Sociological Theory

Dr. Ashok Shivaji Yakkaldevi

LAXMI BOOK PUBLICATION

Dedicated to

My best friend

Dr. Ecaterina Patrascu

(Editor, European Academic Research Journal,

CONTENT

Acknowledgement

I am using this opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone who supported me throughout the completion of this book. I am thankful for their aspiring guidance, invaluably constructive criticism and friendly advice during the written work. I am sincerely grateful to them for sharing their truthful and illuminating views on a number of issues related to the project.

At the very outset, I would like to record my deep sense of gratitude and everlasting indebtedness. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who provided me the possibility to complete this book.

I gratefully acknowledge the unstinted encouragement and unreserved support from my beloved teacher, Dr. H. N. Jagtap for providing me the necessary knowledge and support in bringing this work. Also I would like to thankful to Principal Dr. Rajendra Shendge, A. R. Burla Mahila Varishta Mahavidyalay, Solapur.

It is with great pleasure and a sense of gratitude I remember the encouragement I received from my parents, wife, son and my loving daughters. More than anything else, their love and affection is so gratifying that it always motivates me to do the things to be worthy of their love and affection. But for the blessings, incessant help at all levels and the constant insistence of my parents, this work could not have been completed. I am ever grateful to them for the sincerity and warmth in their blessings.

Dr. Ashok S. Yakkaldevi

~1~
Sociological Theory

Introduction:

A sociological theory is a set of ideas that provides an explanation for human society. Theories are selective in terms of their priorities and perspectives and the data they define as significant. As a result they provide a particular and partial view of reality. Sociological theories can be grouped together according to a variety of criteria. The most important of these is the distinction between Structural and Social action theories.

Structural or macro perspectives analyses the way society as a whole fits together. Structural theory sees society as a system of relationships that creates the structure of the society in which we live. It is this structure that determines our lives and characters. Structured sets of social relationships are the 'reality' that lie below the appearance of 'the free individual' of western individualism. Structuralism focuses on the particular set of 'structural laws' that apply in any one society.

Despite their differences, both functionalism and Marxism use a model of how society as a whole works. Many functionalists base their model of society around the assumption of basic needs and go to explain how different parts of society help to meet those needs. Marxists, on the other hand, see society as resting upon an economic base or infrastructure, with a superstructure above it. They see society as divided into social classes which have the potential to be in conflict with each other.

However, the main differences between functionalist and Marxist perspectives then, is the way they characterize the social structure. Functionalists stress the extent to which the different elements of the social structure fit together harmoniously. Marxists

stress the lack of fit between the different parts, particularly social classes, and so emphasize the potential for social conflict.

Not all sociological perspectives base their analysis upon an examination of the structure of society as a whole. Rather than seeing human behaviour as being largely determined by society, they see society as being the product of human activity. They stress the meaningfulness of human behaviour, denying that it is primarily determined by the structure of society. These approaches are known as social action theory, interpretive sociology or micro sociology.

Max Weber was the first sociologist to advocate a social action approach. Symbolic interactionists try to explain human behavior and human society by examining the ways in which people interpret the actions of others, develop a self-concept or self-image, and act in terms of meanings. Ethno methodology moves even further from a structural approach by denying the existence of a social structure as such. They see the social world as consisting of the definitions and categorizations of members of society. The job of the sociologist, in their view, is to interpret, describe and understand the subjective reality.

Marxism is an economic and socio-political worldview and method of socioeconomic inquiry that centers upon a materialist interpretation of history, a dialectical view of social change, and a critique of capitalism. Marxism was pioneered in the early to mid-19th century by two German philosophers, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marxism encompasses Marxian economic theory, a sociological theory and a revolutionary view of social change that has greatly influenced socialist political movements worldwide.

Social theories are frameworks of empirical evidence used to study and interpret social phenomena. A tool used by social scientists, social theories relate to historical debates over the most valid and reliable methodologies (e.g. positivism and anti-positivism), as well as the primacy of either structure or agency. Certain social theories

attempt to remain strictly scientific, descriptive, and objective. Conflict theories, by contrast, present ostensibly normative positions, and often critique the ideological aspects inherent in conventional, traditional thought.

The origins of social theory are difficult to pinpoint, but debates frequently return to Ancient Greece (Berberoglu 2005, p. xi). From these foundations in Western philosophy arose Enlightenment social contract theory, sociological positivism, and modern social science. Today, 'social science' is used as an umbrella term to refer to sociology, economics, political science, jurisprudence, and other disciplines. Social theory is interdisciplinary and draws upon ideas from fields as diverse as anthropology and media studies. Social theory of an informal nature, or authorship based outside of academic social and political science, may be referred to instead as "social criticism" or "social commentary". Similarly, "cultural criticism" may be associated both with formal cultural and literary scholarship, as well as other non-academic or journalistic forms of writing.

Social theory as a distinct discipline emerged in the 20th century and was largely equated with an attitude of critical thinking, based on rationality, logic and objectivity, and the desire for knowledge through a posteriori methods of discovery, rather than a priori methods of tradition. With this in mind it is easy to link social theory to deeper seated philosophical discussions to assure the responsibility in every human also.

~ **2** ~
Conflict Theory

Introduction:

Conflict theories are perspectives in sociology that emphasize the social, political, or material inequality of a social group, that critique the broad socio-political system, or that otherwise detract from structural functionalism and ideological conservatives. Conflict theories draw attention to power differentials, such as class conflict, and generally contrast historically dominant ideologies. It is therefore a macro level analysis of society. Karl Marx is the father of the social conflict theory, which is a component of the 4 paradigms of sociology. Certain conflict theories set out to highlight the ideological aspects inherent in traditional thought. Whilst many of these perspectives hold parallels, conflict theory does not refer to a unified school of thought, and should not be confused with, for instance, peace and conflict studies, or any other specific theory of social conflict.

Conflict theory is based on the writings of Karl Marx (1818-1883), he argues that in all stratified societies there are two major social groups: a ruling class and a subject class. The ruling class derives its power from its ownership and control of the forces of production and exploits the subject class hence a conflict between the two classes.

Conflict theory are basically the perspectives in social science that emphasize on the social, political or material inequality of a social group, which critique the broad socio-political system, or which otherwise detract from structural functionalism. The concept of Conflict Theory was first fronted by Karl Max and was meant to explain the workings of a society with a ruling and subject classes and their conflicts of interest.

In sociology, conflict theory states that society or an organization functions so that each individual participant and its groups struggle to maximize their benefits, which inevitably contributes to social change such as political changes and revolutions. The theory is mostly applied to explain conflict between social classes, proletariat versus bourgeoisie; and in ideologies, such as capitalism versus socialism.

Conflict theory and consensus theory are two major social theories. In general terms, conflict theory states that society functions by the exploitation of a subject, or worker class by the ruling class, which owns and controls the means of production, maintaining a constant state of conflict between the classes' interests. In contrast, consensus theory maintains that society functions as a result of peoples' shared and common interests and values, which are developed through similar socialization experiences. Clearly, these two social theories appear to stand in opposition to each other.According to Karl Marx, well-known communist theorist and author of conflict theory, workers are continually oppressed by a ruling class that owns most of the wealth in a given society. That oppression is perpetuated through the institutions that maintain social order: the political system, the legal system, the educational system and so forth. Societies are unchangeably stratified, and the ruling class uses the institutions to protect its power and domination of the subject class. In the United States, for example, most of the nation's wealth and income is claimed by a very small percentage of the population. Marx describes this disparity of access or resources between the subject and ruling class as an inherent conflict of interest, hence the term 'conflict theory.'Consensus theory is also known as structural functions. This theory maintains that society functions because of people's shared interests and interdependence. Because individuals have unique skills and talents, the contribution of each is important to the success of the society as a whole. Society functions in this way through the creation of

shared values, cultural norms and traditions. Social behavior is regulated to conform to shared norms. Individuals rely on others to help fill their needs, creating social dependence. Prominent theorists in this school include Herbert Spencer and Talcott Parsons. More reference links: www2.ucsc.edu www.sociologyguide.com

Conflict theories are perspectives in sociology that emphasize the social, political, or material inequality of a social group, that critique the broad socio-political system, or that otherwise detract from structural functionalism and ideologicalconservatives. Conflict theories draw attention to power differentials, such as class conflict, and generally contrast historically dominant ideologies. It is therefore a macro level analysis of society. Karl Marx is the father of the social conflict theory, which is a component of the 4 paradigms of sociology. Certain conflict theories set out to highlight the ideological aspects inherent in traditional thought. Whilst many of these perspectives hold parallels, conflict theory does not refer to a unified school of thought, and should not be confused with, for instance, peace and conflict studies, or any other specific theory of social conflict.

Definition of Conflict Theory

Conflict theory suggests that human behavior in social contexts results from conflicts between competing groups. Conflict theory originated with the work of Karl Marx in the mid-1800s. Marx understood human society in terms of conflict between social classes, notably the conflict in capitalist societies between those who owned the means of economic production (factory or farm owners, for example) and those who did not (the workers). Subsequent thinkers have described different versions of conflict theory; a common theme is that different social groups have unequal power, though all groups struggle for the same limited resources. Conflict theory has been used to explain diverse human behavior, such as educational practices that either sustain or challenge the *status quo*, cultural customs regarding the elderly, and criminal behavior.

11

Conflict Theories

According to Karl Marx in all stratified societies there are two major social groups: a ruling class and a subject class. The ruling class derives its power from its ownership and control of the forces of production. The ruling class exploits and oppresses the subject class. As a result there is a basic conflict of interest between the two classes. The various institutions of society such as the legal and political system are instruments of ruling class domination and serve to further its interests. Marx believed that western society developed through four main epochs-primitive communism, ancient society, feudal society and capitalist society.

Primitive communism is represented by the societies of pre-history and provides the only example of the classless society. From then all societies are divided into two major classes - master and slaves in ancient society, lords and serfs in feudal society and capitalist and wage laborers in capitalist society. Weber sees class in economic terms. He argues that classes develop in market economies in which individuals compete for economic gain. He defines a class as a group of individuals who share a similar position in market economy and by virtue of that fact receive similar economic rewards. Thus a person's class situation is basically his market situation. Those who share a similar class situation also share similar life chances. Their economic position will directly affect their chances of obtaining those things defined as desirable in their society. Weber argues that the major class division is between those who own the forces of production and those who do not. He distinguished the following class grouping in capitalist society:

- ✓ The propertied upper class.
- ✓ The property less white collar workers.
- ✓ The petty bourgeoisie.
- ✓ The manual working class.

Social conflict theory

Social conflict theory is a Marxist-based social theory which argues that individuals and groups (social classes) within society have differing amounts of material and non-material resources (such as the wealthy vs. the poor) and that the more powerful groups use their power in order to exploit groups with less power.[citation needed]

The two methods by which this exploitation is done are through brute force usually done by police and the army and economics. Earlier social conflict theorists argue that money is the mechanism which creates social disorder. The theory further states that society is created from ongoing social conflict between various groups. There are other theories of deviance, the functionalist theory, the control theory and the strain theory. It also refers to various types of positive social interaction that may occur within social relationships.

"Consider paying rent towards housing. The conflict theorist argues that this relationship is unequal and favors the owners. Renters may pay rent for 50 years and still gain absolutely no right or economic interest with the property. It is this type of relationship which the conflict theorist will use to show that social relationships are about power and exploitation."

Padgitt continues, "Marx argued that through a dialectic process, social evolution was directed by the result of class conflict. Marxism argues that human history is all about this conflict, a result of the strong-rich exploiting the poor-weak. From such a perspective, money is made through the exploitation of the worker. It is argued thus, that in order for a factory owner to make money, he must pay his workers less than they deserve."

Thus, the social conflict theory states that groups within a capitalist society tend to interact in a destructive way, that allows no mutual benefit and little cooperation. The solution Marxism proposes to this problem is that of a workers' revolution to break the political and

economic domination of the capitalist class with the aim of reorganising society along lines of collective ownership and mass democratic control.

Social conflict theories

According to Karl Marx in all stratified societies there are two major social groups: a ruling class and a subject class. The ruling class derives its power from its ownership and control of the forces of production. The ruling class exploits and oppresses the subject class. As a result there is a basic conflict of interest between the two classes.

The various institutions of society such as the legal and political system are instruments of ruling class domination and serve to further its interests. Marx believed that western society developed through four main epochs-primitive communism, ancient society, feudal society and capitalist society.

Primitive communism is represented by the societies of pre-history and provides the only example of the classless society. From then all societies are divided into two major classes - master and slaves in ancient society, lords and serfs in feudal society and capitalist and wage labourers in capitalist society. Weber sees class in economic terms. He argues that classes develop in market economies in which individuals compete for economic gain.

He defines a class as a group of individuals who share a similar position in market economy and by virtue of that fact receive similar economic rewards. Thus a person's class situation is basically his market situation. Those who share a similar class situation also share similar life chances. Their economic position will directly affect their chances of obtaining things defined as desirable in their society.

Weber argues that the major class division is between those who own the forces of production and those who do not. He distinguished the following class grouping in capitalist society: the propertied upper class, the property-less white-collar workers, the petit bourgeois, and the manual working class.

In classical sociology

Of the classical founders of social science, conflict theory is most commonly associated with Karl Marx (1818–1883). Based on a dialectical materialist account of history, Marxism posited that capitalism, like previous socioeconomic systems, would inevitably produce internal tensions leading to its own destruction. Marx ushered in radical change, advocating proletarian revolution and freedom from the ruling classes. At the same time, Karl Marx was aware that most of the people living in capitalist societies did not see how the system shaped the entire operation of society. Just like how we see private property, or the right to pass that property on to our children as natural, many of members in capitalistic societies see the rich as having earned their wealth through hard work and education, while seeing the poor as lacking in skill and initiative. Marx rejected this type of thinking and termed it false consciousness, explanations of social problems as the shortcomings of individuals rather than the flaws of society. Marx wanted to replace this kind of thinking with something Engels termed class consciousness, workers' recognition of themselves as a class unified in opposition to capitalist and ultimately to the capitalist system itself. In general, Marx wanted the proletarians to rise up against the capitalist and overthrow the capitalist system.

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels The Communist Manifesto 1848,

In the social productions of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely

relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or – this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms – with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces, these relations turn into their fetters. Then an era of social revolution begins. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.

In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society.

Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation. In broad outline, the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society. The bourgeois mode of production is the last antagonistic form of the social process of production antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism but of an antagonism that emanates from the individuals' social conditions of existence but the productive forces developing within bourgeois society create also the material conditions for a solution of this antagonism. The prehistory of human society accordingly closes with this social formation.

— Karl Marx A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy 1859, [2]

Two early conflict theorists were the Polish-Austrian sociologist and political theorist Ludwig Gumplowicz (1838–1909) and the American sociologist and paleontologist Lester F. Ward (1841–1913). Although Ward and Gumplowicz developed their theories independently they had much in common and approached conflict from a comprehensive anthropological and evolutionary point-of-view as opposed to Marx's rather exclusive focus on economic factors.

Gumplowicz, in Grundriss der Soziologie (Outlines of Sociology, 1884), describes how civilization has been shaped by conflict between cultures and ethnic groups. Gumplowicz theorized that large complex human societies evolved from the war and conquest. Another organizes states around the domination of one group: masters and slaves. Eventually a complex caste system develops.[3] Horowitz says that Gumplowicz understood conflict in all its forms: "class conflict, race conflict and ethnic conflict", and calls him one of the fathers of Conflict Theory.

What happened in India, Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome may sometime happen in modern

Europe. European civilization may perish, over flooded by barbaric tribes. But if any one believes that we are safe from such catastrophes he is perhaps yielding to an all too optimistic delusion. There are no barbaric tribes in our neighbourhood to be sure — but let no one be deceived, their instincts lie latent in the populace of European states.

Gumplowicz (1884)

Ward directly attacked and attempted to systematically refute the elite business class's laissez-faire philosophy as espoused by the hugely popular social philosopher Herbert Spencer. Ward's Dynamic Sociology (1883) was an extended thesis on how to reduce conflict and competition in society and thus optimize human progress. At the most basic level Ward saw human nature itself to be deeply conflicted between self-aggrandizement and altruism, between emotion and intellect, and between male and female. These conflicts would be then reflected in society and Ward assumed there had been a "perpetual and vigorous struggle" among various "social forces" that shaped civilization.[6][7] Ward was more optimistic than Marx and Gumplowicz and believed that it was possible to build on and reform present social structures with the help of sociological analysis.

Durkheim (1858–1917) saw society as a functioning organism. Functionalism concerns "the effort to impute, as rigorously as possible, to each feature, custom, or practice, its effect on the functioning of a supposedly stable, cohesive system," The chief form of social conflict that Durkheim addressed was crime. Durkheim saw crime as "a factor in public health, an integral part of all healthy societies." The collective conscience defines certain acts as "criminal." Crime thus plays a role in the evolution of morality and law: "[it] implies not only that the

way remains open to necessary changes but that in certain cases it directly prepares these changes."

Weber's (1864–1920) approach to conflict is contrasted with that of Marx. While Marx focused on the way individual behavior is conditioned by social structure, Weber emphasized the importance of "social action," i.e., the ability of individuals to affect their social relationships.

Modern approaches

Wright Mills has been called the founder of modern conflict theory.[12] In Mills's view, social structures are created through conflict between people with differing interests and resources. Individuals and resources, in turn, are influenced by these structures and by the "unequal distribution of power and resources in the society." The power elite of American society, (i.e., the military–industrial complex) had "emerged from the fusion of the corporate elite, the Pentagon, and the executive branch of government." Mills argued that the interests of this elite were opposed to those of the people. He theorized that the policies of the power elite would result in "increased escalation of conflict, production of weapons of mass destruction, and possibly the annihilation of the human race."

Gene Sharp (born 21 January 1928) is a Professor Emeritus of political science at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. He is known for his extensive writings on nonviolent struggle, which have influenced numerous anti-government resistance movements around the world. In 1983 he founded the Albert Einstein Institution, a non-profit organization devoted to studies and promotion of the use of nonviolent action in conflicts worldwide.Sharp's key theme is that power is not monolithic; that is, it does not derive from some intrinsic quality of those who are in power. For Sharp, political power, the power of any stateregardless of its particular structural organization—

ultimately derives from the subjects of the state. His fundamental belief is that any power structure relies upon the subjects' obedience to the orders of the ruler(s). If subjects do not obey, leaders have no power. Sharp has been called both the "Machiavelli of nonviolence" and the "Clausewitz of nonviolent warfare." Sharp's scholarship has influenced resistance organizations around the world. Most recently the protest movement that toppled President Mubarak of Egypt drew extensively on his ideas, as well as the youth movement in Tunisia and the earlier ones in the Eastern European color revolutions that had previously been inspired by Sharp's work.

- Societies are defined by inequality that produces conflict, rather than which produces order and consensus. This conflict based on inequality can only be overcome through a fundamental transformation of the existing relations in the society, and is productive of new social relations.
- The disadvantaged have structural interests that run counter to the status quo, which, once they are assumed, will lead to social change. Thus, they are viewed as agents of change rather than objects one should feel sympathy for.
- Human potential (e.g., capacity for creativity) is suppressed by conditions of exploitation and oppression, which are necessary in any society with an unequal division of labour. These and other qualities do not necessarily have to be stunted due to the requirements of the so-called "civilizing process," or "functional necessity": creativity is actually an engine for economic development and change.
- The role of theory is in realizing human potential and transforming society, rather than maintaining the power structure. The opposite aim of theory would be the objectivity and detachment associated with positivism, where theory is a neutral, explanatory tool.
- Consensus is a euphemism for ideology. Genuine consensus is not achieved, rather the more powerful in societies are able to impose

their conceptions on others and have them accept their discourses. Consensus does not preserve social order, it entrenches stratification, e.g., the American dream.

- The State serves the particular interests of the most powerful while claiming to represent the interests of all. Representation of disadvantaged groups in State processes may cultivate the notion of full participation, but this is an illusion/ideology.
- Inequality on a global level is characterized by the purposeful underdevelopment of Third World countries, both during colonization and after national independence. The global system (i.e., development agencies such as World Bankand International Monetary Fund) benefits the most powerful countries and multi-national corporations, rather than the subjects of development, through economic, political, and military actions.

Although Sears associates the conflict theory approach with [Marxism](), he argues that it is the foundation for much "[feminist](), [post-modernist](), [anti-racist](), and [lesbian-gay liberationist]() theories."

Types of conflict theory

Conflict theory is most commonly associated with Marxism, but as a reaction to functionalism and the positivist method may also be associated with number of other perspectives, including:

- Critical theory
- Feminist theory: The advocacy of social equality for women and men, in opposition to patriarchy and sexism.
- Postmodern theory: An approach that is critical of modernism, with a mistrust of grand theories and ideologies.
- Post-structural theory
- Postcolonial theory
- Queer theory: A growing body of research findings that challenges the heterosexual bias in Western society.
- World systems theory

- Race-Conflict Approach: A point of view that focuses on inequality and

- Conflict theory emphasizes the role of coercion and power in producing social order. This perspective is derived from the works of Karl Marx, who saw society as fragmented into groups that compete for social and economic resources. Social order is maintained by domination, with power in the hands of those with the greatest political, economic, and social resources. When consensus exists, it is attributable to people being united around common interests, often in opposition to other groups.

- According to conflict theory, inequality exists because those in control of a disproportionate share of society's resources actively defend their advantages. The masses are not bound to society by their shared values, but by coercion at the hands of those in power. This perspective emphasizes social control, not consensus and conformity. Groups and individuals advance their own interests, struggling over control of societal resources. Those with the most resources exercise power over others with inequality and power struggles resulting. There is great attention paid to class, race, and gender in this perspective because they are seen as the grounds of the most pertinent and enduring struggles in society.

- Whereas most other sociological theories focus on the positive aspects of society, conflict perspective focuses on the negative, conflicted, and ever-changing nature of society. Unlike functionalists who defend the status quo, avoid social change, and believe people cooperate to effect social order, conflict theorists challenge the status quo, encourage social change (even when this means social revolution), and believe rich and powerful people force social order on the poor and the weak. Conflict theorists, for example, may interpret an "elite" board of

regents raising tuition to pay for esoteric new programs that raise the prestige of a local college as self-serving rather than as beneficial for students.

- Whereas American sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s generally ignored the conflict perspective in favor of the functionalist, the tumultuous 1960s saw American sociologists gain considerable interest in conflict theory. They also expanded Marx's idea that the key conflict in society was strictly economic. Today, conflict theorists find social conflict between any groups in which the potential for inequality exists: racial, gender, religious, political, economic, and so on. Conflict theorists note that unequal groups usually have conflicting values and agendas, causing them to compete against one another. This constant competition between groups forms the basis for the ever-changing nature of society. Critics of the conflict perspective point to its overly negative view of society. The theory ultimately attributes humanitarian efforts, altruism, democracy, civil rights, and other positive aspects of society to capitalistic designs to control the masses, not to inherent interests in preserving society and social order.

