

NCSS 2016
Session 1: Sociological Perspective and Social Structure
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Mapping Your Social Identity

Key Terms/Concepts: Groups, Statuses, Roles, Master Status, Role Conflict, Role Strain, Ascribed Status, Achieved Status, Ingroups/Outgroups

Description:

This lesson helps students see that their identity is comprised of numerous groups. It helps students see the dynamic between all of those groups.

Setup:

I like to do this lesson with all of the desks in a large circle so that all students can see everyone in the room.

Process:

First handout the blank social map sheet. Write your name in the center of the map and circle it. Then tell students to write the groups that they are apart of on the outside around the circle with their name. I tell them to think of all the groups that influence who they are. Explain that a group can be as few as 2 people or as many as millions. Another way to think about it is to think about what groups you are with throughout the day or throughout the year. I try to be vague about this so that students will not be swayed toward certain groups. I tell them to do this on their own and not to influence each other, but I circulate the room and try to help them individually. I sometimes model for them by drawing one line and a circle. I tell them to have at last 5 groups.

Second, I explain that a status is their position within the group. For example, if I listed my family, I might be a son, a brother, a dad, etc... Also, explain that some cases like friends might not have a separate status, other than "friend" per se. After you explain this have students list all of the statuses that they are in each group.

Third, tell students to choose one or two statuses on their whole sheet that are the most important status(es). I explain that they might be the statuses that either everyone else always thinks of them in this way or that wherever they go, they are always conscious of this status. I explain that this is called a master status and it may change throughout the year or throughout their lifetime, but they should choose their master status(es) right now in their lives.

Lastly, we discuss the lesson by sharing our groups and statuses. Here is how I facilitate it: First, I call out different categories of groups and I ask students to stand if they listed any group that fits the category.

Then , I tell students to remain standing if they listed the status as a master status.

Lastly, depending on time, I ask the students who remained standing to comment on why they listed this status as a master status.

This is an important part of the beginning of my semester. Besides introducing groups and statuses and how they make up individuals' identities, this also serves as an important notifier that our class is made up of a diverse group. Some students hold their family status as important while for others it might be their race or their job or a sport. I point out that each individual is shaped differently so we must be mindful to be respectful of the different identities within the class.

After this exercise is finished, teachers may wish to identify and have students describe examples of the following concepts on their identity map: role conflict, role strain, ascribed status, achieved status, primary groups, secondary groups, status inconsistency.

Sociology
Social Identity Map

Groups - Two or more people who identify with each other or who regularly and consciously interact with one another.

Social Structure - *The typical patterns of groups.*

Social Structure guides our behaviors and life chances (opportunities).

Put groups that influence you into circles around your name.

(name)

Key:

statuses in each circle

Master Status

¹ Ascribed (involuntary membership)

² Achieved (voluntary membership)

! Status Inconsistency

Role conflict (one status to another)

^^^^^ Role strain (from you to the status)

P primary group

S secondary group

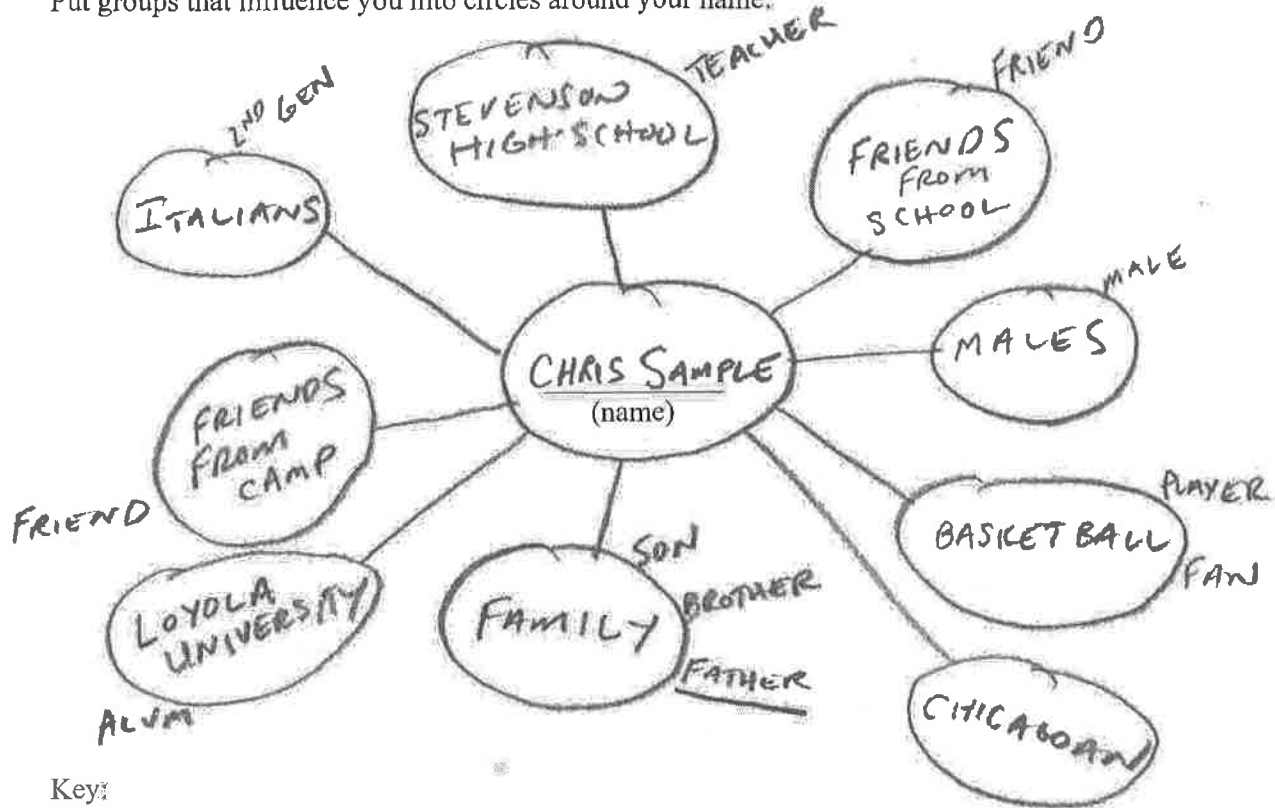
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**S** secondary group

