

Key Sociological Concepts

(Important Words!)

Culture

- Learned and shared
 - *“The culture of a society is the way of life of its members; the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation.” Linton*
- Defines acceptable behaviour for members of a society
- Changes between societies – Hall (1973)
- Determines solutions to society’s problems – eg. Hunger, crime
- Main influence on human behaviour

Values

- General guidelines to behaviour
- Define what is important within society
 - Eg respect for elders, do not steal
- Vary from one society to another
- **Value judgements** – a statement made based on an individual's values
 - “should”, “must”, “ought to”

Norms

- Guide behaviour in particular situations
 - outline what is acceptable and appropriate
 - Based on values
 - Eg. Value: respect for elders; Norm: give up your seat on the bus if there is someone elderly standing
- Reinforced by Sanctions
 - Positive and negative
 - Formal and informal
- Mechanism of **social control**

Socialisation

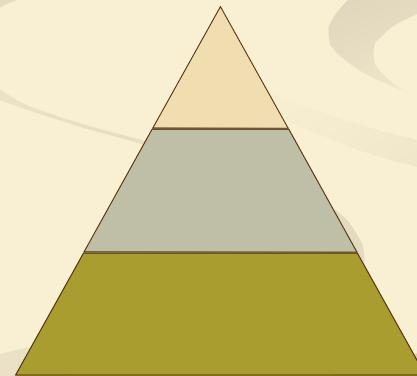
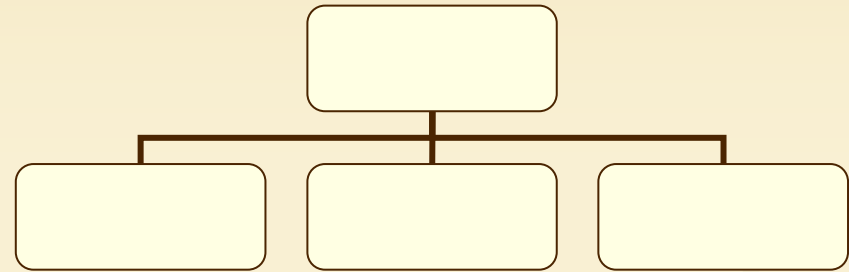
- Process of individuals learning culture
 - How to behave – norms, values
- 2 types
 - Primary
 - Young children within family
 - Secondary
 - Throughout life – school, work, new job...

Status

- Social position
 - E.g. occupational, family ...
- Varies from culture to culture
- May be **ascribed** or **achieved**
- Associated with a set of norms = **ROLE**
 - Defines interaction with others – regulation and organisation of society

Hierarchy

- Ordering according to importance
 - Eg. Social class
- Some individuals/institutions have greater power than others



Subcultures & Cultural Diversity

■ Subculture

- Culture within larger culture
- Has some own values, customs etc, but shares many values of the parent culture
 - Eg. Youth culture

■ Cultural diversity

- Many cultures within one society

Gender

- Gender rather than “sex”
 - Gender: social characteristics (eg. Behaviour, dress) associated with being male/female
 - Sex: biological characteristics of men/women

Ethnicity

- Membership of a group, based upon religion/place of origin/customs/nationality
 - May be very complex
- Nationality: holding the citizenship of a particular nation
- “race” is an inaccurate term, traditionally based on false biological assumptions

Deviance

- Non-conformity
 - Rule-breaking behaviour