

# DS1001: Sociology of Design

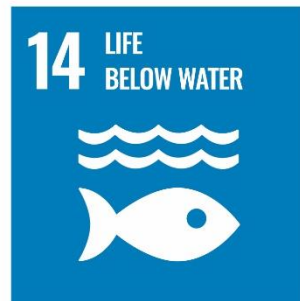
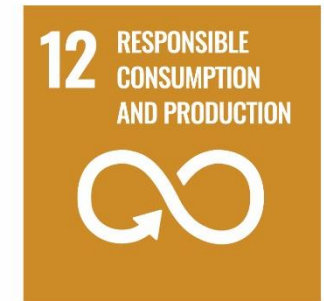
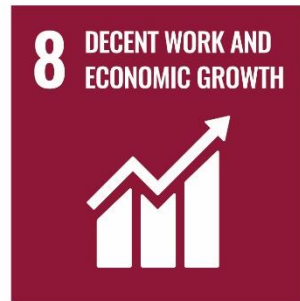
Session 8



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY,  
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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



# Relook at different aspects our everyday life – what is the new challenge & how people are grappling with it?



Home



Education



Work



Health, Illness  
and Disability



Human  
relations



Food &  
Beverages



Shopping,  
Social Events



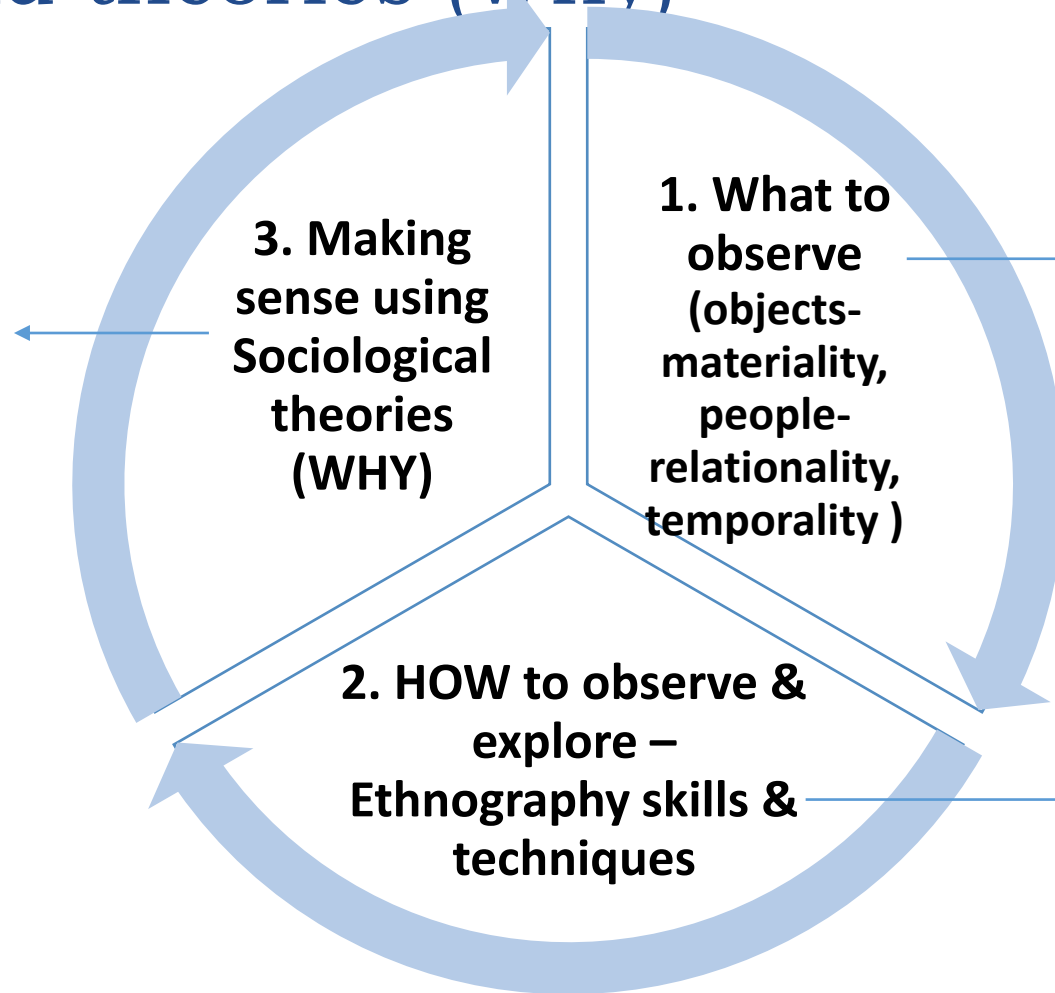
Leisure &  
Travel



Time

# Sociology of everyday life (What), methods (How) and theories (Why)

Common  
sense  
vs  
Logical  
thinking  
Vs  
Critical  
thinking

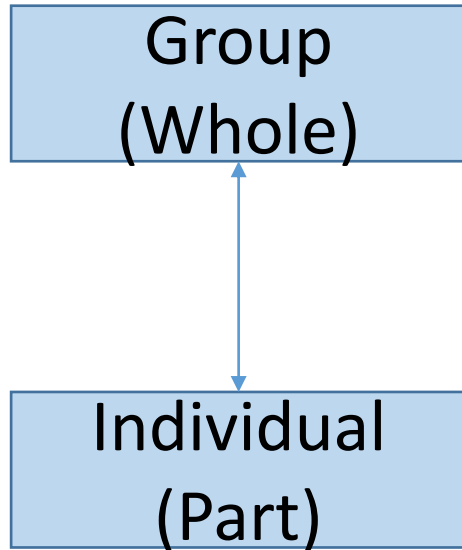


- Your immediate context – everyday life

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

- Note-taking, Rich Pictures, Narrative Writing, Conversing
- Experiencing through seeing, listening, feeling, participating, reflecting

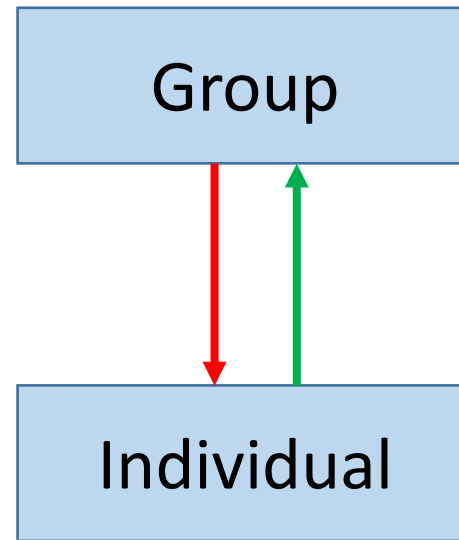
# Basic concepts in sociology



- Culture – symbols, language, customs, rituals, artefacts, beliefs, norms of a group
- Norms or ethical standards refer to what is considered right/wrong by the group
- Class – a group of people within society who share similar socio-economic status
- Status – a relative position within a social setting
- Role – behavior expected of a person in a particular status
- Behavior = Meaning + Action
- Values – the beliefs that individuals carry of what is right/wrong

# Macro vs Micro Sociology

Macro (Group) level properties (norms, class, role, status, gender, or generalized attitudes, motives, desires, needs) affect individual behaviors; Individuals must fit-in; purpose of groups is to socialize individuals & ensure stability



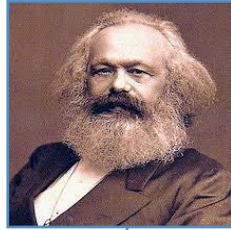
Macro (group) level properties are not given, they emerge from everyday interactions among individuals, and can be changed

# Three key theories (perspectives) in sociology



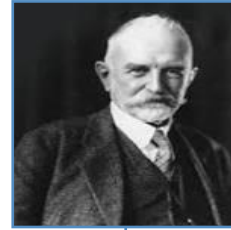
## Functionalist

- 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 (System)**

**MICRO SOCIOLOGY (Network)**

# 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 Theory

- 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?



