Glossary

A

absolute poverty the absence of enough money to secure life's necessities

achieved status a position that is earned or chosen

actuarial tables statistics of life expectancies; used as basis for life insurance costs

age stratification the unequal distribution of scarce resources based on age

ageism a set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, and values used to justify age-based prejudice and discrimination

agricultural society a society that uses plows and draft animals in growing food

alternative movement a social movement that focuses on bringing about limited changes in people

anomie a social condition in which norms are weak, conflicting, or absent

anticipatory socialization the voluntary process of preparing to accept new norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors

ascribed status a position that is neither earned nor chosen but assigned

assimilation the blending or fusing of minority groups into the dominant society

authoritarianism a political system controlled by nonelected rulers who usually permit some degree of individual freedom

authority the legitimate or socially approved use of power

averting turning aside; prevention

B

beliefs ideas about the nature of reality

bilateral family arrangement where descent and inheritance are passed equally through both parents

biological determinism principle that behavioral differences are the result of inherited physical characteristics

bourgeoisie class owning the means for producing wealth

bullish optimistic; hopeful

bureaucracy a formal organization based on rationality and efficiency

C

canon an accepted principle or rule

capitalism an economic system based on private ownership of property and the pursuit of profit

capitalist person who owns or controls the means for producing wealth

case study intensive study of a single group, incident, or community

caste system a stratification structure that does not allow for social mobility

causation the belief that events occur in predictable ways and that one event leads to another

census regularly occurring count of a particular population

central-city dilemma concentration of people in need of public services without tax base–generated money to provide for them

charismatic authority authority that arises from the personality of an individual

charter schools public schools that are operated like private schools by public school teachers and administrators

church a life-encompassing religious organization to which all members of a society belong

city dense and permanent concentration of people living in a specific area and working primarily in non-agricultural jobs

class conflict the ongoing struggle between the bourgeoisie (owners) and the proletariat (working) classes

class consciousness identification with the goals and interests of a social class

closed-ended questions questions a person must answer by choosing from a limited, predetermined set of responses

coercion interaction in which individuals or groups are forced to behave in a particular way

cognitive ability capacity for thinking abstractly

collective behavior the spontaneous behavior of a group of people responding to similar stimuli

collectivity collection of people who do not normally interact and who do not share clearly defined norms

compensatory education specific curricular programs designed to overcome a deficiency

competition system in which rewards are based on relative performance

concentric zone theory theory that describes urban growth in terms of circular areas that grow from the central city outward

conflict interaction aimed at defeating an opponent

conflict perspective approach emphasizing the role of conflict, competition, and constraint within a society

conformity behavior that matches group expectations

conglomerates networks of unrelated businesses operating under one corporate umbrella

contagion theory theory stating that members of a crowd stimulate each other to higher and higher levels of emotion and irrational behavior

contingent employment the hiring of part-time, short-term workers

control theory theory that compliance with social norms requires strong bonds between individuals and society

convergence theory theory that states that crowds are formed by people who deliberately congregate with like-minded others

cooperation interaction in which individuals or groups combine their efforts to reach a goal

cooperative learning instructional method that relies on cooperation among students

core tier an occupational structure composed of large firms dominating their industries

corporation an organization owned by shareholders, who have limited liability and limited control

correlation a measure of the relationship between two variables

counterculture a subculture deliberately and consciously opposed to certain central beliefs or attitudes of the dominant culture

crime acts committed in violation of the law

criminal justice system system comprising institutions and processes responsible for enforcing criminal statutes

crowd a temporary collection of people who share an immediate common interest

crude birthrate the annual number of live births per one thousand members of a population

crude death rate the annual number of deaths per one thousand members of a population

cult a religious organization whose characteristics are not drawn from existing religious traditions within a society

cultural bias the unfair measurement of the cognitive abilities of people in some social categories

cultural particulars the ways in which a culture expresses universal traits

cultural pluralism desire of a group to maintain some sense of identity separate from the dominant group

cultural universals general cultural traits that exist in all cultures

culture knowledge, values, customs, and physical objects that are shared by members of a society

