

CHAPTER**1****UNDERSTANDING
SOCIOLOGY****CHAPTER OUTLINE****WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?**

The Sociological Imagination
Sociology and the Social Sciences
Sociology and Common Sense

WHAT IS SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY?**THE DEVELOPMENT OF
SOCIOLOGY**

Early Thinkers
Émile Durkheim (1858–1917)
Max Weber (1864–1920)
Karl Marx (1818–1883)
W. E. B. DuBois (1868–1963)
Twentieth-Century Developments

**MAJOR THEORETICAL
PERSPECTIVES**

Functionalist Perspective
Conflict Perspective
Interactionist Perspective
The Sociological Approach

TAKING SOCIOLOGY WITH YOU

Applied and Clinical Sociology
Developing a Sociological Imagination

Boxes

*Research Today: Looking at Sports from
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Research Today: “The Third Place”
*Sociology in the Global Community:
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APPENDIX: CAREERS IN SOCIOLOGY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	WHAT’S NEW IN CHAPTER 1
• Explain the sociological imagination and the characteristics of sociology as a discipline. • Differentiate the natural sciences, social sciences, and sociology. • Distinguish sociology from commonsense knowledge about society. • Explain the characteristics of sociological theory. • Summarize the contributions of the major figures in the history of sociology from Auguste Comte on. • Distinguish macrosociology and	• New chapter-opening photo illustrating environmental cleanup. • New chapter-opening excerpt exploring the lives of low-wage workers in the affluent Napa Valley. • New Thinking Critically question about sociological observation and about dysfunction in society. • New analysis of the 2020 election from the perspective of queer theory. • Discussion of the effects of the Covid-19 lockdown on the third place. • New discussion of the universal hand

microsociology. - Summarize the characteristics of each of the three major theoretical perspectives in sociology: functionalist, conflict, and interactionist. - Describe the objectives of applied sociology and clinical sociology. - Employ the sociological imagination to address issues such as globalization, social inequality, race, gender, and religion.	signal for distress, with illustration. - New analysis of sociological approaches to hunger on campus, with photo. - Updated discussion of online influencers, with photo. - Examination of sociological approaches to school punishment.
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CHAPTER SUMMARY

Sociology is the scientific study of social behavior and human groups. In attempting to understand social patterns of behavior, sociologists rely on a unique type of critical thinking referred to by C. Wright Mills as the **sociological imagination**. A key element of the sociological imagination is having an awareness of the relationship between an individual and the wider society.

Sociology, along with anthropology, psychology, economics, history, and political science, is a **social science**, which is defined as the study of the social features of humans and the way they interact and change. Sociologists study the influence that society has on people's attitudes and behavior and the ways in which people interact and shape society. Is sociology a science? **Science**, as a discipline, represents the body of knowledge obtained by methods based on systematic observation. Sociology is extremely broad in scope and encompasses a number of substantive topics ranging from aging and the life course to crime, education, health, religion, and sexuality. Unlike common sense, sociological data are empirical, meaning that sociologists rely on scientific studies in order to describe and understand a social environment. Common sense, on the other hand, is based on conventional wisdom, which, as we know, is often inaccurate and unreliable. **Natural science** is the study of the physical features of nature and the ways they interact and change.

Sociologists use theories to help explain events, forces, ideas, or behavior in a comprehensive manner. A **theory** is simply a set of statements that seeks to explain problems, actions, or behavior. The strongest theories are those that both explain and predict. Sociologists rely on a variety of theories, each with a different set of assumptions and a unique perspective. Several European social theorists made long-standing contributions to the development of sociology and to sociological theory. Auguste Comte (1798–1857) coined the term *sociology* and was one of the first to suggest an application of scientific principles to the study of human behavior. Harriet Martineau (1802–1876), an English sociologist, is known both for her translations of Comte's writings and for her original studies of the customs and social practices of Britain and the United States. Martineau's writings emphasized the impact that the economy, law, trade, health, and population could have on social problems, and she worked as an activist for religious and gender rights, and for the emancipation of enslaved people. One of the most controversial social theorists of the 19th century was Herbert Spencer (1820–1903). Drawing

on the ideas of Charles Darwin, Spencer argued that like animals, humans have varying levels of social fitness, and those who are the most fit will thrive, while those who are less fit will struggle and eventually die out. His theories appealed to many throughout Britain and the United States, especially the powerful, who had a vested interest in protecting the status quo.

