

---

[THEME MUSIC]

Welcome to this episode of *Sociology Studies of Society*. Today's lesson is on sociology with the sociological and global perspectives defined. As always, don't be afraid to pause, stop, rewind, or even fast forward to make sure you get the most out of this tutorial.

So what is sociology? Sociology is the study of human society using systematic methods, but let's break that definition down a little bit. First off, using systematic methods. Sociology is not randomly looking at facts. They're not making assumptions based on one tiny thing they see. It's a systematic study. It's a science. It's formulating hypotheses, and testing those, and really trying to scientifically understand.

And what are they trying to understand? Well, sociology is trying to understand human society. So we're not concerned about the structures of the human body. We're not concerned about the way the brain works. We're concerned about human society, so how humans interact with each other and how society affects people's lives.

Now I like to think of sociology having a lens, a way of looking at the world that's different from other ways of looking at the world, from the way you look at it as an individual, from the way you look at it as a psychologist, and that's called "the sociological perspective." The sociological perspective is examining details of human society to find general patterns. And we're looking for general patterns about the way people live and the effect society plays on people's lives.

Now just to be clear, you might hear people talk about lenses in other subjects. There are different lenses, even within subjects. Psychology has many different lenses. But for sociology, we're concerned about this sociological perspective. Now let me give you an example of examining details to find general patterns and about how that ties into society.

So let's say we see someone running. OK, it's the weekend. We see some running. And then, we notice that it's not just one person. There's actually two people running. And wait a second, there's actually more people running, and there's more, and we're starting to see a general pattern. We're starting to see something go on, and we're trying to figure out what is going on and, oh, it appears that they're running in a race. So they're running in a race and, in fact, that race is a fundraiser. It's the Race for the Cure.

So the sociological perspective is looking for individual details and trying to pull them together into

making a bigger picture. Now a sociologist isn't going to look at a runner and try to figure out whether or not their racing in a race or if they're just running for fun, but they might look at the running culture and its effect on society. They may look on the culture of fundraising, and how the Race for the Cure has been a very successful, and why it is, and how that makes the individuals feel, and that's why they choose to partake in it. That is what sociology is about.

So why is this lens a useful one? Why is it useful to look at human society to find patterns and then try to figure out how these patterns work and how they affect people's lives? Now there are four benefits of the sociological perspective, and the first one is that it challenges familiar understandings about ourselves and others. Now this actually recently happened to me. I was traveling in New York, and I thought New Yorkers were rude because people were not making eye contact. It's not that New Yorkers are rude. It's just that I'm from Minnesota. In Minnesota, we make eye contact, and we might politely smile. But we don't actually stop and talk to people. Were not randomly meeting people as much as New Yorkers.

Now New Yorkers are much more likely to look down on the ground, and sociology is a way for us to understand the situation beyond just my personal bias, my personal experience, and you can actually look at the data and maybe find out that New Yorkers are much more likely to give charitably, so maybe they're actually nicer than people from the Midwest, than people from Minnesota. So that is one of the benefits.

Another benefit is that it discerns constraints and opportunities that surround human life. Some people are born into tougher situations than other people, and some people are born into really plush situations. I was really lucky, personally, in my family. Both my parents went to college, so all three of my brothers saw college not only as an option, it really wasn't an option. It was, you needed to go to college. And I really think that helped me in my life. And other people don't maybe have that benefit. And I know that there are other things that-- other opportunities that I do not have because of my upbringing, but that is one that I think was a good one.

The third benefit of the sociological perspective is it allows us to see society's influence on individual actions and decisions. So in America, most of us are probably going to be having two to three kids. And I mean, the average is somewhere around the middle twos. And that's going to be normal for what forming a family is.

Now in other parts of the world, what's normal for a family might be seven or eight kids. And it's not a different, really, as much in the individuals, it's a difference in the societies. The society of India is

different, and has different expectations, and puts different value on having kids.

The last benefit of the sociological perspective is that it recognizes human diversity and issues surrounding this diversity. So the world is very diverse. People are very diverse inside the world. And sociology is one way, the sociological perspective is one way to really start to understand those differences, and see them, and see why it's difficult. Because norms for me might be not normal for someone else.

And there's a key term that goes with this last benefit, and that's called "a global perspective." A global perspective is the study of the global world and each society's niche. When you hear someone talk about a global perspective, that's what they're talking about.

So today's takeaway message-- sociology is the study of human society using systematic methods. The sociological perspective is finding general patterns out of the details from particular people. There are four benefits to the sociological perspective. It challenges familiar understandings, recognizes constraints and opportunities, sees societies influence, and recognizes human diversity. Lastly, a global perspective is just the study of the global world and each society's niche. That's it for this lesson. Good work. And hopefully, you'll be seeing me on your screen again soon. Peace.