



# CSTU5170 - Sociology for Social Practice: Inequality and Social Change

Introduction to the course

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# Karakia MANAWA MAI

Manawa mai te mauri nuku

Manawa mai te mauri rangi

Ko te mauri kai au

He mauri tipua

Ka pakaru mai te po

Tau mai te mauri

Haumi e, hui e, taiki e

Embrace the life force of the earth, embrace the life force of the sky

The life force I have fathered is powerful, and shatters all darkness

Come great life force,

Join it, gather it, it is done

# WAIATA PUREA NEI

- Parea nei, e te hau  
Horoia, e te ua  
Whitiwhitia, e te ra  
Mahea ake nga, poraruraru  
Makere ana, nga here
- E rere, wairua, e rere  
ki nga ao, o te rangi  
Whitiwhitia, e te ra  
Mahea ake nga, poraruraru  
Makere ana nga here (x2)



# Agenda for today learning objectives

- Get to know each other
- Get a sense of the course
  - Have you been to moodle yet?
  - What are the assessments?
- Introduce some key sociological ideas/concepts.
- Not freak you out too much

# WARNING

This course  
may expand  
your mind!

- You will learn some new stuff, and new language for things you already know.
  - It's going to ask you to think!
  - It will definitely hurt your brain
    - This is your brain growing
  - You may feel emotions
  - Confusion, Anger, Sadness, surprise wonder, etc.
  - My hope is that you may also feel affirmed, empowered, inspired to make change.
- 
- Go slow, but keep on going.
  - You won't "get it" all in one go, but you will start to make connections, hear these ideas in other papers, in the media. Then they may "click".



# Teaching approach

- Ako. We are both teachers and learners simultaneously
- Critical pedagogy
  - educational practice that focuses on the dismantling of relations of domination and the (enabling of) power of individuals to take action for social justice.
  - Together we will explore ways to work for social justice through understand the barriers to social justice.
- Critique of western epistemological hegemony
  - That is, the critique of western ways of knowing and the ways they position themselves as “the way”
- Inquiry based learning (you will need to read, to think, and to reflect).
- You will be invited to Question everything
- It is okay to ask questions!! We will not think you are silly because you don't know something.
- It's just that you don't know it... yet.





ko wai au  
who am I

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# Sociology for Social Practice

Learning to think sociologically is one of the most important skills a social worker can bring to their practice (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2008).

Understanding our own biographies (our own life stories) in sociological terms (the forces that shape our lives) better equips us to comprehend the lives of those we work with" (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2008, p.9).



## Our stance as social practitioners

- International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (2014) Global Definition of Social Work
- Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people.
- Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility **and respect for diversities are central to social work.**
- Underpinned by theories of social work, **social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge**, social work engages people and **structures** to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.”

