

Sociology

- Scientific study of human society. Attempting to apply scientific method to humans.
- A group is two or more. The more # of people, the more complex the group.
- "The function of sociology, as of every science is to reveal that which is hidden." – Pierre Bourdieu
- Hidden = difficult patterns that we can't always see
- Hidden = things people don't want others to know

Social Structure

- larger than the individual, but made up of individuals (systems, concepts).
 - o ex: mother: social structure
- Social structure is both abstract and concrete.
 - o Mothers loving their child is abstract. The description of a mother is abstract.
 - o Post Partum depression= abstract.
 - o Giving birth= concrete
- Varies in structure, relevance, and influence
- Social Institution- particular type of structure
 - o Networks of structures in society that socialize groups of people within them
- Shapes our behavior
- Structures change over time

Two levels of Sociology:

Micro: Individuals and Families, Households and Neighborhoods

Macro: National, Societies and Cultures, Global

- I. Macro-objective: Examples- society, law, bureaucracy, architecture, technology, and language.
- II. Macro-subjective: Examples- culture, norms, and values.
- III. Micro-objective: Examples- patterns of behavior, action and interaction.
- IV. Micro-subjective: examples- perceptions, beliefs, and the various facets of the social construction of reality.

Founding Sociologists:

- I. Auguste Comte
 - a. Positivism or social physics: idea that society can be studied scientifically and logically
 - i. Needed to make moral sense of society as religious authority declined.
 - b. Comte's 3 Historical Epistemological Stages
 - i. Theological Stage
 1. Society is the result of divine will
 - ii. Metaphysical Stage

- 1. Human Behavior governed by natural, biological instincts.
 - iii. Scientific Stage
 - 1. Develop a social physics to understand human behavior
 - II. Harriet Martineau
 - a. Authored *How to Observe Morals and Manners*.
 - i. First sociology methods book
- Sociological Imagination
- III. Wright Mills
 - a. Historical context: connecting biology and history
 - b. Using your sociological imagination
 - i. Make the familiar strange
 - ii. Question habits or customs that seem 'natural'.

Social Theory

Subjective Sociologists. Founding Fathers. Theorists.

- I. Karl Marx
 - a. Historical materialism
 - i. Conflict drives social change through history
 - 1. Humans dominate environment
 - 2. Humans dominate other humans
 - b. Critic of capitalism
- II. Max Weber- interpretive sociologist
 - a. Verstehen: "understanding" in German
 - i. Understanding why people do things they do
 - b. Emphasis on subjectivity became a foundation of interpretive sociology
- III. Emile Durkeim
 - a. 'Considered founding practitioner of **positivist sociology**
 - b. **Division of labor** helps to determine how social cohesion is (or is not) maintained.
 - c. Looked at how religions held people together

Theories

- I. Functionalism
 - a. Identifies the roles phenomena play in keeping society working
 - b. Society is a living organism and institutions are like vital organs
 - c. Emphasizes the role of consensus in maintaining order
 - d. There is a reason why things happen
- II. Conflict theory
 - a. Identifies power relationship that create different phenomena in society
 - b. Social inequality results from power struggles between groups
- III. Symbolic Interactionism
 - a. Focuses on how face-to-face interactions create the social world
 - b. Individuals act based on symbolic meanings attached to objects and people

- Theories in action
- Lets see how the sociological theories would all tackle the same question
 - o Why does inequality exist?
- Functionalism and Inequality
- o Inequality is necessary for a society.
 - o Its sets the mark for possible outcomes
 - Examples of success and failure
 - o Eases the division of neighbor
 - Not everyone is capable of being a surgeon or pilot
 - Rewards match the skill required for the job (Davis and Moore).
- Conflict Theory and Inequality
 - o Inequality is a sign that there is exploitation within a society and is unjust.
 - o Furthermore, inequality perpetuates itself in many elements of our social structure.
 - Symbolic Interactionism and Inequality
 - o Inequality is the end result of several social processes that are rooted in individual interaction

Chapter 2: Methods

Expanding the Imagination

- Sociological research can
 - o Explore Social Environment
 - Poverty in the Delta
- Empirically Test Hypotheses and Theories
 - o Do children of single mothers have lower graduation rates?
- Evaluate Social Phenomenon
 - o Disaster recovery

Public Sociology

- Using sociology to influence social change
- Social research mostly read by sociologists
 - o But can benefit public

Research Methods

- Standard rules to find a casual relationship between social elements. Pg 59
 - o Correlation: when two factors change together
 - o Causation: when a change in one factor causes a change in another factor
 - o Establishing causation:
 - Correlation
 - Time order
 - Nonspurious (reasonable) explanation