# Analyze the arguments pertaining to any contemporary event from sociological perspective

- Simultaneous elections for legislative assembly and parliament
- Cricketers must play domestic tournaments to be eligible for IPL
- Need for transformation in teaching & learning in Indian academia

# Can we critically question each element?

- need for
  - Whose need – global/national/industry/student?
- transformation
  - Level: course/program/dept/Inst, Degree of change?
- in Indian
  - Is it a problem only in India, where demand for education > jobs?
- academia
  - Is it only in academia? How about work integrated learning in industry?
- in teaching
  - Whose teaching – Youtube, chatGPT? What is teaching? Is it = learning?
- and learning?
  - Whose learning? What is the outcome of learning – knowledge, skill, behaviour? Underlying theory – cognitive, embodied, social, pragmatic?

# Twelve Angry Men (1957)

- Background: A diverse group of twelve jurors are brought together to deliberate (after hearing the “facts”) in a murder case involving an uneducated, teenaged Puerto Rican tenement-dwelling boy for killing his father with a switchblade knife.

## Ex 8.1: Identify situations / statements from “12 Angry Men” that point to different theories: 20 min

### Functionalist

- ???

### Conflict

- ???

### Interactionist

- ???

Ex 8.2: Can you explain the transition from ‘guilty’ to ‘not guilty’ in the movie? 15 min



## Lessons from “12 angry men”

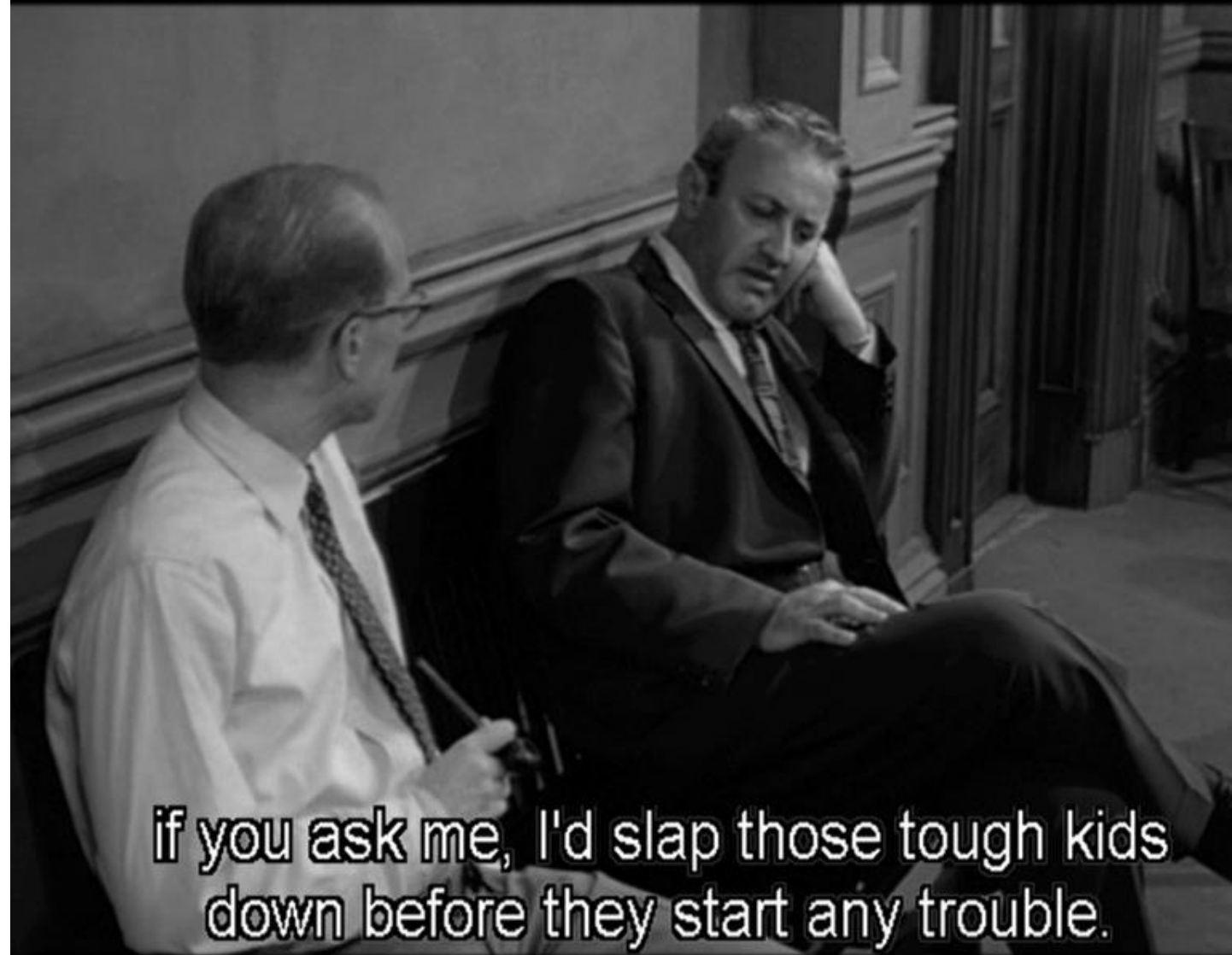
- *What did you notice about the context in the first 10 minutes?*

