

# Sociology: hunger and homelessness essay sample



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Sociology discusses various topics and concepts that aid learners in understanding the complex structure of society and social relationships and points of view. From the dimensions of sociology, one understands the concepts or processes that help individuals not only understand the external environment or the kind of society that they live in, but also how one's personality or individuality fit the structure of society. Robert Zussman discusses the concept of the self as it is related to the dimensions of society, community or environment that they live in (Goodwin & Jasper, 2007).

For instance, one's emotional condition, personal thoughts and opinions, established social skills and capabilities, and such, determine how he will relate to the people around him – that is, whether he will be able to establish desirable relationships with other people, become an asset or a liability to the community, etc. Other concepts go beyond the self and the dimensions of the community by looking into the interrelationship of sociological concepts to social issues or concerns that confront the structure of society.

Learning experiences from the course have helped in understanding how sociological concepts and recognizable elements of human life influence the quality and kind of environment or society that we live in. For instance, the Hunger & Homelessness event sponsored by the class led to the assumptions that various sociological concepts, particularly family and social status influence the rate of hunger and homelessness in various areas such as Darfur and New Orleans, and the practices or operations by which society handles or approaches the situation is affected as well.

The remainder of the text will look into the issues of hunger and homelessness while attempting to convey how the sociological concepts aforementioned influence the occurrence and resolution of these social issues. In addition, other sociological concepts will also be discussed in order to communicate how these concepts as learning experiences contributed to my own understanding of sociology and its important role to an individual's life and the structure of society.

Gender and sexuality are one of the most common social issues that individuals are trying to understand and reconcile. Gender has something to do with the distinct characteristics that individuals use to break away the male population from the female population. For instance, gender pertains to the roles, responsibilities, skills and capabilities, features or characteristics that are used to label masculinity or femininity. (Goodwin & Jasper, 2007) From this definition of gender, one can deduce that it is therefore be subjective.

It is an indefinite concept that somewhat exhibits an air of prejudice or bias from which gender inequality and discrimination might arise. In fact, from the learning experiences in this course, I believe that gender is not a true or tangible concept. It does not exist, such that it is not something corroborated by valid and reliable arguments as it is just a generalization or a means of stereotyping people into the established concepts of masculinity and femininity.

This claim or assumption is further supported by the concept of sex or sexuality such that when gender is compared with sexuality, the

establishment of the former concept as rational is cancelled out by the reliability and validity of sex or sexuality as a means of describing the biological differences between the male population and the female population. (Goodwin & Jasper, 2007) This is because sexuality is based on scientific evidences and tangible concepts that prove the differences between the male and the female.

Gender, on the other hand, is something established by man according to perceptions and assumptions that are not drawn from facts that are general or universal to all individuals. Jumping into other sociological concepts, the relationship between family, social status and hunger and homelessness shall be discussed. Hunger and homelessness is a worldwide social issue that affects majority of the international population.

This worldwide situation is causing thousands of deaths everyday as people suffer from hunger consequently leading to a variety of health problems. (Winne, 2008) The root of everything is attributed to poverty, and from this unfortunate situation that one might find himself in, other social issues and problems arise such as hunger and homelessness, leading to health, welfare, and security problems, to depression, and finally death. This particular situation which arises from poverty shows how social issues are interconnected and complementary to each other.

The Darfur and New Orleans situation are two examples which convey the severity of hunger and homelessness. The complex cultural/religious/territorial-political conflict that have stricken Darfur caused the death of hundreds of people who were victims of war and violence, and

the straying away of families from their lands due to the conflict leading them to become homeless and suffer from hunger as they fail to maintain their source of nourishment.

New Orleans, on the other hand, is immensely influenced not only by their unfortunate historical position which led to their struggle for survival until the present time, but also the strong forces of nature that endanger not only the lives of individuals but also cause them to lose their homes and their food supplies or sources. The concepts of family and social economic status or SES will help in describing how these concepts contribute to hunger and homelessness as general social issues.

The composition of an individual's family is likely to predict its position in terms of the social issues of hunger and homelessness. A particular composition or set-up of a family is one that comprises an unmarried parent with his or her children as discussed by Edin and Kefalas (Goodwin & Jasper, 2007). Unmarried parents – single moms or dads – go through the family life alone, necessitating the ability to balance family time, with work or studies, and such. This usually happens to young mothers and fathers who, psychologically and sociologically speaking, are not prepared to face the responsibility of parenthood.

Their inability to fulfill their responsibilities of caring for themselves and their children might lead to hunger and homelessness as they are unable to sustain their personal needs and their children's in terms of food and shelter. Another sociological concept which aggravates the rate of worldwide hunger and homelessness is the SES. As aforementioned, poverty is the main reason

why people are unable to meet their physiological needs of feeding and obtaining shelter.

Being born to a lower-class family, individuals would have to suffer poverty in terms of having a limited or scarce supply of food, inefficient shelter, as well as education, jobs, and the likes. (Winne, 2008) With poverty, everything comes full circle, such that it takes down every opportunity that one might have to end it; and poverty continues on like a cycle that makes it difficult for individuals to escape it. On the other hand, people who are born in upper-class families seem to obtain the advantage or the edge of having access to abundant sources of food and luxurious homes, prestigious education and job opportunities, and such.

From the discussion in the previous paragraph, I have come to understand the essence of studying and understanding sociology as a relevant concept as it points out how the makings of a single individual influences the life of other individuals, and the condition of the environment also influences the kind of life that individuals will lead all throughout. I perceive the sociological concepts I have learned as representative of the “ ripple effect” that is society – that is, the kind of interaction of individuals with each other and their environment.

Like the case of one’s SES to the kind of life that one will lead, other aspects of human life such as personal thoughts, opinions, and such, social interactions, worldviews, kind of family, etc. , influences all other aspects of society. Therefore, the understanding of sociological concepts and sociology as a whole comes in handy as a means of determining how to approach

social issues and problems appropriately to resolve them and foster a good and solid foundation of society.