

Understanding the social imagination: chap 1

Me and my inner circle - microstructure

- Me, family, friends

Local organizations and community

- Organizations that you belong to
- YMCA, sports teams, political parties

National organizations, institutions, and ethnic subcultures

- Institutions you belong to
- Have a bigger scope and become transnational
- Political organizations, universities, ethnic subcultures

Society

- What does it mean to have the Canadian society

Global community

What is SOC?

- Comparing the social sciences:
- All aspects of human behaviour and social life, but each has a different focus:
 - Cultural anthro: culture or way of society
 - Psychology: individual behaviour and mental processes
 - Political science: government systems and power
 - Economics: economics conditions and how people organize, produce, and distribute goods
 - **Sociology**: human interaction, groups and social structure
- Systematic study of human groups and their interactions
 - This (systematic) what separates us from journalists
 - Their work isn't pure review
- **Sociological perspective**: unique way in which sociologists see our world and can dissect the dynamic relationships between individuals and the larger social network in which we all live
 - Soc is global in its nature now
 - About finding connections as an individual to society: finding your place in global society

Charles Wright Mills: The sociological imagination

- Developing an appreciation of how individual challenges are influenced by larger social forces
- Personal troubles: result of individual challenges
- Social issues: caused by social factors
- 'Trick' is to understand how these personal troubles may indeed be due to larger social issues

- Quality of mind: one's ability to look beyond personal circumstance and into the social context

Peter berger:

- Seeing the *general* in the *particular* is the ability to look at seemingly unique events (particular) and then recognizing the larger (general) features involved
- You want to see that occur all the time as particular
- Think about what is *familiar* and see it as the *strange*

What makes you, *you*?

- Agency: idea that each of us has, to some extent, the ability to alter our socially constructed lives
- Structure: network of relatively stable opportunities and constraints influencing our individual behaviours
- Can you see, in your own life thus far, that both agency and structure have played a role in who you are?
 - Which is more influential? Why?

Engaging your sociological imagination

- Our perception of ourselves and others are the products of many factors, for example:
 - Minority status
 - Gender
 - Socioeconomic status
 - Family structure
 - Urban-rural differences
 - Religion
- How have these factors affected you as a person you have become today?

The origins of sociology:

- Scientific revolution
- Positivism: approach that considers all understanding to be based on science
 - Exists an objective knowable reality
 - Singular explanation
 - Value free
- Anti-positivism: considers knowledgeable and understanding to be the result of human subjectivity
 - React each of the positivist assumptions

Sociology in canada

1. Geography and regionalism: ability to survive overtime; role of regionalism (quebec, maritime, northwest territories)
2. Political economy: clement - interest in the interactions of politics, government and the social and cultural constitution of markets, institutions and actors

3. Canadianization movement: influenced by american sociology
4. Radical nature: greater focus in macrosociology as well as feminist ideas

Sociology in a global perspective;

- Looking beyond our own boundaries to consider dynamic forces
- Globalization: is a worldwide process involving the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services
 - We are very dependant on other countries
 - Things from other countries have an impact on us
- Capitalism: as a defining feature of the global economy

Levels of analysis: size of the social groups being considered, from the smallest to the largest

- Understood sociology requires understanding multiple levels of analysis
- Picture levels of analysis in our social environment as an interconnected series of small groups, organizations, institutions, and societies