## Our stance as social practitioners

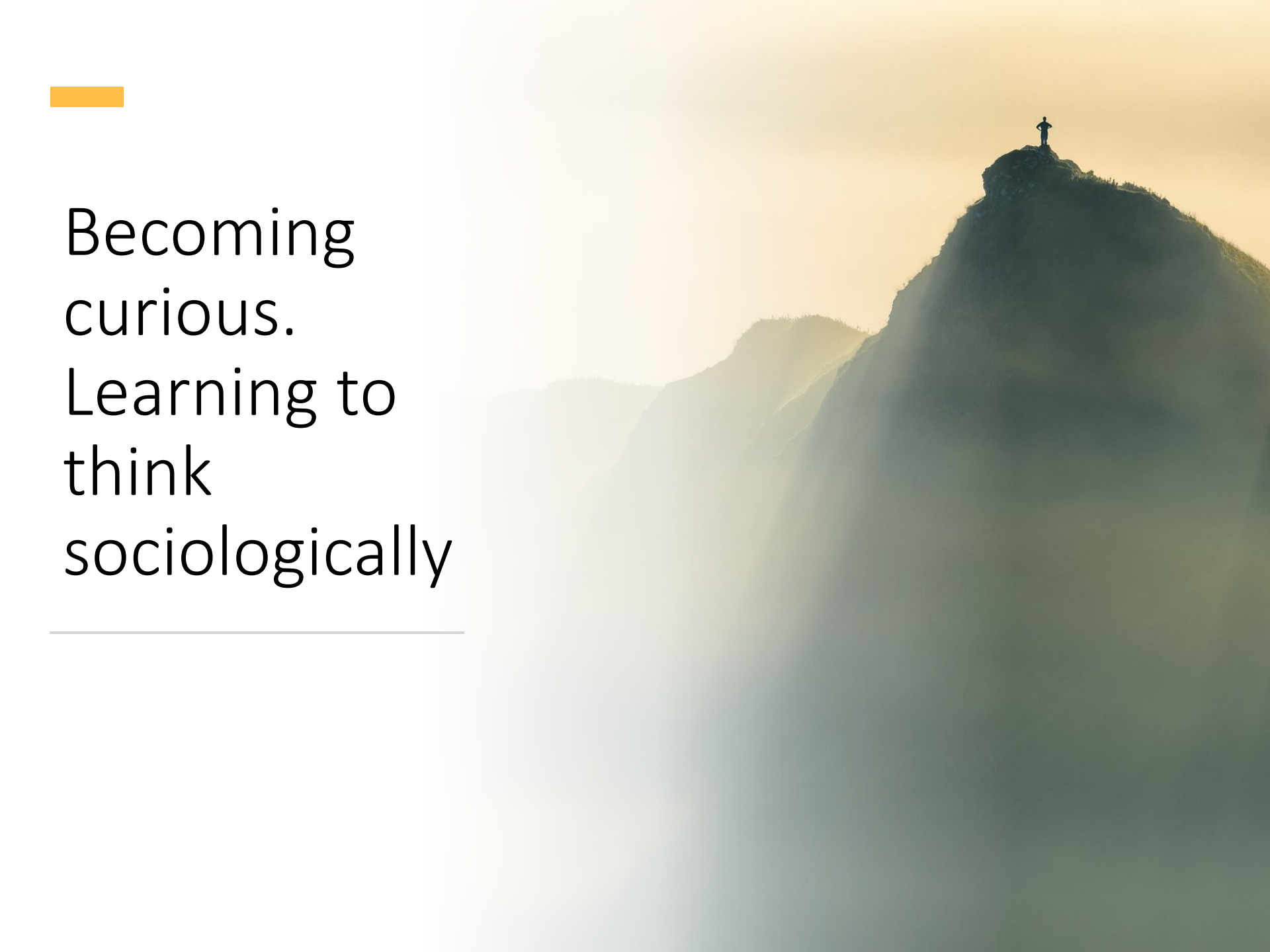
- Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) affirms that member social workers are committed to:
  - The development and **just allocation of the resources** that enable everyone to achieve their full potential.
  - **Action for social change** is necessary to achieve social justice. (ANZASW, 2018)
  - This is about addressing inequality at both the macro (big) and Micro (small).

# A closer look at this definition

- A just (fair) allocation of the resources?
  - What is just (fair)?
  - When does it become unjust (unfair)?
  - When does some inequality become too much inequality?
- **Action for social change** is necessary to achieve social justice
  - How do we take action?
  - Where do we take action?
- **When considering social change ask:**
  - Who benefits? Who gains?
  - Who is marginalised? Who loses?
- *These questions form the heart of this course.*

## Our stance as social practitioners

- We may have different positions about a number of things
- We do however support the concept that inequality is bad and that social justice (fairness, equality, equity) is good.
- We also
- Understanding the sociological drivers of inequality make us more able to effect change.

A person stands on the peak of a mountain, silhouetted against a warm, golden sunset sky. The mountain's ridges and valleys are visible in the distance, creating a sense of vastness and achievement.

Becoming  
curious.  
Learning to  
think  
sociologically

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Coffee

# WHY ARE SOME THINGS MORE DEVIANT THAN OTHERS



# Whakawhanaungatanga

Line up

Form pairs. Choose someone unfamiliar to you.

Become curious, ask questions, 3 minutes each,

- Find out
- How does this person identify themselves (e.g. gender, ethnicity, class).
- Where do they come from? (e.g. where in Tāmaki Makaurau, where in the world)

Report Back, by introducing your new friend

Break





So what is sociology?

- We will get to that
- But first lets start small





# What is an idea?

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- An idea is a thought. It can be of a thing and create a mental image of that thing (pencil) or it can be abstract (pain).
- Ideas can create more ideas
- I'm thinking about a flower
- Were we thinking about the same flower?



Not  
everyone  
thinks  
the same

# What is a concept?

- Different philosophers have used the two terms in different ways and some synonymously
- A concept is a set, or a group of ideas, that build or helps us build an understanding of the world
- Concepts may be thought of as “interpretative constructs”. Things that help us interpret information, ideas, etc.
- We all use concepts.
- Concepts are abstract ideas.
- Concepts may include generalizations
  - All use of language involves abstraction
  - E.g. DOG.
  - Refers to all dogs?
    - Big dog? Small dog? Hairy dog?
    - The more broad the concept the more it includes
    - But does it tell us what we need to know?



