

MAN202T: Sociology of Design

Session 2 (Module 1)



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY,
DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING,
KANCHEEPURAM

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SESSION OUTLINE

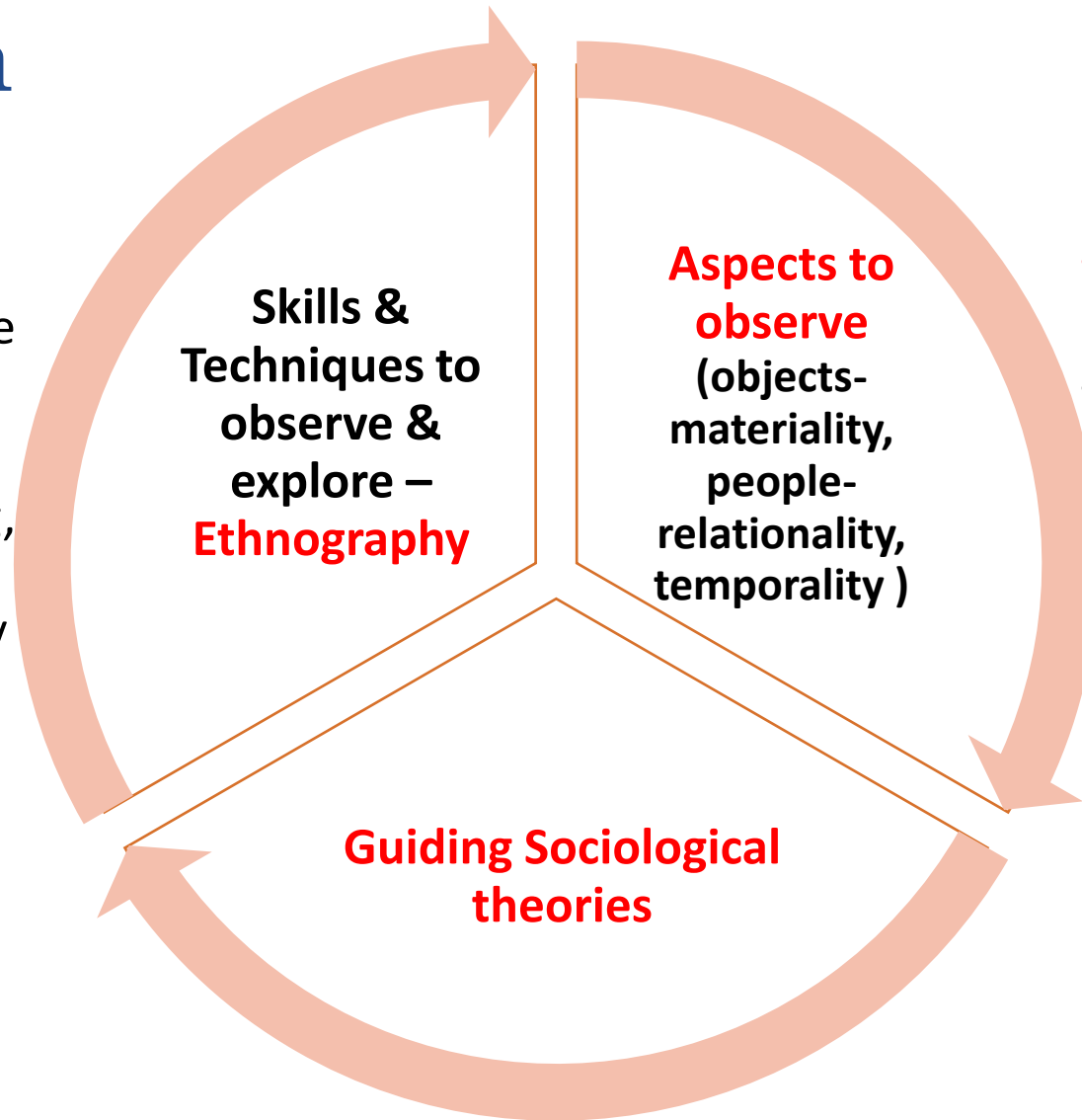
- Introduction
- Key Sociological Perspectives
- Making Sense of 'D' in IIITDM



Introduction

The documentation and analysis of a particular culture through field research:

- Seeing, Listening, participating, experiencing, reflecting (empathy)
- **Note-taking**, rich pictures / visual thinking, Narrative Writing, Conversing



