May 5th

First year definition

The systematic study of human groups and their interactions

1. It has academic rigor 2. 99% of our time is with other people and interacting with them

Sociological Perspective is he 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

Invitation to sociology

 Seeing the general in the particular is the ability to look at seemingly unique events (particular) and then recognizing the larger (general) features involved.

 Provides methodologies and theories to measure society and board social patterns and how to identify them and address them

 Cited, “any intellectual activity derives excitement from the moment it becomes a trial in discovery. In some fields of learning, this is the discovery of worlds previous unthought and unthinkable. There is a deceptive simplicity in obviousness about sociological investigations…”

 “One reads them, nods at the familiar scene, remarks that one has heard all this before and people have better things to do than waste their time on truisms. Until one is suddenly brought up against an insight that radically questions everything one is previously assumed about this familiar scene. This is the point at which one begins the sense of excitement of sociology”

Ex: Racial system in USA vs. Caste system in India

Class on the Titanic

Social location matters

Debates over social class

Children born into wealthy families are more likely than poor children to:

Enjoy good health

Have access to good daycare

Receive more nurturing time

Live longer

Perform better at better schools

Be able to afford extracurricular activities

Stay out of jail

Succeed in a career

Therefore, their affluence and privilege enriches, empowers, and energizes.

Survival on the Titanic

Marked differences in gender, age, and social class

Women and children more likely to survive especially from first and second class

Men from all class were doomed

Survival rates correlated with class status

Represented a microcosm of Edwardian society

The Centrality of Intersectionality

Age intersected with class and gender to improve survival rates

Perceptions of race also intersected with gender and class to play a key role in who survived on the Titanic.

Blaming the Victims

Lord Mersey`s 1912 inquiry pinned the blame on the steerage class passengers for their predicament

Steerage passengers blamed for their short-sighted behavior

Their natural inclination to hysteria made a bad situation worse

Systemic Bias

Systemic(unconscious)bias and structural exclusions were at play, which were ignored.

Consider the positioning of lifeboats on the first/second class deck

The architecture of the Titanic

Social barriers that assumed the lives of the poor were worth less than those of the rich

The more things change, more they stay the same?

A person`s life chances, then and now (from health and life expectancy to employment and victimization by crime), continue to be shaped by his or her parents` background related to income, occupation, parenting styles and education.

Sociological Imagination

Developing an appreciation of how individual challenges are influenced by larger social forces

Personal troubles result from individual challenges and Social issues are caused by larger social factors

Challenges our basic impulses to see aspects of life as inevitable or natural.

The ability to ask hard questions instead of accepting easily available answers is the hallmark of sociological imagination.

Provides insight into stereotyping and active discrimination.

Facilitates more active and effective participation in the world around us.

Ask the hard questions and seek answers about the social worlds we inhabit.

Capacity to think systematically about how many things we experience as personal problems.

May 12

Elements of culture

Robert Bierstedt (1963)-The Social Order

Building Blocs of Culture

1. Abstraction: The ability to create general concepts that meaningfully organize concrete, sensory experience

Interpret-Classify-Organize

2. Cooperation: The capacity to create a complex social life by establishing norms and values.

3. Cultural concept provides the foundation for Beliefs: Statements about what members of a community define as real.

4. Production: The human capacity to make and use tools and thereby improve out ability to take what we want from nature

5. Social Organization: The orderly arrangement of social interaction. Understanding, interpreting, and putting this blueprint into coordinated action is the key to community survival.

High and Popular culture: encompasses the cultural artifacts of aesthetic value, which a society collectively esteem as exemplary.

Such as art, and the intellectual works of philosophy, history, and literature that a society consider representative of their culture.

High culture refers to cultural patterns that distinguish a society`s elite; in contrast, popular culture (mass culture) designates cultural patterns that are widespread among a society`s population.

High culture is not inherently superior to popular culture.

It becomes derogatory because it becomes exclusive and bars access to certain groups in society.

Subcultures are cultural patterns within a population whose values, norms, folkways or mores set them apart from the mainstream culture.