Here are the records that I have been keeping since I started doing this lesson in 1999. You can obviously keep your own records, but I will include mine here if you'd like. Share with the students that we have the records of the last 30+ times. Can students guess the totals? Has anyone *never* been thrown off? Has anyone always been thrown off? Is it just a random grouping?

The totals:

Through Fall of 2009 the number of times each person *thrown off* out of 63:

|                                                    |    |
|----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Able-Bodied Sailor Jones:                       | 20 |
| 2. Ship's Officer O'Maley: Mr./Ms. O'Malley:       | 2  |
| 3. Quarter Master MacDonald:                       | 51 |
| 4. Self-Made Millionaire Douglas:                  | 49 |
| 5. College Student Mr/Ms Parsons:                  | 54 |
| 6. Nobel Prize Winner in Literature, Dr. Lightfoot | 35 |
| 7. Nobel Prize Winner in Physics, Dr. Singleton    | 0  |
| 8. Football Player Mr. Small:                      | 14 |
| 9. Cheerleader Mrs. Small:                         | 5  |
| 10. Army Captain Thomas:                           | 13 |
| 11. Draft Evader Samuels:                          | 54 |
| 12. Peace Corps Volunteer Mr./Ms. Davidson:        | 5  |
| 13. Med Student Mr./Ms. Ryan:                      | 0  |
| 14. Elderly man Mr. Eldridge:                      | 60 |
| 15. Elderly woman Mrs. Eldridge:                   | 57 |
| 16. Travelling Poet Mr/Ms Carpenter:               | 39 |

Circle the class's choices that reflect the longitudinal totals.

Why do the totals look like this? What are the values? What did those aboard look for? (Use sociologists' comments)

*Usefulness, health, youth, patriotism, morality – American values, teen values?*

What are some other ways that the class could have chosen who to throw overboard?

*Age, women and children first, family first, race, save the wounded/ special needs, draw straws/ random, by education level. All of these could be ways of deciding, but they are not and have not been. Students from other cultures can often imagine the other culture doing the activity differently.*

Macrosociology helps explain this. We are all from the same culture, (In my case: students from the United States, suburban, upper-middle class, teens, Adlai E. Stevenson High School.) I would be interested in hearing your results, especially if they are different and your demographics are different. Please feel free to contact me.

To explain the divergence from the usual choices, I usually focus on microsociology.

Ask about how the decisions were reached on the boat. How did students interact with each other on the boat? (Use the sociologists again.)

Microsociology helps explain this. Smaller focus, social or face-to-face interaction, interaction within the smaller group(s) examples: a family, group of friends, this classroom, the boat, people in line at supermarket, etc...

Examples of microsociology: Stereotypes, Personal space, Touching, Eye Contact.

For this exercise I look at:

*Were there alliances? Did anyone gang up on anyone? Did anyone use a strategy such as deflecting attention or staying quiet? Was there a group leader? Who & why? How do students interact with each other and why? Is a millionaire defined by their weight? How are decisions being made? Is there a leader? Is it democratic? If you go by the list and start in order, what happens to the poet? Does the order of the list matter? How and why? Did volume of voice matter? Did people team up? Did seating on the boat matter? Did race matter? Did the students real life*