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) was one of the first appointed professors of sociology in France. Durkheim was interested in the processes and consequences of modernization. According to Durkheim, the modernization of society may lead to a condition known as *anomie*, or normlessness. **Anomie** is experienced when social norms lose their effectiveness as instruments of control. The inability of modern societies to regulate or control behavior may lead to higher levels of deviance, including suicide. Indeed, Durkheim's most well-known work examined the social patterns underlying suicide rates. Max Weber (1864–1920), another important theorist, was well-versed in many subject areas including history, law, and religion. Weber made several contributions to the field of sociology, including the concept of *verstehen*, the German word for “understanding” or “insight.” Weber argued that social phenomena cannot be studied using objective criteria only. Rather, sociologists must understand the subjective meanings human actors attach to their actions and to things around them. Weber is also known for the concept of ideal type. An **ideal type** is a construct based on pure characteristics. Ideal types are used in sociology for understanding, describing, and comparing.

Like Spencer, Karl Marx (1818–1883) is a controversial figure in sociology, although for very different reasons. Marx was highly critical of existing social institutions and their tendency to create and maintain the status quo. He was especially outspoken on the matter of worker exploitation by the bourgeoisie. Together with his friend and colleague Friedrich Engels, Marx wrote *The Communist Manifesto*, a brief but compelling document, urging the working class (or “proletariat”) to overthrow the class system. Because of his subversive writings, endorsement of major social change, and involvement with underground organizations, Marx was eventually exiled from Germany. To this day, however, his work continues to have an enormous influence on sociological research and theory.

A number of contemporary social theorists, many from the United States, have also made contributions to the field of sociology. W. E. B. DuBois (1868–1963), one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons (NAACP), used sociological research to study urban life for Black and White Americans in hopes that his studies would be used to assist in the struggle for racial equality. DuBois stressed that empowerment comes through knowledge, and he was a champion of equal access to higher education. Like Marx, DuBois encountered a certain amount of resistance from the academy due to the political and activist nature of his writings. In 1897, he coined the term **double consciousness** to refer to the division of an individual's identity into two or more social realities. Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929), a convert from economics to sociology, preferred to look at smaller units, including intimate, face-to-face groups. Cooley's work contributed immensely to our understanding of groups of relatively small size. Jane Addams (1860–1935) often combined intellectual rigor with political activism. She is known for her involvement in the establishment of “Hull House” in Chicago, a settlement house for the poor. Addams was involved in a number of social causes, including the rights of women, children, and immigrants.

Although Addams helped to grow the discipline of social work, by the mid-20th century, sociologists began to restrict themselves to theorizing and gathering information, shifting the discipline away from social work and activism. Robert Merton (1910–2003), recently a sociologist at Columbia University, proposed one of the most popular and frequently cited explanations for deviant behavior. Merton based his explanation of crime on individual behavior that has been influenced by society's approved goals and means. When social norms advocate a certain lifestyle but simultaneously prevent some from achieving that lifestyle, deviance and criminal behavior are likely to result. Merton also emphasized that sociology should strive to bring together macro-level and micro-level approaches to the field.

Macrosociology concentrates on large-scale phenomena or entire civilizations, while **microsociology**, in contrast, stresses the study of small groups, often by experimental means. In addition to these approaches, modern sociologists have identified two additional levels of research: mesosociology and global sociology. **Mesosociology** is the intermediate level of analysis embracing study of formal organizations and social movements, whereas **global sociology** makes comparisons among nations, typically using entire societies as the units of analysis.

Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002), a sociologist from France, developed the concept of **cultural capital**. In addition to material assets, capital may take the form of cultural assets, including such things as family background, occupational prestige, and access to important informal networks. In comparison, **social capital** refers to the collective benefit of social networks, which are built on reciprocal trust.