D

de facto segregation denial of equal access based on everyday practice

de jure segregation denial of equal access based on the law

demographic transition theory theory that population growth is a function of the level of economic development in a country

demography the scientific study of population

denomination one of several religious organizations that most members of a society accept as legitimate

dependency ratio the ratio of dependent persons to economically active persons

dependent variable a characteristic that reflects a change

desocialization the process of giving up old norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors

deterrence discouraging criminal acts by threatening punishment

deviance behavior that departs from societal or group norms

deviant a person who breaks significant societal or group norms

differential association theory theory that individuals learn deviance in proportion to the number of deviant acts to which they are exposed

diffusion process by which one culture or society borrows from another culture or society

discovery process by which something is learned or reinterpreted

discrimination treating people differently based on ethnicity, race, religion, or culture

dispersed collectivity collectivity made up of people who are not physically connected but who follow common rules or respond to common stimuli

doubling time number of years needed to double the base population size

downsizing the process by which companies reduce their work forces

dramaturgy approach that depicts human interaction as theatrical performances

drive impulse to reduce discomfort

dysfunction negative consequence of an aspect of society

E

economic institution institution that determines how goods and services are produced and distributed

edge city a suburban unit specializing in a particular economic activity

educational equality condition in which schooling produces the same results for lower-class and minority children as it does for other children

elitism system in which a community or society is controlled from the top by a few individuals or organizations

emergent norm theory theory stating that norms develop to guide crowd behavior

endogamy marriage within one's own group as required by social norms

equalitarian family structure where authority is evenly shared between the husband and wife

equilibrium a society's tendency to react to changes by making adjustments to keep itself in a state of functioning and balance

ethnic minority group identified by cultural, religious, or national characteristics

ethnocentrism judging others in terms of one's own cultural standards

exogamy the practice of marrying outside one's group

exponential growth growth in which the amount of increase is added to the base figure each time period

extended family two or more adult generations of the same family whose members share economic resources and a common household

extrapolating predicting based on past experiences

F

fad an unusual behavior pattern that spreads rapidly and disappears quickly

false consciousness adoption of the ideas of the dominant class by the less powerful class

family a group of people related by marriage, blood, or adoption

family planning the voluntary use of population control methods

fashion a widely accepted behavior pattern that changes periodically

fecundity the maximum rate at which women can physically produce children

feminization of poverty a trend in U.S. society in which women and children make up an increasing proportion of the poor

fertility a measure of the number of children born to a woman or a population of women

fertility rate the annual number of live births per one thousand women aged fifteen to forty-four

field research research that takes place in a natural (nonlaboratory) setting

folkways norms that lack moral significance

for-profit schools schools run by private companies on government funds

formal organization a group deliberately created to achieve one or more long-term goals

formal sanctions sanctions imposed by persons given special authority

formal schooling education that is provided and regulated by society

fundamentalism the desire to resist secularization and to adhere closely to traditional religious beliefs, rituals, and doctrines

G

game stage Mead's third stage in the development of role taking; children anticipate the actions of others based on social rules

Gemeinschaft "community"; preindustrial society based on tradition, kinship, and close social ties

gender identity a sense of being male or female based on learned cultural values

gender socialization the social process of learning how to act as a boy or girl

generalized other integrated conception of the norms, values, and beliefs of one's community or society

genocide the systematic effort to destroy an entire population

gentrification the development of low-income areas by middle-class homebuyers, landlords, and professional developers

Gesellschaft "society"; industrial society characterized by weak family ties, competition, and impersonal social relationships

gross migration rate the number of persons per year per one thousand members of a population who enter or leave a geographic area

group at least two people who have one or more goals in common and share common ways of thinking and behaving

groupthink when thinking in a group is self-deceptive, based on conformity to group beliefs, and created by group pressure to conform

H

hate crime a criminal act motivated by prejudice

hidden curriculum the informal and unofficial aspects of culture that children are taught in school, such as conformity or cooperation

hidden unemployment unemployment that includes people not counted in the traditional unemployment categories

horizontal mobility a change in occupation within the same social class

horticultural society a society that survives primarily through the growing of plants

hunting and gathering society a society that survives by hunting animals and gathering edible foods

hypothesis of linguistic relativity theory stating that our idea of reality depends largely upon language

hypothesis testable statement of relationships among variables

I

"I"   the part of the self that accounts for unlearned, spontaneous acts

ideal culture   cultural guidelines that group members claim to accept

imitation stage   Mead's first stage in the development of role taking; children begin to imitate behaviors without understanding why

in-group   exclusive group demanding intense loyalty

incarceration   a method of protecting society from criminals by keeping them in prisons

incest taboo   a norm forbidding marriage between certain kinds of relatives

income   amount of money received by an individual or group over a specific time period