# Sociology uses specific concepts

Key concepts >>>>>

## Norms

- The unspoken rules that govern and guide behaviour

## Socialisation

- How we learn these rules

## Roles

- The positions we occupy in our day-to-day life. (Mother, Father, Son, Daughter, teacher, student, employer, employee)

## Expectations (or normative assumptions)

- Assumptions of how we should think, act, or do, based on some social feature (e.g. ideas on the way we should dress to fit our

## Power

## Privilege

# More complex concepts

Key concepts >>>>

Inequality

Class

Ethnicity

Gender

Modernity

Consumerism

Power

# And theories

Theory comes into play when ever we wish to explain or explore something

It is about developing arguments and using concepts which answer questions (e.g. why is there racism, what are the consequences of this racism, how did ideas of “race “emerge, who has benifited, who has been marginalised?)

Theory involves abstracting from features of particular events/ issues, developing concepts, and generalising.



Sociology  
develops  
theories.

Theories of...

Colonisation

Modernity

Capitalism

Consumerism

Class

Ethnicity

Gender

Identity

Power

# So who knows about sociology?

- You do!
- You are already an expert in your own biography.
- Have you heard about the haves and the have nots
  - Then you know about class and inequality
- Have you ever felt frustrated about who does (or who does not) do some household tasks?
  - Then you know about gender (or gender roles)
- Sociology can be thought of as a way to name some of the social experiences you already experience.

# The Sociology of the Classroom

- We doing the social NOW
- Social relationships brought you here. Your biography has you here, now, shaping this part of our collective history.
- What did you do to get here?
  - Set alarm clock
  - Childcare
  - Negotiated with loved ones
  - Debt (Student loan?)
- We are currently engaged in a social relationship
- Teacher/Student
- Power (assessment, attention)
- Surveillance (moodle)
- Student politics
- You are doing Identity right now... (how you see your self and how others may see you, how you think others might see you)

$$F = G \frac{m_1 m_2}{d^2}$$

$$i\hbar \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \psi = \hat{H} \psi$$

$$\phi(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma}} e^{-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

$$E + V = 2$$

So what is sociology?

$$dS \geq 0$$

$$\frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial t^2} = c^2 \frac{\partial^2 u}{\partial x^2}$$

$$\frac{df}{dt} = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(t+h) - f(t)}{h}$$

# Sociology is...

Key concepts >>>>

- an “-ology”
- The study of society
- The study of social arrangements
- including the processes that provide continuity and change.
- Big picture (**macro**) stuff e.g. why do we arrange our economy this way.
- Medium picture stuff (**meso**). E.g. what causes crime, why do we organize our families in certain ways
- Smaller picture stuff (**micro**) e.g. how do I identify in this world (or construct an identify, or am I constructed by society?)



It's the  
study of...

Key concepts >>>>

- ...the world around us (or more specifically the people and their associations).
- The **structures** (the way things are organised and arranged, including the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion) (note: power is a key concept here)
- The **institutions** (family, religion, education, media, work etc)
- The **social groups** (social groupings) we belong to (e.g. rich, poor, employed, unemployed, man, woman, old, young etc)
- The **social roles** we fulfil (fathers, mothers, partners, lovers, students, workers etc). And the behaviours that go with these.

## What is the social?

“The ‘social’ is produced in and through humans doing things collectively” (Matthewman, 2007, p.1).

“It is characterised by amazing richness, variety, complexity, puzzlement, and the capacity to excite both pleasure and misery” (Matthewman, 2007, p.1).



