
- loyalty
- pride
- justice
- patriotism
- respect
- equality

- political leaders
- political parties
- elected officials
- judges
- police officers
- civil servants

- demonstrates the legitimate use of power by governing members
- models respect for the nation and its symbols
- instills a sense of belonging and pride of country
- enforces social order (law, law enforcement etc.)
- administers to the well-being of the population
- attempts to unify society

Institution and Core Beliefs

Representatives of Institution

Individual Needs Served

ECONOMY

- ethics
- efficiency
- competition
- honesty
- integrity

- banks
- small businesses
- corporations

- regulates the distribution of goods and services
- establishes an appropriate work ethic
- teaches the value of honest and hard work as a way to get ahead
- teaches the laws of supply and demand
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Family

- family is the primary agent of socialization and the most important institution in Canadian society
- like all institutions, it's continuously adapting to change
 - the nuclear family was considered the ideal for many generations
 - today, Canadians are challenging the notion that nuclear families are the only way children can properly be socialized
 - as a result of changing attitudes toward parenting and marriage, the family is an institution that has grown to include lone-parents families, same-sex families, common-law, and blended families
 - more than any other institution, the family has demonstrated that diversity and tolerance are possible in a society as complex as Canada

Family

- In all cultures, the institution of the family is responsible for promoting universal functions, such as regulation of reproduction and sexual behaviour
 - it's also responsible for socializing and teaching the youngest members social norms
 - daily, the family helps develop lifelong lessons, such as the importance of respect and obedience
 - these skills are further explored when the student enters school—in this way, the family is seen as the blueprint for social norms and beliefs
- the family is the only institution to use nurturance and emotional support as a basis for all its relationships
 - the family has the ability to nurture self-esteem, creativity, and self-confidence
 - the family is the foundation on which well-adjusted young adults emerge ready and capable of fully participating in other institutions and society itself

Religion

- on a **personal level**, religion can serve a number of purposes—it can provide an individual with a sense of serenity and calm, help celebrate important rituals of life, and provide support in times of grief and personal tragedy
- on an **intellectual and philosophical level**, it can help explain the origins of the world, the universal order that governs it, and the presence of good and evil
 - for many individuals, religious beliefs are developed in the family starting at a very young age through initiation rites (Baptism, Hindu ear-piercing, Jewish bris etc.)
 - throughout the course of a person's life, a worshipper will attend prayer services, observe important rites, and learn sacred scripture
- *religion helps the worshipper explain natural phenomena, such as birth and death*

Religion

- **socially**, religion helps individuals develop charity, compassion, and altruism
 - most of the world's well-known religions are based on these elements
- For many cultures around the world, religion is a deeply integrated part of the fabric of society
 - it exerts a great influence on other institutions as well
 - organized religions have been known to create *social cohesion*, as well as *social conflict* among their believers and their society
- as social institutions, religious organizations serve a social purpose
 - most host charity events and community meals, and perform social service (good will and charity)

Religion

- Before 1971, **less than 1%** of people identified themselves as non-religious'
- Two generations later, **23%** of people identify themselves as non-religious
 - a look at the youngest Canadians suggests the transformation is gathering speed—***in 2002, 34% of 15-29 year olds said religion was highly important to them; in 2009, that number dropped to 22%***

→ this demographic shift raises profound questions about our social values, the fate of our cultural heritage, the institutions that once formed the bedrock of our communities, and access to political power

Education

- the basic purpose of going to school is to get good grades
 - but, education as an institution is steeped in traditions, rituals and rites of passage for many youth all over the world
- not all education systems are the same, as not all countries value the same set of skills or body of knowledge
 - however, ***all education systems work to transmit knowledge, skills and social values from one generation to the next***
 - the knowledge and skills you learn in school are ***building blocks*** for the next phase of your life (the workforce)
- education also provides a number of social and life management skills that are meant to foster student independence
- education must offer every student the same access to the same resources and serve them equally
 - no matter social class, race etc.