Sociologists, like laypersons, view society in different ways. The **functionalist perspective** views society like a living organism in which each part contributes to its overall survival. This perspective was developed primarily by Talcott Parsons (1902–1979), a sociologist at Harvard University. According to this view, any aspect of society that persists over time does so because it serves some purpose and, in some way, contributes to its livelihood. Even something such as crime or poverty may persist so long as it serves some purpose or “function.” For functionalists, the parts of society normally work together toward a common goal. Robert Merton distinguished between the **manifest functions** of institutions, which are open, stated, and conscious, with **latent functions**, which are unconscious or unintended functions that may reflect the hidden purposes of an institution. Functionalists acknowledge that not all parts of a society contribute to its stability all the time. A **dysfunction** refers to an element or process of a society that may actually disrupt the social system or reduce its stability.

The **conflict perspective** views the parts of society as at odds with one another. From the conflict perspective, groups in society are constantly engaged in a power struggle over scarce, highly valued resources. Dominant groups, wishing to maintain their positions of power, create ideologies and institutions that serve to protect the status quo. Karl Marx, a key figure among conflict theorists, viewed conflict (rather than consensus) as the primary characteristic of all human societies. Furthermore, it was his belief that it was capitalism that was primarily responsible for the exploitation of the working class. Contemporary sociologists have used conflict theory to focus on issues of long-term social and racial inequality. Often allied with the conflict perspective because of its clear focus on one aspect of inequality, the **feminist perspective** (or feminist theory) sees inequity in gender as central to all behavior and

organization. Women's subordination is often seen by these theorists as inherent in capitalist societies, and some see the oppression of women as inevitable in *all* male-dominated societies. An early example of this perspective (long before the label *feminist* was used by sociologists), Ida Wells-Barnett (1862–1931) used her analysis of society as a means of resisting oppression, drawing on her experience as a Black woman in America. A more recent contribution is the concept of intersectionalities, the interlocking matrix of domination, incorporating multiple social factors like gender, age, race, sexual orientation, and religion, to determine privilege, or lack of privilege, in society. **Queer theory**, another branch, approaches the study of society from the perspective of a broad spectrum of sexual identities, including heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality.

Finally, the **interactionist perspective** examines everyday forms of interaction, including symbols, language, and nonverbal communication to make generalizations that can explain society as a whole. **Nonverbal communication** is the sending of messages through the use of gestures, facial expressions, and postures. George Herbert Mead (1863–1931), an American sociologist and philosopher, first developed interactionism in the United States and is regarded as the founder of this perspective. Erving Goffman (1922–1982) contributed a method known as the **dramaturgical approach**, which compares everyday life to the setting of the theater and stage. Interactionists place importance on the everyday behavior that occurs in the **third place**, defined as a social setting in addition to the “first place” of home and the “second place” of work where people routinely gather.

It should be noted that sociologists make use of all perspectives since each offers unique insights into the character of social behavior.

Applied sociology involves the use of sociological findings or insight with the specific intent of yielding practical applications for persons or society. **Clinical sociology** is dedicated to altering social relationships or to restructuring social institutions. Both applied and clinical sociology can be contrasted with **basic sociology** (or pure sociology), which seeks to build a knowledge base of the fundamental aspects of social phenomena. This type of research is not necessarily meant to generate specific applications.

This book will attempt to show sociological imagination in several different ways: showing theory in practice and in research; thinking globally; exploring social inequality; and investigating racial, gender, and religious boundaries. Strong research is a foundation for all the approaches to sociology, and it can shed light on many different sociological processes. **Globalization**, the worldwide integration of government policies, cultures, social movements, and financial markets through trade and the exchange of ideas, is also an important and growing factor in sociological study. An important feature of the world landscape is the growing importance of **influencers**, or social media users who have established credibility in a specific industry, such as fashion, electronics, or toys. Perhaps the most dominant theme of analysis in sociology today is **social inequality**, a condition in which members of society have differing amounts of wealth, prestige, or power. Many sociologists have used their research and analysis to advocate for social justice.

In general, sociologists seek to draw conclusions that speak to *all* people. An important use of the sociological imagination is in the attempt to form a greater understanding of social issues throughout the world.

LECTURE OUTLINE

Introduction

- Excerpt from *Low-Wage Work Uncertainty Often Traps Low-Wage Workers* by Brian Halpin and Vicki Smith.
- How did sociology develop?
- In what ways does it differ from other social sciences?