## Sociology offers...

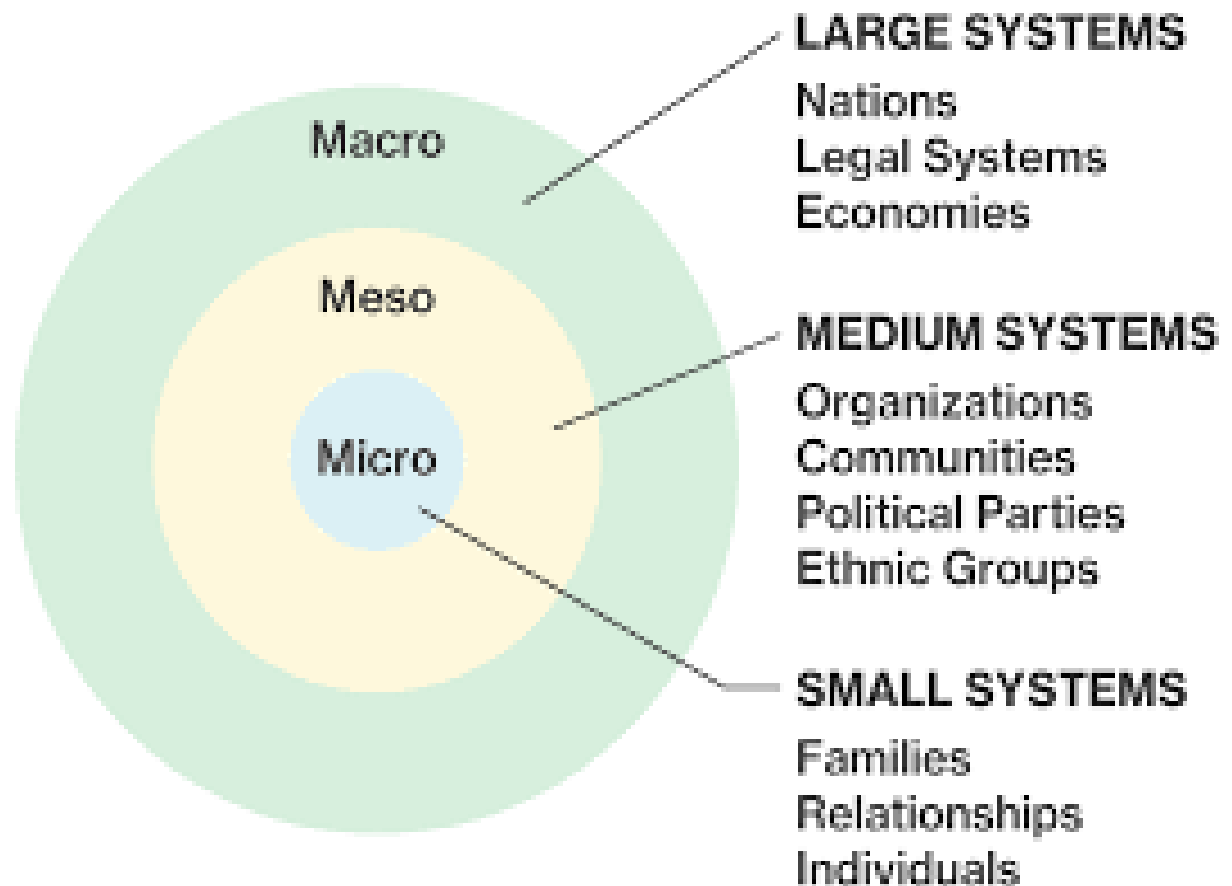
- Sociology offers a distinctive way of seeing and understanding the social world in which we live and which shapes our lives.
- Sociology looks beyond normal, “common sense” and taken-for-granted views of reality, to provide deeper and a more nuanced understanding of social life.



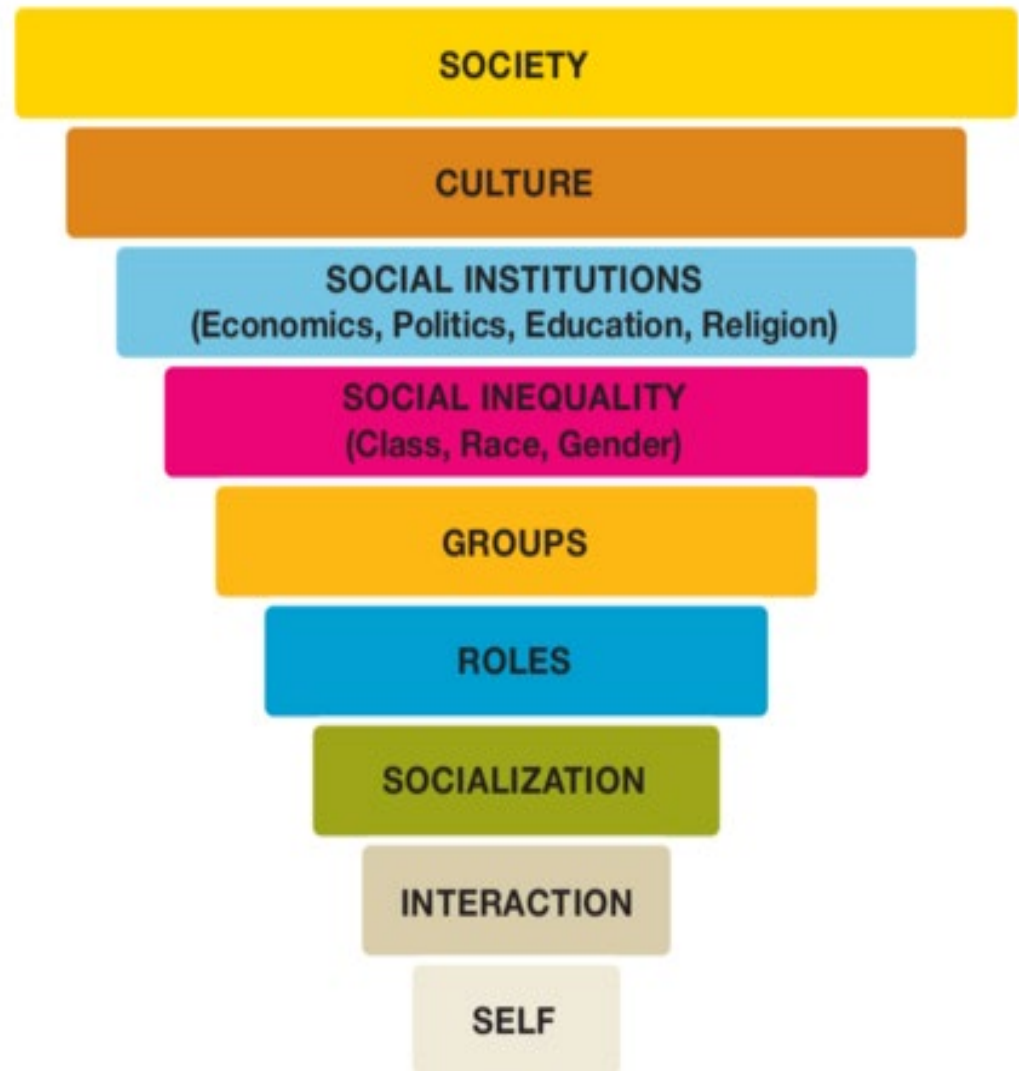
## Sociology offers...

