

Values and Ethics

Questions

- ▶ What are values?
- ▶ How do we have/develop values?
- ▶ What are ethics?
- ▶ How are ethics and values related? Different?
- ▶ How do we develop ethics?
- ▶ What keeps us “holding on” to our ethics or values?

Values

- ▶ Think of the values that form the moral principles you use to make decisions. You probably got these values from your family. A person decides what is important in his or her life and acts, based on those values.
- ▶ Every society has a code of ethics based on generally accepted values.

Ethics

- ▶ A code of ethics is a collection of the rules of right and wrong that form a system of behaviour. These rules can apply to an individual, a company, or a society. The ways in which you or the society in which you live behaves illustrates your beliefs, values systems, and code of ethics.
- ▶ Ethics are learned through experience, education, and interaction with other people.

Levels of ethics

There are three levels of ethics that may guide a person.

- ▶ First, there is the most difficult category to define - the **moral stance** an individual takes when making decisions that are not covered by written rules.
- ▶ Second, **ethical policies** exist in some form in most large companies and organizations.
- ▶ Third, there is the law, which is how a society formalizes its code of ethics.

Ethical Issues in Sociological Research

- ▶ The study of people (human subjects) in sociology raises vital questions about the ethical behaviour of sociologists.
- ▶ The Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association has outlined the basic standards sociologists must follow in conducting research. Social research often involves intrusions into people's lives - surveys, interviews, field observations, and participation in experiments all involve personally valuable commodities: time, energy, and privacy.

Ethical Issues in Sociological Research

- ▶ Participation in research must be voluntary. No one should be enticed, coerced, or forced to participate.
- ▶ Researchers must not harm the research subjects in any way - physically, psychologically, or personally. Researchers must be careful not to reveal information that would embarrass the participants or damage their personal relationships.
- ▶ Researchers must respect the rights of research subjects to anonymity and confidentiality.
- ▶ Anonymous means the researcher cannot identify a given response with a given respondent.
- ▶ Confidentiality means that the researcher is able to identify a given person's responses with that person but essentially promises not to so.

Task: Values survey

Video

▶ Defining ETHICS TedTalks