

**Department of Sociology
The University of Hong Kong**

The Promise of Sociology

Dr. Carmen Tong

Do you want to be one of them? Why?



Do you want to look like him or her?

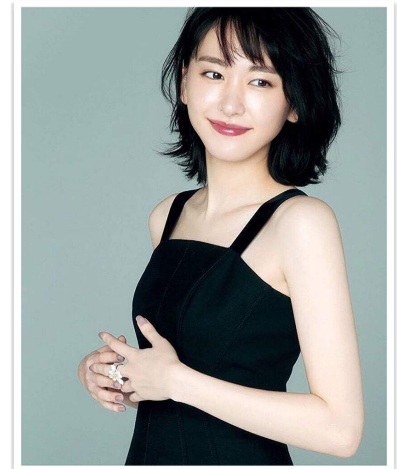


Personal troubles

- a series of 'traps' in private lives

Public issues

- transcend the personal to collective experience / values / interests
- **Neither could be understood without understanding both**



Sociological imagination (C. Wright Mills 1959)

- biography & history: the relations between the two
- linking private troubles to public issues
- as the task and the promise

Sociology as a perspective

- to see and understand the connections between individuals and the broader social contexts in which we live
- a way of seeing
- a journey of thinking and understanding

What is Sociology?

The **systematic study** of the **relationship** between **individuals and society**



- scope: groups and people
- dynamics: connections and influences
- approach: common sense vs systematic study (as a discipline)

Common sense?

- poor people are more likely to break the law
- new immigrants are lazy people
- men and women are different by nature
- people marry because of love
- we will have a better future if we study hard
- we will be happier if we can buy whatever we want
- Ming Pao (The Guardian) is more objective than Apple Daily (The Sun)

- but... one's common sense can be other's nonsense!

Systematic study

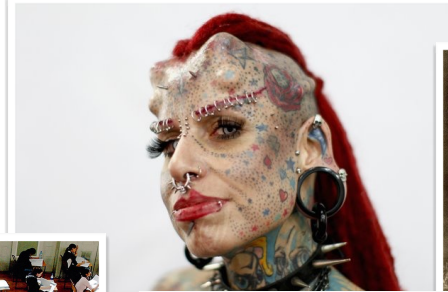
- sociology as a scientific discipline
- **empirical** + **theoretical**

Culture, structure, and power



Socialisation, life course, and identity

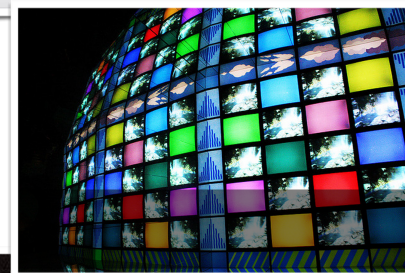
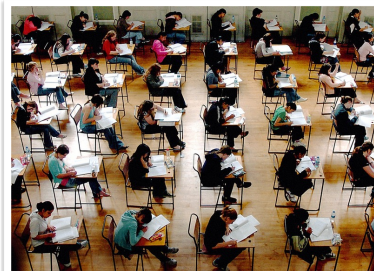
Deviance



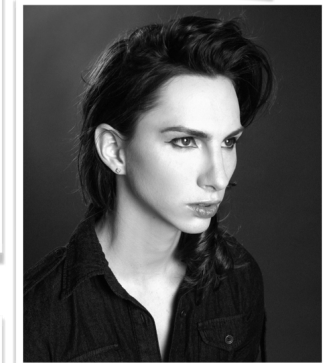
Family & intimate relationships



Education



Media



Gender & sexuality



Social inequality



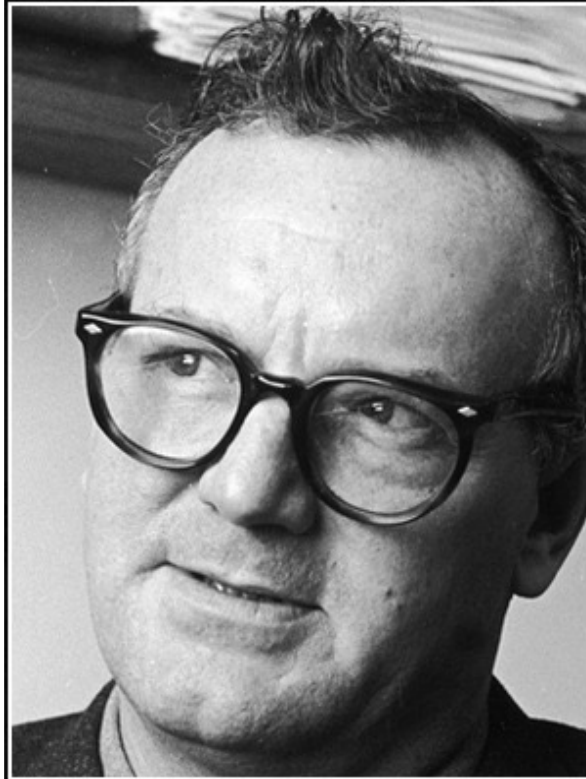
Globalisation

Social change

How to do sociology??

- be curious, be open-minded, think ourselves away from the familiar routines of life / think outside the box
- Peter Burger (1963):
“An introduction to sociology is an invitation to a very special kind of passion.”





The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. This is its task and its promise.

— *C. Wright Mills* —

AZ QUOTES