independent variable   a characteristic that causes something to occur

industrial society   a society that depends on science and technology to produce its basic goods and services

infant mortality rate   the annual number of deaths among infants under one year of age per one thousand live births

informal organization   groups within a formal organization in which personal relationships are guided by norms, rituals, and sentiments that are not part of the formal organization

informal sanctions   rewards or punishments that can be applied by most members of a group

instincts   innate (unlearned) patterns of behavior

institutionalized discrimination   unfair practices that grow out of common behaviors and attitudes and that are a part of the structure of a society

integrative curriculum   an approach to education based on student-teacher collaboration

interest group   a group organized to influence political decision making

intergenerational mobility   a change in status or class from one generation to the next

interlocking directorates   directorates that result when heads of corporations sit on one another's boards

intervening variable   a variable that changes the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable

interview   a survey method in which a trained researcher asks questions and records the answers

invention   the creation of something new from previously existing items or processes

iron law of oligarchy   theory that power increasingly becomes concentrated in the hands of a few members of any organization

L

labeling theory   theory that society creates deviance by identifying particular members as deviant

latent function   an action that produces an unintended and unrecognized result

law   a norm that is formally defined and enforced by officials

legitimate   justify or give official approval to

life expectancy   the average number of years that persons in a given population born at a particular time can expect to live

life span   the most advanced age to which humans can survive

looking-glass self   an image of yourself based on what you believe others think of you

M

magnet schools   public schools that focus on particular disciplines or areas, such as fine arts or science

manifest function   an action that produces an intended and recognized result

marriage   a legal union based on mutual rights and obligations

mass media   means of communication designed to reach the general population

master status   a position that strongly affects most other aspects of a person's life

material culture   the concrete, tangible objects of a culture

matriarchy   the pattern in which the oldest woman living in the household has authority over all other family members

matrilineal   family arrangement where descent and inheritance is passed through the female line

matrilocal   the pattern in which married couples live with or near the wives' parents

"me"   the part of the self formed through socialization

mechanical solidarity   social dependency based on a widespread consensus of values and beliefs, enforced conformity, and dependence on tradition and family

mechanization   the process of replacing animal and human power with machine power

meritocracy   a society in which social status is based on ability and achievement

migration   the movement of people from one geographic area to another

minority   a group of people with physical or cultural traits different from those of the dominant group in the society

mob   emotional crowd ready to use violence for a specific purpose

monogamy   a marriage consisting of one man and one woman at a time

monopolies   companies that have control over the production or distribution of a product or service

mores   norms that have moral dimensions and that should be followed by members of the society

mortality   deaths within a population

multicultural education   an educational curriculum that emphasizes differences among gender, ethnic, and racial categories

multinationals   firms based in highly industrialized societies with operating facilities throughout the world

multiple causation   the belief that an event occurs as a result of several factors working in combination

multiple nuclei theory   theory that focuses on specific geographic or historical influences on urban growth

N

negative deviance   involves behavior that underconforms to accepted norms

neolocal   the pattern in which newly married couples set up their own households

net migration rate   the annual increase or decrease per one thousand members of a population resulting from migration into and out of the population

nonmaterial culture   ideas, knowledge, and beliefs that influence people's behavior

norms   rules defining appropriate and inappropriate behavior

nuclear family   family structure composed of one or both parents and children

nullifying   causing to have no value or force; negating

O

obligations   behaviors that individuals are expected to perform toward others

occupational sex segregation   the concentration of women in lower-status positions

occupations   categories of jobs that involve similar activities at different work locations

oligopolies   combinations of companies that control the production or distribution of a product or service

open class system   a system in which social class is based on merit and individual effort; movement is allowed between classes

open classroom   a nonbureaucratic approach to education based on democracy, flexibility, and non-competitiveness

open-ended questions   questions a person is to answer in his or her own words

organic solidarity   social interdependency based on a high degree of specialization in roles

out-group   group targeted by an in-group for opposition, antagonism, or competition

overurbanization   when a city cannot supply adequate jobs and housing for its inhabitants

