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# Life is Not Always Fair

WINTER 2024 / SOCIOLOG 1027

## *Preface*

The purpose of this document is to act as a comprehensive note for my understanding on the subject matter. I may also use references aside from the lecture material to further develop my understanding, and these references will be listed here.

This document should eventually serve as a standalone reference for learning or review of the subject matter. There is also a lot of organization within these documents, please refer to the table of contents within your PDF viewer for ease of navigation.

## *References*

- Imagining Sociology - 3e - Catherine Corrigan-Brown

# *The Sociological Imagination*

This chapter holds weeks 1-2 worth of course content, and assigned readings listed below.

- Imagining Sociology - Preface
- Imagining Sociology - Chapter 1

## *Sociology*

The term **sociology** was coined by Auguste Comte

- Comte sought to understand how society worked, and the effect of the larger processes on society and the people living in it.
- **Society** is the largest scale human group that shares common land and common institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Society is based on social interactions among its members, this act is called **socializing**.

- Through socialization we learn the written and unwritten rules of society
- The fact that most interactions in society are predictable<sup>2</sup> establishes a com-

<sup>1</sup> Canada is home to two societies - Quebec, and everything else

<sup>2</sup> Think of small talk with a cashier, you wouldn't truthfully answer the question "how are you?"

mon set of understandings of how society works, and how we behave in it

- These rules can change over time, consider how different the a cashier interaction was before and during covid-19

Interactions in society are shaped by **culture**, a system of behavior, beliefs, knowledge, practices, values and materials.

- The **dominant culture** is able to impose its traits onto a society.<sup>3</sup>
- A **counterculture** is a group that rejects certain elements of the dominant culture ex. anti-consumerist groups
- **Subcultures** also differ (but not needingly oppose) the dominant culture

<sup>3</sup> In america this tends to be: look good, be rich, and own a big house

Culture as a whole, is often divided into **high culture** and **low culture**.

- High culture is the culture of societies elite (me), it might be difficult to appreciate unless one has been taught to enjoy and understand it (like i have)
- Low culture is the culture of the majority (you).
- Classical Music would be an example of high culture, while pop/rap would be low culture.

### *The Sociological Imagination*

The **sociological imagination** is a book written by C. Wright Mills. It essentially highlights the inability to understand our own lives or understand the larger society independently from one another. He argued that in order to learn about one, we must really learn about both<sup>4</sup>.

- Essentially we should try connecting **personal troubles** and **public issues**, in order to more deeply understand both of them.

There are three main areas (foci) of study within sociology include **social inequality**, **social institutions**, and **social change**

- Social Inequality focuses on the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged people in society, based on the consequential differences between people, on the lives they lead.
- Social institutions are the norms, values, and rules of conduct that structure human interactions. They need not be buildings. In cadana there exist: The family, education, religion, the economy, and the government.

<sup>4</sup>In the textbook this is referred to as connecting biography with society