Key Points

✓ Conflict theory sees social life as a competition, and focuses on the distribution of resources, power, and inequality.

✓ Unlike functionalist theory, conflict theory is better at explaining social change, and weaker at explaining social stability.

✓ Conflict theory has been critiqued for its inability to explain social stability and incremental change.

✓ Conflict theory derives from the ideas of Karl Marx.

Terms

A social science perspective that holds that stratification is dysfunctional and harmful in society, with inequality perpetuated because it benefits the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor.

Functionalism

Structural functionalism, or simply functionalism, is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability.

EXAMPLES

✓ A conflict theorist might ask, "Who benefits from the current higher educational system in the U.S.?" The answer, for a conflict theorist attuned to unequal distributions of wealth, is the wealthy. After all, higher education in the U.S. is not free. The educational system often screens out poorer individuals, not because they are unable to compete academically, but because they cannot afford to pay for their education. Because the poor are unable to obtain higher education, they are generally also unable to get higher paying jobs, and, thus, they remain poor. Such an arrangement translates into a vicious cycle of poverty. While a functionalist might say that the function of education is to educate the workforce, a conflict theorist might point out that it also has an element of conflict and inequality, favoring one group (the wealthy) over other groups (the poor). Thinking about education in this way helps illustrate why both functionalist and conflict theories are helpful in understanding how society works.

Sociological Theory/Conflict Theory

The basic premise of conflict theory is that individuals and groups in society struggle to maximize their share of the limited resources that exist and are desired by humans. Given that there are limited resources, the struggle inevitably leads to conflict and

competition. These struggles can lead to changes in institutions and societies as different groups come into power.

Detailed Description

Theoretical Assumptions: Assumptions are taken for granted statements about reality those theories drawn upon as their foundation. Following are some of assumptions of modern conflict theory:

- *Interactions*: Human interaction results in conflict.
- *Change*: Conflict and change are normal and inevitable in society.
- *Competition*: Competition over scarce resources (e.g., money, leisure, sexual partners, etc.) is part of all social groups. Competition rather than consensus is characteristic of human relationships. If everyone had the resources they needed, conflict would not exist.
- *Structural Inequality*: Inequalities in power and rewards are built into all social structures. Resources are scarce and groups will always compete over these resources.
- *Degree of Inequality*: Inequality exists in varying degrees with people having different amounts of resources; hierarchies exist.
- *Revolution*: Macro changes occur as a result of conflict between competing interests rather than through adaptation. It is often abrupt and revolutionary rather than evolutionary.

Key Terms

Below are some of the key terms employed in social conflict theories.

- **Class conflict:** The struggle between groups occupying different socioeconomic positions in the same society. These groups compete for control of economic, political and social resources. Class conflict can manifest as physical violence, propaganda (e.g., the spread of ideologies, such as

"homeless people are lazy"), economic threats (e.g., the middle class boycotting "Big Business"), or legal battles (e.g., class action lawsuits by consumers against largecorporations).

- **Ideology:** the collection of beliefs that justify a social arrangement
- **Social class:** an aspect of social location that is determined by either your relationship to the means of production (Marx) or your power, prestige and wealth (Weber).
- **Deviance:** going against prevailing social norms
- **Proletariat:** in Marx's economic conflict theory, the proletariat are the working class who did not own the resources, land or tools they use to produce goods for the bourgeoisie
- **Bourgeoisie:** in Marx's economic conflict theory, the bourgeoisie are the capitalist class who own the resources, land and tools. They exploit the proletariat by paying them less than their work is worth.
- **Capitalism:** an economic system with private ownership of the means of production and the creation of goods or services for profit.

Propositions

Propositions are relationships proposed between the conceptual components of a theory. Various proponents of conflict theory have delineated propositions based on the above assumptions. Below are some of these propositions.

- ✓ **Marx (1818-1883):** The proletariat and bourgeoisie compete for control over scant resources.
- ✓ **Gumplowicz (1838-1909):** Societies evolve out of war and conquest resulting in the development of nation-states and unequal systems with master and slave relationships.

- ✓ **Weber (1864-1920):** The Protestant Ethic promoted hard work, creating an environment in which a capitalistic struggle for resources would thrive.
- ✓ **Mills (1916-1962):** Conflict exists between people of lower social statuses and the "Power Elite" (those at the top of the socioeconomic hierarchy) resulting in a struggle for resources and unequal distribution of influence.
- ✓ **Feminine Conflict Theory:** Historically oppressed, women struggle to gain equal access to power and resources from men.
- ✓ **Post colonialism:** In an effort to increase their wealth, more powerful countries spread around the world.
- ✓ **World Systems Theory:** Countries compete with each other for status, wealth, and technology. Countries are divided into core countries, semi-periphery countries, and periphery countries, which are, respectively, arranged in a social hierarchy with the core countries at the top and the periphery countries at the bottom. Core countries extract resources from the semi-periphery and periphery countries and use their technology to turn those resources into consumer goods, which they can then sell back to people in the peripheral countries.

History of Conflict Theory

The ideas that make up the foundations of conflict theory can be traced back to early philosophy. Han Fei Tzu (280 - 233 BC) and other ancient Chinese philosophers taught that men are innately weak and lazy. This assumption leads to the obvious conclusion that the only way men can be controlled, then, is through punishment. Those who have the power to punish can control society, as the fear of the power of punishment keeps men in check.

Polybius, a Greek philosopher (205-125 BC), focused his studies on the Roman Republic. He believed that people were like herds of animals. Weaknesses lead man to form communities in which the strongest and bravest person became the leader. He believed societies

change and transition into a monarchy and that monarchies are based on justice and legitimate authority. Monarchies have an obligation to keep peace in society. However, the same problems with men will be exhibited in their kings, leading to corrupt and unjust monarchies. The result: tyrants and tyranny. Tyranny is, however, self-limiting. Once it becomes unbearable, the elite in society will figure out ways to over throw the monarchy. Society will be in support of these new leaders because they give more liberty and equality. This cycle will repeat itself because the new leader will take some of the liberty and sense of equality away from the people. Polybius believed the only way to stop this cycle is to form a government that combines the best elements from monarchies, aristocracies, and democracy, like the Roman government during his time.

Many philosophers had similar ideas about conflict and society.[citation needed] They believed that conflict was a necessary part of society.[citation needed] Conflict, as a sociological theory, was formalized in the 19th and 20th Centuries, building upon the ideas of people like those mentioned above. Many sociologists have contributed to the development of conflict theory, including Max Gluckman, John Rex, Lewis A. Coser, Randall Collins, Ralf Dahrendorf, Ludwig Gumplovicz, Vilfredo Pareto, and Georg Simmel. However, Karl Marx is often credited as being the father of conflict theory.

Karl Heinrich Marx (1818 – 1883) was a German philosopher, sociologist, historian, political economist, political theorist and revolutionary socialist, who developed the socio-political theory of Marxism. His ideas have since played a significant role in both the development of social science and also in the socialist political movement. He published various books during his lifetime, with the most notable being The Communist Manifesto (1848) and Capital (1867–1894), many of which were co-written with his friend, the fellow German revolutionary socialist Friedrich Engels. Marx's dedication to social change led him to focus most of his work on revolutionary class

conflicts in industrial societies. Karl Marx died a poor man but his work and ideas have influenced the modern world.

Marx saw conflict as primarily resulting from class conflicts within industry and the economic segment of society. Max Weber (1864-1920) proposed that power, prestige and property also added to social conflict and that such conflict was found in all aspects of society (e.g., politics, gender, and religion).

C. Wright Mills (1916-1962) also contributed to modern conflict theory. According to Mills, one of the results of conflict between people with competing interests and resources is the creation of a social structure. Social structure refers to the relatively fixed institutions and norms of society that heavily influence, consciously or not, peoples' everyday behavior (e.g., getting your license at a department of motor vehicles reflects the fact that social structure dictates who gets to grant licenses, how, when, and to whom). However, control over the social structure is largely in the hands of the elite (wealthy), who generally oppose the interests of the non-elite.

❖ **Modern Examples**

Social Stratification

As civilizations undergo change from agrarian, rural groups into industrialized, modern societies, a social hierarchy emerges that effectively creates distinct classes based on wealth, power and prestige. According to conflict theory, it is this structure of social stratification that pits those in the upper class (i.e., those with the most power, wealth and prestige) against the lower classes.

Conflict theory also asserts that modern society and the "...criminal justice system and criminal law...operates on the behalf of the rich and powerful social elites, with the resulting policies aimed at controlling the poor," thus perpetuating a system in which the upper class maintains power and all other classes remain economically disadvantaged, disenfranchised, and nearly powerless. Marx foresaw

such conflicts, asserting that "...every society has been based... on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes," with modernization and industrialization significantly increasing this conflict and the oppression of the lower classes by the upper class

Modern society presents several examples of the main ideas and mechanisms of conflict theory in practice, showing the process by which the upper class power elites systematically work to disenfranchise and exploit the lower classes to maintain and increase their power.Interestingly, conflict theory does not apply only to one type of government or society; it can be applied to democracies, socialist nations and dictatorships alike.

Wealth and Power Inequality

While the United States is purportedly a nation that is values principles of equality, egalitarianism, meritocracy, hard work, and the pursuit of the "American Dream," the U.S. also has a very high level of economic and social inequality. Domhoff (2011) provides striking evidence of this inequality, finding that "as of 2007, the top 1% of households (the upper class) owned 34.6% of all privately held wealth, and the next 19% (the managerial, professional, and small business stratum) had 50.5%."[9] He goes on to state that this means that the top 20% of Americans own 85% of the nation's wealth as a whole, with the other 80% of Americans having only 15% of the wealth. This extreme inequality in the level of power and wealth that currently exist in the United States exemplifies the central themes of conflict theory, namely that there is a competition for power between classes. The implications of this large disparity in wealth between social classes in the United States includes many disadvantages for those in the lower classes, such as a lack of access to quality health care, increased risk of violent crime, fewer educational opportunities (especially post-secondary education), and the absence of a social network to provide opportunities for upward mobility.

Drug Abuse and Crime

Proponents of conflict theory argue that crime and criminal justice in the modern world is designed to benefit the upper, powerful classes, while subjugating and disenfranchising the lower classes. Greek (2005) provides an excellent explanation of this phenomenon:

"Thus, street crimes, even minor monetary ones are routinely punished quite severely, while large scale financial and business crimes are treated much more leniently. Theft of a television might receive a longer sentence than stealing millions through illegal business practices."

This example illustrates the manner in which conflict theory can be applied to deviance in society as the upper classes seek to maintain their position and power by ensuring that the lower classes remain poor and relatively powerless.

Conflict theory has also been applied to the current trends of drug abuse in the United States, finding that societal and social class position effect one's rate of drug abuse. More specifically, "Conflict theory holds that there are higher numbers of chronic drug abusers found in lower social classes, disorganized neighborhoods. lower income families, and relatively politically powerless places."Lo (2003) found that, in accordance with conflict theory, social environments negatively affect inequality "...widespread poverty and severe social disorganization, lacking legitimate opportunities as well as adequate education and training, have a [strong] association with opiate and cocaine use."

Conflict theory is based upon the view that the fundamental causes of crime are the social and economic forces operating within society. The criminal justice system and criminal law are thought to be operating on behalf of rich and powerful social elites, with resulting policies aimed at controlling the poor. The criminal justice establishment aims at imposing standards of morality and good

behavior created by the powerful on the whole of society. Focus is on separating the powerful from have nots who would steal from others and protecting themselves from physical attacks. In the process the legal rights of poor folks might be ignored. The middle class are also co-opted; they side with the elites rather the poor, thinking they might themselves rise to the top by supporting the status quo.

Thus, street crimes, even minor monetary ones are routinely punished quite severely, while large scale financial and business crimes are treated much more leniently. Theft of a television might receive a longer sentence than stealing millions through illegal business practices. William Chambliss, in a classic essay "The Saints and the Roughnecks," compared the outcomes for two groups of adolescent misbehavers. The first, a lower class group of boys, was hounded by the local police and labeled by teachers as delinquents and future criminals, while the upper-middle class boys were equally deviant, but their actions were written off as youthful indiscretions and learning experiences.

Radical criminology or critical criminology is a branch of conflict theory, drawing its ideas from a basic Marxist perspective. For Karl Marx (1818-1883), modern capitalist societies were controlled by a wealthy few (bourgeoisie) who controlled the means of production (factories, raw materials, equipment, technology, etc.) while everyone else (the proletariat) was reduced to the lot of being wage laborers. While Marx himself never really addressed in detail the criminal justice system's specific role in keeping such a system in place, from his writings a radical tradition has emerged. From this perspective, certain types of crime take on a different character. Stealing can be seen as an attempt to take away from the rich. Eric Hobsbawn referred to the like as "social banditry." Protest-related violence may actually be the start of proto-revolutionary movements, ultimately leading to a workers' revolt and the establishment of a just society.

At a minimum this perspective aids in the explanation of certain actions; civil rights and antiwar protesters were being locked up in the 1960s because they threatened the established social order. The FBI and the CIA both directed efforts at monitoring such behavior. Thus, the law enforcement community had come down on the wrong side of those seeking social change. Scenes of police officers attacking civil rights protesters with dogs, clubs, and water hoses and police riots such as the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago appeared on nightly television news.

A number of other varieties of conflict theory have appeared since the 1960s. These include radical feminism, left realism, and peacemaking criminology. The latter two are attempts to tone down some of the rhetoric, and present a more balanced approach.

Radical feminism focuses on the plight of women under capitalism. Male domination has been the norm, and women have been subject to it in the home and workplace, as well as on the street. Radical feminist criminologists have looked at the unjust treatment of female teens, who are much more frequently subject to institutionalization for status offense violations (offenses that would not be criminal if an adult) such as running away from home, and particularly singled out for sexual deviance. While away from home or work alone, women must always be on their guard for potential attacks or advances from men. Living in fear has consequences, according to organizations such as Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network

Left realism emerged in the 1980s, partially as a response to the crime victims' movement of that decade. Victims forced criminologists to recognize that the primary victims of crime are not the wealthy, but the poor. Most predatory crimes are not "revolutionary" acts; they are attacks on family members and neighborhood residents. As advocated by Stanley Cohen and others, left realists recognize that the criminal justice system must act to stop criminal victimization without regard to the class of the perpetrators. At the same time, continued focus on the

crimes committed by the rich and powerful is warranted. White collar and business related crimes remain important.

Peacemaking criminology sought to expand the role of the discipline by looking at international issues such as war and genocide. International struggles for human rights and universal social justice are related foci of concern. Hal Pepinsky and Richard Quinney are major authors in this area. In addition, there are a number of not for profit non-government organizations (NGOs) involved in efforts such as these. For example, Witness (http://www.witness.org/) gives video cameras and photographic equipment to victims of government abuse and civil strife and asks them to document their experiences. These are then shared via the World Wide Web so that other can witness what is happening

Making Sense of Abstract Theories

Sociological theories are the core and underlying strength of the discipline. They guide researchers in their studies. They also guide practitioners in their intervention strategies. And they will provide you with a basic understanding of how to see the larger social picture in your own personal life. A Theory is a set of interrelated concepts used to describe, explain, and predict how society and its parts are related to each other. The metaphor I've used for many years to illustrate the usefulness of a theory is what I call the "goggles metaphor." Goggles are a set of inter-related parts that help us see things more clearly. Goggles work because the best scientific components work together to magnify, enlarge, clarify, and expand to our view of the thing we are studying.

Theories are sets of inter-related concepts and ideas that have been scientifically tested and combined to magnify, enlarge, clarify, and expand our understanding of people, their behaviors, and their societies. Without theories, science would be a futile exercise in statistics. In the diagram below you can see the process by which a theory leads sociologist to perform a certain type of study with certain

types of questions that can test the assumptions of the theory. Once the study is administered the findings and generalizations can be considered to see if they support the theory. If they do, similar studies will be performed to repeat and fine-tune the process. If the findings and generalizations do not support the theory, the sociologist rethinks and revisits the assumptions they made.

Here's a real-life scientific example. In the 1960's two researchers named Cumming and Henry studied the processes of aging. They devised a theory on aging that had assumptions built into it. These were simply put, that all elderly people realize the inevitability of death and begin to systematically disengage from their previous youthful roles while at the same time society prepares to disengage from them (see Maddox et al. 1987 The Encyclopedia of Aging, Springer Pub. NY for much more detail. Cumming and Henry tested their theory on a large number of elderly persons. Findings and generalization consistently yielded a "no" in terms of support for this theory. For all intents and purposes this theory was abandoned and is only used in references such as these (for a more scientifically supported theory on aging Google "Activity Theory and/or Continuity Theory"). Theories have to be supported by research and they also provide a framework for how specific research should be conducted.

By the way, theories can be used to study society-millions of people in a state, country, or even at the world level. When theories are used at this level they are referred to as Macro Theories, theories which best fit the study of massive numbers of people (typically Conflict and Functional theories). When theories are used to study small groups or individuals, say a couple, family, or team, they are referred to as being Micro Theories, theories which best fit the study of small groups and their members (typically Symbolic Interactions or Social Exchange theories). In many cases, any of the four main theories can be applied at either the macro or micro levels.

There are really two distinct types of theories: first, Grand Theory, which is a theory which deals with the universal aspects of social processes or problems and is based on abstract ideas and concepts rather than on case specific evidence. These include Conflict, Functionalism, Symbolic Interactions, and Social Exchange Theories; second, Middle-Range Theory, which is a theory derived from specific scientific findings and focuses on the interrelation of two or more concepts applied to a very specific social process or problem. Robert K. Merton (1910-2003) was a functional theory-based sociologist who taught the value of using smaller more specifically precise theories in trying to explain smaller and more specific social phenomena. These theories include: Continuity, Activity, Differential Association, and Labeling theories. (see American Sociology Association, Theory http://www.asatheory.org/).

Let's consider the four grand theories one at a time. The Conflict Theory is a macro theory. AMacro Theory is a sociological theory designed to study the larger social, global, and societal level of sociological phenomena. This theory was founded by a German philosopher, economist, sociologist, and revolutionary (1818-1883). Marx was a witness to oppression perpetrated by society's elite members against the masses of poor. He had very little patience for the capitalistic ideals that undergirded these powerful acts of inhumane exploitation of the average person. To him struggle was innate to all human societies. Later another German named Max Weber (1864-1920; pronounced "Veybur") further developed this sociological theory and refined it to a more moderate position. Weber studied capitalism further but argued against Marx's outright rejection of it.

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory is especially useful in understanding: war, wealth and poverty, the haves and the have nots, revolutions, political strife, exploitation, divorce, ghettos, discrimination and prejudice, domestic violence, rape, child abuse, slavery, and more conflict-related social

phenomena. Conflict Theory claims that society is in a state of perpetual conflict and competition for limited resources. Marx and Weber, were they alive today, would likely use Conflict Theory to study the unprecedented bail outs by the US government which have proven to be a rich-to-rich wealth transfer.

Conflict Theory assumes that those who have perpetually try to increase their wealth at the expense and suffering of those who have not. It is a power struggle which is most often won by wealthy elite and lost by the common person of common means. Power is the ability to get what one wants even in the presence of opposition. Authority is the institutionalized legitimate power. By far the Bourgeoisie, or wealthy elite (royalty, political, and corporate leaders), have the most power. Bourgeoisie are the "Goliaths" in society who often bully their wishes into outcomes. The Proletariat are the common working class, lower class, and poor members of society. According to Marx (see diagram below) the Bourgeoisie and Proletariat cannot both have it their way and in order to offset the wealth and power of the Bourgeoisie the proletariat often rise up and revolt against their oppressors (The French, Bolshevik, United States, Mexican, and other revolutions are examples).

In fact Marx and Weber realized long ago that society does have different classes and a similar pattern of relatively few rich persons in comparison to the majority who are poor. The rich call the shots. Look below at the photographic montage of homes in one US neighborhood which were run down, poor, trashy, and worth very little. They were on the West side of this gully and frustrated many who lived on the East side who were forced to drive through these "slums" to reach their own mansions.

The Conflict Theory has been repeatedly tested against scientifically derived data and it repeatedly proves to have a wide application among many different levels of sociological study. That is not to say that all sociological phenomena are conflict-based. But, most

Conflict theorists would argue that more often than not Conflict assumptions do apply. Feminist theory is a theoretical perspective that is couched primarily in Conflict Theory assumptions.

Functionalism or Structural Functionalism Theory

The next grand theory is called Functionalism or Structural Functionalism. The Functionalist Theory claims that society is in a state of balance and kept that way through the function of society's component parts. This theory has underpinnings in biological and ecological concepts (see diagram below). Society can be studied the same way the human body can be studied - by analyzing what specific systems are working or not working, diagnosing problems, and devising solutions to restore balance. Socialization, religious involvement, friendship, health care, economic recovery, peace, justice and injustice, population growth or decline, community, romantic relationships, marriage and divorce, and normal and abnormal family experiences are just a few of the evidences of functional processes in our society.

Sure, Functionalists would agree with Conflict Theorists that things break down in society and that unfair treatment of others is common. These break downs are called Dysfunctions, which are breakdowns or disruptions in society and its parts that threaten social stability. Enron's collapse, the ruination of 14,000 employees'retirement funds, the loss of millions in shareholder investments, and the serious doubt it left in the mind of US investors about the Stock Market's credibility and reliability which lasted for nearly a decade are examples of dysfunctions in the economic sector of the economy. But, Functionalists also look at two types of functions: manifest and latent functions. Manifest Functions are the apparent and intended functions of institutions in society. Latent Functions are the less apparent, unintended, and often unrecognized functions in social institutions and processes.

Back to Enron, the government's manifest function includes regulation of investment rules and laws in the Stock market to ensure credibility and reliability. After the Enron collapse, every company offering stocks for trade underwent a government supervised audit of its accounting processes in order to restore the public trust. For the most part balance was restored in the Stock Market (to a certain degree at least). There are still many imbalances in the investment, mortgage, and banking sectors which have to be readjusted; but, that's the point - society does readjust and eventually recover some degree of function.

Does the government also provide latent or accidental functions to society? Yes. Take for example the US military bases. Of all the currently open US military bases, all are economic boons for the local communities surrounding them. All provide jobs, taxes, tourism, retail, and government contract monies that would otherwise go somewhere else. When the discussion about closing military bases comes up in Washington DC, Senators and members of Congress go to work trying to keep their community's bases open.