P

Pandora's box   a source of trouble

participant observation   a case study where the researcher becomes a member of the group being studied

pastoral societies   societies where food is obtained primarily by raising and taking care of animals

patriarchy   the pattern in which the oldest man living in the household has authority over the rest of the family members

patrilineal   family arrangement where descent and inheritance is passed through the male line

patrilocal   the pattern in which married couples live with or near the husbands' parents

peer group   set of individuals of roughly the same age and interests

peripheral theory   theory that emphasizes the growth of suburbs around the central city

peripheral tier   an occupational structure composed of smaller, less profitable firms

perspective   a particular point of view

play stage   Mead's second stage in the development of role taking; children act in ways they imagine other people would

pluralism   system in which political decisions are made as a result of bargaining and compromise among special interest groups

political institution   institution that determines how power is obtained and exercised

political socialization   informal and formal processes by which a person develops political opinions

polyandry   the marriage of one woman to two or more men at the same time

polygamy   the marriage of a male or female to more than one person at a time

population   a group of people living in a particular place at a specified time or a group of people with certain specified characteristics

population control   attempts by government to control birth rates

population momentum   inability to stop population growth immediately because of previous high rate of growth

population pyramid   a graphic representative of the age and gender composition of a population

positive deviance   involves behavior that overconforms to social expectations

positivism the belief that knowledge should be derived from scientific observation

postindustrial society a society in which the economic emphasis is on providing services and information

power the ability to control the behavior of others

power elite a unified group of military, corporate, and government leaders

prejudice widely held negative attitudes toward a group (minority or majority) and its individual members

prestige recognition, respect, and admiration attached to social positions

primary deviance deviance involving occasional breaking of norms that is not a part of a person's lifestyle or self-concept

primary group people who are emotionally close, know one another well, and seek one another's company

primary relationships interactions that are intimate, personal, caring, and fulfilling

primary sector that part of the economy producing goods from the natural environment

profane nonsacred aspects of life

proletariat class that labors without owning the means of production; those who labor for the bourgeoisie

Protestant ethic a set of values, norms, beliefs, and attitudes stressing hard work, thrift, and self-discipline

Q

qualitative variable a characteristic that is defined by its presence or absence in a category

quantitative variable a characteristic that can be measured numerically

questionnaire a written set of questions to be answered by a research participant

R

race people sharing certain inherited physical characteristics that are considered important within a society

racism an extreme form of prejudice that assumes superiority of one group over others

rational-legal authority form of authority in which the power of government officials is based on the offices they hold

rationalization the mind-set emphasizing knowledge, reason, and planning

real culture actual behavior patterns of members of a group

recidivism a repetition of or return to criminal behavior

redemptive movement a social movement which seeks to change people completely

reference group group used for self-evaluation and the formation of attitudes, values, beliefs, and norms

reflex automatic reaction to physical stimulus

reformative movement a social movement that attempts to make limited changes in society

rehabilitation process of changing or reforming a criminal through socialization

relative poverty a measure of poverty based on the economic disparity between those at the bottom of a society and the rest of the society

religion a unified system of beliefs and practices concerned with sacred things

religiosity ways in which people express their religious interests and convictions

replacement level birthrate at which a couple replaces itself without adding to the population

representative democracy a system of government that uses elected officials to fulfill majority wishes

representative sample a sample that accurately reflects the characteristics of the population as a whole

resocialization the process of adopting new norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors

resource mobilization theory theory of social movements that focuses on the use of resources to achieve goals

retribution punishment intended to make criminals pay compensation for their acts

revolution sudden and complete overthrow of a social or political order

revolutionary movement a social movement that attempts to change the total structure of society

rights behaviors that individuals can expect from others

riot episode of largely random destruction and violence carried out by a crowd

role conflict condition in which the performance of a role in one status interferes with the performance of a role in another status

role expected behavior associated with a particular status

role performance the actual behavior of an individual in a role

role strain condition in which the roles of a single status are inconsistent or conflicting

role taking assuming the viewpoint of another person and using that viewpoint to shape the self-concept

rumor a widely circulating piece of information that is not verified as being true or false

S

sacred   things and ideas that are set apart and given a special meaning that goes beyond, or transcends, immediate existence

sample   a group of people that represents a larger population

sanctions   rewards and punishments used to encourage people to follow norms

school desegregation   the achievement of a racial balance in the classroom

scientific method   the recognition and formulation of a problem, the collection of data through observation and experiment, and the formulation and testing of hypotheses

secondary analysis   using precollected information for data collection and research purposes

secondary deviance   deviance in which an individual's life and identity are organized around breaking society's norms

secondary group   people who share only part of their lives while focusing on a goal or task

secondary relationships   impersonal interactions involving limited parts of personalities

secondary sector   that part of the economy engaged in manufacturing goods

sect   a religious organization that arises out of a desire to reform an existing religious organization

