There is no such thing as society…?

AI review. Margaret Thatcher said: there is no such thing as society. Her critics viewed that as having indifference about the vulnerable. Her supporters viewed it as highlighted personal duty and neighbourly support. So I ask myself, who is my neighbour, and who and what is my society.

The Coop and Building Societies are good examples. Globalisation has changed how societies operate. It has created a degree of fragmentation, at the same time it has brought many new ways of thinking about our relationship with neighbours, with whom we do not appear to have much in common.

JH

Here is the full passage from Margaret Thatcher's interview with *Woman's Own* magazine in September 1987:

"We've been through a period where too many people have been given to understand that if they have a problem, it's the government's job to cope with it. 'I have a problem, I'll get a grant.' 'I'm homeless, the government must house me.' They're casting their problem on society. **And, you know, there's no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families.** And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look after themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then, also, to look after our neighbours."

David Cameron later said:

"There is such a thing as society; it's just not the same thing as the state," declared David Cameron in his 2005 victory speech, after becoming Conservative leader.

Five years later, the idea of a Big Society was a key strand of the Conservatives' 2010 general election manifesto.

These quotes simply provide background to how we, today, relate to society. The original question TA considered was, 'What's right for me may not be right for

society.’ Jim and I thought that the best way into the question was through Margaret Thatcher’s interview which was given when society was very different from today.

BC

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