

Het Dorp: Experimental incarceration?

A research seminar with Dr Martha Kember

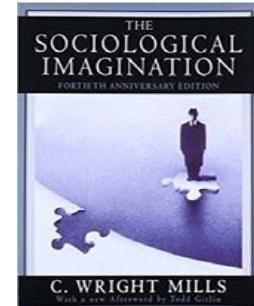
Autumn 2021



“Someone who marries a cripple must have something wrong with them. He (sic) must need to be indispensable to someone....there’s something morbid, unhealthy about wanting to devote the whole of your life to a woman who’s crippled”

Cordelia Jones (1978) *The View from the window*.

The sociological imagination



Consider how the “personal troubles” of individuals occur in relationship to others alongside the “public issues” affecting institutions

“Historical understanding” and empathy are “essential precondition[s]” for a sociological engagement with the issue of disability

Wright-Mills, C. (2000)

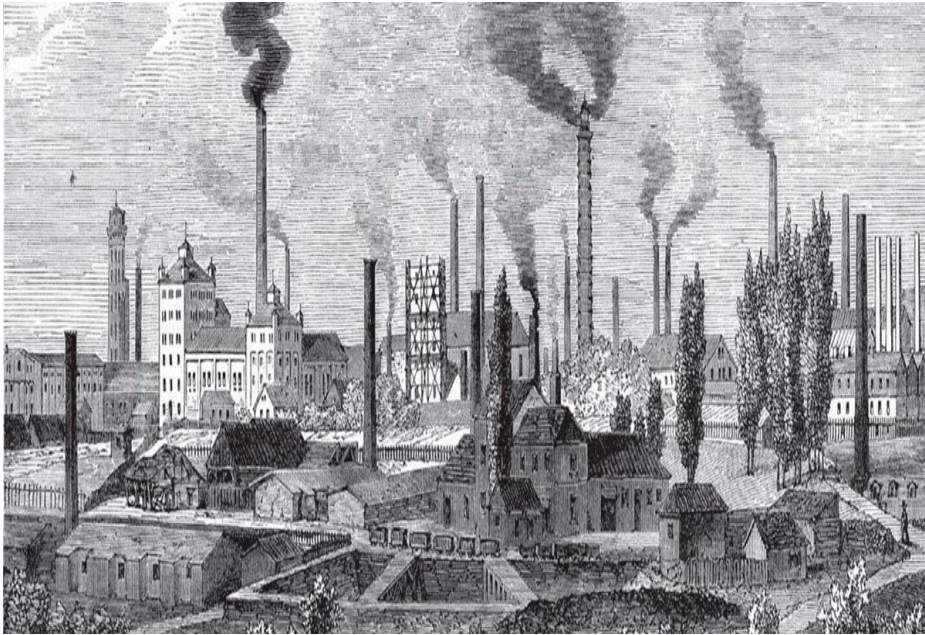
The Finkelstein construct: Models of disability in a social context



Accommodation
and
containment

Compensation
and social
activism

Citizenship



The Medical model

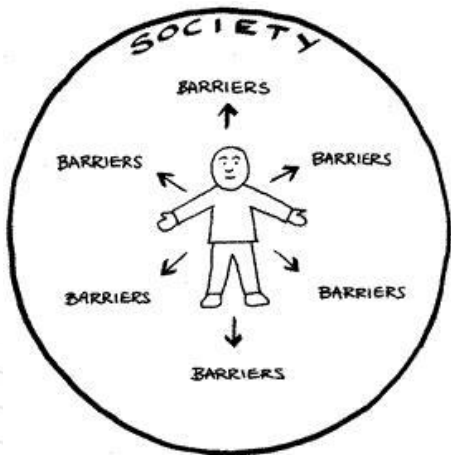
“to be avoided as a dangerous thing, tow him away to a harbour of refuge, there to lie neglected until he rots away (sic)”

Shaw, T. (1914)

The Social Model

“Disability is not *caused* by impairment it is *created* by society”

Lawson, A. & Priestley, M. (2017)



Altruism or Alcatraz?



- 26th November 1962
- 24 hour 'telethon'
- £21 Million (£7M)
- Matchbox donations

'Open Het Dorp!'

Not in my back yard?



Experimental reality

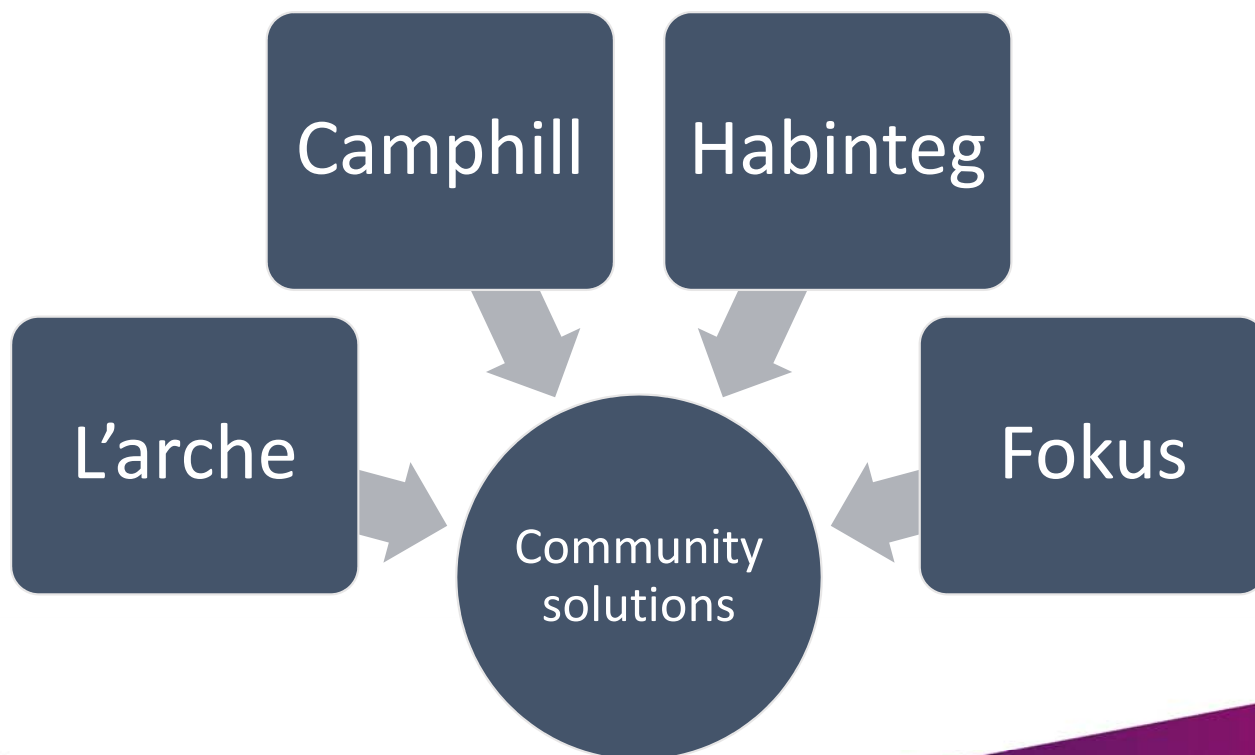
- ‘Whatever Het Dorp may be it is certainly not a kind of heaven on earth. It is a community with human shortcomings’ (Klapwig & Bijleveld, 1972: 61)
- ‘A failure of normal (sic) society to cope with severely disabled people’ (Tate & Lee, 1983: 100)
- ‘An unrealistic attempt ...to protect handicapped (sic) people from the rigours of life’ (Shearer, 1974: 65)
- ‘An unusual experiment in living’ (Zola, 1982: 5)

Lived experience: Hermeneutic exploration

- a research position seeking to understand the lived experience, *phenomenology*, and interpret the text of life, *hermeneutics*
- From the Greek '*hermeneutikos*', hermeneutic interpretive epistemology in social and educational research assumes that all human interaction is important and "hence to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices"

Scott, D. & Usher, R. (1996)

Alternative communities



Returning to Finkelstein

- ‘We will not make any progress by keeping disabled people on one side of the river and non-disabled people on the other, with each side creating barriers. What we need is to build up the banks so that the river does not flood and to build bridges across the river so that we can meet, exchange experiences and create an environment where we can celebrate human difference.’



Het Dorp: A brighter future



My invitation to you.....

If *“invisible, less known or contested conditions are dismissed as a fabrication, malingering and an act of a fundamentally lazy or overwhelmed worker seeking validation”*what can each of us do to change attitudes, behaviour, cultures and live the sociological imagination?

Brown, N. & Leigh, J. (2018)



References

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Images

- *Pity the poor girl* - <http://dhss.alaska.gov/qcdse/PublishingImages/history/Images/section%2004%20-%20training/4d-afflicted-sis.jpg>
- *The telethon* - [mies bouwman telethon open het dorp - Bing images](#)
- *Opening Het Dorp* - [opening Het Dorp - Bing images](#)
- *Het Dorp 2021* - [The Village | JDWA - Johan De Wachter Architecten](#)
- *Bridging the gap* - [bridging the gap - Google Search](#)



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