As you can already tell, Functionalism is more positive and optimistic that Conflict Theory (the basis for much criticism by many Conflict Theorists). Functionalists realize that just like the body, societies get "sick" or dysfunction. By studying society's parts and processes, Functionalists can better understand how society remains stable or adjust to destabilizing forces when unwanted change is threatened. According to this theory most societies find that healthy balance and maintain it (unless they don't and collapse as many have in the history of the world. Equilibrium is the state of balance maintained by social processes that help society adjust and compensate for forces that might tilt it onto a path of destruction.

Getting back to the Conflict example of the gully separating extremely wealthy and poor neighborhoods, look at this Habitat for Humanity picture below. I took this close to my own home, because it represents what Functional Theorists claim happens - component parts

of society respond to dysfunctions in ways that help to resolve problems. In this house the foundation was dug, poured, and dried within a week. From the foundation to this point was three working days. This house is now finished and lived in, thanks mostly to the Habitat non-profit process and the work of many volunteers. From the Functionalism perspective, optimism is appropriate and fits the empirical data gathered in society.

Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Interactionism comes in two theoretical forms: Symbolic Interaction and Social Exchange. By far, my favorite sociological theory is Symbolic Interactionism. Symbolic Interaction claims that society is composed of ever-present interactions among individuals who share symbols and their meanings. This is a very useful theory for: understanding other people; improving communications; learning and teaching skills in cross-cultural relations; and generally speaking, "not doing harm to your roommates" as many of my students often say after understanding this theory. Values, communication, witch hunting, crisis management, fear from crime, fads, love and all that comes with it, "evil and sin," what's hot and what's not, alien abduction beliefs, "who I am," litigation, mate selection, arbitration, dating joys and woes, and both personal and national meanings and definitions (September 1, 2001-WTC) can all be better understood using Symbolic Interactionism.

Once you realize that individuals are, by their social natures, very symbolic with one another, then you begin to understand how to persuade your friends and family, how to understand others' points of view, and how to resolve misunderstandings. This theory magnifies the concepts of meanings. Think about these three words, LOVE, LUST, and LARD. Each letter is a symbol. When combined in specific order, each word can be defined. Because we memorize words and their meanings we know that there is a striking difference between LOVE and LUST. We also know that LARD has nothing to do with either of these two terms. Contrast these word pairs: hate versus hope; help versus hurt; advise

versus abuse; and connect versus corrupt. These words, like many others carry immense meaning and when juxtaposed sound like the beginning of philosophical ideas.

Symbolic Interactionism makes it possible for you to be a college student. It makes it so you understand your professors' expectations and know how to step up to them. Our daily interactions are filled with symbols and an ongoing process of interactions with other people based on the meanings of these symbols. "How's it going?" Ever had anyone you've greeted actually answer that question? Most of us never have. It's a greeting, not a question in the US culture (see culture chapter).

If you want to surprise someone, answer them next time they say "How's it going?" If they have a sense of humor, they might get a kick out of it. If not, you may have to explain yourself. Symbolic Interactionism Theory explores the way we communicate and helps us to understand how we grow up with our self-concept (see socialization chapter). It helps you to know what the expectations of your roles are and if you perceive yourself as doing a good job or not in meeting those expectations.

There are many other Symbolic Interactionism concepts out there to study, let's just talk about one more-The Thomas Theorem or Definition of the Situation. The Thomas Theorem is often called the "Definition of the situation" which is basically if people perceive or define something as being real then it is real in its consequences. I give a few examples from the media: a woman was diagnosed as HIV positive. She made her funeral plans, made sure her children would be cared for then prepared to die. Two-years later she was retested. It turned out her first test results were a false positive, yet she acted as though she had AIDS and was certainly going to die soon from it.

In a hypothetical case, a famous athlete (you pick the sport) defines himself as invincible and too famous to be held legally

accountable for his criminal behavior. He is subsequently found guilty. A politician (you pick the party and level of governance) believes that his/her constituents will tolerate anything. When he/she doesn't get reelected no one is surprised. The point is that when we define our situation as being real, we act as though it is real (regardless of the objective facts in the matter).

Symbolic Interactionism is very powerful in helping people to understand each other. Newlyweds, roommates, life-long friends, young adult children and their parents, and teammates can all utilize the principles to "walk a mile in the other's shoes;" "see the world through their glasses;" and/or simply "get it." One of the major realization that comes with Symbolic Interactionism is that you begin to understand the other people in your life and come to know that they are neither right nor wrong, just of a different point of view. They just define social symbols with varying meanings.

To understand the other person's symbols and meanings, is to approach common ground. Listen to this statement by Rosa Parks (1913-2005), "All I was doing was trying to get home from work." In 1955 when she refused to give up her seat on the bus to a White person, it proved to be a spark for the Civil Rights Movement that involved the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. and many other notable leaders. It was Rosa Parks' simple and honest statement that made her act of defiance so meaningful. The lion share of the nation was collectively tired and sick of the mistreatment of Blacks. Many Whites joined the protests while others quietly sympathized. After all that was written in the history books about it, a simple yet symbolic gesture by Rosa Parks symbolically started the healing process for the United States.

Social Exchange Theory

The remaining theory and second interactionist theory is Social Exchange. Social Exchange claims that society is composed of ever

present interactions among individuals who attempt to maximize rewards while minimizing costs. Assumptions in this theory are similar to Conflict theory assumptions yet have their interactistic underpinnings. Basically, human beings are rational creatures, capable of making sound choices once the pros and cons of the choice are understood. This theory uses a formula to measure the choice making processes.

(REWARDS-COSTS)=OUTCOMES

or

("What I get out of it"-"What I lose by doing it")="My decision"

We look at the options available to us and weigh as best we can how to maximize our rewards and minimize our losses. Sometimes we get it right and other times we make a bad choice. One of the powerful aspects of this theory is the concept of Equity. Equity is a sense that the interactions are fair to us and fair to others involved by the consequences of our choices. For example, why is it that women who work 40 hours a week and have husbands who work 40 hours per week do not perform the same number of weekly hours of housework and childcare? Scientists have surveyed many couples to find the answer. Most often, it boils down to a sense of fairness or equity. Because she defines it as her role to do housework and childcare, while he doesn't; because they tend to fight when she does try to get him to perform housework, and because she may think he's incompetent, they live with an inequitable arrangement as though it were equitable (don't get me started on the evidence that supports men sharing the actual roles of housekeepers and childcare providers-see Joseph Pleck, "Working Wives/ Working Husbands" Sage Pub, CA).

Each of us tries constantly to weigh pros and cons and to maximize the outcomes of our choices. I often provide a rhetorical challenge to my students when I ask them to go down to the cafeteria, pick the least attractive person they can find, take them on a date where they drive and they pay for everything, then give the person a 7

second kiss at the end of the date. "Why would we do that?" they typically ask. "That's my point," I typically reply, having increased a bit of their understanding of the Social Exchange Theory.

Any of the four theories can be used to study any individual and collective behaviors. But, some do work better than others because their assumptions more precisely match the issue of interest. Divorce might be studied from the Conflict Theory to understand how things become adversarial and how and why contested divorces sometimes become violent. Divorce might be studied from the Functionalism Theory to understand how divorce is a means to resolving untenable social circumstance-it is a gesture designed to restore balance and equilibrium. Divorce might be studied using the Symbolic Interactionism Theory to identify how people define their roles before, during, and after the divorce and how they reestablish new roles as unmarried adults. Divorce might also be studied using the Social Exchange Theory to understand the processes and choices that lead to the final divorce decision, distribution of assets, child custody decrees and the final legal change of status (see Levinger and Moles, "Divorce and Separation: Context, Causes, and Consequences" 1979, Basic Books).

I've enclosed a simple summary sheet of the four basic theories used most by sociologists. It serves well as a reference guide, but can't really replace your efforts to study sociological theories in more detail. On the next page I've enclosed a self-assessment that may help you to assess your leanings towards these four main theories and two others that are often used by sociologists. On the self-assessment don't be surprised if you find that all four theories fit your world-view. Keep in mind they have been extensively studied for a very long time.

Comparing the Four Sociological Theories

Conflict	Functionalism	Symbolic Interactions	Social Exchange
Macro	Macro	Micro	Micro

44

-Inequality lies at the core of society which leads to conflict -Resources are limited -Power is not evenly distributed -Competition is inevitable (winners & losers) -Negotiations based on influence, threats, promises, and consensus -Threats and coercion -Any resource can be used as tool of power or exploitation -War is natural -Haves and have nots -Privileges are protected by haves -Order is challenged by have nots	-Uses biological model (society is like a living organism) -Society has interrelated parts -What are functions or dysfunctions of parts -Society finds balance and is stable -Equilibrium -Society adjusts to maintain balance -How are parts integrated -Manifest functions -Latent functions and dysfunctions -Example of: Systems Theory	-Society is an ongoing process of many social interactions -Interactions based on symbolic context in which they occur -Subjective perceptions are critical to how symbols are interpreted - Communications -Meanings -Significant others -Roles -Relative deprivation -Self -Reality shaping in self and with others -Key Ideas: Social construction of reality Thomas Theorem Definition of situation	-Society is an ongoing series of exchanges which occur during interactions -Interactions based on formula: (Rewards-Costs)= Outcomes Rewards -Costs -Profit/Loss -Comparisons -Limited resources -Power -Legitimacy -Equity -Negotiations -Tradeoffs -Example of: Levinger=s model on divorce: (Attractions +/- Barriers)=/- (Alternative Attractions)

-Examples of: Gender & Feminist		-Example of: theories of self	

The several social theories that emphasize **social conflict** have roots in the ideas ofKarl Marx (1818-1883), the great German theorist and political activist. The Marxist, conflict approach emphasizes a materialist interpretation of history, a dialectical method of analysis, a critical stance toward existing social arrangements, and a political program of revolution or, at least, reform.

The **materialist** view of history starts from the premise that the most important determinant of social life is the work people are doing, especially work that results in provision of the basic necessities of life, food, clothing and shelter. Marx thought that the way the work is socially organized and the technology used in production will have a strong impact on every other aspect of society. He maintained that everything of value in society results from human labor. Thus, Marx saw working men and women as engaged in making society, in creating the conditions for their own existence.

Marx summarized the key elements of this materialist view of history as follows:

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that

determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness (Marx 1971:20).

Marx divided history into several stages, conforming to broad patterns in the economic structure of society. The most important stages for Marx's argument were feudalism,capitalism, and socialism. The bulk of Marx's writing is concerned with applying the materialist model of society to capitalism, the stage of economic and social development that Marx saw as dominant in 19th century Europe. For Marx, the central institution of capitalist society is private property, the system by which capital (that is, money, machines, tools, factories, and other material objects used in production) is controlled by a small minority of the population. This arrangement leads to two opposed classes, the owners of capital (called the bourgeoisie) and the workers (called theproletariat), whose only property is their own labor time, which they have to sell to the capitalists.

Owners are seen as making profits by paying workers less than their work is worth and, thus, exploiting them. (In Marxist terminology, material forces of production ormeans of production include capital, land, and labor, whereas social relations of production refer to the division of labor and implied class relationships.)

Economic exploitation leads directly to political oppression, as owners make use of their economic power to gain control of the state and turn it into a servant of bourgeois economic interests. Police power, for instance, is used to enforce property rights and guarantee unfair contracts between capitalist and worker. Oppression also takes more subtle forms: religion serves capitalist interests by pacifying the population; intellectuals, paid directly or indirectly by capitalists, spend their careers justifying and rationalizing the existing social and economic arrangements. In sum, the economic structure of society molds the superstructure, including ideas (e.g., morality, ideologies, art, and literature) and the social institutions that support the class structure of society (e.g., the state, the educational system, the family, and religious

institutions). Because the dominant or ruling class (the bourgeoisie) controls the social relations of production, the dominant ideology in capitalist society is that of the ruling class. Ideology and social institutions, in turn, serve to reproduce and perpetuate the economic class structure. Thus, Marx viewed the exploitative economic arrangements of capitalism as the real foundation upon which the superstructure of social, political, and intellectual consciousness is built. (Figure 1 depicts this model of historical materialism.)

Marx's view of history might seem completely cynical or pessimistic, were it not for the possibilities of change revealed by his method of dialectical analysis. (The Marxist dialectical method, based on Hegel's earlier idealistic dialectic, focuses attention on how an existing social arrangement, or thesis, generates its social opposite, or antithesis, and on how a qualitatively different social form, or synthesis, emerges from the resulting struggle.) Marx was an optimist. He believed that any stage of history based on exploitative economic arrangements generated within itself the seeds of its own destruction. For instance, feudalism, in which land owners exploited the peasantry, gave rise to a class of town-dwelling merchants, whose dedication to making profits eventually led to the bourgeois revolution and the modern capitalist era. Similarly, the class relations of capitalism will lead inevitably to the next stage, socialism. The class relations of capitalism embody a contradiction: capitalists need workers, and vice versa, but the economic interests of the two groups are fundamentally at odds. Such contradictions mean inherent conflict and instability, the class struggle. Adding to the instability of the capitalist system are the inescapable needs for ever-wider markets and ever-greater investments in capital to maintain the profits of capitalists. Marx expected that the resulting economic cycles of expansion and contraction, together with tensions that will build as the working class gains greater understanding of its exploited position (and thus attains class consciousness), will eventually culminate in a socialist revolution.

Despite this sense of the unalterable logic of history, Marxists see the need for social criticism and for political activity to speed the arrival of socialism, which, not being based on private property, is not expected to involve as many contradictions and conflicts as capitalism. Marxists believe that social theory and political practice are dialectically intertwined, with theory enhanced by political involvement and with political practice necessarily guided by theory. Intellectuals ought, therefore, to engage inpraxis, to combine political criticism and political activity. Theory itself is seen as necessarily critical and value-laden, since the prevailing social relations are based uponalienating and dehumanizing exploitation of the labor of the working classes.

Marx's ideas have been applied and reinterpreted by scholars for over a hundred years, starting with Marx's close friend and collaborator, Friedrich Engels (1825-95), who supported Marx and his family for many years from the profits of the textile factories founded by Engels' father, while Marx shut himself away in the library of the British Museum. Later, Vladimir I. Lenin (1870-1924), leader of the Russian revolution, made several influential contributions to Marxist theory. In recent years Marxist theory has taken a great variety of forms, notably the world-systems theory proposed by Immanuel Wallenstein (1974, 1980) and the comparative theory of revolutions put forward by Theda Skocpol (1980). Marxist ideas have also served as a starting point for many of the modern feminist theorists. Despite these applications, Marxism of any variety is still a minority position among American sociologists.

Theory Greats

One of the main components of your workbook is to relate your topic to the tradition of sociological theory. 9 times during the course of the semester, you must engage in a mental dialogue with one of the

past or present towering figures of the discipline. Take some insight from the theory or work of the figure and apply it to your own topic.

In practice what that means is that you should read over the relevant chapter or chapters of *One World* and then make an entry of about one page, concerning the application of the theory to your topic. Below, I have written ten thumbnail sketches of those figures, to make it easier, but the sketches are designed to supplement rather than to substitute for the reading. They are also designed to give you some sense of the human face behind the theories.

Any serious engagement or dialogue with the theories is acceptable. There are no right (or wrong) answers to the assignment. You are not responsible for doing library research to find out what the theorist may have said about your topic; you are only being asked to think about what they would say, based on the assigned reading. Not only could you take an idea or argument from the theorist and apply it to your topic, but also you could make an argument that the theorist is irrelevant to your topic. It may be that you think they have nothing useful to contribute, either because their whole approach is essentially wrong, in your view, or because it is true and useful for other topics, but not for yours.

Note, however, that a thoughtless dismissal is not acceptable. It is not OK to dismiss their relevance, either because you have not done the reading, or because they did not address your particular topic and you have not thought about what they would say about it. What makes these theorists important is that most other sociologists have regarded them as having developed really basic insights that are illuminating and applicable to almost every topic within sociology.

The nine entries to your workbook should be made by the Mondays of the dates shown. On 10/7, you may pick either Spencer or Mead. I shall only look your entries when the workbooks are handed in ,but I would strongly advise you not to get behind in the reading and in

these assignments. Some of the material from these 9 assignments should find its way into your final paper. One of the essential requirements of the paper is that it relate to the readings from *One World* in an integral way. Exactly how the theories of these figures will relate to your topic will depend on the kind of paper you are writing.

Ten Great Figures in Sociology

One approach to sociological theory looks at the writings of the great figures of the discipline. There are about two dozen figures with whom any sociologist is familiar -- or at least acquainted. The towering classic figures are Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber. They established the principal paradigms of the discipline. In the mid-twentieth century, Parsons' development of Durkheimian functionalism and Mill's development of marxian conflict theory established the main lines of theory important today. While there would, no doubt, be more debate about the status of living sociologists, most practicing sociologists are acquainted with the works of Stinchcombe, Wilson and Habermas.

Sociologists	Doctrines	Due
1. Karl Marx (1818-1883)	Socialism	1/29
2. Emile Durkheim (1858-1916)	Functionalism	2/5
3. Max Weber (1864-1920)	Organization Theory	2/12
4. Hebert Spencer (1820-1903)	Social Darwinism	2/26
5. George Herbert Mead (1863-1931)	Symbolic Interactions	2/26
6. Talcott Parsons (1902-1979)	Structural Functionalism	3/12
7. C. Wright Mills (1916-1961)	Power Elite Conflict Theory	3/19
8. Arthur Stinchcombe (1935-	Theory Construction Movement	3/26

9. William Julius Wilson (1940-	Contemporary Conflict Theory	4/9
10. Joe Feagin	Institutional racism and sexism	4/16

1. Karl Marx (1818-1883), socialism and Conflict theory.

Ideas: History is the history of class struggle. All that is solid melts into air. Men's ideas change with changes in the conditions of their material existence.

Karl Marx was the founder of conflict theory, which argues that the competition of individuals and groups for wealth and power is the fundamental process shaping social structure. For conflict theories, basic questions about a social structure are "Who gets what and why?" Marx was born just after the monarchical restorations that concluded the Napoleonic wars. He studied philosophy at Berlin and then edited a radical newspaper, which argued that the privileges of privileged groups blocks progress. This brought him into conflict with the authorities, and he had to flee from Germany to France and then to England. There, he lived in poverty (most of his children died from lack of food and medicine), wrote, and together with Fredrick Engels, organized the First International Workingmen's Association.

Marx believed that over the long run, the conflict of groups produces a progressive development of greater equality, democracy, autonomy and individuality, as different forms of privilege are abolished. He believed that this progress only occurs when the rule of privileged groups (slaveholders, aristocrats) is overthrown, leading to a more inclusive society. First the relationships of personal subordination, characteristic of slavery and feudalism are replaced by relationships in the market. But in a capitalist society, Marx believed, the fact that owners (capitalists, the Bourgeoisie) can accumulate vast resources and can control the livelihood of others (workers, the Proletariat), allows them to dominate the society by political corruption, the whip of hunger, etc. He believed that the abolition of monarchy and of

aristocratic class abolished one kind of privilege, but produces "wage slavery," which can only be ended by the abolition of private ownership of means of production.

In the 1960's, the rise of conflict theories, stressing the importance of stratification, class, conflict and material interests led to increased interest in Marx. Many conflict theorists are not Marxists, and there are many different varieties of Marxism, but virtually all conflict theorists recognize that Marx's theories raise fundamental questions about inequality, social structure and social dynamics. We shall approach Marxian theory in terms of the dynamics of positive feedback and Monopoly. In some ways, the most natural entry is in terms of the last four presidents of the American Sociological Association: Feagen, Massey, Reskin and Burawoy.

Basic concepts: class, class struggle, Bourgeoisie, Proletariat, surplus value (the source of property incomes: profit, interest and rent), alienation, ideology, exploitation,

2. Emile Durkheim(1858-1916), functionalist theory.

Ideas: social integration; structural differentiation. Social facts must be explained by other social facts.

Emile Durkheim established sociology as a quantitative, academic social science, and established the functionalist paradigm in sociology. His analysis of suicide was the model for the scientific analysis of social rates as social facts which have to be explained causally rather than interpreted psychologically or judged morally. His first work, *The Division of labor in Society* is partly a critique of Spencer=s individualism. While Marx saw the division of labor as a competition of individuals and groups, Durkheim saw it as a cooperative, functional specialization, regulated by the normative system. In a functional system, the different people, performing different tasks, are rewarded according to the functional importance of their contribution. Durkheim argued that social development can be explained by the increased differentiation of functions (the division of labor) and the moral transformation which is necessary to integrate a heterogeneous, differentiated society.

He was devoted to his family and trained his son to follow in his footsteps. When that son was killed in World War I, Durkheim went into a decline from which he never recovered.

His analyses of phenomena such as suicide, religion, crime, education, and the professions established functionalist sociological theory. However, within American sociology Durkheim=s work was largely ignored through the first half of the 20th century. He was regarded as a theory of the group mind because he believed that social structure and social dynamic should be understood aside from individual actions and individual motives. It was only after Parsons emphasized the importance of norms, values, functional systems and solidary groups that Durkheim became recognized as a classic figure.

Concepts: social fact, normative system, anomie, egoism, altruism, organic solidarity, forced division of labor.

3. Max Weber (1864- 1920), Interpretive and organizational sociology.

Ideas: The Protestant ethic; ideal types; theory of bureaucracy.

Max Weber became a professor of sociology at Heidelberg in Germany. His personal life was a mass of contradictions, which mirrored fundamental contradictions of European social thought and the emergent discipline of sociology. Some of the tensions in his analysis may have reflected the opposed world views of a devout, idealistic, socially concerned mother and his father, a hardnosed, materialistic German nationalist. These contradictions led to Webers complete breakdown before World War I. Central to these was the question, often posed in terms of the opposition between Durkheim and Marx, whether human action should be understood in terms of human ideals and motives or in terms of interests, constraints and power. Weber=s theory of action tried to consolidate analysis of both ideal and material motives.

His own life and marriage appears to have been marked by value conflicts. He suffered repeated episodes of nervous collapse and was able to actively function within his university post for only short periods of time.

He consolidated the method of the interpretive understanding of people's subjective motives, the method of AVerstehen. He consolidated and developed a rich mass of interpretive theory of religion in his volumes on Judaism, Christianity, the Protestant Ethic, Confucianism, Hinduism and Islam. At the same time, Weber consolidated institutional analysis of stratification, power, economic structure and bureaucratic organization. His analysis of A rationalization or the development of rational capitalism, rational bureaucracy and the rational state attempted to describe the basic differences between modern and traditional institutions. On the one hand, he believed that the modern growth of rationality (science, education, bureaucratic structures, governments of law, etc.) was

inevitable because modern bureaucratic structures are more effective than traditional structures. But on the other hand, he believed that this development leads to an iron cage: the disenchantment of the world, the restriction of human spontaneity and the erosion of human values.

Concepts: ideal types; traditional v. modern society, traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic organizations.

