

### what is a social problem?

- existence of a social condition
- someone has to think its larger group= a problem (**BELIEF**) more attention
- awareness/ spreading thru out media

**example-** drug addiction, not a social problem unless part of society BELIEVES it diminishes quality of human life

### methods of data collection

experiments, surveys, field research, secondary data research

### Social Groups

- 2 or more people who have a common identity, interact, and form a social relationship

**primary groups-** characterized by intimate and informal interactions (friends and family, comfortability)

**secondary groups-** task oriented and characterized by impersonal and formal interaction (class mates, co workers)

### Blumer's Stages of a Social Problem

1. **societal recognition** process by which a social problem is "born"
2. **social legitimation** social problems is recognized by the larger community
3. **mobilization for action** leads to development and implementation of a plan for dealing with the problem

### roles

the set of rights, obligations, and expectations associated with a status

- guide our behavior and allow us to predicts others behaviors

### roles (cont)

**examples** student: do work; prisoner: w/ guards and w/ inmates

- you learn what the roles are, then accept them to maintain that status

### Structural- Functionalist Perspective

society is composed of parts that work together to maintain a state of balance

**latent-** conseq- father got fired, how uences unintended kids feel; gay rights and often hidden ( ur gay), how fam feels

**manifest-** intended a problem that and commonly throws that ""norm" recognized off

**social pathology-** social problems result from 'sickness' in society

**social disorgani- zation-** rapid social change disrupts norms in society you adapt ( like coming to college)

### The Sociological Imagination

putting yourself "in" the situation to get a different perspective and better understanding

- im not homeless, but what would it be like if i was

### methods of data collection

experiments, surveys, field research, secondary data research

### SOCIAL PROBLEM DEFINITION

a social condition that a segment of society views as harmful to members of society and in need of remedy

### GOOD EXAMPLES

### SOCIAL PROBLEM DEFINITION (cont)

gun control- threat to civil rights OR its necessary for safety

abortion- pro life OR pro choice

### Theoretical Perspectives

**labeling theory:** social condition or group is viewed as problematic if it is labeled as such

**social construct- ionism:** argues that reality is socially constructed by individuals who interpret the social world around them

### symbolic interactionist perspective

basic premise is that a individual condition must be defined or level recognized as a social problem for it to be a social problem

### 3 types:

Blumer's Stages of a Social Problem

labeling theory

social constructionism

### conflict perspective

two groups opposing each other rich vs poor, pro life vs pro choice

### culture

the meanings and ways of life that characterize a society, including **beliefs, values, norms, sanctions, and symbols**

people think the same way as you do

... wouldn't be in the drug culture if you don't believe in drugs



### culture (cont)

**beliefs:** definitions and explanations about what is assumed to be true "is 2nd hand smoke dangerous?"

**values:** *social agreements ab what is considered good or bad, right and wrong\** racism, sexism, child abuse, violate the values of equality and fairness

**norms:** defined rules of behavior

1. folkways: customs, habits, and manners of society (not the law) ways u act (sneeze= cover ur nose)

2. laws: formal norms backed by authority (LAW)

3. mores: norms w/ a *moral* basis

### Statuses

a position that a person occupies within a social group

ex: mother, father, child, husband

**ascribed statuses:** status that society assigns to an individual on the basis of factors with NO CONTROL over (age, race etc)

**achieved statuses:** assigned on the basis of some characteristic or behavior over which there is some control (college graduate, spouse, parent, criminal) (+/-)

### elements of social structure and culture

the **structure** of a society refers to the way it is organized

Organized into:

**institutions**

**social groups**

**statuses**

**roles**

### symbols

something that represents something else

- language, gestures, and objects whose meaning is *commonly understood by the members of a society*

ex.) flipping someone off, gang sings (meaning to them not me)

### sanctions

consequences for conforming to or violating norms

- can be positive or negative

(+)= being nice, receiving an award for a kind act

(-)= breaking the law

### levels of analysis

**macrosociology** looks at 'big picture' of society suggests how social problems are affected at the institutional level

**STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM and CONFLICT THEORY**

**microsociology** concerned with the psychological dynamics of individuals interacting in small groups

**SYMBOLIC INTERACTIVISM**

### elements of social structure

an **institution** is an established and enduring pattern of social relationships

5 traditional institutions are: **family, religion, politics, economics, education**

**family**- everyone comes from one (+/-)

**religion**- guides a lot of issues ( gay rights, legalized prostitution)

**politics**- huge impact, set policies with a direct impact on you (happy if ur guy wins, sad if loses)

### elements of social structure (cont)

**economics**- micro and macro, every thing is tied into it, SPENDING, globally interconnected, high unemployment = worst economy

**education**- HS drop outs: not great jobs, high crime

### Research

#### Stages of conducting a research study

1. formulating a research question
2. reviewing the literature (whats already out there?)
3. defining variables (measurable event, characteristic, or property that is subject to change)
4. formulating a hypothesis (B4 research)

#### \*methods of data collection

experiments: involves manipulating the independent variable to determine how it affects the dependent

survey: not v accurate; eliciting info from respondents thru questions (sample: portion of population)

interviews: survey research, people ask respondents questions and make written notes ab (advantage: clarifying questions)

questionnaires: less expensive and less time consuming but response rate is a downside

web based surveys: growing in popularity, thought to reduce problems associated with traditional survey research

field research: observing social behavior in settings in which it occurs naturally

^^ participant observation (researcher participates in whatever is studied); nonparticipant observation ( researcher observes)... presence influences behavior

secondary data research: researching what has been researched