Two basic Components

1. Non-Material Culture 2. Material Culture

Material Culture: Comprised of tools. Technology and techniques that enable people to achieve everyday goals and improve our lives. We call such tools and techniques material culture because they are tangible.

Non-Material Culture: Composed of symbols, norms, values and other intangible elements.

Symbols: In his 1973 book, they interpretation of cultures, anthropologist Clifford Geertz refers to culture as a “system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life”

The meaning of a symbol is not in the symbol; the meaning resides in what the symbol refers to. For this reason, symbols always have an abstract dimension.

This abstract feature of symbols is what is referred to by the words “and their definitions” in the key term definition of culture.

A symbol`s “definition” informs us what a symbol represents. Members of a community who acquire a set of shared meaningful symbols participate in a common culture.

Symbols are defined as anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by people who share culture.

The meaning of the same symbols varies from society to society, within a single society, and over time.

Language: A system of symbols strung together to communicate thought

Language enables culture to develop and sociologists commonly think of language as a cultural invention that distinguishes humans from other animals.

Language is the key to cultural transmission, the process by which one generation passes culture to the next.

Through most of human history, cultural transmission has been accomplished through oral tradition.

Only humans can create complex systems of symbols, but some other animals have the ability to use symbols in communicating.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis holds that people perceive the through the cultural lens of language.

Linguistic Relativity

Experience-Conceptualization-Verbalization

Cultural Diversity: Countercultures are cultural patterns that strongly oppose accepted culture within a society.

As cultures change, they strive to maintain cultural integration, the close relationship among various elements of cultural system.

Multiculturalism: Refers to the demographic reality that we are a multicultural society made up of ethnoculturally and racially diverse groups of people.

Can also refer to an ideology that uses ethnocultural and racial diversity and equity as its framework and a mosaic as its metaphor.

Multiculturalism has become a fundamental Canadian value.

Multiculturalism stands in opposition to Eurocentrism, the dominance of European (particularly English) cultural patterns.

Values: values are culturally defined standards by which people judge desirability, goodness and beauty and which serve as broad guidelines for social living.

Values are broad principles that underlie beliefs, specific statements that people hold to be true.

Canadian Values:

Belief fairness in democratic society, equality and equity (new)

Belief in consultation and dialogue

Importance of accommodation, tolerance and inclusion (new)

Support for diversity

Compassion and generosity

Attachment to Canada`s natural beauty and sustainability (new)

Commitment to freedom, peace, non-violent change and safety (new)

Economic security (new)

Health and Patriotism (new)

Cultural Analysis

Symbolic Interactionism: According to the symbolic interactionist view, people do not accept culture passively.

Part of the reason why we are increasingly able to choose how culture influences us is that there is more to choose from. This view implies that, we are at liberty to choose how culture influences us.

Like many societies in the world, Canada is undergoing rapid cultural diversification because of a rising number of immigrants and change in their countries of origin.

Marxian Perspective-Begins with conflict

Rights Revolution: The process by which socially excluded groups have struggled to win equal rights under the law and in practice

The rights revolution fragments Canadian culture by:

1) Legitimizing the grievances of groups that were formerly excluded from full social participation;

2) Renewing their pride in their identity and heritage.

Weberian Perspective-Rationalization

Max Weber`s term fir the most efficient means to achieve given goals and the unintended, negative consequences of doing so.

One of the most constraining aspects of contemporary culture, making life akin to living inside an “iron cage”.

Loss of individuality-Loss of autonomy-Obsession with moving on to bigger and better positions

Lack of individual freedom-Specialization-There is a loss in the sense of community because the purpose of bureaucracies is to get the job done efficiently

Consumer Culture

Consumerism: The tendency to define ourselves in terms of the goods we purchase.

Consumers are motivated to make purchases because of the bombardment of advertising in the form of North America`s “shop-till-you-drop” lifestyle.

Conspicuous Consumption: The term coined by American economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen in his book, The Theory of the Leisure Class (1899).

Pierre Bourdieau-Cultural Capital

Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (1979)

The beliefs, tastes, norms, and values that people draw upon in everyday life.

People with different socialization histories occupy different social positions and have different amounts and types of cultural capital.