- A court; Concept of Jury – common people from different walks of life (not experts) decide what experts (lawyers) have debated – knowledge gaps
- Verdict must be unanimous; Concept of “reasonable doubt” (clear requirement?)
- Door locked ... boundary established to focus on a specific objective
- Jury has all white men – race & gender
- How strangers introduce themselves – role that objects like window, chewing gum, climate/weather in triggering chit chat

To continue, you've listened to a long and complex case, murder in the first degree

## Lessons from “12 angry men” - What did you notice about the initial talk and interactions?

- It is only for formalizing a “open and shut case”...  
“I’d slap those tough kids down...” (already  
concluded, prejudice)
- It is a waste of time ... “talk and talk about  
nothing” (talking vs doing)
- “We need to finish it fast, more important things  
to do” (personal priorities)
- “Baltimore” ... “good groundsmen?” ...  
establishing class / power difference
- Seating arrangement by number (organized)
- Belief in experts, roles, class, experience, facts ...  
all these pre-conditions are sacrosanct... us vs  
them deviants are exceptions
- All attempts to close the dialogue and sustain  
status quo about some perceived macro order





## Lessons from “12 angry men” - How members respond to the open ballot?

- Some are clear .. A few are not sure ... succumb to peer pressure
- One stands up ... How is this defiance viewed...? “there is always one..” ... “you can talk and talk... I am not going to change my mind”...
- What makes the one person (Jury 8) to differ? ... exploring the instability inside us... I-We...
- “I may not know, but we are here for a purpose, lets talk for an hour”... no personal agenda... emphasizing the value of that space/time/person



# Lessons from “12 angry men” – How does the conversation shift?



- Most often people either talk from their past experience or think about what to say next... *we hardly listen and explore what is emerging at present ...*
- And the first twist...
- One member (advt executive is doodling, not present), but makes a random suggestion to ask others to convince Jury 8...
- This exposes hidden uncertainties (the first guy has no clear reason) and prejudices that get challenged (“how do you believe the story of the woman... she is one among them?”)
- Even after this, the stalemate persists... so what happens next?
- Closed ballot... Risk taking