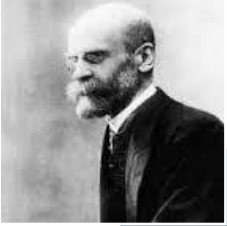
- **Your immediate context**
- Your product context

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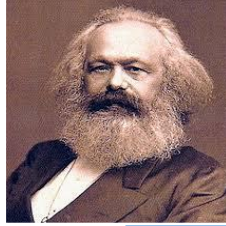


Three key perspectives in sociology



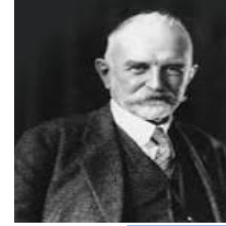
Functionalist

- Society as stable, well integrated
- Social order maintained through cooperation and consensus
- People are socialized to perform societal functions



Conflict

- Characterized by tension and struggle between groups
- Social order maintained through force and coercion
- People are shaped by power, coercion, and authority



Interactionist

- Active in influencing and affecting everyday social interaction
- Social order maintained by shared understanding of everyday behavior
- People manipulate symbols and create their social worlds through interaction

MACRO SOCIOLOGY

MICRO SOCIOLOGY

Macro vs Micro Sociology

Macro level properties (norms, class, role, status, gender, or generalized attitudes, motives, desires, needs) affect individual behaviors

Vs

Macro level properties emerge from everyday interactions among individuals

Example: Analyzing an issue like cow slaughter

Functionalist

- Cow has been integral to the rural economy, agriculture/dairy and household
- Its importance is reinforced through rituals (& religious beliefs ... cow-Lord Krishna) that involve praying the cow
- So, ban slaughter of productive cow ... only those that have become dysfunctional can be taken out of the system ... skinned & eaten by certain groups

Conflict

- Cow related conflict is a sign that one class is imposing its power or coercing another group and it may be rooted in the access to scarce resources
- Example: cow as a source of food creates a supply-demand gap - is seen as an economic opportunity by communities that are traditionally in the skinning/eating activity
- The dominant community fears that this may alter the power dynamics or cows become costlier. That is why cow slaughter is being opposed

Interactionist

- What is the everyday reality of interactions among cows and people in a particular context – say in urban ecosystem and in non-agrarian society?
- Who is involved, what symbols are being generated and how is the social world constructed through interaction – painting it as a religious or caste or economic opportunity?

Discuss about other issues

- Me Too
- Entry of women into Sabarimala
- Driving behaviors on roads – following rules, breaking rules
- Which perspectives seem to be dominant in the arguments put forward by people? What actions do they guide?

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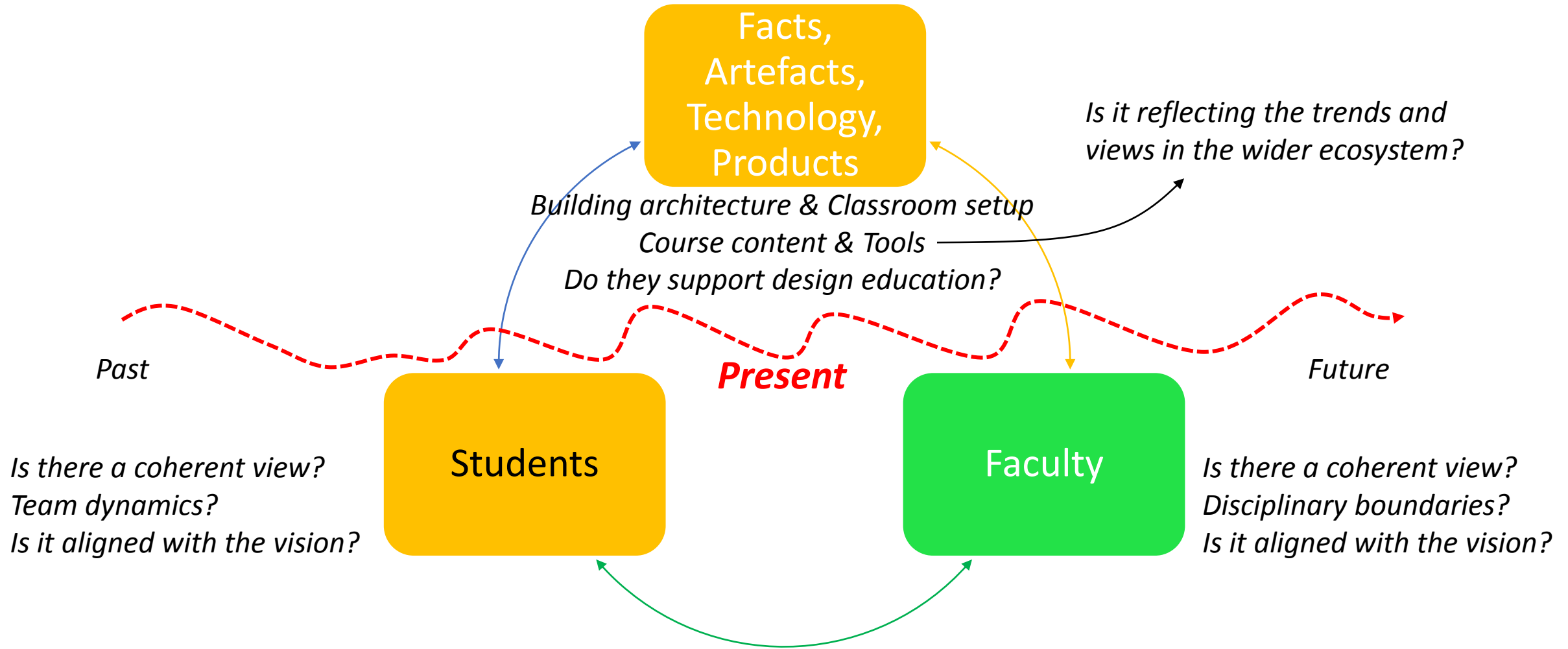
Exercise 2a (30 min): Make notes about your perceptions of “DESIGN in IITDM”?

- What do you observe / see in action?
 - NOW and HERE
 - IN GENERAL
- What do you think / hear?
 - Why are people behaving the way they are doing?
 - Where are the views coming from?
- What is your behavior towards design?
- What is driving your behavior?

Capture your notes in two columns



Which aspects did you capture?



Macro-sociological views on DESIGN Education

- Functionalist View
 - Institute has a mandate to focus on Design & Manufacturing. This is based on a macro view that such skills are the need of the hour in the industry and for national development. And Design & Manufacturing require more than core engineering discipline.
 - This may be challenging and stifling for those who do not 'fit' with this purpose. This can manifest into dysfunctional behaviors both from students and faculty, example adding "design" to all courses that would eventually destroy the core meaning ...students who are neither engineers nor designers... quality of students is going down, need better faculty...
 - The Board and its representatives try to monitor and control these behaviors to keep the system moving towards its goal. Typical interventions will include clarity on roles, expectation setting for students, faculty development, TLC, brand building with industry, Startup Centre, change in institutional arrangements to attract design-oriented faculty, change in entrance model, etc. Changing the structure or function
- Conflict View
 - One group that is "elitist" is trying to use design as a way of creating a separate niche and sustain the interests of that class
 - This may be challenging for others to get into the system... fortunately, there is nothing in the interview or selection process where the institute reduces choices...
 - Vice-versa... the institute may be a mechanism to dilute the aura of "design"
 - Could manifest into different kinds of conflicts in everyday affairs and deadlocks



Making Sense of DESIGN

Design as a “VERB” –
Process / Methodology

A scientific approach
to design means ... it
has to be SYSTEMATIC
and REPEATABLE

Anybody should be able
to produce same results
(following the procedure)

**FACULTY/
TECHNO-
CENTRIC**

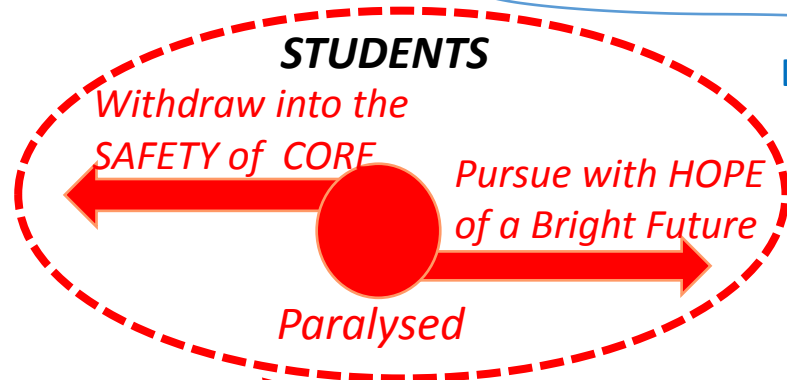
What if industry does not
perceive the difference,
Will I GET A JOB?