# Abandon Ship Student Handout

## Part 1: Roles

1. **Able-Bodied Sailor Jones: Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
-Able-Bodied Sailor Jones: It is somewhat questionable how Jones was able to get from his assigned position below deck to the life boat when no other sailor assigned to the lower decks managed to escape from the ship. Sailor Jones is in excellent health. Not married, and no close relatives.
2. **Ship's Officer O'Malley: Mr./Ms. O'Malley: Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
-Mr./Ms. O'Malley was the only high ranking officer aboard the ship that was able to get to the lifeboat. It is the boat that s/he has been assigned to in all of the emergency practice drills. S/he is a capable officer, has navigational skills, and was well-liked by passenger and crew members aboard the ship. Excellent health.
3. **Quarter Master MacDonald: Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
-Little is known about Quarter Master MacDonald. S/he did serve in the regular navy. Quarter Master MacDonald did suffer injuries to both hands in the explosion of the ship. At the present time, Quarter Master MacDonald can not use either hand. S/he is married and has four children in the U.S..
4. **Self-Made Millionaire Douglas: Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
-Mr/Ms Douglas owns and manages one of the U.S.'s largest garment industrial complexes, which employs hundreds of factory workers. Health: good to excellent, but over-weight due to lack of exercise.
5. **College Student Mr/Ms Parsons: Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
-A college student who has been on a limited budget European vacation. Mr/Ms. Parsons is a grand mal epileptic. Unfortunately, while abandoning the ship, all medication was left behind. Single—age 22.
6. **Nobel Prize Winner in Literature, Dr. Lightfoot Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
-Dr. Lightfoot is black and questions have been raised whether the Nobel Prize was awarded to him/her due to his/her race or his/her ability. Dr. Lightfoot is 39 years old and is in good health. Married, with two daughters who have families of their own.
7. **Nobel Prize Winner in Physics, Dr. Singleton Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
-It has been said that Dr. Singleton is about to release information to the world that will essentially bring about the solution to the world's ecology problem. Dr. Singleton is 62 years old and is in excellent health. Dr. Singleton was born and raised in a small town in Arkansas. S/he comes from a very wealthy family. Single.
8. **Football Player, Mr Small \_\_\_\_\_ and 9.Cheerleader, Mrs. Small \_\_\_\_\_**  
-Mr. and Mrs. Small are in their late twenties. Mr. Small was a star football player at Ohio State. Mrs. Small, who also attended Ohio State, was the Homecoming Queen. Mr. Small is now a running back for a semi-pro football team in New York. Mrs. Small is eight and one-half months pregnant. Mr. Small is black and Mrs, Small is white.
10. **Army Captain Thomas Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
-Captain Thomas was recently decorated for his/her bravery and valor above and beyond the call of duty. S/he is on her/his way to the U.S. to personally receive the Medal of Honor from the President. Captain Thomas is married, has two children and is in his mid-thirties. While engaged in the action, which resulted in receiving the Medal of Honor, Captain Thomas lost her/his right leg. Other than this rather serious condition, s/he is in good health.
11. **Draft Evader Samuels Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
-Samuels left the United States two years ago in order to avoid the military draft. He then spent two years in Sweden, from which he was recently deported for dealing in illegal drugs. Samuels is in his early twenties and in good health. Single.
12. **Peace Corps Volunteer Mr./Ms. Davidson Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
-A Peace Corps Volunteer who has recently completed 2 years of work in India. Mr/Mrs Davidson has a Master's Degree in Chemical Engineering and is on his/her way back to Boston where s/he is to be married in two months. S/he is 27 and in excellent health.
13. **Med Student Mr./Ms. Ryan Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
-A last year medical student who has been vacationing in France. S/he is 26 years old, single, and in excellent health.
14. **Elderly man, Mr. Eldridge \_\_\_\_\_ and 15.Elderly woman, Mrs. Eldridge \_\_\_\_\_**  
-An elderly couple, both in their late 60's and on their way back to their native New Jersey after a one month tour of Spain. Mr. Eldridge is suffering severely from arthritis and is not capable of walking without the aid of a cane. The couple will celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary next week. They have 8 children and 29 grandchildren and are all living in New Jersey.
16. **Traveling Poet Mr/Ms Carpenter:** \_\_\_\_\_  
-A 30 year old traveling poet in excellent health. Carpenter has never had a permanent home since s/he ran away from a New York orphanage 15 years ago. S/he spent 4 years in the Navy where s/he acquired a taste for sailing. S/he has since made several solo sailing voyages in the Caribbean. Mr/Ms. Carpenter has been divorced three times and is currently separated from his/her 4<sup>th</sup> wife/husband who resides in Paris.



Save / reject 8.Football Player Mr. Small:

Save / reject 9.Cheerleader Mrs. Small:

Save / reject 10.Army Captain Thomas:

Save / reject 11.Draft Evader Samuels:

Save / reject 12.Peace Corps Volunteer Mr./Ms. Davidson:

Save / reject 13.Med Student Mr./Ms. Ryan:

Save / reject 14.Elderly man Mr. Eldridge:

Save / reject 15.Elderly woman Mrs. Eldridge:

Save / reject 16.Travelling Poet Mr/Ms Carpenter: