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SOC⁶

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY



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INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

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1

Thinking Like a Sociologist



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to...

- 1-1 Explain what sociology is and how it differs from other social sciences and common sense.
- 1-2 Explain how and why a sociological imagination helps us understand society.
- 1-3 Identify and illustrate why it's worthwhile to study sociology.
- 1-4 Describe and explain the origins of sociology, why sociology developed, and its most influential early theorists.
- 1-5 Compare, illustrate, and evaluate the four contemporary sociological perspectives.

After finishing
this chapter go to
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STUDY TOOLS

Texting and emailing are associated with the highest risk of car crashes, and headset cell phones aren't much safer than handheld cell phones. Almost 90 percent of U.S. drivers say that distracted driving is a serious safety threat. However, 70 percent talk on a cell phone, text, surf the Internet, and even video chat while driving. In 2014 alone, such distractions contributed to 18 percent of all crashes that resulted in death or severe injury (AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2015; AT&T Newsroom, 2015; National Center for Statistics and Analysis, 2016).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Sociology is basically common sense.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree			strongly disagree			

Why is there such a disconnection between many Americans' attitudes and behavior? This chapter examines these and other questions. Let's begin by considering what sociology is (and isn't) and how a "sociological imagination" can give us more control over our lives. We'll then look at how sociologists grapple with complex theoretical issues in explaining social life. Before reading further, take the True or False?

1-1 WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

Stated simply, **sociology** is the scientific study of human behavior in society. Sociologists study behavior patterns that occur between individuals, among small groups (e.g., families), large organizations (e.g., Apple), and entire societies (e.g., the United States). But, you might protest, "I'm unique."

1-1a Are You Unique?

Yes and no. Each of us is unique in the sense that you and I are like no one else on earth. Even identical twins, who have the same physical characteristics and genetic matter, often differ in personality and interests. One of my colleagues likes to tell the story about his 3-year-old twin girls who received the same doll. One twin chattered that the doll's name was Lori, that she loved Lori, and would take good care of her. The second twin

muttered, "Her name is Stupid," and flung the doll into a corner.

Despite some individual differences, identical twins, you, and I are like other people in many ways. Around

True or False?

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT...

1. The death penalty reduces crime.
2. Women's earnings are now similar to men's, especially in high-income occupations.
3. People age 65 and older make up the largest group of those who are poor.
4. There are more married than unmarried U.S. adults.
5. Divorce rates are higher today than in the past.
6. Latinos are the fastest-growing racial-ethnic group in the United States.
7. The best way to get an accurate measure of public opinion is to poll as many people as possible.
8. Illegal drugs are the biggest health hazard.

The answers are at the end of 1-1.

the world, we experience grief when a loved one dies, participate in rituals that celebrate marriage or the birth of a child, and want to have healthy and happy lives. Some actions, such as terrorist attacks, are unpredictable. For the most part, however, people conform to expected and acceptable behavior. From the time that we get up until we go to bed, we follow a variety of rules and customs about what we eat, how we drive, how

sociology the scientific study of human behavior in society.

Marriage without Love? No Way!

When I ask my students, “Would you marry someone you’re not in love with?” most laugh, raise an eyebrow, or stare at me in disbelief. “Of course not!” they exclaim. In fact, the “open” courtship and dating systems common in Western nations, including the United States, are foreign to much of the world. In many African, Asian, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern countries, marriages are arranged: They forge bonds between families rather than individuals, and preserve family continuity along religious and socioeconomic lines. Love isn’t a prerequisite for marriage in societies that value kin groups rather than individual choices (see Chapters 9 and 12).

we act in different social situations, and how we dress for work, classes, and leisure activities.

So what? you might shrug. Isn’t it “obvious” that we dress differently for classes than for job interviews? Isn’t all of this just plain old common sense?

1-1b Isn’t Sociology Just Common Sense?

No. Sociology goes well beyond conventional wisdom, what we call common sense, in several ways:

- ▶ **Common sense is subjective.** If a woman crashes into my car, I might conclude, according to conventional wisdom, statements that we’ve heard over the years, that “women are terrible drivers.” In fact, most drivers involved in crashes are men—especially teenagers and those age 70 and older (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 2013). Thus, *objective* data show that, overall, men are worse drivers than women.
- ▶ **Common sense ignores facts.** Because common sense is subjective, it ignores facts that challenge cherished beliefs. For example, many Americans are most concerned about street crimes, such as robbery or homicide. FBI and sociological data show, however, that we’re much more likely to be assaulted or murdered by someone we know or live with (see Chapters 7 and 12).
- ▶ **Common sense varies across groups and cultures.** Many Americans believe that working harder decreases poverty. In contrast, Europeans tend to think that poverty is due to forces outside people’s control (see Chapters 3 and 8). Thus,

common sense notions about economic success vary considerably across countries.

- ▶ **Much of our common sense is based on myths and misconceptions.** A common myth is that living together is a good way to find out whether partners will get along after marriage. Generally, however, couples who live together before marriage have higher divorce rates than those who don’t (see Chapter 12).

Sociology, in contrast to conventional wisdom, examines claims and beliefs critically, considers many points of view, and enables us to move beyond established ways of thinking. The *sociological perspective* analyzes how social context influences people’s lives. The “sociological imagination” is at the center of the sociological perspective.

True or False?

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT...

All of the answers are false.

1. States without the death penalty have had consistently lower homicide rates than those with death penalties (see Chapter 7).
2. Regardless of education or occupation, women’s earnings are lower than men’s (see Chapters 9 and 11).
3. Children ages 5 and under make up the largest group of Americans who are poor (see Chapter 8).
4. The number of unmarried U.S. adults outnumber those who are married (see Chapter 12).
5. Divorce rates are lower today than they were between 1975 and 1990 (see Chapter 12).
6. Latinos are the largest ethnic group in the United States, but Asian Americans are the fastest growing (see Chapter 10).
7. What matters in polling is not the number of people polled, but their representativeness in the population studied (see Chapter 2).
8. In the United States and worldwide, tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disability (see Chapter 14).

WHAT IS A SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION?

According to sociologist C. Wright Mills (1916–1962), social factors such as religion, ethnicity, and politics affect our behavior. Mills (1959) called this ability to see the relationship between individual experiences and larger social influences the **sociological imagination**. The sociological imagination emphasizes the connection between personal troubles (biography) and structural (public and historical) issues.

Consider unemployment. If only a small group of people can't find a job, it's a *personal trouble* that may be due, in part, to an individual's low educational attainment, lack of specific skills that employers want, not searching for work, and so on. If unemployment is widespread, it's a *public issue* because economic problems are also the result of structural factors such as mass layoffs, sending jobs overseas, technological changes, and restrictive hiring policies (see Chapter 11). Thus, people may be unemployed regardless of skills, a college degree, and job searches.

A sociological imagination helps us understand how larger social forces impact our everyday lives. It identifies why our personal troubles are often due to larger public issues and policies over which we have little, if any, control. A sociological imagination relies on both micro- and macro-level approaches to understand our social world.

