

Understanding the world today

Sociology helps us to place current changes in a historical and economical context

Understanding the world today (NEW YORK - USA) is a sociological project that examines the ways in which societies change over time. Specifically, this means reports on social, economic and political aspects of society, and trends over time in these characteristics. Through these reports, the sociologists of the staff intend to present a picture of how society is constructed, and how society changes over time. The data sets are available on the web to describe many different aspects of society, such as basic socio-demographics (i.e., population size, growth, age and urban distribution, infant mortality rate, education), technology (i.e., electricity consumption, telephone mainlines), politics (i.e., political rights, freedom, armed conflict) and communication (tv, radio, newspaper, internet). The website also presents long term changes in economic growth and population, to place more current changes in context. These reports can serve several purposes: 1) source, for teachers, students, researchers, policy makers and the general public, of information about social change 2) easily accessible reports presenting a comprehensive picture of how societies change 3) An example for researchers, to see what kind of research is possible, with all of the free data available on the web 4) a starting point for researchers interested in social change 5) A way to advance the discipline, by creating collaborations and serving as linking point of longitudinal multinational data.

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