

Age stratification

Age is also a significant way of defining status within a society and one way that society is stratified.

Aging as a Social Construction

While aging itself is a biological process, what it means to be “young” or “old” is socially constructed. This means that there is no concrete cultural meaning to the biological process of aging. Rather, in every culture, youth and age have different meanings. Aging is perceived differently around the world, demonstrating its social construction.

Cultural Treatment of Aging

Cultures treat their elderly differently and place different values on old age. Many Eastern societies associate old age with wisdom, so they value old age much more than their Western counterparts. In Japan, adult children are expected to care for their aging parents in ways different than in the United States. Sixty five percent of Japanese elders live with their children and very few live in nursing homes. Japanese cultural norms suggest that seeking services like old homes or assistance from non familial members to care for own parents are highly disrespectful. When unable to care for themselves, parents should ideally move in with their children. The Japanese celebration of old age is further illustrated by the existence of Respect for the Aged Day, which is a national holiday to celebrate elderly citizens.

Ageism is stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age. This may be casual or systematic.

Age brackets/age groups : While studying age groups (childhood, teenage, adulthood, middle age, old age) it is important to remember that age of an individual helps in explaining the contribution of society to that individual or how that individual can benefit the society.

Q1. Describe the rights and restrictions imposed on children in different societies.

Q2. Describe youth or adolescence in terms of transitional phase for an individual.

Q3. Explain adulthood as an important phase of life in terms of major contributing phase to the society.

Q4. Describe the experiences of elderly/old people in different cultures.

Q5. Do you agree that age is the only determinant in describing social position of individuals?

In sociology, the term "**age cohort**" refers to a group of individuals who were born during the same time period and, consequently, share similar historical and cultural experiences as they progress through the different stages of life. Age cohorts are used to study and analyze the impact of shared historical events,

social changes, and cultural influences on the attitudes, behaviors, and life trajectories of individuals within a specific age group.

Key points about **age cohorts** in sociology include:

1. **Shared Experiences:** Members of the same age cohort are likely to have experienced similar historical events and societal changes during their formative years. These shared experiences can include major cultural, political, or economic events that shape their worldview and influence their socialization.
2. **Cohort Effects:** The concept of age cohorts is often used to examine cohort effects, which are variations in attitudes or behaviors that result from the experiences of a particular generation. For example, individuals who grew up during times of economic prosperity may have different perspectives on work and finances compared to those who experienced economic recessions.
3. **Life Course Analysis:** Sociologists often employ age cohorts in life course analysis, which involves studying individuals' life trajectories and transitions across various stages. Age cohorts help researchers understand how societal changes and historical events impact people at different points in their lives.
4. **Generational Analysis:** The terms "generation" and "age cohort" are sometimes used interchangeably, but they can have nuanced differences. A generation often refers to a broader group of individuals linked by birth years, while an age cohort is a more specific group within that generation.
5. **Social Change and Norms:** Age cohorts contribute to our understanding of how social norms, values, and behaviors change over time. Different generations may have distinct perspectives on issues such as family, work, technology, and social justice, reflecting the historical context in which they came of age.
6. **Influence on Identity:** Belonging to a particular age cohort can influence an individual's identity and sense of belonging. People often share cultural references, memories, and societal norms with others in their age group, contributing to the formation of generational identities.

Studying age cohorts is valuable for sociologists seeking to analyze patterns of social change, intergenerational dynamics, and the ways in which historical events shape the lives of individuals within specific age groups.

