

What are the differences between common sense and sociology and what makes sociol...

[Sociology](#)



George Vernon What are the differences between Common Sense and Sociology and what makes sociology so unique Sociology states the obvious! Sociology is only commonsense! These statements are often heard in criticism of sociology. Commonsense however, is based on assumption and is the knowledge and/or awareness shared by most people within a particular group; whereas, sociology provides scientific knowledge based on analysis and research of that same group knowledge and/or awareness. Sociology, unlike other social sciences, is unique in that it does not take the world at 'face value' but provides theorized and tested insights into people as individuals living within a particular culture or society.

There is no real agreement on what commonsense knowledge actually means in life and has been used by many people to mean many things, (Kuipers) but explanations and notions based on common sense illustrate a type of social view because they represent what people in common know and take for granted about appropriate social behavior in response to certain situations. Common sense therefore, " can be defined as the knowledge that is shared by the vast majority of people who live in a particular culture."

(Anacleto) Although a statement may be regarded as common sense in one particular culture, it does not mean that it is true or common sense in another culture. It is the number of people who agree in one particular culture that defines whether that statement is common sense or not. Thus, as the number of people who agree with the same statement multiplies, the possibility of that statement being considered as a common sense increases.

(Anacleto) These views are not necessarily wrong, but they are different from sociological forms of knowledge, in that they can often lead to vague,

uneducated and naive views of reality and are inclined to support the status quo of a specific cultural. (Livesey)

Contrary to common sense knowledge, although explanations and notions based on sociological knowledge are not always right, they do have greater validity because they have been tried and tested in some way. In other words, they are based on evidence instead of simple statements of verity. In order to illustrate the differences between common sense and sociology, we only need to consider particular statements of beliefs by specific groups. For example, the belief that a person with schizophrenia has split personalities; or sex education will alert and induce adolescents to sexual activity at an earlier age and increase disease and pregnancies; or men are naturally more aggressive than women; or even, a criminal is someone who has broken the law. (Livesey) These beliefs are all based on common sense and a shared assumption by particular groups of society. Sociologists have argued these assumptions based on results of a number of studies within these specific areas.

Sociology seeks confirmation of facts, and confronts common sense views of the world in a bid to improve society and thus human life. Sociology is unique in its accounting and analysis of human life within a public arena, and its commitment to what is important to individuals within society.

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