Why WASTE TIME
on PERIPHERAL
DESIGN courses?

Poor quality of ‘peripheral’
design & management courses

Teach design in the same way, position
regular courses as design courses, or
glorify core engineering

Design as a topic that concerns
different stakeholders



It is critical for innovation
and national development

Design as a “NOUN” –
product (physical or
conceptual)

It has to be creative
and aesthetic

Can be unpredictable, has no
correlation with expertise

Only few can do
it... in-born skills

WHAT IF I
DON'T HAVE IT?

Design thinking is too complex
and takes a lot of time to learn

Adapting to a new style of education is a challenge
for faculty (coming from traditional model and
operating in the same institutional arrangement)

Advanced economies are
moving in that direction

Emerging challenges demand inter-
disciplinary problem solving skills
(need to move beyond traditional
engineering disciplinary education)

It is difficult to change existing
institutions. May be easier to
develop a new culture in a new
institution with right leadership
and direction/governance

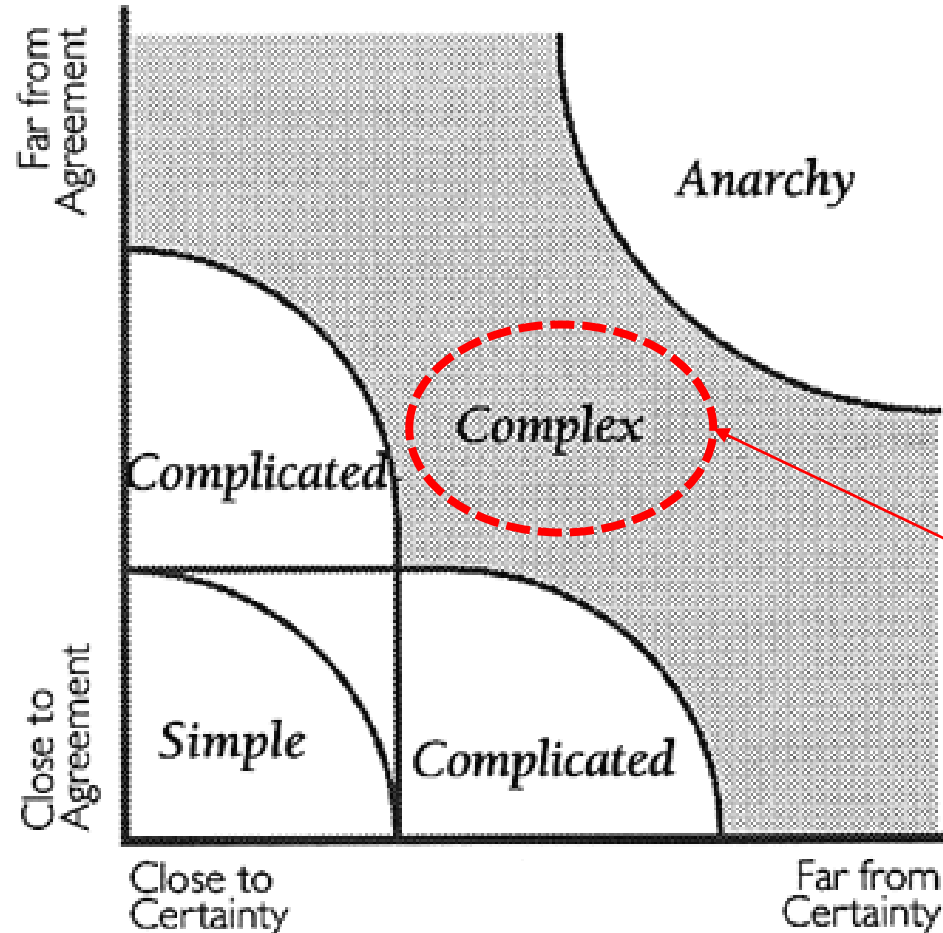
A shift in the funding pattern can
encourage institutions to foster
entrepreneurship and innovation

This can encourage Youth to
leverage New Technologies for
national development

Quality of education is important –
what is taught and how it is taught –
enabling youth to deal with real-world
challenges with life-long learning



Why is DESIGN complex?



An interactionist perspective is most suited for navigating complexity and developing design competence

Stacey's matrix

Before next session

Read the papers on “What is Sociology” and the “New Engineer” for discussion in next class