(Note on Mead and Spencer: for 10/14, a propos of chapter 6 of *One World* students may chose to engage either Herbert Spencer or George Herbert Mead. Both of them were extremely well-known theorists at the beginning of the century, whose work was eclipsed, to some degree in the late 20th century, but is undergoing a revival at the present time.)

4. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and Social Darwinism

Ideas: progress; evolution;the survival of the fittest.

Herbert Spencer is both an early sociologist and also the father of social Darwinism, against which most early sociology was directed. He was the first English speaking theorist to call himself a Asociologist, and through the first decade of the 20th century, his works were the most popular works of sociology. His social Darwinist doctrines of Asurvival of the fittest, Alaissez faire and the "night watchman state" became the conventional wisdom of most English speaking social theory from 1890 to 1920, celebrated by sociologists such as W. G. Sumner and by robber barons such as Andrew Carnagie.

Spencer saw individualism and competition as the key to social progress, and he argued that government programs are ineffective and lead to dependency. The individualism and the biological reductionism of Social Darwinism was in conflict with the basic insight that human behavior is socially shaped by culture, families, religion, class, gender, schools, organizations and other groups. After the Great Depression, the Holocaust and World War II, Social Darwinist theory was eclipsed. From the 1950's to the 1980's, it hardly appears in sociology texts and is

largely rejected by sociologists. However, since 1990, as many people criticized the welfare state and affirmative action, works such as *The Bell Curve, The g Factor,* and *The New American Dilemma* have represented a resurgence of these doctrines within psychology, political thought and economics, driven by the new conservatism. Those who oppose the welfare state [progressive income tax, public education, minimum wage, welfare, public health, etc.] stemming from the New Deal have often recalled Spencer's theories, which were deeply antagonistic to the welfare state. *The Assault on Equality* is a criticism of *The Bell Curve*'s use of genetic arguments about IQ to account for racial and individual differences in life chances and for such social problems as crime, poverty, unemployment, family breakdown and academic failure.

5. George Herbert Mead: Symbolic Interaction

The Chicago school of sociology at the University of Chicago was the center of the growth of sociology in the United States. George Herbert Mead was the center, or at least one center, of that Department.He is regarded as the founding theorist of symbolic interaction the view that human actions are governed by the meanings that actors give to their situations, and that these meanings are established in interactions. This idea provided a general framework for the analysis of individual socialization and education, for the analysis of class, race and ethnic groups in Chicago, and for the analysis of groups and neighborhoods in Chicago -- gangs, prostitutes, slums, etc. For Mead, the center of one's socialization was the development of a "generalized other" and thus of the ability to take the standpoint of the other members of the society. The formation of a "generalized other" allows one to communicate with others and to interact with them.

A revival of symbolic interaction today is driven partly by skepticism about there being "one true story" about anything. Symbolic interaction has always stressed that there are many different viewpoints a ways of looking at the world (definitions of the situation)

associated with different structures of interaction. This means that symbolic interaction is often skeptical of the possibility of any objective or predictive social science. Integrationists believe that different actions would follow from different meaning systems and since interaction can lead to development of many different meaning systems, human action cannot be predicted. Most sociologists regard this as a council of despair. The rise of identity theories and of multiculturalism (feminism, Afrocentric theory, Queer theory, Third-worldism etc.) has often been formulated in ways close to symbolic interaction.

Although Mead wrote a number of articles, he could never get around to publishing a systematic and definitive account of his own theory. His reputation is largely based on *Mind Self and Society*, which are essentially the lecture notes to his popular lecture course. But besides the fact that a lecture is often informal and inexact, the lectures changed from year to year, and so after Mead's death there were several competing claims to articulate the essence of social psychology and "symbolic interaction."

Mead's own analysis did not ignore the macro-social issues of social class, power, social integration, and social institutions, but they are ambiguous. He made clear that he regarded property and class as variable social institutions, rather than part of man's biological nature, and he argued against "caste" sentiment. But it is unclear whether he regarded as "caste," any large difference in life chances, or whether the caste sentiment he opposed was only the kind of aristocratic and racial subordination which had already been abolished.

Ideas: "Property is not the attitude of a dog to a bone."

Concepts: Self, I, me, interaction, generalized other, universal human society.

6.Talcott Parsons (1902- 1978), Voluntarism, Structural-functionalism.

Ideas: "Who now read Spencer?Structural-functionalism. Society as a self-regulating system, regulated by the norms which are guided by the value system

Talcott Parsons studied at Heidelberg, shortly after Weber died. Parsons then taught at Harvard form some 50 years, where he trained the bulk of sociologists who became important in the second half of the twentieth century, including the recent president of the American Sociological Association, Neil Smelser. Parsons translated many of the works of Weber, and he popularized the works of Weber and Durkheim within American sociology.

His early works developed the voluntaristic theory of action C the idea that human action can only be understood as being aimed at some end, determined by values, within a structure of norms. The opening question to *The Structure of Social Action,* AWho now read Spencer? refers both to the decline of Spencers individualist *laissez fair* politics and to the decline in interest in large-scale theories of historical development.

During Parsons middle period, this led to his developing a view that social, economic, political and legal structures (as well as psychological and cultural structures) should be understood as functionally integrated systems. Ultimate values, socially enshrined in the religious system, play a key role in holding together all of these systems together. And in his later work, this generated a complex system of double interchanges of generalized media.

Concepts: Theory of action; normative integration; the four-function paradigm

7. C. Wright Mills (1916- 1962), Conflict theory

Ideas: The sociological imagination. The power elite.

C. Wright Mills is usually regarded as the founder of modern conflict theory. He died at age 45, but in the 12 years from 1950 to 1962, he published nearly a dozen books which became a focus of

opposition to Parsons within American sociology and of the revival of conflict theory in the 1960's. *The Sociological Imagination* argued that the key task of a sociologist is to see social structures and personal actions in their interrelations. Social structures don't just happen; they are the outcome of struggles and negotiations between people with different interests and different resources. And those people and resources, in turn are shaped by the larger structures and by the unequal distribution of power and resources in the society.

Thus Mills defines the sociological imagination as the ability to see the micro-level of individual action and the macro-level of social structure in relation to each other. For example, Mills distinguishes personal troubles (being unemployed; having one's marriage break up) from social issues (having a substantial fraction of the work force unemployed; having a substantial fraction of marriages break up.) An individual may be unemployed fall all kinds of personal reasons, such as poor work habits, but to explain a high rate of unemployment by such factors (supposing a sudden magical change in people's work habits during the Great Depression) is merely an evasion and a failure to deal with the real dynamics and stresses in the economy.

The Power Elite (1956) argued that at the upper levels of American society, a power elite, or military industrial complex had emerged from the fusion of the corporate elite, the Pentagon, and the executive branch of government. He argued that the interests of this elite were often opposed to those of the mass of the population and that their policies were headed toward increased escalation of conflict, production of weapons of mass destruction, and possibly the annihilation of the human race.

8. Arthur Stinchcombe (1940-   ) The Theory Construction Movement

Ideas: falsification: testing theories by deriving consequences from them. Systems: representing dynamics as simple feedback loops.

Stinchcombe was one of the founding figures of what came to be known as the "theory construction movement." While many people had criticized Parsons for proposing "grand theories" rather than theories of the "middle range," it remained very difficult to formulate empirical tests of the big ideas from functionalist sociology or from conflict theory.

Specifically, *Constructing Social Theories* argued that while the theories of Marx and Durkheim are complex and operate on a number of different levels, their dynamic core can be represented by some simple systems models.

Concepts: hypothesis testing; falsification; theories of the middle range; systems; negative feedback loops.

9. William Julius Wilson (active)

Ideas: the underclass; loss of jobs as driving underclass formation; universalistic policy

William Julius Wilson, president of the American Sociological Association in 1997, is a good example of a contemporary conflict theorist. He is most closely associated with the analysis of the "underclass" first in *The Truly Disadvantaged* and most recently in *When Work Disappears*.

His early books, *Power Racism and Privilege* and *The Declining Significance of Race* argued that racism and racial inequality must be understood in terms of the larger structures of class and power in the United States today. Although some people have taken him to say that racism no longer exists, he insists that the point is that the structures of racial privilege and racial inequality have changed. rather than a set of legal restrictions of direct personal discrimination, what is central today is the structures of jobs, personal networks, and residences, leading to social isolation and lack of access to jobs.

Thus, the *Truly Disadvantaged* along with his 1997 presidential address, argued that some 10,000,000 industrial, minimum wage or

more jobs have disappeared from the "rust belt" and this led to the development of the subculture of the underclass,

Concepts

10. Jurgen Habermas neoFunctionalism, neoMarxism and Communications Ethics

Ideas: the ideal speech situation. A communications ethic.

Habermas is probably the most important social theorist writing in Europe today. He is heir to the rich tradition of "critical theory" associated with a group of German theorists (particularly Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse) who fled Germany during the Nazi era. Habermas was Adorno's assistant in the 1950's and 1960's and has written about 30 books since then.   Many of those concentrate on the philosophical issues of post-modernism. Against postmodernists such as Foucault, Lyotard or Derrida (or, in sociology, Seidman and Lemert) Habermas defends the notion that there is a real progress from pre-modern to modern societies.

The concept of the "ideal speech situation" is the idea that there are certain kinds of consensus that would emerge if it was really possible to fully discuss the merits of all positions, without coercion or manipulation. In science, we often believe that the ideas which would win out in the long run, in the absence of coercion, are the ideas which are true. Habermas believes that something similar is also true in normative realm of morals and in the aesthetic realm of the arts. In practice, we do not live in the "ideal speech situation," and it is possible for dictators, privileged groups, or special interests to fool at least some of the people at least some of the time.   But it is still useful for us to think of the true, the good or the beautiful as what would be agreed upon in an ideal speech situation.

In the last decade, his books on history, philosophy, politics and culture have been one of the main "modernist" positions, arguing that it is possible and desirable to specify the characteristics of a rational and

just society, and that there is a real movement in that direction. He thus stands opposed to those who believe that social theory ought not to be concerned with such things and to those who believe that one person's rationality and justice is another person's insanity and oppression.

Definition of Conflict Theory

A social science perspective that holds that stratification is dysfunctional and harmful in society, with inequality perpetuated because it benefits the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor.

Source: boundless

- The Conflict Perspective The conflict perspective, or *conflict theory*, derives from the ideas of Karl Marx, who believed society is a dynamic entity constantly undergoing change driven by class conflict
- When studying a social institution or phenomenon, they ask, "Who benefits from this element of society?" *conflict theory* and Change While functionalism emphasizes stability, *conflict theory* emphasizes change
- Criticism of *conflict theory* Predictably, *conflict theory* has been criticized for its focus on change and neglect of social stability

Sociological Theories of Deviance

- *conflict theory* The third main sociological theory of deviance is *conflict theory*
- An example of *conflict theory* would be the Occupy Wall Street movement that began in the fall of 2011
- Their actions and perspectives demonstrate the use of *conflict theory* to explain social deviance

The Feminist Perspective

The Conflict Perspective: Class Conflict and Scarce Resources

- According to *conflict theory*, social stratification benefits the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor
- According to *conflict theory*, capitalism, an economic system based on free-market competition, particularly benefits the rich by assuming that the "trickle down" mechanism is the best way to spread the benefits of wealth across society

Intergenerational Conflict

The conflict perspective of aging is a strand of general sociological *conflict theory*, which is the theory that sees conflict as a normal aspect of social life rather than as an abnormal occurrence

Social   conflict: is   the struggle for agency or power in society.   Social conflict or group conflict occurs when two or more actors oppose each other in social interaction, reciprocally exerting social power in an effort to attain scarce or incompatible goals and prevent the opponent from attaining them. It is a social relationship wherein the action is oriented intentionally for carrying out the actor's own will against the resistance of other party or parties.[citation needed]

Conflict Theory

Conflict   theory   emphasizes   interests,   rather than norms and values, in conflict. The pursuit of interests generates various types of conflict. Thus conflict is seen as a normal aspect of social life rather an abnormal occurrence. Competition over resources is often the cause of conflict. The three tenets of this theory are the following: 1) Society is composed of different groups that compete for resources. 2) While societies may portray a sense of cooperation, a continual power struggle exists between social groups as they pursue their own interests. Within societies, certain groups control specific resources and means of production. 3) Social groups will use resources to their own advantage in the pursuit of their goals. This often means that those who lack control over resources will be taken

advantage of. As a result, many dominated groups will struggle with other groups in attempt to gain control. The majority of the time, the groups with the most resources will gain or maintain power (due to the fact that they have the resources to support their power). The idea that those who have control will maintain control is known as The Matthew Effect

One branch of conflict theory is critical criminology. This term is based upon the view that the fundamental causes of crime is oppression, resulting from social and economic forces operating within a given society. This perspective stems from German philosopher, Karl Marx, who believed the justice system and laws favor the rich and powerful in a society and that the poor are punished far more severely for much smaller crimes.

Another branch of conflict theory is the conflict theory of aging. This came about in the 1980s due to a setback in federal spending and a loss of jobs across the nation;[citation needed] the older generations competed with the younger generation for employment. Among those that were the worst effected were women, low-income families, and minorities.

Karl Marx

In the Critique of the Political Economy Marx writes: In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At some stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or – this merely

expresses the same thing in legal terms – with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters (legcuffs). Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.

In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic – in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society.

Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation. In broad outline, the Asiatic, ancient,feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society. The bourgeois mode of production is the last antagonistic form of the social process of production antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism but of an antagonism that emanates from the individuals' social conditions of existence – but the productive forces developing within bourgeois society create also the material

conditions for a solution of this antagonism. The prehistory of human society accordingly closes with this social formation.

Karl Marx, a German revolutionary, emphasized his materialist views on ownership and means of production. He argued that what is most valued is a result of human labor and founded his ideas based on a capitalistic community, meaning a majority of the money is owned by only a small percentage. This causes a distinction between two classes, the industrialists and the working class. The industrialists, the ones that make up the small percentage, own the means of production. The working class are those earning their wages by selling their labor. Problems become noticeable because the upper class is looking to get the most production possible for the least amount of money. A Surplus value is created; the profit industrialists hold onto caused by workers producing more than the employers actually need to repay the cost of hiring laborers. Another occurrence is exploitation; when workers receive less money than what their labor is worth. Marx believed that the gap between industrialists and the laborers would continue to grow. The industrialists would become more and wealthier, and the laborers continue to move towards poverty. Conflict theory is seen throughout relationships and interactions between two groups of people including races, opposite sexes, and religions.

Max Weber and Karl Marx have two different approaches to the conflict theory. Marx supports the ideas of deviance, claiming that individuals choose to engage in such rebellious and conflicting behavior as a response to the inequalities of the capitalist system. Weber discusses the conflict of stratification and its effects on power in society. He stresses property, prestige, and power as the main influences to the conflicting behaviors of groups in society.

Karl Marx argued: "The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and range. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. With the increasing value of the world of

things proceeds in direct proportion to the devaluation of the world of men. Labour produces not only commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a commodity -- and does so in the proportion in which it produces commodities generally."

A commodity is a social use value produced by its owner not for personal consumption but for exchange. Marx believed that an entrepreneur has more and more to keep up with the more his company and power expandscitation needed. It becomes more difficult each time his range of power increases. Eventually, the entrepreneur himself will become a commodity because he/she will no longer be able to keep up with their business and will have to put themselves (their company) up for sale on the market.

Stratification

Stratification is the distribution of a valued good in levels, or could be looked as the inequalities among individuals and groups. Weber determined that there are three levels of stratification and those include: property (economic class), prestige (status), and power (party). Property is related to control and ownership; prestige is the position that gains value determined by interactions with others; power is influence, relations, and position.

Systems of Stratification

These systems share 3 characteristics. They are as follows:

✓ The rankings apply to social categories of people who share a common characteristic without necessarily interacting or identifying with each other.

✓ People's life experiences and opportunities depend on the ranking of their social category.

✓ The ranks of different social categories change very slowly over time.

Conflict Interests

Conflict of interest is a type of conflict interest. We can define a conflict of interest as a situation in which a person has a private or personal interest sufficient to appear to influence the objective exercise of his or her official duties as, say, a public official, an employee, or a professional." "Social conflict is not limited to hostile or antagonistic opposition; it is not wholly a clash of coercive powers as often is implied, but of any opposing social powers". Social conflict is usually recognized through violence, and physical behavior. Yet, it's more that just fighting, and killing one another. At times, it can deal with it throw a simple town in a conversation. It is acknowledged by someone's power."

Dr. Coser, a sociologist, disagrees with the majority of American sociologists who, he contends, have badly neglected and misunderstood the concept and function of social conflict. He defines social conflict as '… a struggle over the values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals'. He believes that the prevalent tendency is to look upon conflict as dysfunctional and pathological.

Types of social conflict:
- ✓ conflict involving social positions
- ✓ conflict of interest
- ✓ role conflict - conflict involving social roles

Ralf Dahrendorf Conflict Theory

- Associated primarily with the work of **Ralf Dahrendorf (1929-)**, conflict theory arose primarily as a reaction against structural functionalism and in many ways represents its antithesis. Where structural functionalism sees a near harmony of purpose from norms and values, conflict theory sees coercion, domination, and power. Dahrendorf saw both theories as addressing different situations, depending upon the focus of the study. According to

Dahrendorf, functionalism is useful for understanding consensus while conflict theory is appropriate for understanding conflict and coercion.

- For Dahrendorf the distribution of authority was a key to understanding social conflict. Authority is located not within people but within various positions. Authority is created by the expectation of certain types of action associated with particular positions, including subordination of others and subordination to others. Various positions of authority exist within associations. The fault lines that spring up around competing loci of authority generate conflicting groups. The conflict between these groups pervades their interaction, with the result that authority is often challenged and tenuous.

- Much as Merton looked at latent and manifest functions, Dahrendorf identified latent and manifest interests, or unconscious and conscious interests. The connection between these two concepts was a major problematic for conflict theory. Dahrendorf posited the existence of three types of groups: *quasi-groups*, *interest groups*, and *conflict groups*. Dahrendorf felt that, under ideal circumstances, conflict could be explained without reference to any other variables.

- Conflict theory has been criticized for being ideologically radical, underdeveloped, and unable to deal with order and stability. Both functionalism and conflict theory share the weakness of being able to explain only portions of social life.

Conflict Sociology

- **Randall Collins** developed a form of conflict theory that focuses far more on micro-level interactions than does Dahrendorf. It criticized previous conflict theories and theories of stratification as "failures," and attempted to focus on the role of individual action in the process of stratification. His theory of stratification is rooted in Marxist, phenomenological, and ethnomethodological concerns, focusing on material arrangements and exploitation in real-life situations. Collins extended his theory to deal with various dimensions of stratification, such as gender and age inequality, as well as looking at stratification within formal organizations.

I sent you a bunch of links on your other post. They explain the concepts really well. Anyways, here is the down and dirty: (I'm giving you a few definitions for each in case the wording of one is unclear for you)

Conflict Theory

A sociological approach that assumes that social behavior is best understood in terms of conflict or tension between competing groups.

The sociological approach that views groups in society as engaged in a continuous power struggle for control of scarce resources. A social theory that emphasizes the role of power, authority, coercion, and manipulation in maintaining social order.

A theoretical approach, such as Marxism, focusing on the notion that society is based on an unequal distribution of advantage and is characterised by a conflict of interests between the advantaged and the disadvantaged.

Symbolic Interactions

- ✓ A theoretical approach in sociology which focuses on social reality as constructed through the daily interaction of individuals and places strong emphasis on the role of symbols (gestures, signs, and language) as core elements of this interaction.
- ✓ A theoretical approach which focuses on the role of symbols and language in human interaction.

Functionalism

A sociological approach that emphasizes the way that parts of a society are structured to maintain its stability.

- ✓ The sociological approach that views society as a stable, orderly system.

A theoretical perspective that focuses on the way various parts of the social system contribute to the continuity of society as well as the affect the various parts have on one another.

- ✓ A theoretical perspective, associated with Durkheim and Parsons, based on an analogy between social systems and organic systems. It claims that the character of a society's various institutions must be understood in terms of the function each performs in enabling the smooth running of society as a whole.

Topic Summary: In sociology, Conflict theory states that society or an organization functions so that each individual participant and its groups struggle to maximize their benefits, which inevitably contributes to social change such as political changes and revolutions. The theory is mostly applied to explain conflict between social classes, proletariat versus bourgeoisie; and in ideologies, such as capitalism versus socialism. While Conflict theory successfully describes instances where conflict occurs between groups of people, for a variety of reasons, it is questionable whether this represents the ideal human society. Although

some theorists, such as Karl Marx, have claimed that growth and development occur through the conflict between opposing parties, cooperation is also a source of healthy growth. It needs to be determined under which situations, if any, conflict is necessary to produce change, as compared to those under which cooperation and harmony lead to the greatest advances.

- ✓ In sociology, Conflict theory states that society or an organization functions so that each individual participant and its groups struggle to maximize their benefits, which inevitably contributes to social change such as political changes and revolutions (fromwww.newworldencyclopedia.org)
- ✓ Earlier social conflict theorists argue that money is the mechanism which creates socialdisorder (from en.wikipedia.org)
- ✓ Conflict theories are perspectives in social science which emphasize the social, political or material inequality of a social group , which critique the broad socio-political system, or which otherwise detract from structural functionalism and ideological conservativism (from en.wikipedia.org)
- ✓ Conflict theories are perspectives in social science which emphasize the social , political or material inequality of a social group , which critique the broad socio-political system, or which otherwise detract from structural functionalism and ideological conservativism (from en.wikipedia.org)
- ✓ The theory further states that society is created from ongoing Social conflict between various groups (from en.wikipedia.org)
- ✓ The theory is mostly applied to explain conflict between social classes , proletariat versus bourgeoisie; and in ideologies, such as capitalism versus socialism (fromwww. Newworldencyclopedia.org)

- ✓ It also refers to various types of positive social interaction that may occur within social relationships. (from en.wikipedia.org)
- ✓ To argue that property relations have become passé and that we should focus exclusively on the authority relations within imperatively coordinated institutions is silly; worse, it is a sure-fire way to misread the class dynamics shaping the world today (frompeople.eku.edu)
- ✓ Usually, this body of thought is known as 'critical' theory in philosophy, and 'conflict' theory in the social sciences (from www.ehow.com)
- ✓ The Mystery House at its worst is still a hell of a time! (from www.myspace.com)
- ✓ I doubt that social reality can be torn apart so easily (from people.eku.edu)conflict theories draw attention to power differentials, such as class conflict , and generally contrast historically dominant ideologies . (from en.nwikipedia.org)
- ✓ Although some theorists, such as Karl Marx , have claimed that growth and development occur through the conflict between opposing parties, cooperation is also a source of healthy growth (from www.newworldencyclopedia.org)
- ✓ Conflict, or critical theory , is a complex philosophical attack on modern political life (fromwww.ehow.com)
- ✓ The chief method of critical writers begins with the idea that social life is based on the. (from www.ehow.com)
- ✓ In this case, the conflict is still manageable and if parties proceed carefully, they need not use contentious tactics to achieve their goal of not having the coach s and the student s name unnecessarily dragged in a pile of bad publicity. (fromwww.internationalpeaceandconflict.org)

Conflict TheoryAdapted from Dr. Scott Plunkett's FCS 432 Course Packand Professor Scott Williams' Class Notes

Overview

- Conflict theory has wide and varied roots that range from the individual intra-psychic approach of Freud to the systemic societal approach of Karl Marx.
- Became popular during the 1960's when feminists and African Americans challenged the current family theories
- Conflict theory examines the ways in which groups of people disagree, struggle for power and compete for resources (such as wealth and prestige)

Thomas Hobbes: How is social order possible?

First law: self-preservation and self-assertion

- *Human beings think of themselves first and will assert themselves to exist*

Second law: humans form a social contract giving up rights of self-interest to live in a stable and secure society of laws

- We want to live in a stable world, so will give up certain rights and form arrangements with others to have that stable world.
- Much of human interest is regulated and governed by laws, not negotiation

Conflict Theory and Families

- Conflict theory as applied to families challenges the myth that families are harmonious, and instead focuses on the ability of the family to deal with differences, change, and conflict
- Conflict Theory begins by asserting that conflict in families is the normal state of affairs and that family dynamics can be understood by identifying the sources of conflict and the sources of power.
- Solutions are a result of:
    1. Establishing better communication
    2. Developing empathy and understanding

3. Being motivated to change

Assumptions of conflict theory:

1. If you have interaction, you have conflict

- No human society or group exists which does not possess conflicts of interest
- Conflict is necessary for growth and social change

2. Conflict and change are normal, inevitable and ubiquitous (i.e., everywhere) in family relationships and society

3. Conflict is endemic

- Goal is to manage conflict so it does notescalate to damaging levels to reduce the group to totally separate individuals.
- The problem with allowing conflict to increase to damaging levels is the couple or group will inevitably split apart and individuals will become separate.
- Oftentimes this is what occurs in a divorce with chronic unresolved anger and conflict.

4. **There is a scarcity of resources**

A. With surplus of resources, humans pursuing self-interest would not pursue conflict

B. Our conflict arises because there is not enough resources for all to have what they want.

C. If everyone could get what they want, there would never be conflict.

So for example, three brothers are watching the television and one decides to play Nintendo. Since the boys cannot play the game and watch the TV show at the same time the brothers begin to argue. The limited resource is the television. If there were more than one television, the conflict may not occur. This would be because there would be a surplus. However, if each brother wanted to watch or play

on one particular television and not the other, the resource would be limited and the conflict would re-occur.

Think about how SES influences conflict according to conflict theory

5. Human societies consist of varying degrees of inherently unequal elements

- Therefore hierarchies emerge since power is not distributed equally
- Individuals and groups usually try to maximize their own positions within the hierarchies instead of completely changing the society.

Concepts and terms

Conflict

The confrontation between individuals or groups over scarce resources.

Disagreement, clashes, and discordance in interests or ideas

Consensus

con·sen·sus (ken-sèn¹ses) *noun*

- General agreement or accord: *Government by consensus.*
- An opinion or position reached by a group as a whole or by majority will: *The voters' consensus was that the measure should be adopted*
- Preferable outcome of negotiation
- Both sides persuasively present their positions
- Consensus is achieved when parties of a negotiation agree
- Agreement is a vital component of a consensus.

Opposite of consensus is disagreement

- *Both parties may negotiate, but if no agreement is met it is called a 'disagreement'.*

Competition for resources

- In a family, members will compete for limited resources such as power, time, affection, privilege, material items, money, food.

Conflict is endemic

en·dem·ic (èn-dèm¹îk) *adjective*; prevalent; widespread

Prevalent in or peculiar to a particular locality, region, or people: *diseases endemic to the tropics.*

Inequalities

- Within the family inequalities will exist such as parents having more **power** than children.
- The unequal distribution creates **hierarchies** within the family which depict family structure and influence family functioning

Negotiation

- Major technique used in families and groups to manage conflict
- Occurs when both parties state their goals and then use resources to induce or coerce the other to move closer to their goal
- Both sides must express what their interest is. Of course each side wants to see the other side adjust their position to their own side. People will do many things to see their own goal met.

As mentioned above the preferable outcome of negotiation is:

- Both sides persuasively present their positions
- Consensus is achieved when parties of a negotiation agree
- Agreement is a vital component of a consensus.

Resources

- Defined as all knowledge, skills, techniques, and materials that are at the ready disposal of a person or group
- Resources provide a potential base for power

Other important concepts of conflict theory include:

- cooperation
- competition
- threats
- negotiation
- bargaining
- aggression.

Social conflict theory is about different social classes

Social conflict theory really begins with the work of Karl Marx. This theory encompasses the idea that there are different social classes within any society.

These social classes can be summed up into two groups: the wealthy vs. the poor. The theory states that the wealthy consistently uses their power to oppress the poor.

Sometimes, this form of oppression comes with brute force. Other times, this type of oppression comes through economics. Some theorists also believe that money is always at the root of social disorder.

Many examples of this theory can be found within modern societies today. Social conflict theory is present all around you if you look closely enough.

A Closer Look at Social Conflict Theory

In a classic summation of Marx's original social conflict theory, various theorists have used the example of the renter versus the landlord. Even though the renter continues to pay an increasing amount of money to the landlord, the renter never gains any value or profit from this kind of transaction. Thus, the relationship between the landlord and the renter is unfair. This is a prime example of sociological conflict theory.

Another key example of social conflict theory is the general laborer. The laborer works within a factory or other industrial building, earns a wage, and goes home with a paycheck. This may seem fair until you take into consideration that the owner of that same factory must pay the worker a low wage in order to make any profit. Sociological conflict theory looks closely at these types of relationships.

Summation of the theory

We can summarize social conflict theory as:

- The exploitation of the lower class by the wealthy
- The unfair relationship between the worker/renter and the landlord/boss
- The idea that money will always bring about conflict

Conflict theory sociology is an interesting way to look at the world. Conflict theory may seem straightforward, but it isn't always so cut and dry. In order to understand society, this Marxist theory must be considered without forgetting about other forms of sociological conflict theory.

How do we collectively decide what we call a social problem? How do we decide who is at fault or to blame for the problem? In this article Nathan Palmer uses conflict theory to discuss how those with social power often use it to define social problems as the fault of the least powerful in society.

Stop what you're doing and think of the word most commonly used in the United States to describe when people from other countries come to the U.S. without the appropriate legal paper work. What do we tend to call that? I ask my students this question during the first week each semester and the answer they always give is, "illegal immigration". Now you may be thinking, "yeah, so what. Big deal", but stay with me. Why do we call it "illegal immigration"

Think of the industries that undocumented immigrants work in most often. Many undocumented immigrants work in low wage manual labor in agriculture, manufacturing, and in the service industry. So here's my question: do you think any of the products or services you've purchased were cheaper because the workers who produced it weren't paid a fair wage or given proper benefits? How much higher would your grocery bill be if we paid the workers who produced the food that fills your cart a fair living wage? Probably a lot, right? So that means that you personally are the direct beneficiary of what is commonly called "illegal immigration". You have more money in your pocket because of the undocumented workers in the United States. Or put more simply, consumers and corporations in the U.S. benefit from exploiting undocumented immigrant labor.

Conflict theory, one of the main theoretical camps of sociology, argues that those in power use their power to ensure that they stay in power. To this end, conflict theorists argue, those in power uses it to define social problems as the fault of the least powerful in society. With this in mind let's go back to our original question: why do we often call it "illegal immigration".

Three Major Perspectives in Sociology

Sociologists analyze social phenomena at different levels and from different perspectives. From concrete interpretations to sweeping generalizations of society and social behavior, sociologists study everything from specific events (the micro level of analysis of small social patterns) to the "big picture" (the macro level of analysis of large social patterns).

The pioneering European sociologists, however, also offered a broad conceptualization of the fundamentals of society and its workings. Their views form the basis for today's theoretical perspectives, orparadigms, which provide sociologists with an orienting framework—a philosophical position—for asking certain kinds of questions about society and its people.

Sociologists today employ three primary theoretical perspectives: the symbolic interactionist perspective, the functionalist perspective, and the conflict perspective. These perspectives offer sociologists theoretical paradigms for explaining how society influences people, and vice versa. Each perspective uniquely conceptualizes society, social forces, and human behavior (see Table 1).

Table-1 Sociological Perspectives

Sociological Perspective	Level of Analysis	Focus
1.Symbolic Interactionism	Micro	Use of symbol; Face to Face interactions
2. Functionalism	Macro	Relationship between the parts of society: how aspects of society are functional (adaptive)
3. Conflict	Macro	Competition for scarce resources; How the elite control the poor and weak.

The symbolic interactionist perspective

The symbolic interactionist perspective, also known as symbolic interactionism, directs sociologists to consider the symbols and details of everyday life, what these symbols mean, and how people interact with each other. Although symbolic interactionism traces its origins to Max Weber's assertion that individuals act according to their interpretation of the meaning of their world, the American philosopher George H. Mead (1863–1931) introduced this perspective to American sociology in the 1920s.

According to the symbolic interactionist perspective, people attach meanings to symbols, and then they act according to their subjective interpretation of these symbols. Verbal conversations, in which spoken words serve as the predominant symbols, make this subjective interpretation especially evident. The words have a certain meaning for the "sender," and, during effective communication, they hopefully have the same meaning for the "receiver." In other terms, words are not static "things"; they require intention and interpretation. Conversation is an interaction of symbols between individuals who constantly interpret the world around them. Of course, anything can serve as a symbol as long as it refers to something beyond itself.

83

Written music serves as an example. The black dots and lines become more than mere marks on the page; they refer to notes organized in such a way as to make musical sense. Thus, symbolic interactionists give serious thought to how people act, and then seek to determine what meanings individuals assign to their own actions and symbols, as well as to those of others.

Consider applying symbolic interactionism to the American institution of marriage. Symbols may include wedding bands, vows of life-long commitment, a white bridal dress, a wedding cake, a Church ceremony, and flowers and music. American society attaches general meanings to these symbols, but individuals also maintain their own perceptions of what these and other symbols mean. For example, one of the spouses may see their circular wedding rings as symbolizing "never ending love," while the other may see them as a mere financial expense. Much faulty communication can result from differences in the perception of the same events and symbols.

Critics claim that symbolic interactionism neglects the macro level of social interpretationthe "big picture." In other words, symbolic interactionists may miss the larger issues of society by focusing too closely on the "trees" (for example, the size of the diamond in the wedding ring) rather than the "forest" (for example, the quality of the marriage). The perspective also receives criticism for slighting the influence of social forces and institutions on individual interactions.

The functionalist perspective

According to the **functionalist perspective**, also called **functionalism**, each aspect of society is interdependent and contributes to society's functioning as a whole. The government, or state, provides education for the children of the family, which in turn pays taxes on which the state depends to keep itself running. That is, the family is dependent upon the school to help children grow up to have good jobs so that they can raise and support their own families. In

the process, the children become law-abiding, taxpaying citizens, who in turn support the state. If all goes well, the parts of society produce order, stability, and productivity. If all does not go well, the parts of society then must adapt to recapture a new order, stability, and productivity. For example, during a financial recession with its high rates of unemployment and inflation, social programs are trimmed or cut. Schools offer fewer programs. Families tighten their budgets. And a new social order, stability, and productivity occur.

Functionalists believe that society is held together by **social consensus**, or cohesion, in which members of the society agree upon, and work together to achieve, what is best for society as a whole. Emile Durkheim suggested that social consensus takes one of two forms:

- **Mechanical solidarity** is a form of social cohesion that arises when people in a society maintain similar values and beliefs and engages in similar types of work. Mechanical solidarity most commonly occurs in traditional, simple societies such as those in which everyone herds cattle or farms. Amish society exemplifies mechanical solidarity.

- In contrast, **organic solidarity** is a form of social cohesion that arises when the people in a society are interdependent, but hold to varying values and beliefs and engage in varying types of work. Organic solidarity most commonly occurs in industrialized, complex societies such those in large American cities like New York in the 2000s.

The functionalist perspective achieved its greatest popularity among American sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s. While European functionalists originally focused on explaining the inner workings of social order, American functionalists focused on discovering the functions of human behavior. Among these American functionalist sociologists is Robert Merton (b. 1910), who divides human functions

into two types: manifest functions are intentional and obvious, while latent functions are unintentional and not obvious. The manifest function of attending a church or synagogue, for instance, is to worship as part of a religious community, but its latent function may be to help members learn to discern personal from institutional values. With common sense, manifest functions become easily apparent. Yet this is not necessarily the case for latent functions, which often demand a sociological approach to be revealed. A sociological approach in functionalism is the consideration of the relationship between the functions of smaller parts and the functions of the whole.

Functionalism has received criticism for neglecting the negative functions of an event such as divorce. Critics also claim that the perspective justifies the status quo and complacency on the part of society's members. Functionalism does not encourage people to take an active role in changing their social environment, even when such change may benefit them. Instead, functionalism sees active social change as undesirable because the various parts of society will compensate naturally for any problems that may arise.

The conflict perspective

The conflict perspective, which originated primarily out of Karl Marx's writings on class struggles, presents society in a different light than do the functionalist and symbolic interactionist perspectives. While these latter perspectives focus on the positive aspects of society that contribute to its stability, the conflict perspectivefocuses on the negative, conflicted, and ever-changing nature of society. Unlike functionalists who defend the status quo, avoid social change, and believe people cooperate to effect social order, conflict theorists challenge the status quo, encourage social change (even when this means social revolution), and believe rich and powerful people force social order on the poor and the weak. Conflict theorists, for example, may interpret an "elite" board of regents raising tuition to pay for

esoteric new programs that raise the prestige of a local college as self-serving rather than as beneficial for students.

Whereas American sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s generally ignored the conflict perspective in favor of the functionalist, the tumultuous 1960s saw American sociologists gain considerable interest in conflict theory. They also expanded Marx's idea that the key conflict in society was strictly economic. Today, conflict theorists find social conflict between any groups in which the potential for inequality exists: racial, gender, religious, political, economic, and so on. Conflict theorists note that unequal groups usually have conflicting values and agendas, causing them to compete against one another. This constant competition between groups forms the basis for the ever-changing nature of society.

Critics of the conflict perspective point to its overly negative view of society. The theory ultimately attributes humanitarian efforts, altruism, democracy, civil rights, and other positive aspects of society to capitalistic designs to control the masses, not to inherent interests in preserving society and social order.

The American Drug War – a Conflict Theory Perspective

In the mid to late 20th Century, the United States has experienced several states of Cultural Revolution. The Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement, the anti-War Movement during the Vietnam era, and the increasing presence of a widespread, politically active and highly vocalized youth counterPremium2686 Words11 Pages

Karl Marx: Conflict Theory

The most influential socialist thinker from the 19th century is Karl Marx. Karl Marx can be considered a great philosopher, social scientist, historian or revolutionary. Marx proposed what is known as the conflict theory. The conflict theory looks at how certain social int

Premium890 Words4 Pages

White Collar Crime Social Interaction & Conflict Theory

Question 1: How do consumer fraud, false advertising, and price fixing exemplify the definition of white collar crime? What is white collar crime? White collar crime is defined as illegal or unethical acts that violate creditable responsibility of public trust committed by an individual or organizationPremium3941 Words16 Pages

Conflict Theory

Conflict Theory The modern society is a kind of an organization that consists of individual participants and social groups. These groups are engaged in a constant struggle the primary objective of which is to maximize individual profits of people and social groups.

Viewing the British Strike through the Conflict Theory of Sociology

British Education and Conflict Theory Amid the recent economic crisis, several countries have tried to reduce their budget deficits by implementing broad economic measures. The government of Britain has proposed a plan to do so by reducing government spending towards college grants.

Functionalism vs. Conflict Theory

Functionalism is the original and still dominant discipline of thought in the social sciences. As a construct of two forms of scientific investigation: the scientific approach and viewing the individual as a part of a social organism or social whole.

Social Conflict Theory

The social conflict paradigm is a theory based on society being a complex system characterized by inequality and conflict that generate social change. Personal life experiences dictate me to believe this theory is true.

Labeling and Conflict Theory

Abstract Labeling theory was felt in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Labeling theroy states that official reactio to the delinquent acts, help label youths as criminals, troublemakers, and outcasts and lock them in a cycleof escalating delinquent acts of social sanctions.

Conflict Theory

Tasha Easton March 19, 2007 Essay #2 Soci 181 Conflict Theory With the end of World War II three perspectives on sociological theories emerged-structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. These three theories reflected "national cultural and political trends"

Conflict Theory, Karl Marx, and the Communist Manifesto

Conflict Theory, Karl Marx, and The Communist Manifesto In order to understand Marx a few terms need to be defined. The first is Bourgeoisie; these are the Capitalists and they are the employers of wage laborers, and the owners of the means of production.

Conflict Theory of Marx

Lecture 10 Conflict theory of Karl Marx Sociology developed in Europe in the 19th century, primarily as an attempt to understand the

massive social and economic changes that had been sweeping across Western Europe in the 17th-19th centuries.

Conflict Theory

Thus, street crimes, even minor monetary ones are routinely punished quite severely, while large scale financial and business crimes are treated much more leniently. Theft of a television might receive a longer sentence than stealing millions through illegal business practices.

Comparing and Contrasting the Functionalist Perspective with That of the Conflict Theory

Comparing and contrasting the functionalist perspective with that of the conflict theory Marxist and functionalism are similar in that they see that the way society is structured as an important part in determining the way people have relationships and behave between themselves.

Al Gore and His Wife's Marriage Based on the Conflict Theory

Al Gore and his wife's marriage based on the conflict theory. The shocking news that hit the air wave that the former vice-president and his wife of forty years were getting a divorce left many people with unanswered questions.

Social Conflict Theory

Social Conflict Theory I have decided to use a different approach to my essay and use personal experience for inspiration. As defined in the Wikipedia the "Social Conflict Theory is a Marxist-based social theory which argues that individuals and groups (social classes).

Conflict Theory

The Conflict Theory is based upon the view that the fundamental causes of crime are the social and economic forces operating within society. The criminal justice system and criminal law

are thought to be operating on behalf of rich and powerful social elites, with resulting policies aimed at control.

Feminist Conflict Theory through the Movie Water

Deepa Mehta's Water focuses on widows in India in the year 1938, which was a time when men dominated society and did not accept women's rights. Women were not allowed to make their own decisions. Many were married off at a young age to older men through arranged marriages

Conflict Theory

The several social theories that emphasize social conflict have roots in the ideas of Karl Marx (1818-1883), the great German theorist and political activist. The Marxist, conflict approach emphasizes a materialist interpretation of history, a dialectical method of analysis, a critical stance toward

Family Crisis

Conflict Theories and Symbolic Interaction Theory

The Conflict Theories of Marx & Simmel

Focus: on the conflict of interest that is inherent in all groups and between all members of groups. This principle extends to the larger society in all its forms. There are two schools of thought that concentrate on the analysis of conflict in social groups - Marxian economic theory & Simmel's analysis of dyadic conflict .The Dialectical Change Theories (grand theories) include Dialectic Philosophies of Hegel (1820), the economic models of Karl Marx (1844), and Ralf Dahrendorf (1950s). These are the ideas that provided the basic tenets of communism as an economic form. The Conflict Management Approaches include Georg Simmel (1920), Lewis Coser (1964), and Jetse Spray (1970s). These are the ideas that provided the basis for prescriptions for conflict resolution at the micro-level of social interaction (i.e., communication between husband and wife.).

Historical Perspective on Conflict Theory

Popularly seen as a 1960s reaction to Structural Functionalism, the manuscripts of Marx predate systems theory of any kind by about one hundred years, as does the work of Simmel. However, conflict theories were rediscovered after social science became somewhat disenchanted with Parsons. While it seems quite an intellectual stretch to include both aspects of conflict (i.e., enormous economic pressures on social structure versus individual personality conflicts), the two actually fit quite well. They are ends of a continuum. Marxist approaches to explaining the routines of social life are attractive, especially to younger intellectuals who search for simplistic answers to complex questions. Likewise, Simmel's ideas dealing with the fragility of dyadic (two-person) relationships and the inevitability of conflict are really a call for a sort of two-person form of communism. In the mid-1960s, with the bulk of western culture under fire for the social strain of that decade, social thinkers were searching for candidate theories to replace the functionalist perspective.

Where Structural Functionalism describes a teleological (i.e., explains the past & present in terms of the future) utopia in steady state equilibrium, Conflict theory describes a social structure prone to constant erosion and change. Here, social change is pervasive through inherent conflicts built into the system itself. Similarly, Conflict Management Approaches view the conflict that arises among members of small groups as inevitable and inherent in the small group itself. Sooner or later, two people will disagree, perhaps to the point of changing their personal relationship system. Conflict arises because of the differential distribution of social power, the powerful garnering the lion's share of all scarce resources for themselves. We may observe the differences in social power between the rich and the poor, men and women, or any given pair of individuals attempting to resolve problems particular to their relationship.

Conflict theories make many assumptions about the social world. Whether Marxist or not, conflict theories paint a picture of the

self-interested individual operating to maximize his own rewards in a highly competitive world. This image is well defined in the basic assumptions conflict theorists are willing to hold:

Basic Assumptions about Human Nature:

- Human beings are essentially self-oriented, and inclined to pursue their own interests at the expense of others (also an assumption of social exchange theory).
- Human beings are symbol-producing/consuming creatures. Their environment is a symbolic one having no exact counterpart in objective reality (part of symbolic interaction theory).
- The human potential to hope and aspire (emotionally, economically, socially) seems unlimited given social conditions.
- Basic Assumptions about Human Societies:
- Societies present organized systems of human survival, and reflect origins as well as predicted outcomes.
- Human societies operate under conditions of perpetual scarcity for most resources needed for the lives of their members.
- The continuous confrontations within and between societies are a necessary condition for growth and social change.
- Human societies consist of inherently unequal elements. The result of dealing with this inequality is social organization by classes: the haves & have not's, the satisfied & desirous, the males & females, the majorities & minorities, the rich & poor.
- Because of this inherent inequality and perpetual scarcity of resources, competition for power and material is endemic in all social systems.

Basic Assumptions about Understanding Human Relationships:

- Theories depicting an "orderly process" of human relationships are inadequate. Although any system is ostensibly orderly,

relationships are complex enough to hide the conflict that exists.