1-2a **Microsociology: How People Affect Our Everyday Lives**

Microsociology examines the patterns of individuals' social interaction in specific settings. In most of our relationships, we interact with others on a micro, or "small," level (e.g., members of a work group discussing who will perform which tasks). These everyday interactions involve what people think, say, or do on a daily basis.

1-2b **Macrosociology: How Social Structure Affects Our Everyday Lives**

Macrosociology focuses on large-scale patterns and processes that characterize society as a whole. Macro, or "large," approaches are especially useful in understanding some of the constraints—such as economic forces and public policies.

Microsociology and macrosociology differ conceptually, but are interrelated. Consider the reasons for



Jessica Miglio/Netflix/Everett Collection

Netflix's *Orange Is the New Black* revolves around a white, upper-middle-class woman who's in prison for drug smuggling. For sociologists, the series illustrates the connection between micro-level individual behavior (the inmates' and prison guards' experiences) and macro-level factors (social class, family structures, racial discrimination, corruption, and prison overcrowding).

divorce. On a micro level, sociologists study factors like extramarital affairs, substance abuse, arguments about money, and other everyday interactions that fuel marital tension and unhappiness, leading to divorce. On a macro level, sociologists look at how the economy, laws, cultural values, and technology affect divorce rates (see Chapter 12). Examining micro, macro, and micro-macro forces is one of the reasons why sociology is a powerful tool in understanding (and changing) our behavior and society at large (Ritzer, 1992).

WHY STUDY SOCIOLOGY?

Sociology offers explanations that can greatly improve the quality of your everyday life. These explanations can influence choices that range from your personal decisions to expanding your career opportunities.

1-3a **Making Informed Decisions**

Sociology can help us make more informed decisions. We often hear that grief counseling is essential after the death

sociological imagination seeing the relationship between individual experiences and larger social influences.

microsociology examines the patterns of individuals' social interaction in specific settings.

macrosociology examines the large-scale patterns and processes that characterize society as a whole.

of a loved one. In fact, 4 in 10 Americans are better off without it. Grief is normal, and most people work through their losses on their own, whereas counseling sometimes prolongs depression and anxiety (Stroebe et al., 2000).

1-3b Understanding Diversity

The racial and ethnic composition of the United States is changing. By 2025, only 58 percent of the U.S. population is projected to be white, down from 76 percent in 1990 and 86 percent in 1950 (Passel et al., 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). As you'll see in later chapters, this racial/ethnic shift has already affected interpersonal relationships as well as education, politics, religion, and other spheres of social life.

Recognizing and understanding diversity is one of sociology's central themes. Our gender, social class, marital status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age—among other factors—shape our beliefs, behavior, and experiences. If, for example, you're a white middle-class male who attends a private college, your experiences are very different from those of a female Vietnamese immigrant who is struggling to pay expenses at a community college.

Increasingly, nations around the world are intertwined through political and economic ties. What happens in other societies often has a direct or indirect impact on contemporary U.S. life. Decisions in oil-producing countries, for example, affect gas prices, spur the development of hybrid cars that are less dependent on oil, and stimulate research on alternative sources of energy.



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1-3c Shaping Social and Public Policies and Practices

Sociology is valuable in applied, clinical, and policy settings because many jobs require understanding society and research to create social change. According to a director of a research institute, sociology increased her professional contributions: "I can look at problems of concern to the National Institutes of Health and say 'here's a different way to solve this problem'" (Nyseth et al., 2011: 48).

1-3d Thinking Critically

We develop a sociological imagination not only when we understand and can apply the concepts, but also when we can think, speak, and write critically. Much of our thinking and decision making is often impulsive and

Snapshots



Jason Love/Cartoonstock.com

"I love our lunches out here, but I always get the feeling that we're being watched."

emotional. In contrast, critical thinking involves knowledge and problem solving (Paul and Elder, 2007).

Critical sociological thinking goes even further because we begin to understand how our individual lives, choices, and troubles are shaped by race, gender, social class, and social institutions like the economy, politics, and education (Eckstein et al., 1995; Grauerholz and Bouma-Holtrop, 2003). *Table 1.1* summarizes some of the basic elements of critical sociological thinking.

Table 1.1	What Is Critical Sociological Thinking?
	Critical sociological thinking requires a combination of skills. Some of the basic elements include the ability to:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rely on reason rather than emotion ask questions, avoid snap judgments, and examine popular and unpopular beliefs recognize one's own and others' assumptions, prejudices, and points of view remain open to alternative explanations and theories examine competing evidence (see Chapter 2) understand how public policies affect private troubles



Some well-known people who were sociology majors: Rev. Martin Luther King, Ronald Reagan, Michelle Obama, Robin Williams, and Joe Theismann. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division[Leffler, Warren K/ LC-DIG-ds-00836]; U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Official White House Photo; Everett Collection/Shutterstock.com; Nate Fine/Getty Images Sport/Getty Images; iStock.com/belterz

1-3e Expanding Your Career Opportunities

A degree in sociology is a springboard for many jobs and professions. A national survey of under-graduate sociology majors found that 44 percent were in administrative or management positions, 22 percent were employed in social service and counseling, 18 percent were in sales and marketing, and 12 percent were teachers (Senter et al., 2014; see also Senter and Spalter-Roth, 2016).

What specific skills do sociology majors learn that are useful in their jobs? Some of the most important are being better able to work with people (71 percent), to organize information (69 percent), to write reports that nonsociologists understand (61 percent), and to interpret research findings (56 percent) (Van Vooren and Spalter-Roth, 2010).

In other cases, students major in sociology because it provides a broad liberal arts foundation for professions such as law, education, and social work. The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) now includes material from sociology because “Being a good physician is about more than scientific knowledge. It’s about understanding people—how they think, interact, and make decisions” (Olsen, 2016: 72).

Even if you don’t major in sociology, developing your sociological imagination can enrich your job skills. Sociology courses help you learn to think abstractly and critically, formulate problems, ask incisive questions, search for data in the most reliable and up-to-date sources, organize material, and improve your oral presentations (ASA Research Department, 2013; Spalter-Roth et al., 2013).

1-4

SOME ORIGINS OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

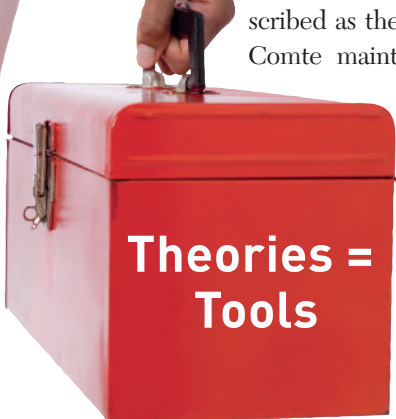
During college, most of my classmates and I postponed taking theory courses (regardless of our major) as long as possible. “This stuff is boring, boring, boring,” we’d grump, “and has nothing to do with the real world.” In fact, theorizing is part of our everyday lives. Every time you try to explain why your family and friends behave as they do, for example, you’re theorizing.

As people struggle to understand human behavior, they develop theories. A **theory** is a set of statements that explains why a phenomenon occurs. Theories produce knowledge, guide our research, help us analyze our findings, and, ideally, offer solutions for social problems.

Sociologist James White (2005: 170–171) describes theories as “tools” that don’t profess to know “the truth” but “may need replacing” over time as our understanding of society becomes more sophisticated. In effect, theories evolve over time because of cultural and technological changes. You’ll see shortly, for example, that sociological theories changed considerably after the rise of feminist scholarship during the late 1960s.

Sociological theories didn’t emerge overnight. Nineteenth-century thinkers grappled with some of the same questions that sociologists try to answer today: Why do people behave as they do? What holds society together? What pulls it apart? Of the many early sociological theorists, some of the most influential were Auguste Comte, Harriet Martineau, Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Jane Addams, and W. E. B. Du Bois.

theory a set of statements that explains why a phenomenon occurs.



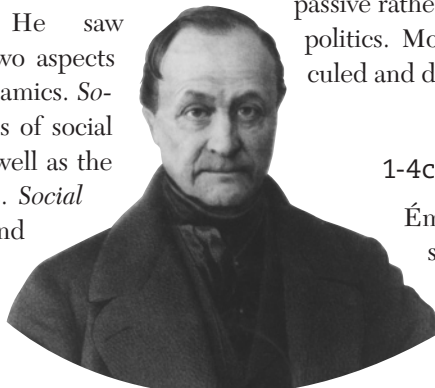
Creatas Images/Jupiter Images

1-4a **Auguste Comte**

Auguste Comte (1798–1857) coined the term *sociology* and is often described as the “father of sociology.”

Comte maintained that the study of society must be **empirical**. That is, information should be based on observations, experiments, or other data collection rather than on ideology, religion, intuition, or conventional wisdom.

He saw sociology as the scientific study of two aspects of society: social statics and social dynamics. *Social statics* investigates how principles of social order explain a particular society, as well as the interconnections between institutions. *Social dynamics* explores how individuals and societies change over time. Comte’s emphasis on social order and change within and across societies is still useful today because many sociologists examine the relationships between education and politics (social statics), as well as how such interconnections change over time (social dynamics).



Hulton Archive/Getty Images

The Father of Sociology—
Auguste Comte

1-4b **Harriet Martineau**

Harriet Martineau (1802–1876), an English author, published several dozen books on a wide range of topics in social science, politics, literature, and history. Her translation and condensation of Auguste Comte’s difficult material for popular consumption was largely responsible for the dissemination of Comte’s work. “We might say, then, that sociology had parents of both sexes” (Adams and Sydnie, 2001: 32). She emphasized the importance of systematic data collection through observation and interviews, and an objective analysis of data to explain events and behavior. She also published the first sociology research methods textbook.

empirical information that is based on observations, experiments, or other data collection rather than on ideology, religion, intuition, or conventional wisdom.

social facts aspects of social life, external to the individual, that can be measured.

Martineau, a feminist and strong opponent of slavery, denounced many aspects of capitalism as alienating and degrading, and criticized dangerous workplaces that often led to injury and death. Martineau promoted improving women’s positions in the workforce through education, nondiscriminatory employment, and training programs. She advocated women’s admission into medical schools and emphasized issues such as infant care, the rights of the aged, suicide prevention, and other social problems (Hoecker-Drysdale, 1992).

After a long tour of the United States, Martineau described American women as being socialized to be subservient and dependent rather than equal marriage partners. She also criticized American and European religious institutions for expecting women to be pious and passive rather than educating them in philosophy and politics. Most scholars, including sociologists, ridiculed and dismissed such ideas as too radical.

1-4c **Émile Durkheim**

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), a French sociologist and writer, agreed with Comte that societies are characterized by unity and cohesion because their members are bound together by common interests and attitudes. Whereas Comte acknowledged the importance of using scientific methods to study society, Durkheim actually did so by poring over

official statistics to test a theory about suicide (Adams and Sydnie, 2001).

SOCIAL FACTS

To be scientific, Durkheim maintained, sociology must study **social facts**—aspects of social life, external to the individual, that can be measured. Sociologists can determine *material facts* by examining demographic characteristics such as age, place of residence, and population size.

They can gauge *nonmaterial facts*, like communication processes, by observing everyday behavior and how people relate to each other (see Chapters 3 to 6). For contemporary sociologists, social facts



Spencer Arnold/Hulton Archive/Getty Images

Harriet Martineau

also include collecting and analyzing data on *social currents* such as collective behavior and social movements (see Chapter 16).

DIVISION OF LABOR

One of Durkheim's central questions was how people can be autonomous and individualistic while being integrated in society. **Social solidarity**, or social cohesiveness and harmony, according to Durkheim, is maintained by a **division of labor**—an interdependence of different tasks and occupations, characteristic of industrialized societies, that produces social unity and facilitates change.

As the division of labor becomes more specialized, people become increasingly dependent on others for specific goods and services. Today, for example, many couples who marry often contract “experts” (e.g., photographers, florists, deejays, caterers, bartenders, travel agents, and even “wedding planners”).

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Durkheim was one of the first sociologists to test a theory using data. In his classic study, *Suicide*, Durkheim (1897/1951) relied on extensive data collection to test his theory that suicide is associated with social integration. He concluded that people who experience meaningful social relationships in families, social groups, and communities are less likely to commit suicide than those who feel alone, helpless, or hopeless. Thus, many seemingly isolated individual acts, including suicide, are often the result of structural arrangements, such as weak social ties.

We typically hear about high teenage suicide rates, but they're much higher at later ages. As in Durkheim's day, men have higher suicide rates than women across all age groups (*Figure 1.1*), and white males age 85 and older are the most likely to take their own lives (National Center for Health Statistics, 2015).

Durkheim's connection of social integration to the suicide rate is still relevant today. The high suicide rates of older white men are due to

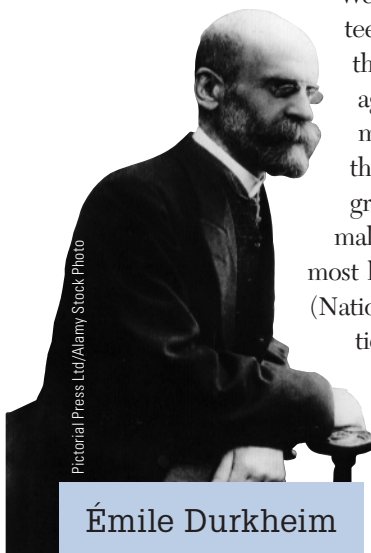
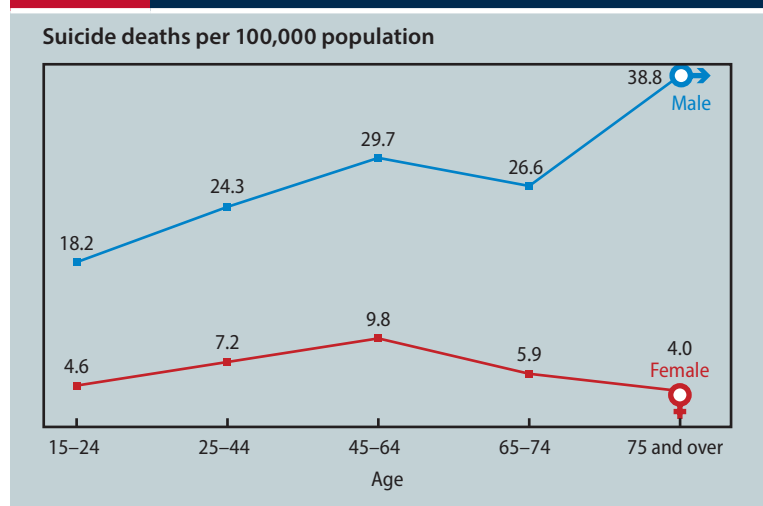


Figure 1.1 U.S. Suicide Rates, by Sex and Age



Source: Based on Curtin et al., 2016, Figures 2 and 3.

a complex interplay of depression, substance abuse, access to guns, hopelessness because of terminal illnesses, and not being “connected” to family, friends, community groups, and support systems that women tend to develop throughout their lives (American Association of Suicidology, 2009; see also Chapters 9 and 12).

1-4d Karl Marx

Karl Marx (1818–1883), a German social philosopher, is often described as the most influential social scientist who ever lived. Marx, like Comte and Durkheim, tried to explain the societal changes that were taking place during the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution began in England around 1780 and spread throughout Western Europe and the United States during the nineteenth century. A number of technological inventions—like the spinning wheel, the steam engine, and large weaving looms—enabled the development of large-scale manufacturing and mining industries over a relatively short period. The extensive mechanization shifted agricultural and home-based work to factories in cities. As masses of people migrated from small farms to factories to find jobs, urbanization and capitalism grew rapidly.

CAPITALISM

Unlike his predecessors and contemporaries, Marx (1867/1967, 1964) maintained that economic issues produce divisiveness rather than social solidarity. For Marx, the most important

social solidarity social cohesiveness and harmony.

division of labor an interdependence of different tasks and occupations, characteristic of industrialized societies, that produces social unity and facilitates change.

social change was the development of **capitalism**, an economic system in which the ownership of the means of production—such as land, factories, large sums of money, and machines—is private. As a result, Marx saw industrial society as composed of three social classes:

- ▶ **capitalists**—the ruling elite who own the means of producing wealth (such as factories)
- ▶ **petit bourgeoisie**—small business owners and workers who still have their own means of production but might end up in the proletariat because they're driven out by competition or their businesses fail
- ▶ **proletariat**—the masses of workers who depend on wages to survive, have few resources, and make up the working class

CLASS CONFLICT

Marx believed that society is divided into the haves (capitalists) and the have-nots (proletariat). For Marx, capitalism is a class system in which conflict between the classes is common and society is anything but cohesive. Instead, class antagonisms revolve around struggles between the capitalists, who increase their profits by exploiting workers, and workers, who resist but give in because they depend on capitalists for jobs.

Marx argued that there's a close relationship between inequality, social conflict, and social class. History, he maintained, is a series of class struggles between capitalists and workers. As wealth becomes more concentrated in the hands of a few capitalists, Marx predicted, the ranks of an increasingly dissatisfied proletariat would swell, leading to bloody revolution and eventually a classless society. The Occupy Wall Street movement showed that thousands of Americans are very unhappy about the growing inequality between the haves and the have-nots, but there hasn't been a "bloody revolution" in the United States, unlike some countries in the Middle East.

ALIENATION

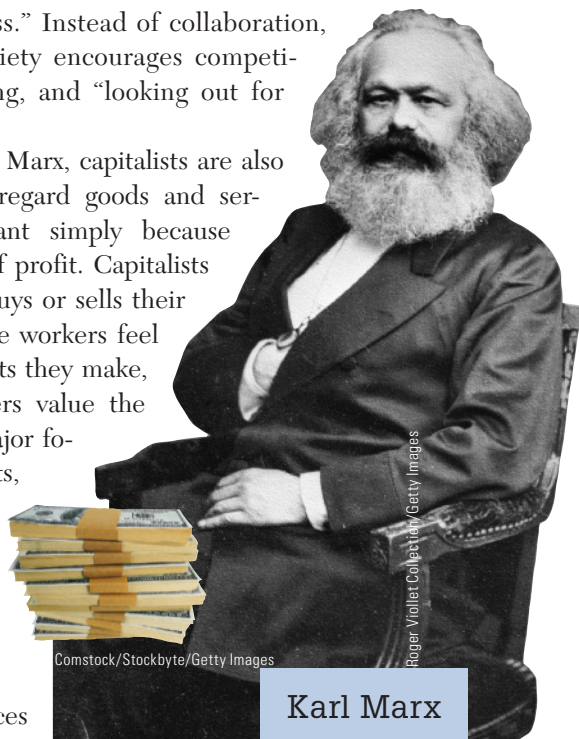
In industrial capitalist systems, Marx (1844/1964) contended, **alienation**—feeling separated from one's group or society—is common across all social classes. Workers feel alienated because they don't own or control

either the means of production or the product. Because meaningful labor is what makes us human, Marx maintained, our workplace has alienated us "from the essence

of our humanness." Instead of collaboration, a capitalistic society encourages competition, backstabbing, and "looking out for number one."

According to Marx, capitalists are also alienated. They regard goods and services as important simply because they're sources of profit. Capitalists don't care who buys or sells their products, how the workers feel about the products they make, or whether buyers value the products. The major focus, for capitalists, is on increasing profits as much as possible rather than feeling "connected" to the products or services they sell. Every

year, for example, companies must recall cars, pharmaceutical items, toys, and food that cause injuries, illness, or death.



Karl Marx



Daryl Lang/Shutterstock.com

Occupy Wall Street (OWS) was a protest movement against corporate greed, corruption, and influence on government. It began in mid-September, 2011, in New York City's Wall Street financial district. The OWS slogan, "We are the 99%," referred to U.S. income and wealth inequality between the wealthiest 1 percent and the rest of the population. OWS received global attention and spawned similar movements worldwide but was short-lived (see Chapter 16).

capitalism an economic system based on the private ownership of property and the means of production.

alienation feeling separated from one's group or society.

1-4e **Max Weber**

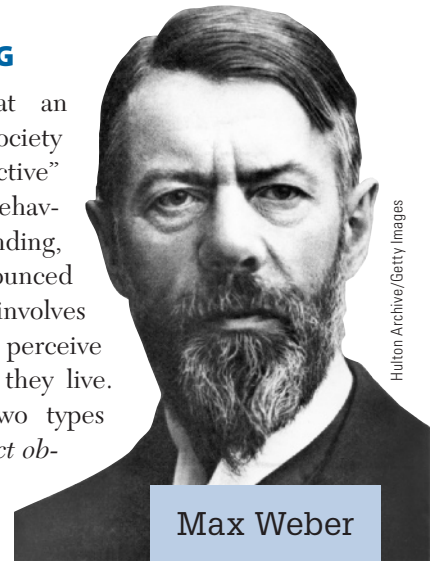
Max Weber (pronounced VAY-ber; 1864–1920) was a German sociologist, economist, legal scholar, historian, and politician. Unlike Marx’s emphasis on economics as a major factor in explaining society, Weber focused on social organization, a subjective understanding of behavior, and a value-free sociology.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

For Weber, economic factors were important, but ideas, religious values, ideologies, and charismatic leaders were just as crucial in shaping and changing societies. He maintained that a complete understanding of society requires an analysis of the social organization and interrelationships among economic, political, and cultural institutions. In his *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, for example, Weber (1920/1958) argued that the self-denial fostered by Calvinism supported the rise of capitalism and shaped many of our current values about working hard (see Chapters 3 and 6).

SUBJECTIVE UNDERSTANDING

Weber posited that an understanding of society requires a “subjective” understanding of behavior. Such understanding, or *verstehen* (pronounced fer-SHTAY-en), involves knowing how people perceive the world in which they live. Weber described two types of *verstehen*. In *direct observational understanding*, the social scientist observes a person’s facial expressions, gestures, and listens to his/her words. In *explanatory understanding*, the social scientist tries to grasp the intention and context of the behavior.



Max Weber

Is It Possible to Be a Value-Free Sociologist?

Max Weber was concerned about popular professors who took political positions that pleased many of their students. He felt that these professors were behaving improperly because science, including sociology, must be “value free.” Faculty must set their personal values aside to make a contribution to society. According to a sociologist who agrees with Weber, sociology’s weakness is its tendency toward moralism and ideology:

Many people become sociologists out of an impulse to reform society, fight injustice, and help people. Those sentiments are noble, but unless they are tempered by skepticism, discipline, and scientific detachment, they can be destructive. Especially when you are morally outraged and burning with a desire for action, you need to be cautious (Massey, 2007: B12).

Some argue that being value free is a myth because it’s impossible for a scholar’s attitudes and opinions to be totally divorced from her or his scholarship (Gouldner, 1962). Many sociologists, after all, do research on topics that they consider significant and about which they have strong views.

Others maintain that one’s values should be passionately partisan, should frame research issues, and should improve society (Feagin, 2001). Sociologists

CAN SOCIOLOGISTS BE VALUE FREE—ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY HAVE STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT MANY SOCIETAL ISSUES? SHOULD THEY BE?

shouldn’t apologize for being subjective in their teaching and research. By staying silent, social scientists “cede the conversation to those with the loudest voices or deepest pockets . . . people with megaphones who spread sensational misinformation” that deprives the public of the best available data (Wang, 2015: A48).

Can sociologists *really* be value free—especially when they have strong feelings about many societal issues? Should they be?

If a person bursts into tears (direct observational understanding), the observer knows what the person may be feeling (anger, sorrow, and so on). An explanatory understanding goes a step further by spelling out the reason for the behavior (rejection by a loved one, frustration if you lose your smartphone, humiliation if a boss yells at you in public).

VALUE-FREE SOCIOLOGY

One of Weber's most lasting and controversial views was the notion that sociologists must be as objective, or "value free," as possible in analyzing society. A researcher who is **value free** is one who separates her or his personal values, opinions, ideology, and beliefs from scientific research.

During Weber's time, the government and other organizations demanded that university faculty teach the "right" ideas. Weber encouraged everyone to be involved as citizens, but he maintained that educators and scholars should be as dispassionate as possible politically and ideologically. The task of the teacher, Weber argued, was to provide students with knowledge and scientific experience, not to "imprint" the teacher's personal political views and value judgments (Gerth and Mills, 1946). "Is It Possible to Be a Value-Free Sociologist?" examines this issue further.

1-4f Jane Addams

Jane Addams (1860–1935) was a social worker who co-founded Hull House, one of the first settlement houses in Chicago that served the neighborhood poor. An active reformer throughout her life, Jane Addams was a leader in the women's suffrage movement and, in 1931, was the first American woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her advocacy of negotiating, rather than waging war, to settle disputes.

Sociologist Mary Jo Deegan (1986) describes Jane Addams as "the greatest woman sociologist of her day." However, she was ignored by her colleagues at the University of Chicago (the first sociology department established in the United States in 1892) because discrimination against women sociologists was "rampant" (p. 8).

Despite such discrimination, Addams published articles in many popular

value free separating one's personal values, opinions, ideology, and beliefs from scientific research.



Jane Addams with a child at Hull House

and scholarly journals, as well as many books on the everyday life of urban neighborhoods, especially the effects of social disorganization and immigration. Much of her work contributed to symbolic interaction, an emerging school of thought that you'll read about shortly. One of Addams' greatest intellectual legacies was her emphasis on applying knowledge to everyday problems. Her pioneering work in criminology included ecological maps of Chicago that were later credited to men (Moyer, 2003).

1-4g W. E. B. Du Bois

W. E. B. Du Bois (pronounced Do-BOICE; 1868–1963) was a prominent black sociologist, writer,

editor, social reformer, and orator. The author of almost two dozen books on Africans and black Americans, Du Bois spent most of his life responding to the critics and detractors of black life. He was the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University, but once remarked, "I was in Harvard but not of it."

Du Bois helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and edited its journal, *Crisis*. The problem of the twentieth century, he wrote, is the problem of the color line. Du Bois believed that the race problem was one of ignorance, and advocated a "cure" for prejudice and discrimination. Such cures included promoting black political power and civil rights and providing blacks with a higher education rather than funneling them into technical schools.

These and other writings were unpopular at a time when Booker T. Washington, a well-known black educator, encouraged black people to be patient instead of demanding equal rights. As a result, Du Bois was dismissed as a radical by his contemporaries but was rediscovered by a new generation of black scholars during the 1970s and 1980s. Among his many contributions, Du Bois examined the oppressive effects of race and social class, advocated women's rights, and played a key role in reshaping black-white relations in America (Du Bois, 1986; Lewis, 1993).

All of these and other early thinkers agreed that people are transformed by each other's actions, social patterns, and historical changes. They and other scholars shaped contemporary sociological theories.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES

How one defines “contemporary sociological theory” is somewhat arbitrary. The mid-twentieth century is a good starting point because “the late 1950s and 1960s have, in historical hindsight, been regarded as significant years of momentous changes in the social and cultural life of most Western societies” (Adams and Sydnie, 2001: 479). Some of the sociological perspectives had earlier origins, but all matured during this period.

Sociologists typically use more than one theory to explain behavior. The theories view our social world somewhat differently, but all of them analyze why society is organized the way it is and why we behave as we do. Four of the most influential theoretical perspectives are functionalism, conflict theory, feminist theories, and symbolic interaction.