- Conceptual language to communicate complex ideas
- A set of analytical tools (concepts)
- An understanding of what causes inequality and social injustice
- Different levels of analysis

# Sociological Levels of analysis



# Sociological Levels of analysis



**Figure 1.2 The Macro-Micro Continuum**

Sociology covers a wide range of topics at different levels of analysis.



# Key debates in sociology (and some more key ideas)

- A big debate in sociology is the relationship(s) between **structure** and **agency**.
- **Structure** (the social patterns through which a society is organized)
- **Agency** (the ability to act or to effect change also the capacity of individuals to perceive their situation, reason about it, consciously monitor their action, form motives)
- The structure agency debate is the question of how much the structures of society constrain or determine individual lives (or how much agency do we actually have).
- Macro approaches tend to focus on the effects of structures on people. They understand the ways structure constrain options/choice
- Micro approaches tend to focus on how the individual acts on their environments. They stress free will and choice.

Break





# Class exercise

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Explore the sociological  
imagination

## The Sociological Imagination

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- C. Wright Mill's book of the same name.
- Reading on moodle is Chapter one
- With the sociological imagination we can see that sociological understanding takes place at the intersection of **biography** (our or another person's story) and **history** (our collective story).
- Biography happens to individuals
- History happens to societies







# Sociological imagination

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- When we use the sociological imagination to look at the intersection of history and biography we will see both the large structural forces which shape our (and others) lives and the small areas of self that we live inside.
- Our lives are lived in a complex loop between the two.
- The loop between inside and outside
- Society is inside and outside of every individual



# The promise of sociology

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- Mills describes this promise as “the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self – and to see the relationships between the two” (1959, p.7)
- Mills argued that what we see as “private troubles” are not solely private but should be seen as “public issues”, to be debated and explored as general social phenomenon (1959, 6-7)





# Group discussion

Is this a private or public issue?  
What is the cause of homelessness?



Fin?



# What Sociology Offers

- Sociology provides an understanding of social issues and patterns of behaviour
- Rules
- Norms,
- Transmission of...
- Deviation from...

# What Sociology Offers

- Sociology helps us understand the workings of the social systems within which we live our lives
- Structures (the way things are organised, the what)
- Social processes (the way things operate, the how)



# What Sociology Offers

- Sociology helps us understand why and how society changes.

# What Sociology Offers

- Sociology helps us understand why we perceive the world the way we do.



# What Sociology Offers

- Sociology helps us identify what we have in common within, and between, cultures and societies.
- How do we differ?
- How do variations become inequalities

# What Sociology Offers

- Sociology provides us theoretical perspectives within which to frame these understandings and research methods that allow us to study social life scientifically.
- Sociology is a social science.

# What Sociology Offers

- It gives us a foundation for social work practice

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# KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA|

## CLOSING KARAKIA

Ka wehe  
atu tatou



I raro I te  
rangimarie,



te harikoa



Haumi e, hui  
e, taiaki e



Me te  
manawanui