- Society can be observed on two levels: the integration and functioning of social institutions AND the character of participation of individuals in institutions. Here the norms (rules of behavior) for participation and change come into play.

The importance of studying conflict lies in its value as a change agent. Every time conflict is resolved, the social system within which the conflict arose is forever changed. Changes and adaptations to the social system occur over time (just as the growth and change seen in dyadic relationships take time). Thus, an Evolutionary or Dialectic perspective is taken. Therefore, Conflict should be studied for its own sake. Conflict can be either resolved, or it can be managed. Management only eases tension for the time being, while resolution removes a particular point of conflict from the system. Conflict is normal, even inevitable, in every social relationship.

The family is not necessarily a group characterized by consensus. It may be held together by constraint or coercion. Harmony is not necessary for continuation of order in the family. Conflict may even strengthen relationships, making them rewarding in the final analysis. People enter most relationships as real or potential competitors, because resources are always perceived as limited. For example, in our discussion of love, isn't it apparent to the average love struck adolescent that love is in short supply and hardly ever rewarded? Thus there is always keen competition among boys and girls to impress each other with feats of strength and attributes of beauty and charm respectively. Later on, in marriages between high school sweethearts, other resources (e.g., money, decision-making power, time, and so on) become more salient and in short supply.

Disagreements result when one's feelings of being short-changed collide with the other's unwillingness to pay up. (i.e., "I think

you love that job more than you love me!", "Why don't you ever take the time to romance me anymore?"). The processes of marriage and family development are viewed as part of the social system, within which members are facing the perpetual problem of coming to terms with each other's conflicting interests. It is through negotiation and compromise that change in the family occurs, allowing it to adapt to changing demands being made on it.

Marxian Conflict Theory

From Marx's writing, particularly The Elements of Marxian Conflict Theory - 1844, conflict is seen as a product of social living. It is almost a mechanistic view in which conflict is manufactured out of the competing interests of the capitalists and their workers.

In order to make sense of Marxian concepts, one must adopt a certain style of thinking. The statement that each person's relation to production in the economy decides his or her social class, and thus, his or her social privilege, is a case in point. Marxists believe that one's social class position, under a capitalistic economy, determines the very thoughts that creep into one's mind. This is known as **Material**

Determinism

Thus, factory workers share a set of cultural symbols in all aspects of life. The factory worker thinks different things compared to the owner of the factory - unless the worker and the owner are the same person. Get it? Workers possess the knowledge of production, little property, and all the labor, but do not possess the means of production (e.g., the hardware, real estate, and capital necessary to operate). However, the defined value of labor is dependent on the ruling class' perception of it--THE RULING CLASS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR VALUE! In order to maintain a capitalistic system, owners of production must justify their privileged position by "cheapening" the perceived value of labor, thereby devaluing its cost to the capitalist.

Economic scarcity keeps workers preoccupied with survival, while belief systems are in place for workers that actually serve the ruling class.

For example, the capitalistic value that leadership ability is "worth" more than the ability to operate a lathe or shape wood or clay serves the interest of the owners of production and keeps the cost of labor down. Management skills, on the other hand, are talents possessed by a select few who are bound by their gift to perform at higher levels of functioning, and deserve to be rewarded handsomely for their efforts.

The very conception of Family as an institution is seen by Marxists as a middle/upper class idea designed to "conservatize" the worker, and is a concept objectively found only in the upper class. The only social stratum in which the "traditional family ideal" can exist is in the relatively rich upper class. Here, rigid rules of socialization and gender roles are created, performed, and held up for the rest of society to emulate.

The male is the upper class - the one family member upon whom all family security rests, and the one who performs the really important work. While women are told that their "work" is equally important to the welfare of the family, it is in moments such as divorce, that women find that men (the ruling class) were not expressing their true values. Workers are always told how valuable they are to the company until such moments as lay-offs, plant closings and relocations reveal the true values of management regarding employees. At any rate, the management of the U.S. corporations that moved from the Rust Belt to the Texas/Mexico border are having a difficult time explaining how polluted air and water are really better for Americans in the long run. By the way - understand that putting workers in the street and moving to a location that is cheaper to do business is not a change, it is normal for capitalism. Any real change that occurs within social

organization (or family organization - the manifestation of society) happens because of the system's proness towards

Dialectical Change:

According to dialecticians, any existing notion (thesis) always has an opposing notion (antithesis). These two ideas will come into conflict sooner or later in the minds of thinking individuals, resulting in a third option - Synthesis.

On a societal level, the conflicting interests of the capitalists and the working class will periodically clash, forming iterations of modified capitalism - each one leading closer to the abolition of all capitalistic ideas about ownership of property. Thus, history shows world economies to have evolved from Feudal systems through to shop keeper capitalism to modern capitalism, and on to communist revolution and stabilization in some cases. In modern capitalism, the manufacturer cannot pay his workers enough for them to buy the products they make and still make a profit for the company. Mass production must be supported by mass consumption in order to sell all products. Therefore, in order to satiate their growing appetites for profits, capitalists have to rely on foreign markets (imperialism) to expand resources and invite larger buying markets while relying on cheaper labor through colonialism for production. But even these new markets will become saturated eventually, making for keen competition between capitalists to eliminate each other. Which brings up the idea of Overproduction but that is another book.

You should be getting the idea that Marxian Conflict Theory poses determination of the individual's mind set as a result of their position on the social class continuum. Rich folks not only behave differently than working folks, they actually think differently. One group has different ideas compared to the other. The key here is that Marxists believe that the kind of work you do is what makes up your mind.

Marxists would suggest that workers and capitalists REALLY do have conflicting interests.

The big difference here is also what Marxists would term the basic fallacy in Capitalism. It is this: the only way to raise the profits from selling of commodities is to lower the production costs (e.g., layoffs, wage cuts, longer working time, lowering the cost of raw materials). When profit rises by lowering wages, the potential buying power of the population is lowered. Wages are again cut to lower prices and raise profits, resulting in a smaller disposable income for workers ... beginning a deflationary spiral. The government's response might be to print more money to cover expenses which increase because there hasn't been a concomitant rise in general wealth (and increase in taxes). Workers are likely to revolt under deflation of their buying power, feeling generally deprived, except for the fact of their acceptance of the Ruling Class' religion, moral values, and family values.

Instead of revolting against an unfair social system which rewards those with the most wealth, we compete with each other for a chance to become wealthy. Make no mistake, Marxists believe that for continued success of capitalism to occur, there must be a large group of underpaid, uninsured, uneducated workers. Capitalism has always relied on free, or nearly free, labor, and it cannot continue without it.

Husbands and wives, men and women, boys and girls all have real conflict of interests, just as workers and capitalists do. In society, when the mounting conflict between the classes reaches intolerable levels, as the disparity between the social rewards of participation in the economy become too great, a revolutionary "synthesis" will occur to bring the group differences back into parity (or EQUITY). It works the same way for smaller groups, like families.

Alienation

When a person uses objects in exercising his or her creative drives, objects become extensions of the person. When a person merely

exchanges objects or vies to accumulate them, however, he or she becomes a slave to fortune and the accumulation of capital, thus objectifying their own existence. This is Marx's notion of Alienation , and it is the very foundation of Marxist philosophy. It is also, as it turns out, a major tenet in many religious philosophies, including good old Christianity. Because of the vast opportunity for alienation in a capitalist economy of any size, Marx was able to delineate four classifications, or types, of alienation.

- Alienation from other people occurs when conflict between individuals results from competition for scarce jobs (workers). People in need of work for pay are placed in unnatural competition for those resources. What happens is that one's competition is perceived as subhuman, or of less valuable stuff. Interestingly, this is the fundamental opposing interest of workers and capitalists. One logical consequence of having workers compete is that it lowers wages, so it is of benefit to employers. Another consequence has been mass extermination (e.g., Jews in Nazi Germany, or the recent "ethnic cleansing" visited on former Iron Curtain countries).

- Alienation from the process of production occurs as assembly line workers, or assembly workers, fit their tiny effort into the larger whole product. Prior to capitalism, artisans and workers had their own tools and could control their work in terms of pace, wage, and form of the product. Put another way, if you had the choice and money was not a consideration, would you rather have a pair of hand made, and personally fitted, shoes, or a pair of mass produced ones bought at the local Cheap Zapatos outlet? By enlisting in the mass assembly line, workers could no longer identify their work. Imagine the auto worker of today, taking great pride in the knowledge that he (and several others like him) screw in tailgate bolts on pickup trucks for a living. What are the chances that this worker identifies with Henry

Ford? Capitalism buys labor only, and it rewards labor with only money. For Marx, this is a form of prostitution.

- Alienation from products of labor occurs because the capitalist owns the product after its completion. This weakens pride in work and quality of product. In fact, it was a principle of 19th century economics that workers were paid too much money if they could purchase the goods they produced. Workers often cannot afford to buy the very products they produce, nor can they produce products for themselves since the raw materials do not belong to them.

- Alienation from one's self. Everyone has potential, and all should have the opportunity, to develop his or her talent. By replacing potential talent with a job dictated by capitalistic economy, an individual becomes estranged from a part of himself. When many are forced into roles that are not of their own choosing, or of their own true nature, there exists a condition of widespread self-estrangement. The worker is his true self only when away from work. Marxian theorists assume that humans work better without coercion.

To sum up, Marxist Conflict Theory maintains that the basic financial inequities between the owners of production and the workers (workers are part of the forces of production, along with the machines, the coal, and the steam engines) results in two different value systems existing in the same society. Because of disparities in the reward structure, working class people naturally (and most righteously) will feel that the society has used them up. Religion, family values, the work ethic are all devices used by the ruling class to blind working people to the reality of their situation. Working people become alienated from each other and their families until they realize, as a group, the truth and rise up in revolt (synthesis).

Simmel and the New Conflict Theorists

Georg Simmel (1920) opposed the view that conflict was destructive of old views, choosing to see conflict as positive, with the ability to strengthen social relations. Simmel follows an organismic world view, rather than the Marxian material determinism (mechanistic view). For Simmel, any social system, or social grouping, is designed to create and resolve dualisms (conflicting interests). He compares his notions of conflict and its positive outcome to disease in the human body. Just as disease is the first step in correcting one's health, so conflict is functionally positive to correcting problems in society. This is analogous to the biological building up of antibodies in the human system in order to fight off new diseases. Antibodies are present because we've been sick before. When a social system, such as the family, is threatened, three steps occur:

1. System Boundaries are maintained.
2. Values and morals are defined.
3. Group ties are strengthened as conflict is resolved.

Simmel's presupposition is that humans have an innate disposition to be hostile mixed with a need for love and a rational mind. The differences between Marx and Simmel aren't that great, philosophically. In fact, both thinkers are wrestling with a good versus evil kind of mentality, with conflict being the evil that must be tamed. In practical terms, however, conflict ultimately results in violent revolution leading to structural social change for Marx. For Simmel, less intense, less violent conflicts promote solidarity, integration and orderly change of the system. For Marx, conflict is materially determined. For Simmel, it isn't the imbalance of resources but Man's hostile nature & lack of boundaries of relationships that are the source of conflict.

Lewis Coser on Simmel's Conflict Functionalism

Conflict serves many functions in normal society. Now get this-- Coser was the first sociologist to conceptually remove the diametrical opposition of Marxist Conflict theory to Structural Functionalism. Both

approaches fundamentally agree on the structure of social life, rights and obligations, and the very real way in which persons are forced to live their lives. As it turns out, according to Lewis Coser, the only difference between the two, aside from minor corollaries, is that Conflict theorists hold a value that S-F Theorists do not. According to Conflict theorists, the way things are working out is morally wrong, unfair, and bad for everybody except the very rich. Functionalists feel that the way things are working out is natural, and probably good for everybody.

Coser's Functions of Conflict in Society.

The Maintenance Function (previous chapter) defines violence and unrest in society as symptomatic of social illness. It is a warning to society to readjust itself before things blow wide open. Thus, society is a dynamic system, not a static one. The Causal Chain suggests that imbalances in the integration of constituent parts of a whole (society or family) lead to the outbreak of varying types of conflict among constituent parts. Think of a system of checks and balances, such as the stock market, or Nixon's Domino Theory in Southeast Asia. Conflict anywhere in the system causes temporary system wide recruitment of solutions, which, under certain conditions, cause increased flexibility and cooperation in structure, which increases the potential for conflict resolution.

The basic premise of all Conflict theories comes down to this: **All social processes (including marriage and family processes) are viewed as systemic ones in which members and member categories (Moms & Dads) are facing the perpetual problem of coming to terms with each other's conflicting interests.**

Conflict in a system is intensified in three ways. First, when there is intensification of deprivation, or the perception of deprivation, between subsystems (i.e., "His is bigger than mine!", "You can't cut funding in my district!", and so on) relations between system units

(people) are strained. Second, when legitimacy of existing distribution of power and wealth is withdrawn or changed, as in a divorce, remarriage, a new governmental administration, system units tend to grab as much of the available wealth as possible. The third way is a mediator--increased conflict is dependent on the degree of emotional involvement of the system units. If emotional involvement is low, conflict will not escalate.

Jetse Sprey took conflict theory into the marital dyad. Taking from Coser and Simmel's notions of the positive effects of some kinds of conflict, and using some of Dahrendorf's ideas, Sprey has calculated the nature of conflict in individual marriages. The terms below are part of a vocabulary of conflict based in part on the idea of the Causal Chain of marital conflict.

Competition - A state of negative interdependence between the elements of a social system. Competition describes both a systemic condition and is a statement of relationship. In family interaction, every instance will ultimately result in a reward for some member(s), at the expense of some other(s). Members are in competition for SCARCE RESOURCES (i.e., time, affection, money, power, prestige, knowledge, etc.).

Conflict - a confrontation between individuals, or groups, over scarce resources. For example, the conflict arising over controversial means or incompatible goals is really a dispute over who is getting what and how much! Conflict may range from the use of physical force to litigation to intimidation through threat of physical harm--from going to bed without your supper to threat of nuclear war. The aim of conflict, as well as the aim of competition, is to win ... AT ALL COSTS! However, depending on the level of force used, the result may be the actual destruction of adversaries.

Conflict Resolution - the end of the state of conflict, and the process of conflict, via the elimination of the disputed issue, resulting in

Consensus. Conflict Management implies the continued existence of the underlying competitive structure (i.e., agreeing to disagree). In fact, people have an enormous capacity to live in **Consensus** when they really don't agree on much. There are at least two meanings given to the concept of consensus. First, it is the existence of a common awareness or knowledge of given issues, values, and norms among the membership of a community. More often than not this is perceived, rather than actual unanimity. The second meaning is that we see things the same way, through a process of discussion and debate. This requires conversion rather than just winning the argument, and is the way to achieve**Conflict Resolution**.

A third approach, not to consensus, but to uneasy peace, is through the use of **Negotiation and Bargaining.** This is an exchange process designed to reach a collective agreement (see Exchange theory). The style of negotiation depends on family rules. Power and Influence are attributes of either individuals or relationships, and are very much a part of the bargaining process. Identification of powerful individuals in a relationship identifies only the potential for the exercise of power. The actual use of power is dependent on an actor's ability to manipulate resources at hand. These can be absolute (i.e., money, physical strength), or relative to the relationship (i.e., value of interaction between partners, which is symbolic in nature).

Aggression and Appeasement can be either destructive or constructive, depending on the appropriateness within a given conflict setting. Starting a fight, being cranky, overbearing, attacking with the rational intention to harm are forms of aggression. Aggression is an attempt to get others to behave to suit one's own advantage (affirm one's own rights or interests). Appeasement is a response to aggression and either a statement of the power structure in a relationship, or an admission of guilt. Threats are aggressive messages that communicate the delivery of some form of punishment or deprivation to others. Promises may have the same form as threats, but carry the potential for

reward/appeasement instead of cost. Threats and Promises must be tempered with awareness for the realization of their desired effect. Empty promises and idle threats can heighten conflict, and reduce the probability of a compromise. The purpose of aggression and appeasement is not in their execution, but in their coercive effects on others.

Types of Marriage and Family Conflicts

Differences in a marital system's characteristics will influence the type of conflict that may occur.**Endogenous conflicts** are those in which the situation is defined as a conflict by agreement between the people involved. These are also known as Structural Conflicts, or relationship oriented conflict. A divorce concludes the awareness of sexual infidelity and disagreement about its relevance because we have laws and norms regarding the sexually exclusive nature of marriage. This is the "You've hurt me by your actions, but we can work things out by talking." type of conflict.

Exogenous conflicts are those in which there is no pre-existing system for the resolution of this type of conflict. With this, the "I hate your guts" kind of conflict, there is little to be discussed. Exogenous conflicts are also known as Instrumental Conflicts.

Symmetrical structures are those in which members of the marital dyad have the same resources and perceive their power base as equal. Escalation of conflict here might result in rapid coming to blows and violence because each believes he or she can win. Asymmetrical structures are those in which members of the marital dyad do not have the same resources, which results in some variation of a dominant/submissive relationship. Escalation of conflict is not as likely because one member is perceived as more power.

Within either symmetrical or asymmetrical marital structures, Issues Oriented Conflict will reside. This is conflict over specific situations or eventsconflict over the disposition of family resources, for

example. The autonomy issuedistance regulation in systems language is one. The "privilege" issuemoney, power, resourcesis another. Both autonomy and privilege issues are accounted for by Dahrendorf, who simultaneously sees all conflict and the social order as resulting from the Unequal Distribution of Authority in society. Just as the authority structure of bureaucracies serves as the principle basis for conflict in the larger society, so is the authority structure of "normal" marriages and families (patriarchy in our society). Unlike the secondary, bureaucratic, relationships of inter-institutional interaction, primary relationships (i.e., husband/wife, parent/child) are characterized by level of intimacy.

Intimacy presents a superficial contradiction. The more self-disclosure of one member to another, the stronger the feelings of investment and concern. Strong feelings can easily turn from strong feelings of love to strong feelings of hate. Additionally, the intimate relationship is characterized by members' frequently being in close proximity to each other. Repeated interaction facilitates the maladaptation of communication patterns.

Another aspect of primary relationships is that their conception is mutually negotiated between members, as is described in **W.I. Thomas's Definition of the Situation:** *"Things perceived as real will be real in their consequences."* Perception defines the consequences of our actions. The difference between primary conflicts, and conflicts between secondary relations is the difference between Games (intimates at play) and War (persons unknown to each other engaged in mortal combat). The inherent instability of dyadic relationships is evident: It takes two to maintain a marriage - only one to end it.

The conflictual process is the process whereby two or more members of the family negotiate a solution to conflicting beliefs (i.e., that what one desires is incompatible with what the other wants). Conflict develops over a difference in attitudes or values. He wants more freedom, she wants to be closer. Conflict will develop when a person's self-esteem is threatened as well. Conflict, according to these

theorists, is inevitable because the family system experiences some constant level of friction due to continually 1) changing social circumstances and 2) continually maturing family members.

Stages of the Conflictual Process in the Marital Dyad

Prior Conditions Stage. All family action has a history of events leading up to its observation. Given a family's rules and communication patterns, conflict arises out of a perceived violation of family rules, competition for scarce resources, undesired dependence of one member on another, or memory of previously unresolved family arguments.

Frustration/Awareness Stage The prior condition becomes unbearable in the minds of the dissatisfied, and is characterized by frustration, a growing awareness of being threatened (the unhappy one), a growing awareness of being attacked by the unhappy one, message responses to frustration. The unhappy one may back off several times before the next stage.

Active Conflict Stage conflict may be played out as calm, precise arguments or animated screaming matches, depending on the family's rules for handling disputes. This stage marks clear escalation from beginning hints of dissatisfaction to stronger tactics. Coalitions may be drawn and sides taken.

Accommodation/Solution Stage. Compromises occur, declaration of terms are made, negotiation occurs, or various management strategies are used here.

Follow-up/Aftermath Stage This stage allows for entrenchment of family rules for conflict management, and includes re-eruptions, settlement, holding of grudges and hurt feelings.

Other factors in family conflict include a family's patterns of conflict, such as fighting styles. A family may fight using reciprocal conflict in which opponents trade "licks". A family may use convergence on solutions, in which the couple work together to find solutions to

their differences. In either case, the introduction of hurtful remarks further complicates the possibility of conflict resolution. Further, the human need for intimacy is often powerfully conciliatory. This need to be loved may invite the danger of momentary "make ups" which fend off the possibility of real conflict resolution. Making up too soon will almost guarantee a later fight or disagreement.

Roles and Rules in Family Conflict

Position oriented families require service to the roles each conflict member occupies (e.g., "I'm your mother - Don't talk back to me!"). Person oriented families tend toward consensus and understanding of each family member as an individual, and family rules are more flexible here. There are also socioeconomic factors, such as the adequacy of income versus the amount of money a given family earns.

Despite personal inclinations to avoid conflict, Sprey and others see conflict between intimates as having positive outcomes. Differences between family members can be aired, and resolution tends to make for a stronger family unit. Here's a listing of elements of positive conflict, or fair fighting.

- A sequential communication exchange in which each participant has equal time to express his or her point of view.
- Feelings are brought out and not suppressed.
- People listen to each other with empathy and without constant interruption.
- Conflict remains focused on the issue and doesn't get sidetracked into other previously unresolved areas.
- Family members respect differences in opinions, values, and wishes.
- Members believe that solutions are possible and that growth and development will take place.
- Some semblance of rules has evolved from past conflicts.

- Members have experience with problem solving as a process to settle differences.
- Little power or control is exercised by one or more family members over the actions of others.

These positive outcomes can occur only if fair fighting rules are obeyed, and if both partners are interested in resolving their differences. Of course, these two elements are not always present in the disagreeing family's interrelationships. We don't always see the problem in the same way. Sometimes we just don't want to see it.

Symbolic Interaction Theory (SI)

Focus: The meanings of language and artifacts determine our thinking and conceptualization of social relationships. The idea is that humans interact with each other using agreed upon sets of symbols. Symbolic Interaction Theory is very useful in explaining several aspects of human development and social/ interpersonal interaction. It is a social-psychological theory that attempts to conceptualize human conduct at a relatively complex level. The broad conceptual units of the theory are: the role - the unit of culture (anthropology), the position - the unit of society (sociology), self-the unit of personality (psychology).

Concepts of socialization, personality development, and self-reflection detail the process of humanization in the social sense. Concepts of self modification of behavior during interaction and the highly salient notion of symbol exchange as the currency of conversation and intimacy both inform a discussion of the dynamic nature of social interaction.

