

Journal 8/13/17

- ▶ Describe something that is an individual problem
- ▶ Describe something that is a social problem
- ▶ What makes something a social problem versus an individual problem? Explain

Unit 1: Sociological Theory

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Sociological Imagination



“Sociological Imagination”

- ▶ Phrase coined by C. Wright Mills
- ▶ The ability to see the relationship between ourselves and the larger society.

1. Personal Troubles can and often do reflect a broader social issues and problems.

2. Humans can alter the course of human history



Private v. Public Issues





“The sociological imagination, I remind you, in considerable part consists of the capacity to shift from one perspective to another, and in the process to build up an adequate view of a total society and its components. It is this imagination, of course, that sets off the social scientist from the mere technician.”

Quote by C. Wright Mills

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- ▶ We as people do not live in isolation - our culture and society affect the way we think, feel, and do things in our world.
 - ▶ The sociological imagination is the ability to see the connection between the larger social world and our personal lives.
 - ▶ Viewing the world by imagining yourself in the shoes of someone else

Examples from C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*

In these terms, consider unemployment. When, in a city of 100,000, only one man is unemployed, that is his personal trouble, and for its relief we properly look to the character of the man, his skills, and his immediate opportunities.

Examples from C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*

But when in a nation of 50 million employees, 15 million men are unemployed, that is an issue, and we may not hope to find its solution within the range of opportunities open to any one individual. The very structure of opportunities has collapsed. Both the correct statement of the problem and the range of possible solutions require us to consider the economic and political institutions of the society, and not merely the personal situation and character of a scatter of individuals.

Excerpts from C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*

We are required to look beyond the problems...
And the number and variety of such structural changes increase as the institutions within which we live become more connected with one another. To be able to do that is to possess the sociological imagination.....

“Sociology can be both Terrible and Magnificent at the same time”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BINK6r1Wy78>

Sociological Imagination Activity

- ▶ Each group (4 students) will get a problem in society.
 - ▶ Half of the group will discuss why it is a personal problem
 - ▶ The other half will discuss whether it is a social problem.
- ▶ Each group will present both sides to the class and explain their group consensus.
- ▶ For each of the 7 problems write the explanation as a social problem and personal problem in your notebook.