1-5a Functionalism

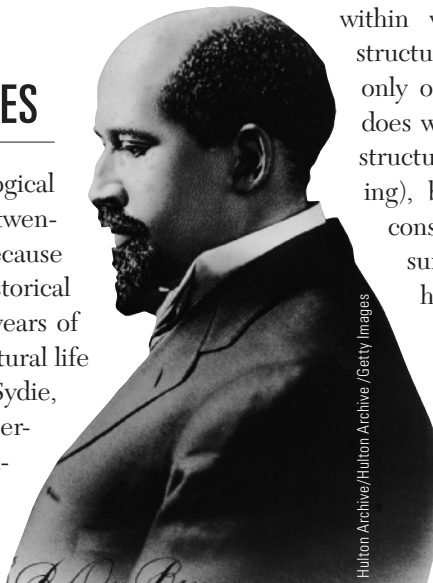
Functionalism (also known as *structural functionalism*) maintains that society is a complex system of interdependent parts that work together to ensure a society’s survival. Much of contemporary functionalism grew out of the work of Auguste Comte and Émile Durkheim, both of whom believed that human behavior is a result of social structures that promote order and integration in society.

One of their contemporaries, English philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), used an organic analogy to explain the evolution of societies. To survive, Spencer (1862/1901) wrote, our vital organs—like the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, and so on—must function together. Similarly, the parts of a society, like the parts of a body, work together to maintain the whole structure.

SOCIETY IS A SOCIAL SYSTEM

Prominent American sociologists, especially Talcott Parsons (1902–1979) and Robert K. Merton (1910–2003), developed the earlier ideas of structure and function. For these and other functionalists, a society is a system that is composed of major institutions such as government, religion, the economy, education, medicine, and the family.

Each institution or other social group has *structures*, or organized units, that are connected to each other and



W. E. B. Du Bois

within which behavior occurs. Education structures like colleges, for instance, aren’t only organized internally in terms of who does what and when, but depend on other structures like government (to provide funding), business (to produce textbooks and construct buildings), and medicine (to ensure that students, staff, and faculty are healthy).

FUNCTIONS AND DYSFUNCTIONS

Each structure fulfills certain *functions*, or purposes and activities, to meet different needs that contribute to a society’s stability and survival (Merton, 1938). The purpose of education, for instance, is to transmit knowledge to the young, to teach them

to be good citizens, and to prepare them for jobs (see Chapter 13).

Dysfunctions are social patterns that have a negative impact on a group or society. When one part of society isn’t working, it affects other parts, generating conflict, divisiveness, and social problems. Consider religion. In the United States, the Catholic Church’s stance on issues such as not ordaining women to be priests and denouncing abortion and homosexuality has produced a rift between those who embrace or question papal edicts. In other countries, religious intolerance has led to wars and terrorism (see Chapter 13).

MANIFEST AND LATENT FUNCTIONS

There are two kinds of functions. **Manifest functions** are intended and recognized; they’re present and clearly evident. **Latent functions** are unintended and unrecognized; they’re present but not immediately obvious.

Consider the marriage ceremony. Its primary manifest function is to publicize the formation of a new family unit and to legitimize sexual intercourse and childbirth (even though both might occur outside of

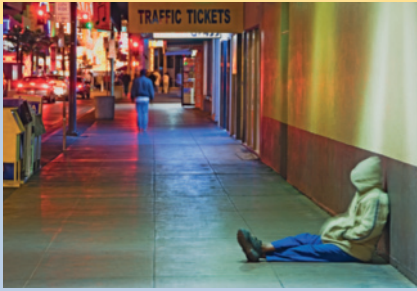
functionalism (structural functionalism) maintains that society is a complex system of interdependent parts that work together to ensure a society’s survival.

dysfunctions social patterns that have a negative impact on a group or society.

manifest functions purposes and activities that are intended and recognized; they’re present and clearly evident.

latent functions purposes and activities that are unintended and unrecognized; they’re present but not immediately obvious.

Sociology and Other Social Sciences: What's the Difference?



Mitchell Funk/Photographer's Choice/
Getty Images

How would different social scientists study the same phenomenon, such as homelessness? Criminologists might examine whether crime rates are higher among homeless people than in the general population. Economists might measure the financial impact of programs for the homeless. Political scientists might study whether and how government

officials respond to homelessness. Psychologists might be interested in how homelessness affects individuals' emotional and mental health. Social workers are most likely to try to provide needed services (e.g., food, shelter, medical care, and jobs). Sociologists have been most interested in examining homelessness across gender, age, and social class, and explaining how this social problem devastates families and communities.

According to sociologist Herbert Gans (2005), sociologists “study everything.” There are currently 43 different subfields in sociology, and the number continues to increase, because sociologists' interests range across many areas.

marriage). The latent functions of a marriage ceremony include communicating a “hands-off” message to suitors, providing the new couple with household goods and products through bridal showers and wedding gifts, and redefining family boundaries to include in-laws or step-family members.

CRITICAL EVALUATION

You'll see in later chapters that functionalism is useful in seeing the “big picture” of interrelated structures and functions. Its influence waned during the 1960s and 1970s, however, because functionalism was so focused on order and stability that it often ignored social change. For example, functionalism couldn't explain the many rapid changes sparked by the civil rights, women's, and gay movements.

A second and related criticism is that functionalism often glosses over the widespread inequality that a handful of powerful people create and maintain. Con-

conflict theory examines how and why groups disagree, struggle over power, and compete for scarce resources.

flikt theorists, especially, have pointed out that what's functional for some privileged groups is dysfunctional for many others.

1-5b Conflict Theory

In contrast to functionalism—which emphasizes order, stability, cohesion, and consensus—**conflict theory** examines how and why groups disagree, struggle over power, and compete for scarce resources (like property, wealth, and prestige). Conflict theorists see disagreement and the resulting changes in society as natural, inevitable, and even desirable.

SOURCES OF CONFLICT

The conflict perspective has a long history. As you saw earlier, Karl Marx predicted that conflict would result from widespread economic inequality, and W. E. B. Du Bois criticized U.S. society for its ongoing and divisive racial discrimination.

Since the 1960s, many sociologists—especially feminist and minority scholars—have emphasized that the key sources of economic inequity in any society include race, ethnicity, gender, age, and sexual orientation.

Conflict theorists agree with functionalists that many societal arrangements are functional. But, conflict theorists ask, who benefits? And who loses? When corporations merge, workers in lower-end jobs are often laid off while the salaries and benefits of corporate executives soar and the value of stocks (usually held by higher

**SOCIOLOGISTS
TYPICALLY USE MORE
THAN ONE THEORY TO
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AND WHY SOCIETY IS
ORGANIZED THE WAY
IT IS.**



skynesher/E+/Getty Images

Among other manifest functions, schools transmit knowledge and prepare children for adult economic roles. Among their latent functions, schools provide matchmaking opportunities. What are some other examples of education's manifest and latent functions?

social classes) rise. Thus, mergers might be functional for people at the upper end of the socioeconomic ladder, but dysfunctional for those on the lower rungs.

SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Unlike functionalists, conflict theorists see society not as cooperative and harmonious, but as a system of widespread inequality. For conflict theorists, there's a continuous tension between the haves and the have-nots, most of whom are children, women, minorities, people with low incomes, and the poor.

Many conflict theorists focus on how those in power—typically wealthy white Anglo-Saxon Protestant males (WASPs)—dominate political and economic decision making in U.S. society. This group controls a variety of institutions—like education, criminal justice, and the media—and passes laws that benefit primarily people like themselves (see Chapters 8 and 11).

CRITICAL EVALUATION

Conflict theory explains how societies create and cope with disagreements. However, some have criticized conflict theorists for overemphasizing competition and coercion at the expense of order and stability. Inequality exists and struggles over scarce resources occur, critics agree, but conflict theorists often ignore cooperation and harmony. Voters, for example, can boot dominant white males out of office and replace them with women and minority group members. Critics also point out that the have-nots can increase their power through negotiation, bargaining, lawsuits, and strikes.

1-5c Feminist Theories

You'll recall that influential male theorists generally overlooked or marginalized early female sociologists' contributions. Until the feminist activism of the 1960s

and 1970s, men—who dominated universities and scholarship—were largely “blind to the importance of gender” (Kramer and Beutel, 2015: 17).

Feminist scholars agree with contemporary conflict theorists that much of society is characterized by tension and struggle, but **feminist theories** go a step further by focusing on women's social, economic, and political inequality. The theories maintain that women often suffer injustice primarily because of their gender, rather than personal inadequacies like low educational levels or not caring about success. Feminist scholars assert that people should be treated fairly and equally regardless not only of their sex but also of other characteristics such as their race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, class, sexual orientation, or disability. They emphasize that women should be freed from traditionally oppressive expectations, constraints, roles, and behavior (see Reger, 2012).

FOCUSING ON GENDER

Feminist scholars have documented women's historical exclusion from most sociological analyses (see, for example, Smith, 1987, and Adams and Sydnie, 2001). Before the 1960s women's movement in the United States, very few sociologists published anything about gender roles, women's sexuality, fathers, or intimate partner violence. According to sociologist Myra Ferree (2005: B10), during the 1970s, “the Harvard social-science library could fit all its books on gender inequalities onto a single half-shelf.” Because of feminist scholars, many

researchers—both women and men—now routinely include gender as an important research variable on both micro and macro levels.

Globally, except for some predominantly Muslim countries, solid majorities of both women and men support gender equality and agree that women should be able to work outside the home. When jobs are scarce, however, many women and men believe

“Sometimes the best man for the job isn't.”

Author Unknown

feminist theories examine women's social, economic, and political inequality.

that men should be given preferential treatment (“Gender Equality...,” 2010). Thus, even equal rights proponents place a higher priority on men’s economic rights.

LISTENING TO MANY VOICES

Feminist scholars contend that gender inequality is central to *all* behavior, ranging from everyday interactions to political and economic institutions, but feminist theories encompass many perspectives. For example, *liberal feminism* endorses social and legal reform to create equal opportunities for women. *Radical feminism* sees male dominance in social institutions (e.g., as the economy and politics) as the major cause of women’s inequality. *Global feminism* focuses on how the intersection of gender with race, social class, and colonization has exploited women in the developing world (see Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1992). Most of us are feminists because we endorse equal opportunities for women and men in the economy, politics, education, and other institutions.

CRITICAL EVALUATION

Feminist scholars have challenged employment discrimination, particularly practices that routinely exclude women who aren’t part of the “old boy network” (Wenneras and Wold, 1997). One criticism, however, is that many feminists are part of an “old girl network” that hasn’t always welcomed different points of view from black, Asian American, American Indian, Muslim, Latina, lesbian, working-class, and disabled women (Lynn and Todoroff, 1995; Jackson, 1998; Sánchez, 2013).

A second criticism is that feminist perspectives often overlook gender, social class, and generational gaps.

Shortly before the 2016 presidential election, 69 percent of women voters said that Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, didn’t respect women. However, 42 percent of

“I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is; I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat.”

Rebecca West, British journalist

those women voted for him anyway (Hartig et al., 2016). At least 90 percent of people vote for their party’s candidate, but Trump appealed to many white women, particularly those without a college degree and those living in rural areas (*Table 1.2*).

There are many reasons for a presidential candidate’s victory, but some observers have attributed Clinton’s defeat to many voters’—particularly working-class white women’s—frustrations about diminished possibilities for their husbands and sons to provide for their families, fears about downward mobility and poverty, concerns about a growing number of immigrants, and a scarcity of jobs in small towns and rural areas (Featherstone, 2016; Morin, 2016; Roberts and Ely, 2016). In contrast, Trump’s slogan to “Make America Great Again” resonated with millions of voters, especially those without college degrees, who feel economically disenfranchised.

During the 2016 presidential race, a large majority of millennials (people born after 1980) supported Bernie Sanders—a 73-year-old senator from Vermont—over Clinton or Trump. Sanders’ platform called for the most progressive and drastic changes to the U.S. political and economic structures (e.g., free tuition, changes in energy policies, and greater equality of wealth). Some analysts believe that millennial enthusiasm for Sanders is an example of a “feminist generation gap” that has increased because younger and older feminists have different values, convictions, and goals (Norman, 2016; Rosen, 2016).

Some critics, including feminists, also question whether feminist scholars have lost their bearings by concentrating on personal issues like greater sexual freedom rather than broader social issues, particularly wage inequality (Chesler, 2006; Shteir, 2013; Rosen, 2016).

1-5d Symbolic Interaction

Symbolic interaction theory (sometimes called *interactionism*) is a micro-level perspective that examines people’s everyday behavior through the communication

symbolic interaction theory (interactionism) examines people’s everyday behavior through the communication of knowledge, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes.

Table 1.2 How Women Voted in the 2016 Presidential Election, by Selected Characteristics

	PERCENTAGE WHO VOTED FOR...		
	HILLARY CLINTON (DEMOCRAT)	DONALD TRUMP (REPUBLICAN)	OTHER/NO ANSWER
White women	42	53	5
Black women	94	4	2
Latinas	68	26	6
College-educated white women	51	45	4
White women without a college degree	34	62	4
Rural white women	34	62	4

Sources: Based on Huang et al., 2016; Levinson, 2016; Malone, 2016; Mohdin, 2016; Morin, 2016.

of knowledge, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes. Whereas functionalists, conflict theorists, and some feminist theories emphasize structures and large (macro) systems, symbolic interactionists focus on *process* and keep the *person* at the center of their analysis.

There have been many influential symbolic interactionists, whom we'll cover in later chapters. In brief, George Herbert Mead's (1863–1931) assertion that the human mind and self arise in the process of social communication became the foundation of the symbolic interaction schools of thought in sociology and social psychology. Herbert Blumer (1900–1987) coined the term *symbolic interactionism* in 1937, developed Mead's ideas, and proposed that people interpret or “define” each other's actions, especially through symbols, instead of merely reacting to them.

Erving Goffman (1922–1982) enriched these earlier theories by examining human interaction in everyday situations ranging from jobs to funerals. Among his other contributions, Goffman used “dramaturgical analysis” to compare everyday social interaction to a theatrical presentation (see Chapter 5).