Symbolic Interaction Theory has its origins in the Chicago School of Social Philosophy, and includes James Baldwin, G. Stanley Hall (the father of adolescent psychology), William James (American Pragmatism), & John Dewey (co-architect of the American education system). These American thinkers began research around the turn of the century, dealing with the development of personality and self-

consciousness. Departing from the earlier work of Freud, the mind of the Chicago School strongly emphasized the environmental effects on socialization, with an even stronger emphasis on the culture. They also developed the American education philosophy, and began to formalize educational psychology into a discipline of study. Out of the Chicago School was born the only purely American philosophy - pragmatism - central to which is the belief that human beings find meaning in the symbols with which they communicate with one another. Their basic view was that through interaction with others in any given cultural setting, individuals negotiate the meaning of a host of symbols, using them to guide and evaluate their lives. Further, MEANING only exists because each individual CREATES it--one symbol at a time.

Definitions for Symbolic Interaction Theory (SI)

It is important to aim for precision in definition of some key terms in any discussion of SI theory. While attempting to explain the development of personality in social terms, this philosophy actually creates taxonomy of symbols. Therefore:

A **Role** is the smallest unit of societya unit requiring precise socialization. A role is a patterned sequence of learned actions or deeds or feelings performed or felt by a person in an interaction situation. Any Item of Behavior must be placed in some SelfOther Context to be understood.

A **Position** in a social structure (a.k.a. status) is a system or set of rights and obligationsa set of acquired anticipatory reactions or expectations.

A **Symbol** is something that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention (traditional use). The meaning of any symbol is socially agreed upon. This means that everyone generally agrees that the symbol in question carries the same meaning for the majority of members of society. Get it? In order that we

understand the development of the individual, we must consider the individual in relation to his or her significant others.

Symbolic Interaction Theory asserts that human individuals develop their personalities through interaction with others, by exchanging meaningful symbols with each other for the purpose of defining themselves.

To fully analyze social interaction in terms of its symbolic nature, we must have firm notions about:

1. The nature of assigning meaning to objects.
2. The nature of personal evaluation of meanings.
3. The sources of innovation (how meanings change).

Symbolic Interaction Theory, then, describes the way we confer, converse, have social intercourse with, and otherwise bother each using symbols as our relational currency:

"So, I was talkin' with this guy, and he was, like, you know, lookin' at me stupid. You know what I mean? Like, he wasn't gettin' a damn thing I was sayin'. So, I thumped him twice on the forehead and said, Hel-lo! Anybody Home in There?" While Structural-Functional theory mainly considers the macrosocial end of the theoretical spectrum, and Conflict theory tries to consider both macro and micro ends, Symbolic Interaction attempts to explain the dyadic part (microsocial) of the spectrum with very definite connections to the larger cultural imperative. Symbolic interaction assumes the culture exists and that it determines much of our behavior. This is getting deep, so let's begin with a rather narrow discussion of religion to illustrate the general way SI theory explains and describes personality development. I'm going to belabor a point here, but don't make the mistake that I am attempting to persuade you to adopt a particular religious point of view, because that would deny SI its descriptive power.

When I was a boy, growing up in West Texas, the only Catholics I ever knew were Hispanics. Having never met a Polish-American or

Italian-American, Catholics were, in my limited experience, Spanish speaking people. In fact, there were two distinct types of Hispanics in my environment: Predominantly Baptist families whose native language was English, and predominantly Catholic families whose native language was Spanish. In my experience, there seemed to be a certain superstitiousness about the Hispanic-Catholic view of religion. As a boy, I felt sorry for them, because they were so wrong-headed in the way they believed. Raised in the Southern Baptist tradition, I knew in my heart that if a person misbehaved and didn't accept Jesus as his personal savior, that person wouldn't go to heaven when they died. What I didn't understand is that, while we all went to the same public schools, played on the same playgrounds, and essentially grew up in the same hot, hostile environment, my Hispanic-American Catholic friends really had different origins. Their historical roots were in the unique mixing of ancient Aztec, American Indian, and Middle Ages Spanish religious cultures. They just happened to be going to my school.

Once I asked my friend Bobby Castro what would happen if he quit being a Catholic. He said he would go to hell. This puzzled me greatly because, according to my pastor, Brother Edwards, Bobby was on the fast track to hell just as sure as he wore that graven image around his neck. While I would often pray before a math test, or before a fist fight after school, Bobby prayed only in church, or at least while holding his crucifix in his hand. Later on everything became clear to me because I asked questions, made lists, wrote down the dilemmas and showed them to people who ought to know the answers. Everything became clear to me because I listened to the faulty logic, sweeping generalizations, and otherwise fuzzy thinking of those people who ought to know. I would later come to understand this process of repeated observation and generalization as inductive logic.

Which is the more correct way of thinking--the Catholic belief system or the Protestant one (for our purposes, other religions aren't considered here)? Now think about the fundamental difference

between the two forms of Christianity. Both use the same holy text as their guidebook, both entertain devotion to the same deity, and both use the same lessons to inform their congregates on matters of morality and right living. Isn't it redundant of our culture to have two religions that are so similar?

Perhaps there is something in all the significant symbols used by each group to inform behavior and apply meaning to everyday life. The meaning underlying the symbols alerts us to the very different approaches each group takes in thinking thoughts, living lives, and using language. For example, the main symbolic artifact for each is the cross, symbolizing the sacrifice Jesus made for others--a major teaching of the New Testament. The symbolic difference may be that for Protestants the cross is empty; while for Catholics the crucifix graphically illustrates the suffering image of the deity. No need to wonder how tough it is to die like that. He's right there on the cross for you to look at anytime.

Think like a social scientist with a symbolic interactionist perspective on social life. You would ask, "What significance does this obvious symbolic difference have for the two groups of believers?" For one thing, Bobby Castro prayed directly into his crucifix, while my prayers were sort of transmitted out into the atmosphere. Bobby prayed prayers that were all written out, even recorded in a prayer book, while mine were extemporaneous (i.e., "Oh. God! Please don't let me fail this algebra test.").

But there are similarities between the two groups too. The larger group, Christians, which encompasses both subcategories of Protestant and Catholic, all believe that Jesus Christ was a prophet who lived roughly two thousand years ago, and was the actual son of God. God, of course, is believed by these people to be the supreme being, all powerful creator of the universe. Jesus Christ, by all reports, was very vocal during his young adulthood; and because of his outspokenness in the context of a highly politicized era of the Roman Empire, was incarcerated, tried for heresy and riotousness, and was sentenced to

death by crucifixion. Normally, this form of execution is painful enough, with victims eventually dying from asphyxiation. In the case of Christ, there was an unexplainable departure from the usual crucifixion process in that the victim was actually nailed to the cross, instead of simply being bound to it. This is the event around which the early Christian Church was formed and flourished for 1600 years. This was the one very big idea that, for a long time, dominated the thoughts of the masses.

Take a little ride with me now. During the sixteenth century, Christianity underwent the Protestant Reformation. It was a time in which the Very Big Idea was splintered into two smaller ones - Protestantism and Catholicism. Among the differences (some say the biggest difference) between the two ideas was the sacramental nature of marriage and the issue of divorce. But the fundamental difference relevant to the discussion of religious artifacts is the recasting of old ideas in new ways, giving them new meaning. While Catholics continue to this day to use the crucifix, complete with an image of Jesus in pain and suffering, the Protestant cross is empty.

When Catholics pray in front of their religious symbol, they gaze upon the tortured image of the son of God. Protestants have no such reminder. Catholics seem to emphasize the event of the crucifixion, noting that Christ's life was painful so that they would not have to suffer so much. In other words, the purpose of religion is to give us an outlet for our troubles. Protestants emphasize the resurrection of Jesus after death (the cross is empty), symbolic of the promise made to them that after a sorrowful life on earth, there is continued life after death for those who believe. Catholics are, then, a little more concerned with the here and now, getting through life by depending on God to help. And they tend to manifest their need for God to intervene in their lives by using a variety of artifacts that show their devotion--dash board saints, candles with biblical scenes painted on them, medals bearing the likenesses of saints, prayer cards, and other equipment. Protestants are a little more concerned with the hereafter--heaven. Like news

114

commentator Paul Harvey says, "now you know the rest of the story". While none of this explanation is absolutely true for all members of a religious sect, there may be enough truth in the story to begin to understand something about socialized differences between nearly similar folks.

While each of us may harbor individualized, or unique, meanings for each of the common symbols above, it is clear that all of us must hold some common meaning for each in order for the symbols to be useful in everyday life. The true meaning of love, money, friendship, patriotism, being a good sport, and self-esteem is carried in the emotional content WE place in symbols that represent those ideas or values. While we can always find individuals who put different meaning into any given symbol, there must be a dominant meaning that is shared by most all in the culture in order for it to be significant in its social use. Now, reach into your pocket and pull out your mahdulla, wind its whanzer very tight and let it zrooomballa across the fletznerzam. Different culture - different words. Here are some of the basic assumptions of Symbolic Interaction Theory. S-I theorists like to see individual development as determined socially. They view socialization as grooming individuals for interaction with each other.

For the Process of Socialization: Basic Assumptions

1. Humans live in a symbolic environment as well as a physical environment, and acquire complex sets of symbols in their minds.
2. Humans evaluate symbols and make evaluative distinctions between symbols.
3. Human conduct is organized and directed in terms of social acts.
4. Humans are reflexive, and their introspection gradually creates a definition of self.
5. Born asocial, an individual creates a self (personality) consisting of different parts.

6. The individual is an actor as well as reactor.

7. Society precedes individuals and is transmitted by individuals.

8. Society and man are the same thing.

9. The human mind is malleable.

10. Human beings hunger for interaction with their kind, much the way they hunger for food, thirst for water. We find interaction with each other delicious.

What all this means is that concepts like family, love, mental illness, spouse abuse, healthy family functioning, are all concepts that carry symbolic weight in the minds of a society's members. None of these concepts exist outside the mind. Instead, all are symbols that represent something else by association, resemblance, or convention. When we laugh at a joke, cry at a movie, become outraged over a news story, we are symbolically interacting with our fellows and sharing in a culture that provides meaning to events. Everyone has laughed at the cartoon character who is fearful of ghosts and gets so scared that he repeatedly runs into things. The cartoon character's dilemma is funny to us because we ourselves have been scared enough to do stupid or silly things.

Consider once again, the **The Situational Hypothesis**: "*Things perceived as real will be real in their consequences.*" - (W.I. Thomas, 1923). Here's another true story, this time about the Ponototoc Snake House. In our culture resides all kinds of faulty information about snakes. They are characterized as evil, dangerous, slimy, and filthy, and they are even said to have carried away infants. The human fear of snakes is documented throughout psychology, but probably our culture is responsible for it. There was a family who somehow got the idea that their house was infested with snakes (Hopper, 1992). No one had actually seen a snake in or near the house and there was no physical sign of snakes to be found. Still, the more they thought about their troubles, the more they all agreed that they were living among

poisonous snakes. They said they could smell snakes in the house (snakes have no distinctive odor), and that they could hear them crawling around at night (snakes are pretty quiet crawlers). Snake experts analyzed the property and found no sign. But the fear of snakes persisted among the family members. The only solution to their problem, they concluded, was to buy a mobile home to live in, and to burn their house to the ground, furniture and all. After the blaze, family sanity returned and they lived happily, though very cramped, ever after.

If a person only partially believes in ghosts (in this case - snakes that aren't there), depending on the way his or her culture portrays the apparition, that person will behave as if ghosts are real and apparent in the everyday world. Placed in the right context, a ghost becomes a Significant Symbol (i.e., a symbol that draws out the same emotional appeal in the majority of individuals).

Two early social thinkers had influence on this old theory. Charles H. Cooley (1864-1929) & George Herbert Mead (1863-1931). Cooley saw society as a whole greater than the sum of its parts, and took an organic world view versus a mechanistic one. Cooley's main contribution to SI theory was the **Looking Glass Self,**which states that with no sharp distinction between the individual and society, the self (personality) is simply a product of social interaction. "Society and the Self are twin born." There could be no sense of "I" without a correlative "You, We, They, He, or She". All images of the self are personal interpretations of one's social reflection in his self-conscious model:

Self Consciousness is arrived at via:

- Our imagination of our appearance as an object to another person.
- Our image of the other person's evaluation of our appearance.
- Our feelings about the other are perceived evaluation.

Because we cannot process our reflection from every potential interaction partner, we come to depend on the judgments of a few

important or significant others. Thus becomes possible the familiar concepts from Structural-Functional Theory - primary and secondary groups.

The Primary Group is the device through which our culture is transmitted. Through interaction with parents, we acquire language (the second in a series of artificial symbols, the first being the meaning associated with feelings we get from nurturing behaviors of our parents). After rudimentary language acquisition, we move in larger circles (e.g., playmates, kindergarten, first grade and on to high school, college, job, and paying taxes.). As we grow and develop (as we are socialized), we encounter Secondary Groups--the educational system, business associates, and governmental agents. Members of our Primary group serve as socialization agents, those who groom us for interaction with the larger, Secondary, society. George Herbert Mead explained this process of socialization.

George Herbert Mead's contributions to social theory are legion. The most important was his theory of socialization, or humanization (also known as **The Generalized Other theory of personality development**). Those of you with a familiar reading of Piaget will find Mead interesting. Like Piaget, Mead asserts that socialization occurs through a maturational process. Through interaction with others we pass through three stages of social and personal development (see Figure 11 below).

1) **Egocentric Stage** 0-2yrs - The child is unaware of any other personality and behaves as though he is the center of the universe.

2) **Play Stage** 2-7yrs - The child moves through rapid emulation of roles it perceives - rapid role changes (e.g., cowboy, fireman, prize fighter, super hero, doctor, etc. Through the practice of "pretending" to be others, the child begins to understand the concept of "others".

3) **Game Stage** 7-80++ yrs - The maturing individual perceives other's expectations, and self's rights, gradually acquiring the ability to take the role of the generalized other, which is simply an amalgamation of all the socially appropriate values and behaviors necessary for optimal social adaptation and interaction.

This acquisition of the Generalized Other Role is due to the uniquely human ability to use symbols (e.g., language, face, signs, signals, etc.), and to abstractly understand the Inner self, or the "I". Incidentally, our failure to recognize this fact, while simultaneously becoming a master of it, accounts for all of the pain, confusion, and heartache that each of us encounters between the ages of 1 and 99 years. We fall prey to so many manipulations of our hearts and minds:

Advertising, "How to be your own best friend", "Women who love too much." Men who love but just can't commit! The Oprah Winfrey Show, The Peter Pan Principle. Co-Dependence and You! Transactional Analysis, Psychoanalysis, Country Music ... and so on.

After one comes to understand the expectations society demands, the "self" can be seen in two parts: the "I" and "me". This accounts for Self-consciousness:

Actions, symbols, and others become "significant" precisely because of our ability to generalize, abstract, and communicate about and through them. Significant action is recognized because we understand where the motivation to action derives. Significant symbols occur if I call out in another, the same response I call out in myself by using a specific symbol. The Process of Interaction defines who we are (to others and ourselves). The "I" is the emergent product of prior interaction. The "me" is reflected behavior, generalized to the next interaction. Thus, roles become objectified and idealized as they are learned, then performed. Consider this interaction model: S = our self-concept at any given time

✓ P = our perceptions of other's responses

- ✓ A = other's actual responses, and
- ✓ B = our behavior, what we say.
- ✓ The theory has it that: S >B >A >P know as the interaction process where:
- ✓ B = I've never felt this way about anyone else before
- ✓ A = (thinks: how flattering! I think I'm going to blush)
- ✓ P = (thinks: that seemed to work - she didn't hit me or run away)
- ✓ S = (thinks: I'm pretty good at this)
- ✓ B = You make me feel ...... so alive
- ✓ A = (thinks: I do have that effect on people)
- ✓ P = (thinks: she's buying it!)
- ✓ S = (thinks: I have her wrapped around my finger)
- ✓ B = I'd like to have sex with you right now!
- ✓ A = (thinks: you wish! Not if you were the only person on earth!)
- ✓ P = (thinks: Oops! Too much - Too soon)
- ✓ S = (thinks: I'm a failure - back up!)
- ✓ B = I'd like that very much - But I respect you too much to use you like that.

The nice thing about symbolic interaction theory is that it answers the Hobbesian Question--"If it is human nature to be aggressive, then why does not civilization end in an all out war of all against all?" Symbolic interaction allows that an unwritten code of conduct exists by virtue of our presence among our fellows. It is through our interaction with others that culture is transmitted - that the rules of society are maintained - that the rules of society are changed as the conditions for action and survival change. Thus: society and the individual are the same. My values, by and large are also society's, or I wouldn't hold them.

Three Big Ideas in SI Theory: Mind Self & Society

Mind uses symbols to designate objects in the environment, the meaning of which is completely constructed by the individual. Mind inhibits inappropriate lines of action by using imaginative rehearsals.

Self emerges as the individual acts symbolically toward himself and others. The self is simply a continually redefined role repertoire. Society is simply organized patterns of interaction among diverse individuals. Roles are similar enough in the collective of minds for empathy to take place. Society is nothing more than the collective shared meaning of the rules by which we interact. The interaction between the ever present society and all its social control agents, the developing self, and the individual mind that constantly mediates between social and personal mandates is also Mead's definition of symbolic interaction.

The Social Construction of Intimacy

As we have argued here, unless there is general consensus among the persons in a society concerning the meanings we give to objects, events, and situations in our lives--unless we generally agree on the meaning of symbols--social life would be impossible. The definitions we give to intimacy depend on 1) the general values of the society in which we live, and 2) the more specific values of the groups to which we belong or with which we identify. It is in this rootedness in socially shared definitions that we are allowed to carry intimacy beyond the assertion that each human relationship is unique. We are in love, or are friendly, with a person precisely because we have given the relationship that interpretation. Walster (1974) suggests that in order to experience passionate love, one must first have learned the proper meanings associated with specific physiological feelings. "Your eyes meet, you smile warmly at each other, and as you approach one another, oblivious to those in the room, you begin to experience increased heart and respiration rates, flushing of the face, dryness of the mouth, and slight body tremors lust or love at first sight."

Moving from strangers to intimates - we expect to fall in love, have sex, and get married within well recognized time frames. Adults often characterize teenagers' first attempts at establishing an intimate relationship as "puppy love", because they are socially defined as too young to experience the real thing. They don't think so! On the other

hand, persons who remain unmarried past their late twenties may be considered "problems" by parents, relatives, and friends. Society has a very narrow path for us to think on. The Romantic Ideal has it that there is only one person in the entire world that we are meant to love--that, although love is blind, we will recognize our true love at first sight. Though we are taught the romantic ideal, society provides us with many potential lovers.

For example, Kierkegaard thought the proposition that first love is the true love to be very accommodating and could come to the aid of humankind in various ways. If a man is not fortunate enough to get possession of what he desires, then he still has the sweetness of the first love. If a man is so unfortunate as to love many times, each time is still the first love ... One loves many times, and each time one denies the validity of the preceding times, one will maintain the correctness of the proposition that one loves only once. (1959). Nice idea, but even Kierkegaard was smart enough never to try that jazz in divorce court.

Impression Management

All of us manipulate identity information to present the proper first impression. It is this deliberate identity manipulation early in a relationship that frequently leads at some point to the declaration "I thought I knew him/her but I didn't." Throughout the whole period of courtship persons tend to offer idealized images of them and largely to accept the idealized image others offer. Break-ups occur at socially convenient times (e.g., spring break, Christmas, end of the term, summer, and graduations). It is love according to popular culture's presentation of love. The same goes for sexual expression. We must ignore the fact that we become sexual through a learning process. What we think of as being sexual, what turns us on, even the belief that we are "horny" as a result of sexual deprivation, all reflect culturally defined and learned ideas about sexuality. Clearly persons must define a situation as sexual before sexual activity will occur.

To understand how persons produce sustained human relationships, we must consider the subtle fashion in which persons "use" institutions that were not designed to function as meeting places for unmarried. We must consider how small stores, taverns, laundromats, clubs, and the like become places for establishing potentially intimate relationships. It is fair to infer that persons can tolerate only so much impersonality in their relationships. Perhaps at the height of feelings of depersonalization and lack of integration, persons will seek out alternatives in the environment to provide them with just the kinds of relationships they seem to be denied. As a person's needs demand it, they will assign new meanings to, and make different usages of, existing institutions. This is elegant evidence to prove that we are active participants in the construction of our social worlds. We can even divide intimacy into several subcategories:

1. **Emotional Intimacy - listening and caring**
2. **Social Intimacy - spending time together**
3. **Sexual Intimacy - sex is exciting prospect**

4. **Intellectual Intimacy - mutual thinking through**
5. **Recreational Intimacy - similar interests in activities.**

How do we go about meeting people? In our society, we have very definite norms (also known as behavioral guidelines) that govern initial meetings. In our society, it is a norm violation to initiate conversations with strangers. We distrust strangers. Speaking to strangers involves RISK of ridicule and rejection. Therefore: In the beginning of an encounter we tend to be a little reserved, hesitant, and uncertain. All this diminishes as we get to know the other. Notice that our intentions are almost always disguised. A boy might be thinking, "I want Sex Now", but he manages to move in more socially acceptable ways to get his needs met.

WEBERIAN/FORMAL

- ✓ -View of Society/Characteristics/Premises
- ✓ -system of diverse groups struggling over scarce resources (wealth,
- ✓ power, prestige)
- ✓ -macro/meso level of analysis
- ✓ -objective, hierarchical, and fragmented-characterized by social inequality
- ✓ -different benefits for different categories of people
- ✓ -order coercion/constraints and power
- ✓ -negotiation and compromise
- ✓ -change is inevitable and continuous
- ✓ -conflict promotes social change
- ✓ -inequality is result of struggle over scarce resources
- ✓ -change is internal to system of conflicts...differentiation of parts

Weaknesses and Criticisms

- ✓ -understates degree of cohesion and stability
- ✓ -little micro level analysis

- ✓ -ignores competition
- ✓ -is a "shadow" structural functionalism

Marxian/Critical/Dialectical

View of Society/Characteristics/Premises

- ✓ -inclusive of most of characteristics of Weber an Conflict Theory (above)
- ✓ -conditions giving rise to conflict
- ✓ -includes Micro level with active social actors creating Meso/Macro   structures
  -inclusive of all levels of analysis and reciprocity of them
- ✓ -Change is about internal arrangements AND about the system itself
- ✓ -Change is historical...temporal...ABOUT the system, not just within it
- ✓ -Change can be revolutionary...often quick and total
- ✓ -Change is inevitable given consciousness and material conditions

Weaknesses and Criticisms

- ✓ -appears to be reductionist (i.e. economics)
- ✓ -too open ended...appears to lead to chaos
- ✓ Concepts/Issues/Terms (For BOTH types of Conflict Theory)
- ✓ -interest-power-authority-dominance-conflict-coercion-patterns of
- ✓ inequality-privilege-social   position-   social   class-class consciousness-vested   interests-alienation-ideology-stratification-racism-sexism-crime- exploitation-class struggle-revolution-means of production

Conflict Theory: definition and assumptions

Definition:

Conflict theory states that the society or organization functions so that each individual participant and its groups struggle to maximize their benefits, which inevitably contributes to social change such as changes in politics and revolutions.

