Session 3
New Social Movements
Department: Social Science
Libguides

Link to the library website
Check out the libguides page on the Endeavour website
  o There are lots of helpful links on the left side
  o You can access number of useful databases from here

Exercise: Search the Endeavour Library database.
  o Type in Health Sociology in the key word box in the middle of the page and see what comes up.
Today’s topics

1. Social Movements
2. Complementary medicine in the context of new social movements
3. The politics of change
4. Max Weber
Section 1
Social movements
What are social movements?

- Large informal groups of people and organisations who come together around a particular issue to achieve social change

- They may have different politics, ideas, ideologies and degrees of formal organisation – don’t have to be formally organised

- There are different kinds of social movements and various stages through which social movements generally pass
Social movements

• Aim to stop or effect change

• Loosely connected - don’t have to be all working on the exact same issue as long as directed toward a common outcome

• Made up of ordinary citizens

• Are a means by which the concerns of a collective can be publically articulated
Exercise: Save the lighthouse

Have look at the hyperlinked article: Plea to save lighthouse

1. Explain why this could be described as a social movement.

2. Who are the key players?

3. How could you interpret the following statement? Queenscliffe Borough Council mayor Helene Cameron says she is "really pleased by the level of community interest".
Social Movements – Key Theories

• **Deprivation theory**
  Social movements arise out of a sense of deprivation/injustice/lack. I.e. feminism as a response to women’s lower social & political rights.

• **Mass-society theory**
  People who feel isolated and insignificant in society are attracted to social movements that provide a sense of belonging. I.e. LGBTI people.

• **Structure Strain Theory**
  When common interests and goals in the society are not met, members experience stress and are likely to turn to alternatives (incl. crime/deviance).
Hegemony and counter-hegemony

- Social movement theories are often linked to the concept of hegemony

  *Hegemony*: a view that becomes established the status quo

- Originated in the work of Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), Marxist theorist – hegemony for Gramsci was linked to the world view of the ruling classes

- Social movements are counter hegemonic – they strive to challenge the established world view
New Social Movements

• Traditionally in industrialist society social movements were based on material inequalities. I.e., workers rights movements in early XX century focused on the difference between the haves and the have nots

• Term ‘new social movements’ refers to social movements that have arisen since the 1960’s - social movements in post industrial society

• Concerned with social and cultural considerations, rather than economic or political concerns
Exercise
Social Movements in Australia

Please follow the link below and visit the profile of a Fluoride Free Australia social movement:
https://www.facebook.com/pg/fluoridefreeaustralia/about/

• Why this social movement has arisen?
• What do they want to achieve?
• How would you describe this movement from the perspective of hegemony (please refer to slide 9)?
Section 2
Complementary medicine in the context of new social movements
Hegemony of Evidence Based Medicine

- In Australia today EBM is the dominant mode of medical intervention (status quo)
- Many CM treatments cannot be evidenced using biomedical models of evaluation
- Leading biomedical bodies, such as the NHMRC, conclude that no reliable evidence exists; that CM should not be used for serious ailments or in the place of conventional medicines & that medical advice should be sought before using CM
- Despite this the popularity of CM continues to increase
CM as Counter-hegemonic

- Reasons people choose to use CM are a result of societal changes
- Environmental concerns – biomedicine and resource use, pollutants, carbon footprint…
- Postmodernism and proliferation of information & choice
- Rise in consumerism – informed decision making
- Increased health literacy
- Rise in the popularity of lifestyle choices and functional foods
- Changes in the demographic ratio
CM as social movement

- Rising awareness of consumers about limits of biomedical model, especially in the treatment of mental health and chronic conditions
- Growing awareness of iatrogenesis - inadvertent and preventable induction of disease or complications by medical treatment or procedures of a physician or surgeon
- People’s changing relationship to their bodies illness & disease
- Increased personal agency and control over own life
- Idea of CM as a complementary, rather than alternative, to modern medicine
Exercise
The rise of Complementary Medicine

Please read the following article:
The rise and rise of complementary and alternative medicine: a sociological perspective

- What societal changes are reasons for growth in the use of CM?
- What reasons can you identify from the article for the rise in CM as a social movement?
Section 3
The politics of change
“The doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will instruct his patient in the care of the human frame, in diet and in the cause and prevention of disease”

Thomas Edison (1903)

Thomas Edison was predicting patient centeredness and holistic health care.