# Lessons from “12 angry men” - How new information pops up and helps explore the situation?

- A small team forms with one person supporting Jury 8... based on intention
- Amplifying the subtle shifts in momentum, not everyone is aligned (there are differences)
- Bringing new information through research (knife), listening (“ran”), presence (“eye-glasses”)
- Power of observing small details – “old man with a torn jacket, wants to feel important”, “lady had nose marks” – different angles/perspectives
- Use of objects/artefacts/demonstration (door locked, knife, layout) to expand dialogue (not close)



# Lessons from “12 angry men”

## - How a new group with different values emerges?

- Vote starts shifting as new information creates reasonable doubt among more people
- Involving people: senior citizen, taking cough drops
- Challenging the Jury with baseball tickets to say “Not Guilty” based on conviction, not to break the tie
- Confronting prejudices and past experiences (“Sadist” ... “Kill you”)
- People moving out of their chairs and isolating one jury member... birth of a new group



# Distinguishing the three sociological theories

## Key differences:

- How people react to conflict / differences?
- What kind of solutions are proposed?

A functionalist seeks better clarity and alignment of purpose, functions and structure (institutions)  
... talk is to communicate and convince the other (deviant or dissatisfied members) or keep them out... mostly focused on means (HOW)

A conflict view sees conflict as an essential tool to expose and resolve power imbalances (talk is to bring out instances of injustice and seek reservation or better roles for the underprivileged – WHO gets the Benefits)

An interactionist view explores the differences to see if something new can emerge ... could be a different purpose, structure or functions... ends (WHAT), means (HOW) and WHO are open for rethinking...

Macro order shapes individuals and micro interactions;  
Structure Oriented

Debate / Discussion  
Negotiation

Micro interactions shape the macro order  
→ (micro is unstable and open to change) – Process oriented

Dialogue

# Lessons from “12 angry men”

- Includes Functionalist, Conflict/Power and Interactionist perspectives
- More such scenarios in everyday life and in the industry
- Very similar to the dynamics in some teams doing sociology assignments

## View about interaction or group work

- It is only for formalizing a “open and shut case” (already concluded)
- It is a waste of time ... “talk and talk about nothing”
- We need to finish it fast, more important things to do
- Roles, Experience, Facts, Logic (pre-conditions are sacrosanct) are used to close dialogue... outliers/deviants are exceptions
- All attempts to close the dialogue and sustain status quo about some perceived macro order... “Yes, I am one among them”
- Most often people either talk from their past experience or think about what to say next... *we hardly listen to what is emerging at present*

# Lessons from “12 angry men”

## Elements of an Interactionist Perspective

- Focused on expanding dialogue, within a certain time limit
- Making explicit the intent (“reasonable doubt”) & building trust
- Risk taking (secret vote)
- Amplifying the subtle shifts in momentum, not everyone is aligned (there are differences)
- Bringing new information through research (knife), listening (“ran”), presence (eye glasses)
- Observation – “old man with a torn jacket, wants to feel important”, “lady had nose marks”
- Use of objects/artefacts/demonstration (door locked, knife, layout) to expand dialogue (not close)
- Involving people: senior citizen, taking cough drops, proximity (dagger)
- Confronting prejudices and past experiences

# How are the lessons relevant to design and innovation?

- The power of status quo ... but the feeling of instability between “I and We”
- The willingness to explore this instability ... within a time frame
- Taking risks ... finding partners ... Researching & bringing new information that challenges status quo ... use of prototypes
- Winning over a few more partners ... and extending the conversation so that others bring in additional information
- Confronting the status quo, but also including it... keeping out personal prejudice / agenda

**Leadership, teams and designs emerge from the process of interaction**

**There are different types of talk beyond Q&A/louder voice:**

- Clarifying, Rephrasing, Persuading...

**Rhetoric-Responsive ways aimed at surfacing new information / relationships**



