

January 15th, 2016

Intro to Sociology

Hierarchy of Systems

Global Community

Society

National Organizations- Institutions- Ethnic Subcultures

Local Organizations- Community

Yourself

What is Sociology?

-Within it, there are different filters (like Instagram)

-Deviance (not aggression or crime)

-Social Structure

We are not philosophers, we belong to a larger body of knowledge. Build an antecedent.

-Study of human groups and interactions. (Dyad)

Digital natives. We are all interconnected- we're sitting in class, yet we're still connecting with other people.

Relationships

People, States, Countries.

How did we get to where we are?

C. Wright Mills

The Sociological Imagination

The Promise

Connections between micro and macro (societal level).

How do we go from nothing to everyone wearing hunter boots?

Rosa Parks (Maid)

Birmingham Jail

Priest (MLK) administers to Rosa Parks

What did she do?

Her personal troubles became public issues. (Vice Versa)

They both affect one another!

Federal Government

Personal troubles may indeed be due to larger social issues.

*A lot of women are very distant from the history, Beyoncé says that feminism is dead- so what does that say about the larger population she influences? *

January 19th, 2016
Sociology Study Meetup
5:30-7:30
Stanton 202
Every Tuesday or Thursday

Examining Society

What is a theory?
Pre Classical and Modern Theories of Sociology

Theory and Everyday Life

Theory: Set of interrelated propositions constructing and fitting together logically which explain aspects of the world (story)
Power causes resistance!
Conditions (What causes youth to wear certain clothes?)

Important

Explanations can be described as the stories we tell each other in attempt to produce some order in our lives.

Theories outline paths lead to particular outcomes. They allow us to feel that we know why something happened, and whether under the conditions are likely to occur again.

Aspects of a Good Theory

Logically Sound
Conflicting Positions
Sensitizing Ability (What has been ignored)
Popularity does not mean validity (twinkies cause someone to kill because of blood sugar spike- it is not valid at all)

Mid 20th Century

Functionalism (became in fashion)
ex. You have to have uggs in your closet.

Evaluate Theory

Scope: Range of phenomena that a theory can explain [Theory B is more correct because it can explain a lot more]
Accuracy: Does the theory match empirical reality? [Full Moon- bad things happen analogy]
Parsimony: Occam's Razor: Simplest explanation is the best explanation
*Can the theory be falsified?

SVS 5 Steps

Circular Reasoning: Don't do it!
Can the theory be falsified? (if it can't be falsified then it can;t be proved)

Refines Theory + Research (makes it stronger)
“Standing on the shoulders of giants” - Refining other theories

Classical Sociological Theory (1600-1750)
Thomas Hobbes

People are responsible for the creation of social worlds
Natural State: How humans existed prior to the emergence of social structures.
People are motivated by self interest and the pursuit of power.
Man is basically a self-serving animal

Power is a central theme throughout centuries!

John Locke
Tabula Rasa
God was responsible for emergence of society and government
Right to self preservation and private property
Individual Autonomy and Freedom (from state)

Charles Montesquieu
People never existed outside (without society)
Humans create and are defined by society
Laws define the spirit of the people's (Republic, Monarchy, Despotism) Lead to revolution
(people were battling over food)
Appreciation for cultural diversity and comparative methodology

JJR
The Social Contract: People existed in symbiotic relationships in natural state.
Human= Perfectible (Utopian) can achieve greatest potential only through society
Entered into Social Contract (Free and Equal Individual)

We do things for the state, they do things for us (pay tax, no crime)
Assure that we do not hurt on another. (reciprocal Relationship)

Enlightenment
Challenge years of Christian teachings
Philosophies advocated critical thinking and practical knowledge- Natural Science
Challenge belief (traditions)
Resulted in ability of masses to challenge their oppressors
Reorganization of Societies

1977 Industrialization
Candles, Gas -> We can work 24/7
Sociology- Born out of conservative reaction against enlightenment thinking

Birth of Sociology
Society exists on its own

Produces individuals not other ways
Individual fills positions
Smallest Unit = Family
Parts of Society = Interrelated + Interdependent
Change is a threat
Social institutions are beneficial
Modern social changes = Fear and Anxiety (ex. Facebook)
Emphasis on seemingly irrational factors
Return to social hierarchy and healthy competition

Social Philosophy

Classical Sociological Theory

Functionalism= Function of Society. Social World = Dynamic System of interrelated and Interdependent parts
Social structures exist to help people fulfill their wants and desires
Society = Organism (When it fails to work together, it will fail) Easy for us to understand.
Society must meet needs of majority
Dominant theoretical paradigm between late 1920s and early 1960s (lasted for 40 years)

Functionalist Theorists

Herbert Spencer

Survival of the Fittest- Why only the strong should survive. (Today's society= school, sports, money)

Eugenics = Conclusions

Societies evolve because they need to change in order to survive (ex. recycling, electric cars)
Environmental pressures allow beneficial traits to be passed onto future generations
Social Darwinism draws upon Darwin's idea of natural selection; asserts societies evolve according to the same principles as biological organisms.
[Social Climber- What can this person do for me?]
Laissez-faire approach (opposes regulation of our interferences with natural processes (You can't survive? Well, too bad for you))

Emile Durkheim

Founder of Modern Sociology

Human action is oriented in collective rather than in individual
Behaviour is driven by collective conscience
Social facts are general social features that exist on their own and are independent of individual manifestations.

Anomaly: State of normalness (Lack of clear goals and creates feelings of confusion = higher suicide rates)

ex. Syria, Hurricane Katrina, Industrial Revolution ->From country to the city = crime rate becomes higher and more prostitution)

War

Natural Disaster
Mass Migration
Rapid Social Change

Mechanic Solidarity describes early societies based on similarities and independence.

Organic Solidarity: describes later societies organized around interdependence and increasing division of labour (Before = small divisions: aristocrat, merchants, Now: Doctors, Lawyers, etc.)

Talcott Parsons

Interested in explaining why people do what they do

Social Action Theory- Framework which attempts to separate behaviour from actions to explain why people do what they do

Four Functional (AGIL)

Adaptation

Goal Attainment

Integration

Latency = What's going on underneath it?

Robert Merton

Social Structures = Many Functions

Manifest Function = The intended consequences of action or social pattern

Latent Function = Unintended consequence of action or social pattern (important to look underneath)

Critiques of Functionalist Approaches

Inability to account for social change

Overemphasis on the extent to which harmony and stability actually exist in society

[ex. First Nations are more harmonious than most cultures]

T or F

The educational system provides both manifest and latent functions?

True!

Private vs. Public School (split between the kids)

Word Problems in School = Preparing us to be little capitalists

Gender= Teaches you your gender (Home Ec. vs. Sports)