Education's Other Functions

socialization and roles - students learn about punctuality, and respect for authority and others

discipline and obedience

- students come to accept and respect the authority of teachers and rules of the school
- students learn to use self-control in their dealings with peers and others
- students learn to take responsibility for their own actions (including actions taken against others)

knowledge and skills

- students study and complete assignments
- students meet all curriculum expectations

competition and collaboration

- students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities to develop healthy competition
- students contribute to classroom activities to help foster collaboration and teamwork

Government

- Every human society is based on a guiding principle that is upheld by authority figures and by the general population
- The guiding principle for most countries is a political idea (Canada's is democracy; Cuba's and China's is communism)
- Aside from the political idea, society is also defined by distinct roles and obligations that help advance the fundamental beliefs of its members
 - **laws** may be written to facilitate appropriate social conduct for the people
 - laws give the **government authority to intervene when individuals violate them**
 - to some people, laws may appear constrictive, but ***without laws, society would be full of chaos***
 - our **elected officials are given the power** to make decisions for society and the citizens grant them that authority by means of our political vote
 - the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides the standard** for which many cases are determined

Government

- The role of government in society has many purposes, and law enforcement is just a small portion
 - government institutions must provide for the social and economic welfare of their people
 - with its many social programs and policies, the Canadian government tries to ***ensure that the most vulnerable and needy receive the support they need***
 - through these incentives and based on appropriate policies, the government hopes to alleviate social inequalities
 - however, social inequalities are on the rise in Canada, especially among certain groups like the ***Aboriginals***

Government

- The government oversees many other institutions, like family and religion
 - *All social institutions work to satisfy the needs of their members—however, the government has specific mandates to keep society safe (from pandemics, violence/terrorism, attacks etc.)*
- **Health Care System**
 - Canada's healthcare system consists of 13 provincial and territorial programs who work together to manage and deliver health care to Canadians
 - Canada has “universal health care” because the system is based on need, rather than the ability to pay
 - Provides proactive solutions to extend life and ensures a high standard of living for the elderly
- **Canadian Military**
 - Works to preserve our way of life, and to keep our nation safe from external threats
 - Canadian peacekeepers provide humanitarian relief after natural disasters, protecting civilians during conflicts, and helping to organize elections and assist in relief efforts around the world
 - members act as ambassadors around the world for our way of life and beliefs
 - provides domestic protection (response to disasters in Canada)

Economy

- a country's economic institution is closely related to the nation's government
- the economy serves a number of important functions (production of goods and the organization of the labour force)
- the economy and its related institutions, such as small businesses and large corporations are concerned with the supply and demand of goods and efficient methods to produce profit
- in many countries, **banks** are the most powerful economic institutions—they are the keepers of the nation's currency
 - *the strength of a country's currency is an indicator of how a country's economy is performing*

Economy

- on a more human level, economic institutions provide society with appropriate examples of leadership styles and teach the importance of honesty and strong work ethic
- the economy also ***highlights the importance of ownership and personal financial success in society***
- in sociological terms, there are 2 distinct views about the role of workers in modern-day economy
 1. the first is that workers are insignificant mechanisms in the larger and more important machine * ***dehumanizes the efforts of the individual***
 2. workers are an integral part of the success of any company, and with encouragement and praise, will produce outstanding results

Social Change

→ a society's attempt to incorporate different values and beliefs into its existing structure and to modify public institutions to instigate social and cultural progress

- *For better or worse, society and its institutions do their best to keep up with the fast-paced and ever changing face of their members, but often find themselves lagging behind*

Social Change

- **Eg. *Technology in schools***
 - *Students are leading the charge as they are more capable of incorporating and using technology, than the institution that is meant to prepare them for the workplace*
 - *as a result of these changing values and needs, education is moving toward integrating technology in the classroom and will continue to progress in this field in the future*

Social Change

- **Eg. *Families***

- *Here, the general population has moved away from the nuclear family that was once considered acceptable*

- *the trend toward cohabitation, the increasing divorce rates, and emergence of same-sex families have changed the face of family life forever*

Social Change

Acknowledging changes such as those occurring in education and the family will ensure that social institutions remain current and capable of progressing with their population.