sector theory   theory that emphasizes the importance of transportation routes in the process of urban growth

secularization   process through which the sacred loses influence over society

self-concept   an image of yourself as having an identity separate from other people

self-fulfilling prophecy   an expectation that leads to behavior that causes the expectation to become reality

sex   classification of people as male or female based on biological characteristics

sexism   a set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, and values used to justify sexual inequality

significant others   those people whose reactions are most important to your self-concept

social aggregate   people temporarily in the same place at the same time

social category   a group of people who share a social characteristic

social change   new societal behaviors with important long-term consequences

social class   segment of society whose members hold similar amounts of resources and share values, norms, and an identifiable lifestyle

social control   ways to encourage conformity to society's norms

social dynamics   the study of social change

social exchange   a voluntary action performed in the expectation of getting a reward in return

social interaction   the process of influencing each other as people relate

social mobility   the movement of individuals or groups between social classes

social movement   movement whose goal is to promote or prevent social change; the most structured and rational form of collective behavior

social network   a web of social relationships that joins a person to other people and groups

social processes   series of steps leading to change on a societal level

social sanctions   rewards or punishments that encourage conformity to social norms

social solidarity   the degree to which a society is unified

social statics   the study of social stability and order

social stratification   ranking of people or groups according to their unequal access to scarce resources

social structure   the patterned interaction of people in social relationships

socialism   an economic system founded on the belief that the means of production should be controlled by the people as a whole

socialization   the process of learning to participate in a group

society   a specific territory inhabited by people who share a common culture

sociobiology   the study of the biological basis of human behavior

sociological imagination   the ability to see the link between society and self

sociological perspective   a view that looks at the behavior of groups, not individuals

sociology   the scientific study of social structure (human social behavior)

spirit of capitalism   the obligation to reinvest money in business rather than to spend it

sport   a set of competitive activities in which winners and losers are determined by physical performance within a set of established rules

sport subculture   a group with distinct roles, values, norms, and beliefs that is organized around a sport activity

spurious correlation   a relationship between two variables that is actually caused by a third factor

stacking   assignment of players to less central positions on the basis of race or ethnicity

status   a position a person occupies within a social structure

status set   all of the statuses that a person occupies at any particular time

stereotype   a distorted, exaggerated, or oversimplified image applied to a category of people

stigma   an undesirable trait or label that is used to characterize an individual

strain theory   theory that deviance is more likely to occur when a gap exists between cultural goals and the ability to achieve these goals by legitimate means

subculture   a group that is part of the dominant culture but that differs from it in some important respects

subjugation   process by which a minority group is denied equal access to the benefits of a society

suburbanization   loss of population of a city to surrounding areas

survey   research method in which people respond to questions

symbol   anything that stands for something else and has an agreed-upon meaning attached to it

symbolic interactionism   approach that focuses on the interactions among people based on mutually understood symbols

T

taboo   a rule of behavior, the violation of which calls for strong punishment

technology   knowledge and tools used to achieve practical goals

tertiary sector   that part of the economy providing services

theoretical perspective   a set of assumptions accepted as true

total fertility rate   average number of children born to a woman during her lifetime

total institutions   places in which people are separated from the rest of society and controlled by officials in charge

totalitarianism   a political system in which a ruler with absolute power attempts to control all aspects of a society

tracking   placement of students in programs according to academic ability levels

traditional authority   forms of authority in which the legitimacy of a leader is rooted in custom

U

underclass   people typically unemployed who came from families that have been poor for generations

urban ecology   the study of the relationships between humans and city environments

urban legend   a moralistic tale which the teller swears happened to someone he or she knows

urbanism   the idea that urbanization involves a distinctive way of life

urbanization   the shifting of population from farms and villages to large cities

V

value-added theory   theory holding that certain conditions must exist for social movements to occur

values   broad ideas about what is good or desirable shared by people in a society

variable   a characteristic that is subject to change

verstehen   understanding social behavior by putting yourself in the place of others

vertical mobility   a change upward or downward in occupational status or social class

victim discounting   process of reducing the seriousness of the crimes that injure people of lower status

voucher system   system in which public school funds may be used to support public, private, or religious schools

W

war   organized, armed conflict that occurs within a society or between nations

wealth   total economic resources held by a person or group

white-collar crime   job-related crimes committed by high-status people

working poor   people employed in low-skill jobs with the lowest pay who do not earn enough to rise out of poverty

Z

zero population growth   situation in which deaths are balanced by births so that the population does not increase