Source: wikicommons
Health Policy

‘Health policy embraces courses of action that affect the set of institutions, organizations, services, and funding arrangements of the health care system. It goes beyond health services, however, and includes actions or intended actions by public, private and voluntary organizations that have an impact on health’.


Health policy change reflects and is shaped by relationships of power in the public and private spheres
Politics and power : Weber

- Weber said that power can be understood as a chance that people can exercise their own will even against others (despite opposition).

- Power can be authoritative or coercive.
  - Authoritative power = exercising power which is considered to be legitimate.
  - Coercive power = exercising power through force, against others’ will.
Politics and power

- Power as the ability to achieve a desired outcome

- A decision not to make a decision is still a decision. (the power to keep something off the agenda).
  It is a mean by which the status quo is supported.

- Nowadays: growing democratization & growing political apathy
Politics today

- Growing sense of globally based problems beyond the scope of the nation-state
- Rise in social movements as collective attempts to achieve common goals through actions outside of established organisations

“We may be seeing the emergence of a ‘social movement society’ in which political issues increasingly find expression through social movements rather than via established political institutions”. Anthony Giddens
The politics of change

- We live in a postmodern world where the possibilities for change are multiple and contingent.
- The structures of the past no longer hold the same sway they once did.
- Multiple possibilities for the future exist.
- Change is comparatively rapid & certain.
- CM conceived of as new social movement provides the possibility of alternatives to the current dominant biomedical model.
Politics and Modern Social Movements

- The machinery of government moves very slowly
- Social movements are integrally related to social change & are inherently unstable, contingent and action focused
- Belief in the authority of the State has been eroded
- Modern social movements assume the possibility of steering history in particular direction
Section 4
Max Weber

7 min.,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICppFQ6Tabw
Modernism: Marx, Durkheim, Weber

Three foundational theorists in Sociological theory:

- **Karl Marx** (1818-1883) German Philosopher
- **Emile Durkheim** (1858-1917) French Sociologist
- **Max Weber** (1864-1920) German Sociologist

Produced theories of social life in the context of industrialisation, capitalism & rationalisation
Max Weber

• Culture catalyzes economic conditions
• Religion and Capitalism intimately linked
• People became capitalists as a result of their religion
• The protestant work ethic: you can work your way to heaven

We exist in an era of bureaucratic authority that is difficult to understand and therefore difficult to change.
Max Weber

- According to Weber we shape and are shaped by the social structures that surround us.
- Focused on the fundamental role of subjective but situated human agency.
- Believed we are human agents whose actions are shaped by the social complex that confronts us.
- Positivism - the only authentic knowledge is scientific knowledge.
Health care is a compromise between 3 vested interests:

- Health Professionals / Doctors…
  - holders of knowledge and **symbolic power**

- Public and Private Health Care Managers
  - Statutory bodies / social insurance schemes…**prosthesis list**

- Health Advocates
  - Community groups **online advocacy groups**
Exercise

Have a look at the hyperlinks in the slide above.

• Why do you think the professional body for surgeons has Royal in the title?

• What might a change in benefit level or removal of an item from the prosthesis list mean for the patients?
Marx vs. Weber

- Weber and Marx both argued about the role of religion.
- Marx had argued that religion was ‘the opium of the masses’, and that it helped people accept the horrors of capitalism.
- Weber said it was religion that was in fact the cause of Capitalism.
- Weber thought capitalism was made possible by a set of ideas, not scientific discoveries – and in particular religious ideas.
- People didn’t tolerate Capitalism because of religion, they only became capitalists as a result of their religion.
Exercise

Link the theorists and key concepts. Write one sentence to each concept, explaining how it was understood by a chosen theorist.

Marx  Society
Durkheim  Religion
Weber  Capitalism
Which explanation would you support?

• Marx, who believed in equality of the classes?
• Durkheim, who understood society as a system based on shared beliefs?
• Weber, who thought we could change society by changing the way we think?

There are no right answers, but each of the theories allows us to think about the society from a different perspective.
For next week please read

Chapter 4: “Global Public Health”

from the textbook:

Thomas Edison was predicting patient centeredness and holistic health care in 1903.

- Why do you think the pace of change towards a more holistic model has been so slow?

Refer to any sociological theory to support your claim and provide at least one example.