

values held by most of the members of a group or society. What is regarded as 'deviant' is as widely variable as the norms and values that distinguish different cultures and subcultures. Likewise ideas of deviance are challenged and change from one period to another. For example, a woman choosing to become an astronaut may

be considered deviant at one time, and be applauded at another time even in the same society. You are already familiar with how sociology is different from common sense. The specific terms and concepts discussed in this chapter will help you further to move towards a sociological understanding of society.

GLOSSARY

Conflict Theories : A sociological perspective that focuses on the tensions, divisions and competing interests present in human societies. Conflict theorists believe that the scarcity and value of resources in society produces conflict as groups struggle to gain access to and control those resources. Many conflict theorists have been strongly influenced by the writings of Marx.

Functionalism : A theoretical perspective based on the notion that social events can best be explained in terms of the function they perform — that is the contribution they make to the continuity of a society. And on a view of society as a complex system whose various parts work in relationship to each other in a way that needs to be understood.

Identity : The distinctive characteristic of a person's character or the character of a group which relate to who they are and what is meaningful to them. Some of the main sources of identity include gender, nationality or ethnicity, social class.

Means of Production : The means whereby the production of material goods is carried on in a society, including not just technology but the social relations between producers.

Microsociology and Macrosociology : The study of everyday behaviour in situations of face-to-face interaction is usually called microsociology. In microsociology, analysis occurs at the level of individuals or small groups. It differs from macrosociology, which concerns itself with large-scale social systems, like the political system or the economic order. Though they appear to be distinct, they are closely connected.

Natal : It relates to the place or time of one's birth.

Norms : Rules of behaviour which reflect or embody a culture's values, either prescribing a given type of behaviour, or forbidding it. Norms are always