I. What Is Sociology?

- *Sociology* is the scientific study of social behavior and human groups. It focuses on social relationships; how those relationships influence people's behavior; and how societies, the sum total of those relationships, develop and change.

A. The Sociological Imagination

- American sociologist C. Wright Mills ([1959] 2000a) described this type of creative thinking as the ability to view one's own society as an outsider.
Examples: What constitutes a normal sporting event is different in the United States than it is in Bali. Divorce can be understood not simply as a personal problem but as a wider societal concern.
- The *sociological imagination* allows us to look beyond a limited understanding of things and people in the world and allows for a broader vision of society.

B. Sociology and the Social Sciences

- The term *science* refers to the body of knowledge obtained by methods based on systematic observation. Just like other sciences, sociology involves the organized, systematic study of phenomena.
- *Natural science* is the study of the physical features of nature. Astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, and physics are natural sciences.
- *Social science* is the study of the social features of human society. Sociology, anthropology, economics, history, psychology, and political science are social sciences. **Example:** Each social science would take a different approach to studying the issue of climate change. While psychologists might look at its impact on the well-being of individuals in flood-prone areas, political scientists might look at the different steps taken to combat it in countries, states, and cities, or politicians' stance on the issue near election time. Economists might study how, through climate change, human activity impacts long-term economic growth. Sociologists would be interested in why a relatively large number of Americans deny it is happening and would examine its uneven impact on members of society.
- The range of social relationships investigated by sociologists is vast—see

Table 1-1.

- In contrast to other social sciences, sociology emphasizes the influence that society has on people's attitudes and behaviors and examines the ways in which people interact and shape society. **Example:** sociologists and other social scientists offer a unique perspective on such events as Hurricanes Katrina, Harvey, and Irma, and the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, VA.

C. Sociology and Common Sense

- Common sense is often unreliable and inaccurate. **Example:** There is a common belief that women are more talkative than men. However, researchers have found that both male and female college students speak about 16,000 words per day (Mehl et al. 2007).
- Sociologists test, record, and analyze information scientifically to describe and understand a social environment. **Example:** Common sense tells us that today, violent crime in communities on the border between the United States and Mexico is in a death grip of lawlessness. Televised news stories and concerns expressed by elected officials make this assertion sound reasonable; however, it is not true. All available crime data—documented by the FBI—show that all the counties along the U.S.–Mexican border have crime rates at least 2 percent lower than that in the rest of the United States. Furthermore, the crime rate has been dropping faster near the border than in similar-size U.S. communities for at least the last 15 years (Nowrasteh 2019).

II. What Is Sociological Theory?

- *Theory* is a set of statements that seeks to explain problems, actions, or behaviors. Effective theory may be both explanatory and predictive. **Example:** Durkheim's theory on suicide both explains and predicts which groups are most at risk of suicide.
- Durkheim's research suggested that, while a solitary act, suicide is related to group life. Suicide rates reflect the extent to which people are integrated into the group life of society. Modern research reveals a similar pattern. **Example:** Las Vegas has a low level of community cohesiveness and in Nevada as a whole, the chances of dying by suicide are strikingly high—about 45 percent higher than in the United States as a whole.

III. The Development of Sociology

- European theorists made pioneering contributions to the development of a science of human behavior.

A. Early Thinkers

1. Auguste Comte (1798–1857)

- Comte coined the term "sociology" to refer to the science of human behavior; he is credited with being the most influential of the philosophers of the early 1800s.

- Comte believed a theoretical science of society and systematic investigations of behavior were needed to improve society.

2. Harriet Martineau (1802–1876)

- Martineau offered insightful observations on the customs and social practices of both Britain and the United States. She emphasized the impact of economy, law, trade, health, and population on social problems.
- She spoke in favor of the rights of women, the emancipation of enslaved people, and religious tolerance.
- She believed that intellectuals and scholars should not simply offer observations of social conditions; they should act on their convictions in a manner that will benefit society.

3. Herbert Spencer (1820–1903)

- Spencer adapted Charles Darwin’s evolutionary view of the “survival of the fittest” by arguing that it is natural that some people are rich while others are poor.
- Spencer’s view appealed to those with a vested interest in the status quo.

B. Émile Durkheim (1858–1917)

- Durkheim stressed that behavior must be understood within a larger social context, not just in individualistic or psychological terms.
- Durkheim concluded that religion reinforces a group’s solidarity.
- The consequences of work were of interest to Durkheim. He suggested that the increasingly specialized division of labor in industrial societies leads to *anomie*, a state of normlessness, which usually occurs during a time of profound social change when people lose their sense of purpose.
- Durkheim was concerned about the dangers that alienation, loneliness, and isolation might pose for modern industrial societies.

C. Max Weber (1864–1920)

- Weber was a German sociologist who suggested social researchers should employ *verstehen* (a deep level of understanding) in their intellectual work. To fully comprehend behavior, we must learn the subjective meanings people attach to their actions—how they themselves view and explain their behavior.
Example: If a sociologist were to study social ranking of members in a fraternity, Weber would expect them to employ *verstehen* to determine the social hierarchy for its members. They would examine how athleticism, grades, or social skills might affect social standing, while also considering members’ own emotions, beliefs, and attitudes (Coser 1977).
- Weber is also credited with the concept of an *ideal type*, a construct based on pure or ideal characteristics. He described various characteristics of an organizational model of bureaucracy as an ideal type. See Figure 1-1.

D. Karl Marx (1818–1883)

- Marx suggested that society is fundamentally divided between classes that clash in pursuit of their own class and self-interests. He saw the factory as the center of conflict between exploiters (the owners of the means of production)

and the exploited (workers, or the proletariat).

- Marx and his colleague Friedrich Engels argued that workers should unite to overthrow capitalist societies.
- Marx's significance in the field of sociology is profound. His emphasis on group identifications and associations that influence an individual's place in society remains an important way for us to understand society.

E. W. E. B. DuBois (1868–1963)

- DuBois, a Black sociologist, contended knowledge was essential to combat prejudice and discrimination. He believed that full political rights and education were both key to economic and social progress for Black Americans.
- His study of religion focused on the community level and on the role of the church in the lives of its members.
- Because many of his ideas challenged the status quo, he did not find a receptive audience in either government or academia. In 1909, he helped found the NAACP.
- DuBois coined the term *double consciousness*, referring to the division of a person's identity into two or more social realities. According to DuBois, this concept captures the experiences of Black people living in a White America.

F. Twentieth-Century Developments

- Sociologists throughout the world and especially the United States have contributed to the development of new insights to better understand the workings of society.

1. Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929)

- Cooley preferred to use the sociological perspective to look first at smaller units such as intimate, face-to-face groups. He saw these groups as the seedbeds of society in the way they shape people's ideals, beliefs, values, behavior patterns, and ultimately our sense of self.
- Cooley's work increased our understanding of groups, particularly in the area of groups of relatively small size.

2. Jane Addams (1860–1935)

- A social reformer, Addams cofounded Chicago's Hull House.
- Working with Ida Wells-Barnett, she successfully prevented racial segregation in Chicago public schools.
- Addams advocated for a more egalitarian society.

3. Robert Merton (1910–2003)

- Merton produced a theory that is one of the most frequently cited explanations of deviant behavior. In it, he noted different ways people achieve success.
Example: in Merton's classification scheme, innovators are people who accept the goal of pursuing material wealth but use illegal means to do so, including robbery, burglary, and extortion.
- He emphasized sociology should strive to bring together the macro-level and micro-level approaches to the study of society.
- *Macrosociology* concentrates on large-scale phenomena such as institutions.

- *Microsociology* stresses small-group interaction.
- Over the past 50 years, sociologists have identified two additional levels of research: *mesosociology*, an intermediate level embracing the study of formal organizations and social movements; and *global sociology*, which typically uses entire societies as the units of analysis.

4. Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002)

- According to Bourdieu, capital has many forms including knowledge, prestige, culture, formal schooling, and social connections.
- *Cultural capital* refers to assets such as family background and education.
- *Social capital* refers to the collective benefit of social networks, which are built on reciprocal trust.

IV. Major Theoretical Perspectives

- The major perspectives provide an introductory look at the discipline of sociology. They are used to help explain, interpret, and analyze social patterns uncovered by sociologists.

A. Functionalist Perspective

- From the *functionalist's perspective*, society is like a living organism in which each part of the organism contributes to its survival.
- Functionalism emphasizes the way the parts of a society are structured to maintain its stability.
- In examining any aspect of society, then, functionalists emphasize the contribution it makes to overall social stability.
- Talcott Parsons (1902–1979) dominated functionalist thought in sociology for over four decades in the United States.

1. Manifest and Latent Functions

- Robert Merton described *manifest functions* as open, stated, conscious functions that involve the intended, recognized consequences.
- *Latent functions* are unconscious or unintended functions, which may reflect a hidden purpose. **Example:** Education has the manifest function of teaching academic competence and excellence. One latent function is to hold down unemployment. Another is to serve as a meeting ground for people seeking marital partners.

2. Dysfunctions

- A *dysfunction* refers to an element or process of a society that may disrupt the social system or reduce its social stability.
- Dysfunctions can be negative or positive in nature. **Example:** prison gangs can be functional for prison security in that the danger posed by gangs creates a “threat to security,” requiring more overtime work for guards.

B. Conflict Perspective

- The *conflict perspective* assumes that social behavior is best understood in terms of conflict or tension between competing groups over power or the allocation of resources including housing, money, access to services, and political representation.

- The conflict approach (also known as conflict theory) has become increasingly persuasive since the late 1960s due to widespread social unrest over civil rights.

1. The Marxist View

- Marx's view of the struggle between social classes has been expanded on to consider all aspects of society in terms of who benefits, who suffers, and who dominates at the expense of others. Conflict is a part of everyday life in all societies.
- The perspective emphasizes social change and a redistribution of resources.
- This view is considered more radical and more activist-oriented than the functionalist view.

2. The Feminist Perspective

- The *feminist perspective* sees inequity in gender as central to all behavior and organization.
- The feminist view draws on and is typically allied with the conflict perspective. Both focus on the macro level.
- Feminist theory views the subordination of women as inherent in capitalist societies.
- Radical feminists hold the oppression of women as inevitable in all male-dominated societies.
- Ida Wells-Barnett (1862–1931) used her feminist analysis of society as a means of resisting oppression, focusing research on what it meant to be a Black woman in the United States.
- A more recent contribution to this perspective is the notion of intersectionalities of domination, where privilege or lack of privilege in all societies is determined by multiple social factors such as gender, age, race, sexual orientation, and religion.

3. Queer Theory

- French social theorist Michel Foucault pointed out that what is regarded as normal or even acceptable human sexuality varies dramatically from one culture and from one time period to another.
- *Queer theory* is the study of society from the perspective of a broad spectrum of sexual identities, including heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality.
- Queer theorist Eve Sedgwick argues that any analysis of society is incomplete if it does not include the spectrum of sexual identities that people embrace.

C. Interactionist Perspective

- The *interactionist perspective* generalizes about everyday forms of social interaction in order to better understand society as a whole. It involves the assumption that human beings live in a world of meaningful or symbolic objects. **Example:** commuter “slugging” in response to higher gas prices.
- American sociologist George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) is regarded as the founder of interactionism.
- *Nonverbal communications* can include facial gestures, expressions, and postures.
- Symbols are seen as an especially important part of human communication—

see Figure 1-2. **Example:** consider what is communicated by a salute or a clenched fist.

- Erving Goffman (1922–1982) popularized what is known as the *dramaturgical approach*. This approach compares the actions of individuals in everyday life to actors performing on a stage. **Example:** consider how we may project a serious image in class but a recreational or “party” image with friends.
- Interactionists give special intention to everyday behavior that occurs in what has come to be called the third place, as described in Box 1-1.

D. The Sociological Approach

- Sociology makes use of all the perspectives (see Table 1-2).
- No single approach is the correct one. Perspectives may often overlap, and they can also diverge. Each offers a unique perspective on social life.
- Sociologists’ research will always be guided by their own theoretical viewpoints.
- Box 1-2 shows how researchers would study sports from different sociological perspectives.

V. Taking Sociology with You

- Applied and clinical sociology are two growing fields that allow sociology majors and those with advanced degrees in sociology to apply what they have learned to real-world settings.

A. Applied and Clinical Sociology

- *Applied sociology* is the use of sociology with the specific intent to yield practical applications for human behavior and organizations. **Example:** The growing interest in hunger on college campuses among students. As of 2023, over 550 food pantries or food banks were in operation to serve students on one or more campuses.
- Applied sociology has led to specializations such as medical and environmental sociology.
- *Clinical sociology* is dedicated to facilitating change by altering social relationships (as in family therapy) or restructuring social institutions (as in the reorganization of a medical center).
- *Basic (pure) sociology* seeks to expand a knowledge base and our understanding of a topic. **Example:** Durkheim’s research on suicide is an example of basic or pure sociology rather than applied or clinical sociology.

B. Developing a Sociological Imagination

1. Theory in Practice

- The ways in which the sociological perspectives are useful for understanding today’s issues are illustrated.

2. Research Today

- The research performed by sociologists and other social scientists sheds light on group behavior of all types.

3. Our Wired World

- More and more, electronic gadgets and applications are altering our social behavior.

4. Thinking Globally

- Sociologists recognize that social behavior must increasingly be viewed within a global context.
- *Globalization* refers to the worldwide integration of government policies, cultures, social movements, and financial markets through trade and the exchange of ideas.
- Another aspect of the world landscape is the growing role of influencers, as described in Box 1-3.

5. The Significance of Social Inequality

- *Social inequality* is a condition in which members of society have differing amounts of wealth, prestige, or power, as well as different levels of access to these important resources.
- Sociologists often see behavior as shaped by social inequality.
- Some have made the case for social justice.

6. Speaking across Race, Gender, and Religious Boundaries

- Both men and women, as well as people from a variety of ethnic, national, and religious origins, are included in research by sociologists.
- Sociology today seeks to better understand the experiences of all people.

7. Social Policy throughout the World

- An important way we can improve our sociological imagination is to enhance our understanding of current social issues throughout the world. Social Policy sections will focus on how fundamental sociological concepts can enhance critical thinking skills and understanding of social policy debates.
- Sociology has been used to evaluate the success of programs or the impact of changes brought about by policymakers and political activists.

VI. Appendix: Careers in Sociology

- While few occupations specifically require an undergraduate degree in sociology, such academic training can be an important asset in entering a wide range of occupations.
- Figure 1-3 summarizes the sources of employment for those with BA or BS degrees in sociology.
- Studies show that students who choose an internship placement have less trouble finding jobs, obtain better jobs, and enjoy greater job satisfaction than students without internship placements.
- Higher education is an important source of employment for sociologists with graduate degrees. The demand for college instructors is projected to grow 11 percent through 2031, faster than the average for all occupations.
- Currently, about 15 percent of the members of the American Sociological Association use their sociological skills outside the academic world, whether in social service agencies or in marketing positions for business firms.

KEY TERMS

Anomie: Durkheim's term for the loss of direction felt in a society when social control of individual behavior has become ineffective.

Applied sociology: The use of the discipline of sociology with the specific intent of yielding practical applications for human behavior and organizations.

Basic sociology: Sociological inquiry conducted with the objective of gaining a more profound knowledge of the fundamental aspects of social phenomena. Also known as *pure sociology*.

Clinical sociology: The use of the discipline of sociology with the specific intent of altering social relationships or restructuring social institutions.

Conflict perspective: A sociological approach that assumes that social behavior is best understood in terms of tension between groups over power or the allocation of resources including housing, money, access to services, and political representation.

Cultural capital: Noneconomic goods, such as family background and education, which are reflected in a knowledge of language and the arts.

Double consciousness: The division of an individual's identity into two or more social realities.

Dramaturgical approach: A view of social interaction, popularized by Erving Goffman, in which people are seen as theatrical performers.

Dysfunction: An element or process of a society that may disrupt the social system or reduce its stability.

Feminist perspective: A sociological approach that views inequity in gender as central to all behavior and organization.

Functionalist perspective: A sociological approach that emphasizes the way in which the parts of a society are structured to maintain its stability.

Global sociology: A level of sociological analysis that makes comparisons between entire nations, using entire societies as units of analysis.

Globalization: The worldwide integration of government policies, cultures, social movements, and financial markets through trade and the exchange of ideas.

Ideal type: A construct or model for evaluating specific cases.

Influencer: A social media user who has established credibility in a specific industry, such as fashion, electronics, or toys.

