

SOCIOLOGY EXAM PREP

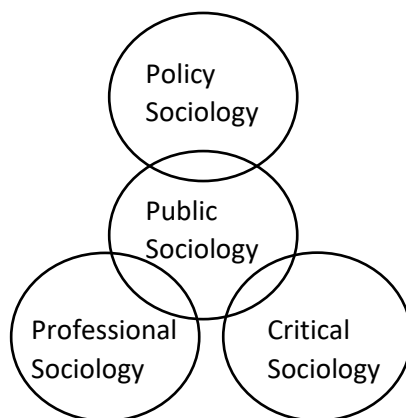
WEEK 1:

The term **Sociology** was first **coined** by French academic **Auguste Comte in 1839** as “The study of the development, structure and functioning of human society”. First book written ‘The study of sociology’ was published by Herbert Spencer in 1874.

Sociology is:

- ➔ **Researchers**, using methods to understand our social world and identify patterns, influences and trends.
- ➔ **Subject Matter**, health, consumerism, gender, deviance, religion, migration, relationships, media, young people etc.
- ➔ **A Way of Thinking**, the ‘Sociological Imagination’, looks at social groups and patterns, rather than individuals.

Public Sociology:



WEEK 2:

Purpose:

- ➔ History and key moments
- ➔ ‘Sociology Imagination’
- ➔ How sociology helps to make sense of the everyday

Chapter One – Text Book – Andrew Singleton – Linking Private Lives to Public Issues

- ➔ US sociologist **Robert Merton** ‘Ours has become an age pervaded by sociology’ and sociological concepts have ‘drifted into our everyday’ (1981)
- ➔ Sociology involves a **methodical study of human behaviours and societies** (Macionis and Plummer 2008)
- ➔ **Relationship between the individual and society** or how we create society at the same time we are created by it (Giddens 1989)
- ➔ **Soius** means **companion** – Latin
Logie means **study of** – Greek
= Sociology – **study of companionship/society (Abercrombie 2004)**

- **Sociological gaze** exposes the **link between the individual experience and the social context** in which we live, work and play.

Defining sociology:

- **Charles Wight Mills:** The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relationships between the two within society... it is a quality of mind that seems most dramatically to promise an understanding of the intimate realities of ourselves in connection with larger social realities.
- **Peter Berger:** We see the puppets dancing on their miniature stage, moving up and down as the strings pull them around, following the prescribed course of their various little parts. We locate ourselves in society and thus recognise our own position as we hand from its subtle strings. For a moment we see ourselves as puppets indeed. Unlike a puppet, we have the possibility of stopping in our movements, looking up and perceiving the machinery in which we have been moved. In this act lies the first steps towards freedom.
- **Anthony Giddens:** Sociology is the scientific study of human life, social groups, whole societies and the human world as such. It is dazzling and compelling enterprise, as its subject matter is our own behaviour as social beings.
- **Zygmunt Bauman and Tim May:** To think sociologically can render us more sensitive and tolerant of diversity. It can sharpen our senses and open our eyes to new horizons beyond our immediate experiences in order that we can explore human conditions, which, hitherto, have remained relatively invisible. Once we understand better how the apparently natural, inevitable, immutable, eternal aspects of our lives have been brought into being through the exercise of human power and resources, we shall find it much harder to accept that they are immune and impenetrable to subsequent actions, including our own.
- Any dictionary will **define sociology** as the “**study of society**”. Expanding on this, we define sociology as “**the methodical study of the ways in which people construct and contribute to society and how they, in turn, are influenced by society**”.
- **Margaret Thatcher** infamously said “**there is no such thing as society...there are individual men and women and there are families**”.
- **Human agency** – The ability of people, individually and collectively, to influence their own lives and the society in which they live.
- Sociologists look behind and beyond the familiar and the obvious (Berger 1963).
- **Social Structure**, the reoccurring patterns of the social interaction through which people are related to each other, such as the social institutions and social groups.
- **Structure Agency Debate**, a key debate in sociology over the extent to which human behaviour is determined by social structure. Humans are substantially influenced by the way their social environment is organised.
- **Social Institutions**, formal organisations that address public needs such as education, health care, government and welfare.
- **Anthony Giddens (1986)**, we have the ability to consider alternative futures.
- **C. Wright Mills (1916-1962)**, an individual contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove.
- **Sociological imagination**, a concept developed by Mills. ‘A quality of mind that enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society (1959). Sociologists aim to imagine the connection between the individual and larger social