Differences in cultural capital are connected to social classes.

Cultural capital is symbolic, not material; it plays an important role shaping one`s fate in society.

Global Culture-Globalization

The process by which formerly separate economies, states, and cultures are connected, and people become aware of their growing interdependence.

One of the most important roots of globalization is expansion of international trade and investment.

Economic-Political-Cultural-Virtual

May 26th-

Relationship between dominant groups and Minority Groups

Genocide

Is the systematic annihilation of one category of people by another

Assimilation: Voluntary (e.g., Immigration) and Involuntary (e.g., colonization)

Neo-Colonialism

By the 1960s most former colonies had gained political independence, however there was a continued dependence on Western countries

Neo-colonialism has become known as the continuation of Western colonialism by not only economic and political but also cultural means.

The dominance of Western multinationals (McDonald`s homogeneity, plundering of resources, sweatshops, export of Western values and cultures, Americanisation).

US concept of Assimilation

The policy that newcomers should follow the path of Anglo conformity, but most groups do not reach full assimilation in the expected period of time.

Even today, descendants of the early immigrants hold on to their ethnic heritages and identities and pass them from generation to generation.

Mexican Americans

1. Originally never crossed an ocean, left their borders, or crossed into U.S. borders.

2. Originally came into the U.S. by conflict, conquest, and coercion.

3. Never immigrated, so its arguable that assimilation is not even possible.

Pluralism

The retention of racial and ethnic culture combined with equal access to basic social resources.

Multiculturalism

Refers to the demographic reality that we are a multicultural society made up of ethnoculturally and racially diverse groups of people.

Can also refer to an ideology that uses ethnocultural and racial diversity and equity as its framework and a mosaic as its metaphor.

Multiculturalism has become a fundamental Canadian value.

Segregation

Separates minority groups from the dominant group

E.g., USA and South Africa

E.g., Anti-miscegenation laws

Population Transfer

Expels a minority group from a country or limits its location

Indigenous reserve system.

First World War--Ukrainian-Canadian internment camps

Second World War—Japanese and Italian internment camps

Boundary Maintenance: Lamont & Virag Molnar (2002)

1. Boundary markers differentiate between groups (customs, traits, language, political ideas).

2. Who defines culture/markers, for what purpose?

3. The groups “cultures” and social organization may change without removing/changing the ethnic boundary markers.

4. These boundaries need not be territorial, but more likely social.

5. Cultural differences relating to ethnicity are extremely relevant in social interaction.

6. People change ethnic identity, individually or collectively (intermarriage/cultural adoption, economic/production strategies, escape social stigma, etc).

7. Boundaries also connect

Living in the Hyphen

Given the tremendous diversity in Canada, we are starting to see;

1. “Fill in the Blank Here + hyphen + Canadian”

2. What happens when boundaries start to fail us?

3. Due to hybrid ancestries cultural identities are overlapping.

4. What becomes our frame of reference?

5. Cultural identity in Canada`s multicultural environment is beginning to reach critical mass where people are suffering from a Cultural identity crisis.

6. Can categories be defined or set out anymore?

7. Paradox of being defined in Canada as “other” while at the same being defined as the “other” in the ancestral home.

Gender and power

1. Power and gender are closely linked

2. Micro level-power involved in everyday decisions

3. Power influences dominant institutions

4. Feminist perspectives on power

Power: Good and Bad

1. Ability to influence behavior of others.

2. Questioning the burden of power.

3. Coercive power: imposing by force

Authority: power from position.

Institutionalized power.

Potential for inequality.

Masculinity and Power

1. Power: exclusively a male matter.

2. Questioning power distribution

3. Experiencing men in power.

4. The supervillain type of power

Who really has the power? Hegemonic Masculinity

Standard against which all men are judged.

Hegemonic definition of manhood.

Masculinity and heterosexuality

Difference: private troubles, public issues.

The connection for women.

The lack of connection for men.

Emasculation: reducing masculinity/The nonmen/Key markers of manhood/Reason why many men feed powerless

1. Power struggles within groups of men.

2. Powerlessness and identity.

3. The superhero type of power.

Take the form of violence/The male willingness to be violent/Marital rape/Head and master laws.

Ex: Sexual harassment at the workplace

Influencing available opportunities

Use of threat in domestic violence

The core of gender inequality

Geography of Fear

Vulnerability and fear in certain spaces/Encroachments on privacy and safety/Fear of becoming a victim/Advantages of outdoor recreation.

Fear of being outdoors/Violation of privacy and control/Negotiating fear of public space/The dilemma faced by women.

Effect of fear on behavior of women/Coercive power in public spheres/Making it a woman`s problem/Normalizing harassment

Coercive Power

Violent intersections: The gender of human trafficking

1. Coercion in exploiting and selling a person

2. Vulnerability of women to trafficking

3. Feminization of poverty

4. Women: victims of modern slavery

Experiences of survivors/Reflection of wider problems/Problem of both wealthy and poor/Passing of anti-trafficking laws.

Gender rights and Human rights?

1. Perception of behavior as morally wrong

2. The question of choice and force

3. Targeting women rather than men

4. Varied ways of dealing with prostitutions

Institutional Power: Defining Gender

The role of power in gender/Treatment of the LGBTQ+ community/Definition of gender/Conflict over defining gender

Biology-based ideologies/Identity-based ideologies/Gender panics

1. The logic of determining gender

2. Heteropatriarchy and cisheteropatriarchy

3. Three levels of determining gender

4. The harm of defining gender

Men and Women Office

1. Political history 2. The political elite 3. Involvement in political and social movements

Ex (Canada): Women in governments/Two questions about gender and power/Descriptive or numerical representation/Substantive representation

1. Entrance into the world of politics

2. The doctrine of separate spheres

3. The level of political participation

4. Women in the colonial administration

5. Democratization and women

6. Factors determining women in politics

7. Political specialization and efficacy

1.Difference in approach to problems 2. Change in the culture of the legislature 3. Impact of a female-majority legislature

Gendered Leadership Styles

1. Emphasis of women leaders

2. The ethic of justice

3. The ethic of care

4. Foreign policy and women

Perception inhibiting opportunities/Effect in gender inequality/State feminism

Symbolic Violence

1. Getting tricked by power

2. Symbolic violence

3. Belief in naturalness of inequalities

May 29th

Individuals, Networks, and Organizations in Social Movement Participation

Individuals and Social Movements: Collective action is the combination of many individual acts

Individuals contribute in many ways: ideas and opinions/financial and time contributions/leadership/votes

1. Letter writing 2. Ethical consumerism 3. Individual acts of resistance and solidarity

Individuals` relationships to Social Movement: Adherent, Beneficiary, Constituent, Conscience constituent

You can also distinguish between individuals` actions in relation to movement

Participant: someone who actually engages in movement activities

Contributor: someone who gives money to movement organizations

Leadership: an important form of individual contribution

Celebrities and celebritization: contributions involving media attention and a ready-made audience, and that can act as a bridge between movement issues and the general public

Recruitment: the process of attracting active participants and contributors

Why contribute to the common good?

An activist is someone willing to incur the costs of participating

Activist are not irrational, social misfits, but are making a conscious choice

Those choices are based on carefully weighing pros and cons, and as such are rational choices (Olson, 1965)

The free-rider problem (Olson, 1965)

The benefits movements produce are public or common goods that everyone has access to

There are costs to contributing to a movement

Rational decision-making leads individuals to not join group if they think they can gain benefits without participating

As a result, movements need to find ways to make the benefits of participating outweigh the costs

Reason why individuals participate in social movements:

Tangible rewards: Material incentives (calendars, pins, and other items that symbolize one`s contribution)

Intangible rewards: A sense of satisfaction from participating; solidarity incentives (feelings of excitement, fun, and solidarity)

Why individuals participate in social movements (symbolic interaction theory)

Frame Alignment: refers to the link between social movement organizations` and individuals` interpretive schemata so that their goals, activities and ideologies are consistent.

Frame alignment is accomplished through various processes, as the movement is pitched, or marketed, in a way that makes more people likely to join it.