CONSTRUCTING MEANING

Our actions are based on **social interaction** in the sense that people take each other into account in their own behavior. Thus, we act differently in different social settings and continuously adjust our behavior, including our body language, as we interact (Goffman, 1959; Blumer, 1969). A woman's interactions with her husband differ from those with her children. And she will interact still differently when she is teaching, talking to

a colleague in the hall, or addressing an audience at a professional conference.

For symbolic interactionists, society is *socially constructed* through human interpretation (O'Brien and Kollock, 2001). That is, meanings aren't inherent but are created and modified through interaction with others. For example, a daughter who has batting practice with her dad will probably interpret her father's behavior as loving and involved. In contrast, she'll see batting practice with her baseball coach as less personal and more goal-oriented. In this sense, our interpretations of even the same behavior, such as batting practice, vary across situations and depend on the people with whom we interact.

SYMBOLS AND SHARED MEANINGS

Symbolic interaction looks at subjective, interpersonal meanings and how we interact with and influence each other by communicating through *symbols*—words, gestures, or pictures that stand for something and that can have different meanings for different individuals.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, many Americans displayed the flag on buildings, bridges, homes, and cars to show their solidarity and pride in the United States. In contrast, some groups in the Middle East burned the U.S. flag to show their contempt for U.S. culture and policies. Thus, symbols are powerful forms of communication that show how people feel and interpret a situation.

To interact effectively, our symbols must have *shared meanings*, or agreed-on definitions. One

social interaction a process in which people take each other into account in their own behavior.

of the most important of these shared meanings is the *definition of the situation*, or the way we perceive reality and react to it. Relationships often end, for example, because people view emotional closeness differently (“We broke up because my partner wanted more sex. I wanted more communication.”). We typically learn our definitions of the situation through interaction with *significant others*—especially parents, friends, relatives, and teachers—who play an important role in our socialization (as you’ll see in Chapters 4 and 5).

CRITICAL EVALUATION

Unlike other theorists, symbolic interactionists show how people play an active role in shaping their lives on a micro level. One of the most common criticisms is that symbolic interaction overlooks the widespread impact of macro-level factors (e.g., economic forces, social movements, and public policies) on our everyday behavior and relationships. During economic downturns, for example, unemployment and ensuing financial problems create considerable interpersonal conflict among couples and families (see Chapters 11 and 12). Symbolic interaction rarely considers such macro-level changes in explaining everyday behavior.

A related criticism is that interactionists sometimes have an optimistic and unrealistic view of people’s everyday choices. Most of us enjoy little flexibility in our daily lives because deeply embedded social

arrangements and practices benefit those in power. For instance, people are usually powerless when corporations transfer jobs overseas or cut the pension funds of retired employees.

Some also believe that interaction theory is flawed because it ignores the irrational and unconscious aspects of human behavior (LaRossa and Reitzes, 1993). People don’t always consider the meaning of their actions or behave as reflectively as interactionists assume. Instead, we often act impulsively or say hurtful things without weighing the consequences of our actions or words.

1-5e Other Theoretical Approaches

Table 1.3 summarizes the major sociological perspectives that you’ve just read about. However, new theoretical perspectives arise because society is always changing. For example, *postmodern theory* analyzes contemporary societies that are characterized by postindustrialization, consumerism, and global communications.

Sociology, like other social sciences, has subfields. The subfields—such as socialization, deviance, and social stratification—offer specific theories that reinforce and illustrate functionalist, conflict, feminist, and interactionist approaches. No single theory explains social life completely. Each theory, however, provides different insights that guide sociological research, the topic of Chapter 2.



Lane Gatey/Blue Jean Images/Getty Images



Jose Nicolas/Sigma/Getty Images

For many people, a diamond, especially in an engagement ring, signifies love and commitment. For others, diamonds represent Western exploitation of poor people in Africa who are paid next to nothing for their backbreaking labor in mining these stones.

Table 1.3 Leading Contemporary Perspectives in Sociology

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE	FUNCTIONALISM	CONFLICT	FEMINIST	SYMBOLIC INTERACTION
Level of Analysis	Macro	Macro	Macro and Micro	Micro
Key Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Society is composed of interrelated, mutually dependent parts. Structures and functions maintain a society's or group's stability, cohesion, and continuity. Dysfunctional activities that threaten a society's or group's survival are controlled or eliminated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life is a continuous struggle between the haves and the have-nots. People compete for limited resources that are controlled by a small number of powerful groups. Society is based on inequality in terms of ethnicity, race, social class, and gender. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women experience widespread inequality in society because, as a group, they have little power. Gender, ethnicity, race, age, sexual orientation, and social class—rather than a person's intelligence and ability—explain many of our social interactions and lack of access to resources. Social change is possible only if we change our institutional structures and our day-to-day interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People act on the basis of the meaning they attribute to others. Meaning grows out of the social interaction that we have with others. People continuously reinterpret and reevaluate their knowledge and information in their everyday encounters.
Key Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What holds society together? How does it work? What is the structure of society? What functions does society perform? How do structures and functions contribute to social stability? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are resources distributed in a society? Who benefits when resources are limited? Who loses? How do those in power protect their privileges? When does conflict lead to social change? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do men and women experience social situations in the same way? How does our everyday behavior reflect our gender, social class, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other factors? How do macro structures (such as the economy and the political system) shape our opportunities? How can we change current structures through social activism? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does social interaction influence our behavior? How do social interactions change across situations and between people? Why does our behavior change because of our beliefs, attitudes, values, and roles? How is "right" and "wrong" behavior defined, interpreted, reinforced, or discouraged?
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A college education increases one's job opportunities and income. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most low-income families can't afford to pay for a college education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender affects decisions about a major and which college to attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College students succeed or fail based on their degree of academic engagement.

STUDY TOOLS 1

READY TO STUDY? IN THE BOOK, YOU CAN:

- Check your understanding of what you've read with the Test Your Learning Questions provided on the Chapter Review Card at the back of the book.
- Tear out the Chapter Review Card for a handy summary of the chapter and key terms.

ONLINE AT CENGAGEBRAIN.COM WITHIN MINDTAP YOU CAN:

- Explore: Develop your sociological imagination by considering the experiences of others. Make critical

decisions and evaluate the data that shape this social experience.

- Analyze: Critically examine your basic assumptions and compare your views on social phenomena to those of your classmates and other MindTap users. Assess your ability to draw connections between social data and theoretical concepts.
- Create: Produce a video demonstrating connections between your own life and larger sociological concepts.
- Collaborate: Join your classmates to create a capstone project.

2

Examining Our Social World



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to...

- 2-1 Compare knowledge based on tradition, authority, and research.
- 2-2 Explain why sociological research is important in our everyday lives.
- 2-3 Describe the scientific method.
- 2-4 Describe the basic steps of the research process.
- 2-5 Compare and illustrate the five most common sociological data collection methods, including their strengths and limitations.
- 2-6 Explain why ethics are important in scientific research.

After finishing
this chapter go to
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STUDY TOOLS