Interactionist perspective: A sociological approach that generalizes about everyday forms of social interaction in order to explain society as a whole.

Latent function: An unconscious or unintended function that may reflect hidden purposes.

Macrosociology: Sociological investigation that concentrates on large-scale phenomena or entire civilizations.

Manifest function: An open, stated, and conscious function.

Mesosociology: An intermediate level of sociological analysis that focuses on formal organizations and social movements.

Microsociology: Sociological investigation that stresses the study of small groups, often through experimental means.

Natural science: The study of the physical features of nature and the ways in which they interact and change.

Nonverbal communication: The sending of messages through the use of gestures, facial expressions, and postures.

Queer theory: The study of society from the perspective of a broad spectrum of sexual identities, including heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality.

Science: The body of knowledge obtained by methods based on systematic observation.

Social capital: The collective benefit of social networks that are built on reciprocal trust.

Social inequality: A condition in which members of society have differing amounts of wealth, prestige, or power.

Social science: The study of the social features of humans and the ways in which they interact and change.

Sociological imagination: An awareness of the relationship between an individual and the wider society, both today and in the past.

Sociology: The scientific study of social behavior and human groups.

Theory: In sociology, a set of statements that seeks to explain problems, actions, or behavior.

Third Place: A social setting in addition to the “first place” of home and the “second place” of work where people routinely gather.

Verstehen: The German word for “understanding” or “insight”; used by Max Weber to stress the need for sociologists to take into account the subjective meanings people attach to their actions.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Why might poverty be of interest to sociologists and psychologists in different ways?
2. How might a sociologist approach the issue of domestic violence, drug addiction, or depression differently from a psychologist?
3. What did C. Wright Mills mean by the “sociological imagination”? How could it be applied to, for example, watching people running in a marathon?
4. Distinguish between sociology and other social sciences identified in the text.
5. How are sociology and “common sense” similar? How are they different?
6. Why is theory an important part of sociology as a social science discipline? What is the relationship between theory and research?
7. Summarize Émile Durkheim’s findings on suicide.
8. How did Auguste Comte view the discipline of sociology?
9. What contributions did Harriet Martineau and Herbert Spencer make to sociology?
10. Explain why the ideas of Herbert Spencer are considered antithetical to the fundamental assumptions of sociology.
11. Explain why Max Weber felt that it was important for researchers to employ *verstehen*.
12. Describe Karl Marx’s contribution to sociology and other social sciences.
13. Describe the contributions Charles Horton Cooley, Jane Addams, and Robert Merton made to sociology.
14. Distinguish between the two levels of analysis used in sociology (macro level and micro level).
15. Distinguish between manifest and latent functions, and dysfunctions.
16. Distinguish between the functionalist and conflict approaches to the study of society.
17. Explain which sociological perspective best reflects the approach taken by Karl Marx, and why.
18. How did W. E. B. DuBois contribute to conflict theory?
19. How does the feminist view differ from other views inspired by the conflict perspective?

20. What contributions did George Herbert Mead make to sociology?
21. Why is nonverbal communication important to interactionist theory?
22. Explain what is meant by the *dramaturgical approach* and identify the sociological approach with which it is associated.
23. Select one of the three main approaches to sociology (conflict, functionalist, or interactionist), describe it, and identify a social thinker associated with it.
24. Summarize the major differences across the functionalist, conflict, and interactionist perspectives.
25. How can the functionalist, conflict, and interactionist perspectives be used to interpret sports?
26. Discuss the place of social inequality within the discipline of sociology.
27. Explain why the concept of globalization is important for sociologists to address.
28. In which sociological perspective does queer theory fall, and what new approach has it introduced into the science?

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Using the functionalist perspective, discuss the role of sports in contributing to the overall social stability of our society.
2. Using the interactionist perspective, discuss the U.S. response to Covid-19. Comment on the lack of a uniform response across states and how mask-wearing is interpreted as nonverbal communication.
3. Using the conflict perspective, describe how sports might strengthen the inherent divisions within our society.
4. Using the interactionist perspective (Goffman's dramaturgical approach, specifically), discuss the reactions students might have to seeing one of their professors at a college fraternity or sorority party.
5. Discuss how the predictive power of sociology could be used to influence social policy and improve the quality of social life.