For example: Frame transformation is used to get people to change the way they view something; something that is taken for granted or viewed as normative is transformed into something problematic, unjust or in need of remediation.

Frame Alignment Processes

Framing also refers to the more general process through which individuals interpret their position in society and its causes.

In particular, the adoption of an injustice frame leads one to view the position of one`s group as more disadvantaged and is an important precursor to participation in a movement.

1. Si theorist who have applied the emergent norm approach have focused on how existing structural conditions become defined as unjust.

2. Often this process is facilitated by an event that dramatizes or personalizes a social issue.

3. This increases the salience of the issue and draws attention to its problematic nature, which gives rise to new situational definitions and the emergence of norms concerning the appropriate course of action

Social movements participation as a self-fulfilling prophecy

Research shows that people`s expectations about others` behaviors are instrumental in shaping their likelihood of participating in a social movement.

Thus, at the aggregate level, the expectations that others will participate results in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

People who think others will participate, are more likely to participate because they regard the movement as likely to be successful. This in turn, results in higher participation and increases the odds that the movement will be successful.

Participation itself also tends to increase commitment. Individuals who participate are likely to develop a pro-movement mindset, which increases the likelihood of subsequent participation in the movement.

Collective Identity and participation in social movements

1. Social identity theory argues that social identities emerge through the process of self-categorization (us vs. them)

2. Collective identity is a potential solution to the free ride problem

3. The formation of a collective identity minimizes the distinction between individual and group interests.

Socially based identities and participation in social movements

Involvement in a social movement may also be a way for individuals to cultivate new (socially based) identities. Social movement organizations and events provide opportunities for individuals to interact with others and provide an opportunity to form new relationships.

1. Changes in the content of individuals` self-concepts resulting from participation are often gradual

2. More drastic identity change is usually rooted in two processes

3. The reinterpretation of the past within the context of their new self-view

4. The verification of new identities through group activities with other movement participants

The extent to which new identities are consistent with the current self-concept affects participation.

New identities that can be readily integrated into people`s existing self-concepts are the most likely to result in sustained participation.

New identities that are discrepant from self-views, may lead people to leave the movement.

People`s nonmovement related identities also influence the trajectory of their participation in social movement

The extent that movement and nonmovement identities overlap is an important determinant of behavior.

The extent of competing, nonoverlapping social relations are also important.

Additional reasons: Costs may be fewer that in previous decades due to the professionalization of social movement organizations.

Internet-based activism has opened up a variety of low-cost ways of participating (clicktivism)

Overall, the understanding participation as rational has shifted the focus from a certain type of person who participates to the idea that people are encouraged to participate by certain conditions.

Activism, Organizations, and Social Networks

The network perspective views the social world as comprising formal and informal links, or social “ties”, that connect people. E.g., friends, family, acquaintances

Networks of social groups: formal and informal organizations that individuals participate in on a regular basis. E.g., religious groups, sports groups, workplaces, community organizations, schools

Activism and personal networks

An individual`s connection to other people is the best predictor of participation in activism (Diani, 2008)

Relationships (or “ties”) vary, from strong to weak

Ties will often override or offset the costs of participation

Hidden networks: Infrapolitics (Scott, 1990): Engagement in everyday forms of resistance; allows individuals to resist dominant power structures and creates subcultures and creates subcultures that can serve as hidden networks for greater political activities.

Submerged networks: Loosely connected networks of people that may exist in neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and other social arenas; may become activated and coalesce into groups organized for activism (Melucci, 1996)

Movements as Networks

Movements can also be viewed as networks, or “actor networks” (Diani,1995)

Networks are the channels for information and ideas, and the individuals and groups who act are “brokers” (Robnett, 1977)

Networks linked “by the centrality of values or principled ideas, the belief that individuals can make a difference, the creative use of information, and the employment by nongovernmental actors of sophisticated political strategies in targeting their campaigns” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, p. 2)

Opportunities that the internet presents (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010):

1. Reduces participation costs

2. Supports (traditional) offline collective action

3. Creates new modes of collective action

4. Creates community

5. Promotes collective identity

Limitations of the internet for participation

1. The digital divide

2. Access to the internet is unequal

3. Slackivism