The theory is mostly applied to explain conflict between social classes, proletarian versus bourgeoisie; and in ideologies such as capitalism versus socialism. The theory attempts to refute functionalism, which considers that societies and organizations function so that each individual and group plays a specific role, like organs in the body.

There are radical basic assumptions (society is eternally in conflict, which might explain social change), or moderate ones (custom and conflict are always mixed).

The moderate version allows for functionalism to as an equally acceptable theory since it would accept that even negative social institutions play a part in society's self-perpetuation.

The essence of conflict theory is best epitomized by the classic 'pyramid structure' in which an elite dictates terms to the larger masses.

All major institutions, laws, and traditions in the society are designed to support those who have traditionally been in power, or the groups that are perceived to be superior in the society according to this theory.

This can also be expanded to include any society's 'morality' and by extension their definition of deviance.

Anything that challenges the control of the so-called elite will likely be considered 'deviant' or 'morally reprehensible.'

Repeat:

Anything that challenges the control of the so-called elite will likely be considered 'deviant' or 'morally reprehensible.'

The theory can be applied on both the macro level (like the US government or Soviet Russia, historically) or the micro level (a church organization or school club). In summary, conflict theory seeks to catalogue the ways in which those in power seek to stay in power. In understanding conflict theory, social class competition plays a key part.

Conflict theory was elaborated in the United Kingdom by Max Gluckman and John Rex, in the United States by Lewis A. Coser and Randall Collins, and in Germany by Ralf Dahrendorf, all of them being less or more influenced by Karl Marx, Ludwig Gumplovicz, Vilfredo Pareto, Georg Simmel, and other founding fathers of.

Assumptions:

The following are four primary assumptions of modern conflict theory:

1. Competition. Competition over scarce resources (money, leisure, sexual partners, and so on) is at the heart of all social relationships. Competition rather than consensus is characteristic of human relationships.
2. Structural inequality. Inequalities in power and reward are built into all social structures. Individuals and groups that benefit from any particular structure strive to see it maintained.
3. Revolution. Change occurs as a result of conflict between competing social classes rather than through adaptation. Change is often abrupt and revolutionary rather than evolutionary.
4. War. Even war is a unifier of the societies involved, as well as war may set an end to whole societies.
5. In essence, those with power, whether actual or percieved,seek to maintain it and gain more by explioting those without...
6. Those without power constantly seek to gain power.Basically the argument of the 'haves and have nots.'Over...and over...and over...and over...and over...and over...and over...and over.......................

127

Conflict Perspective

A third important sociological framework is the conflict theory. Unlike the structural functional theory, which views society as a eaceful unit, conflict theory interprets society as a struggle for power between groups engaging in conflict for limited resources. Karl Marx is the ounder of conflict theory. Conflict theorists like Marx posit that there are two general categories of people in industrialized societies: the capitalist class and the working class.

The capitalist class, or elite, consists of those in positions of wealth and power who own the means of production or control access to the means of production. The working classconsists of relatively powerless individuals who sell their labor to the capitalist class. It is advantageous to the elite to keep the working class in a relatively disadvantaged position so that they can maintain the status quo and their own privileged positions.

Conflict Theory and Crime

Conflict theorists believe that the broad division of people into these two categories is inherently unequal. They cite the criminal justice system to support their claim. The capitalist class passes laws designed to benefit themselves. These same laws are detrimental to the working class. Both groups commit acts of deviance, but the system the capitalists created defines deviance differently for each group. The criminal justice system judges and punishes each group differently.

In addition, the elite can often afford expensive lawyers and are sometimes on a first-name basis with the individuals in charge of making and enforcing laws. Members of the working class generally do not have these advantages.

White-Collar Crimes

Conflict theorists also look at the types of crimes committed by members of the two classes. The working class is more likely to commit so-called street crime, such as robbery, assault, or murder. Members of the elite are less likely to commit acts of violence but more likely to engage in white-collar crime, or nonviolent crime committed by the capitalist class during the course of their occupations.

Example: White-collar criminal acts include embezzlement, insider stock trading, price fixing, and breaking regulatory laws.

White-collar criminals are difficult to catch and prosecute for two main reasons:

White-collar crime is difficult to identify. It leaves little physical evidence and no easily identifiable victim. In order to detect white-collar crime, authorities must have knowledge of high finance to discover that embezzlement, for example, has taken place.   White-collar   criminals are sometimes able to use their power and influence to avoid prosecution. Because of their social and economic clout, white-collar criminals rarely face criminal prosecution. When prosecuted, they are much less likely than members of the working class to receive a prison

sentence. They are more likely to pay a fine as punishment for their crime.

White-Collar Crime: Not Dangerous?

Generally, white-collar crimes are not harmful or dangerous to the general public. But there are exceptions. In 2001, consumer advocates accused the Ford Motor Corporation of equipping some of their vehicles with faulty tires, made by Bridgestone/Firestone. Ford had already recalled the tires from vehicles sold in other countries but made no such recall on tires on those sold in the United States. Over 200 people died and more than 800 were injured in automobile accidents allegedly caused by the defective tires.

Deviance and Power

Conflict theorist Alexander Liazos points out that the people we commonly label as deviant are also relatively powerless. According to Liazos, a homeless person living in the street is more likely to be labeled deviant than an executive who embezzles funds from the company he or she runs.

Because the people in positions of power make the laws of any given society, they create laws to benefit themselves. According to the conflict view of deviance, when rich and powerful people are accused of wrongdoing, they have the means to hire lawyers, accountants, and other people who can help them avoid being labeled as deviant. Lastly, members of a society generally believe that laws are inherently fair, which can draw attention away from the possibility that these laws might be unfairly applied or that a law itself might not be good or just.

~ 3 ~
Functional Theory

Introduction

According to the functionalist perspective of sociology, each aspect of society is interdependent and contributes to society's stability and functioning as a whole. For example, the government provides education for the children of the family, which in turn pays taxes on which the state depends to keep itself running. That is, the family is dependent upon the school to help children grow up to have good jobs so that they can raise and support their own families. In the process, the children become law-abiding, taxpaying citizens, who in turn support the state.

Talcott Parsons believe that order, stability and cooperation in society are based on value consensus that is a general agreement by members of society concerning what is good and worthwhile. Stratification system derives from common values it follows from the existence of values that individuals will be evaluated and therefore placed in some form of rank order. Stratification is the ranking of units in a social system in accordance with the common value system. Those who perform successfully in terms of society's values will be ranked highly and they will be likely to receive a variety of rewards and will be accorded high prestige since they exemplify and personify common values. According to Kingsley Davis and Moore stratification exists in every known human society.

All social system shares certain functional prerequisites which must be met if the system is to survive and operate efficiently. One such prerequisite is role allocation and performance. This means that all roles must be filled. They will be filled by those best able to perform them. The necessary training for them is undertaken and that the roles are performed conscientiously. Davis and Moore argue that all societies need some mechanism for insuring effective role allocation and performance. This mechanism is social stratification which they see as a system which attaches unequal rewards and privileges to the positions in society. They concluded that social stratification is a device by which

131

societies insure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons.

Functionalism (or structural functionalism) is the perspective in sociology according to which society consists of different but related parts, each of which serves a particular purpose. According to functionalism, sociologists can explain social structures and social behavior in terms of the components of a society and their functions. Auguste Comte helped develop functionalism in the 19th century, and functionalist Emile Durkheim later compared society to the human body. Just as the body consists of different, interrelated organs that enable it to survive, society consists of different components that enable it to survive and which depend on each other. For example, judicial systems help maintain order, and schools teach children. Problems in a single part of society can disrupt the whole.

If all goes well, the parts of society produce order, stability, and productivity. If all does not go well, the parts of society then must adapt to recapture a new order, stability, and productivity. For example, during a financial recession with its high rates of unemployment and inflation, social programs are trimmed or cut. Schools offer fewer programs. Families tighten their budgets. And a new social order, stability, and productivity occur.

Functionalists believe that society is held together by social consensus, in which members of the society agree upon, and work together to achieve, what is best for society as a whole. This stands apart from the other two main sociological perspectives: **symbolic interactionalism,** which focuses on how people act according to their interpretations of the meaning of their world, and **conflict theory,** which focuses on the negative, conflicted, ever-changing nature of society.

Functionalism has received criticism for neglecting the negative functions of an event, such as divorce. Critics also claim that the

perspective justifies the status quo and complacency on the part of society's members. Functionalism does not encourage people to take an active role in changing their social environment, even when such change may benefit them. Instead, functionalism sees active social change as undesirable because the various parts of society will compensate naturally for any problems that may arise.

Structural functionalism

Structural functionalism, or simply **functionalism**, is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole, and believes that society has evolved like organisms.[2] This approach looks at both social structure and social functions. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions, and institutions. A common analogy, popularized by Herbert Spencer, presents these parts of society as "organs" that work toward the proper functioning of the "body" as a whole. In the most basic terms, it simply emphasizes "the effort to impute, as rigorously as possible, to each feature, custom, or practice, its effect on the functioning of a supposedly stable, cohesive system". For Talcott Parsons, "structural-functionalism" came to describe a particular stage in the methodological development of social science, rather than a specific school of thought. The structural functionalism approach is a macrosociological analysis, with a broad focus on social structures that shape society as a whole.

Theory

Classical theories are defined by a tendency towards biological analogy and notions of social evolutionism:

Functionalist thought, from Comte onwards, has looked particularly towards biology as the science providing the closest and most compatible model for social science. Biology has been taken to provide a guide to conceptualizing the structure and the function of social systems and to analyzing processes of evolution via mechanisms of adaptation ... functionalism strongly emphasises the pre-eminence of the social world over its individual parts (i.e. its constituent actors, human subjects).

—Anthony Giddens, The Constitution of Society 1984

Whilst one may regard functionalism as a logical extension of the organic analogies for society presented by political philosophers such as Rousseau, sociology draws firmer attention to those institutions unique to industrialised capitalist society (or modernity). Functionalism also has an anthropological basis in the work of theorists such as Marcel Mauss, Bronisław Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown. It is in Radcliffe-Brown's specific usage that the prefix 'structural' emerged.

Émile Durkheim

Radcliffe-Brown proposed that most stateless, "primitive" societies, lacking strong centralised institutions, are based on an association of corporate-descent groups.[9] Structural functionalism also took on Malinowski's argument that the basic building block of society is the nuclear family,[9] and that the clan is an outgrowth, not vice versa. Émile Durkheim was concerned with the question of how certain societies maintain internal stability and survive over time. He proposed that such societies tend to be segmented, with equivalent parts held together by shared values, common symbols or, as his nephew Marcel Mauss held, systems of exchanges. Durkheim used the term 'mechanical solidarity' to refer to these types of "social bonds, based on common sentiments & shared moral values, that are strong

among members of pre-industrial societies".[10] In modern, complicated societies, members perform very different tasks, resulting in a strong interdependence. Based on the metaphor above of an organism in which many parts function together to sustain the whole, Durkheim argued that complicated societies are held together by organic solidarity, i.e. "social bonds, based on specialization and interdependence, that are strong among members of industrial societies".

These views were upheld by Durkheim, who, following Comte, believed that society constitutes a separate "level" of reality, distinct from both biological and inorganic matter. Explanations of social phenomena had therefore to be constructed within this level, individuals being merely transient occupants of comparatively stable social roles. The central concern of structural functionalism is a continuation of the Durkheimian task of explaining the apparent stability and internal cohesion needed by societies to endure over time. Societies are seen as coherent, bounded and fundamentally relational constructs that function like organisms, with their various (or social institutions) working together in an unconscious, quasi-automatic fashion toward achieving an overall social equilibrium. All social and cultural phenomena are therefore seen as functional in the sense of working together, and are effectively deemed to have "lives" of their own. They are primarily analyzed in terms of this function. The individual is significant not in and of himself, but rather in terms of his status, his position in patterns of social relations, and the behaviors associated with his status. Therefore, the social structure is the network of statuses connected by associated roles.

It is simplistic to equate the perspective directly with political conservatism.[11] The tendency to emphasis "cohesive systems", however, leads functionalist theories to be contrasted with "conflict theories" which instead emphasize social problems and inequalities.

Prominent theorists

Auguste Comte

Auguste Comte, the "Father of Positivism", pointed out the need to keep society unified as many traditions were diminishing. He was the first person to coin the term sociology. Auguste Comte suggests that sociology is the product of a three-stage development.

1. Theological Stage: From the beginning of human history until the end of the European Middle Ages, people took a religious view that society expressed God's will. In the theological state, the human mind, seeking the essential nature of beings, the first and final causes (the origin and purpose) of all effects—in short, absolute knowledge—supposes all phenomena to be produced by the immediate action of supernatural beings.

2. Metaphysical Stage: People began seeing society as a natural system as opposed to the supernatural. Began with the Enlightenment and the ideas of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau.Reflected the failings of a selfish human nature rather than the perfection of God.

3. Scientific Stage: Describing society through the application of the scientific approach, which draws on the work of scientists.

Herbert Spencer

Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), a British philosopher famous for applying the theory of natural selection to society. He was in many ways the first true sociological functionalist. In fact, while Durkheim is widely considered the most important functionalist among positivist theorists, it is well known that much of his analysis was culled from reading Spencer's work, especially his Principles of Sociology (1874–96). Spencer allude society to the analogy of human body. Just as the structural parts of the human body - the skeleton, muscles, and various internal organs - function independently to help the entire organism survive, social structures work together to preserve society.

While most avoid the tedious tasks of reading Spencer's massive volumes (filled as they are with long passages explicating the organic analogy, with reference to cells, simple organisms, animals, humans and society), there are some important insights that have quietly influenced many contemporary theorists, including Talcott Parsons, in his early work "The Structure of Social Action" (1937).Cultural anthropology also consistently uses functionalism.

This evolutionary model, unlike most 19th century evolutionary theories, is cyclical, beginning with the differentiation and increasing complication of an organic or "super-organic" (Spencer's term for asocial system) body, followed by a fluctuating state of equilibrium and disequilibrium (or a state of adjustment and adaptation), and, finally, the stage of disintegration or dissolution. Following Thomas Malthus' population principles, Spencer concluded that society is constantly facing selection pressures (internal and external) that force it to adapt its internal structure through differentiation.

Every solution, however, causes a new set of selection pressures that threaten society's viability. It should be noted that Spencer was not a determinist in the sense that he never said that

1. Selection pressures will be felt in time to change them;
2. They will be felt and reacted to; or
3. The solutions will always work.

In fact, he was in many ways a political sociologist, and recognized that the degree of centralized and consolidated authority in a given polity could make or break its ability to adapt. In other words, he saw a general trend towards the centralization of power as leading to stagnation and ultimately, pressures to decentralize.

More specifically, Spencer recognized three functional needs or prerequisites that produce selection pressures: they are regulatory, operative (production) and distributive. He argued that all societies need to solve problems of control and coordination, production of

goods, services and ideas, and, finally, to find ways of distributing these resources.

Initially, in tribal societies, these three needs are inseparable, and the kinship system is the dominant structure that satisfies them. As many scholars have noted, all institutions are subsumed under kinship organization, but, with increasing population (both in terms of sheer numbers and density), problems emerge with regard to feeding individuals, creating new forms of organization consider the emergent division of labour, coordinating and controlling various differentiated social units, and developing systems of resource distribution.

The solution, as Spencer sees it, is to differentiate structures to fulfill more specialized functions; thus a chief or "big man" emerges, soon followed by a group of lieutenants, and later kings and administrators. The structural parts of society (ex. families, work) function interdependently to help society function. Therefore, social structures work together to preserve society.

Perhaps Spencer's greatest obstacle that is being widely discussed in modern sociology is the fact that much of his social philosophy is rooted in the social and historical context of Ancient Egypt. He coined the term "survival of the fittest" in discussing the simple fact that small tribes or societies tend to be defeated or conquered by larger ones. Of course, many sociologists still use him (knowingly or otherwise) in their analyses, especially due to the recent re-emergence of evolutionary theory.

Talcott Parsons

Talcott Parsons was heavily influenced by Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, synthesizing much of their work into his action theory, which he based on the system-theoretical concept and the methodological principle of voluntary action. He held that "the social system is made up of the actions of individuals." His starting point, accordingly, is the interaction between two individuals faced with a

variety of choices about how they might act, choices that are influenced and constrained by a number of physical and social factors.

Parsons determined that each individual has expectations of the other's action and reaction to his own behaviour, and that these expectations would (if successful) be "derived" from the accepted norms and values of the society they inhabit. As Parsons himself emphasized, in a general context there would never exist any perfect "fit" between behaviours and norms, so such a relation is never complete or "perfect."

Social norms were always problematic for Parsons, who never claimed (as has often been alleged) that social norms were generally accepted and agreed upon, should this prevent some kind of universal law. Whether social norms were accepted or not was for Parsons simply a historical question.

As behaviours are repeated in more interactions, and these expectations are entrenched or institutionalized, a role is created. Parsons defines a "role" as the normatively-regulated participation "of a person in a concrete process of social interaction with specific, concrete role-partners." Although any individual, theoretically, can fulfill any role, the individual is expected to conform to the norms governing the nature of the role they fulfill.

Furthermore, one person can and does fulfill many different roles at the same time. In one sense, an individual can be seen to be a "composition" of the roles he inhabits. Certainly, today, when asked to describe themselves, most people would answer with reference to their societal roles.

Parsons later developed the idea of roles into collectivities of roles that complement each other in fulfilling functions for society. Some roles are bound up in institutions and social structures (economic, educational, legal and even gender-based). These are

functional in the sense that they assist society in operating and fulfilling its functional needs so that society runs smoothly.

Contrary to prevailing myth, Parsons never spoke about a society where there was no conflict or some kind of "perfect" equilibrium. A society's cultural value-system was in the typical case never completely integrated, never static and most of the time, like in the case of the American society in a complex state of transformation relative to its historical point of departure. To reach a "perfect" equilibrium was not any serious theoretical question in Parsons analysis of social systems, indeed, the most dynamic societies had generally cultural systems with important inner tensions like the US and India. These tensions were (quite often) a source of their strength according to Parsons rather than the opposite. Parsons never thought about system-institutionalization and the level of strains (tensions, conflict) in the system as opposite forces per se.

The key processes for Parsons for system reproduction are socialization and social control. Socialization is important because it is the mechanism for transferring the accepted norms and values of society to the individuals within the system. Parsons never spoke about "perfect socialization" in any society socialization was only partial and "incomplete" from an integral point of view.

Parsons states that "this point [...] is independent of the sense in which [the] individual is concretely autonomous or creative rather than 'passive' or 'conforming', for individuality and creativity, are to a considerable extent, phenomena of the institutionalization of expectations"; they are culturally constructed.

Socialization is supported by the positive and negative sanctioning of role behaviours that do or do not meet these expectations. A punishment could be informal, like a snigger or gossip, or more formalized, through institutions such as prisons and mental

homes. If these two processes were perfect, society would become static and unchanging, but in reality this is unlikely to occur for long.

Parsons recognizes this, stating that he treats "the structure of the system as problematic and subject to change," and that his concept of the tendency towards equilibrium "does not imply the empirical dominance of stability over change." He does, however, believe that these changes occur in a relatively smooth way.

Individuals in interaction with changing situations adapt through a process of "role bargaining." Once the roles are established, they create norms that guide further action and are thus institutionalized, creating stability across social interactions. Where the adaptation process cannot adjust, due to sharp shocks or immediate radical change, structural dissolution occurs and either new structures (or therefore a new system) are formed, or society dies. This model of social change has been described as a "moving equilibrium," and emphasises a desire for social order.

Davis and Moore

Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore (1945) gave an argument for social stratification based on the idea of "functional necessity" (also known as the Davis-Moore hypothesis). They argue that the most difficult jobs in any society have the highest incomes in order to motivate individuals to fill the roles needed by the division of labour. Thus inequality serves social stability.

This argument has been criticized as fallacious from a number of different angles: the argument is both that the individuals who are the most deserving are the highest rewarded, and that a system of unequal rewards is necessary, otherwise no individuals would perform as needed for the society to function. The problem is that these rewards are supposed to be based upon objective merit, rather than subjective "motivations." The argument also does not clearly establish why some positions are worth more than others, even when they benefit more

people in society, e.g., teachers compared to athletes and movie stars. Critics have suggested that structural inequality (inherited wealth, family power, etc.) is itself a cause of individual success or failure, not a consequence of it.

Robert Merton

Robert K. Merton made important refinements to functionalist thought. He fundamentally agreed with Parsons' theory. However, he acknowledged that it was problematic, believing that it was over generalized [Holmwood, 2005:100]. Merton tended to emphasize middle range theory rather than a grand theory, meaning that he was able to deal specifically with some of the limitations in Parsons' theory. Merton believed that any social structure probably has many functions, some more obvious than others. He identified 3 main limitations: functional unity, universal functionalism and indispensability [Ritzer in Gingrich, 1999]. He also developed the concept of deviance and made the distinction between manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions referred to the recognized and intended consequences of any social pattern. Latent functions referred to unrecognized and unintended consequences of any social pattern.

Merton criticized functional unity, saying that not all parts of a modern complex society work for the functional unity of society. Consequently, there is a social dysfunction referred to as any social pattern that may disrupt the operation of society. Some institutions and structures may have other functions, and some may even be generally dysfunctional, or be functional for some while being dysfunctional for others. This is because not all structures are functional for society as a whole. Some practices are only functional for a dominant individual or a group [Holmwood, 2005:91]. There are two types of functions that Merton discusses the "manifest functions" in that a social pattern can trigger a recognized and intended consequence. The manifest function of education includes preparing for a career by getting good grades, graduation and finding good job. The second type of function is "latent

142

functions", where a social pattern results in an unrecognized or unintended consequence. The latent functions of education include meeting new people, extra-curricular activities, school trips. Another type of social function is "social dysfunction" which is any undesirable consequences that disrupts the operation of society. The social dysfunction of education includes not getting good grades, a job. Merton states that by recognizing and examining the dysfunctional aspects of society we can explain the development and persistence of alternatives. Thus, as Holmwood states, "Merton explicitly made power and conflict central issues for research within a functionalist paradigm" [2005:91].

Merton also noted that there may be functional alternatives to the institutions and structures currently fulfilling the functions of society. This means that the institutions that currently exist are not indispensable to society. Merton states "just as the same item may have multiple functions, so may the same function be diversely fulfilled by alternative items" [cited in Holmwood, 2005:91]. This notion of functional alternatives is important because it reduces the tendency of functionalism to imply approval of the status quo.

Merton's theory of deviance is derived from Durkheim's idea of anomie. It is central in explaining how internal changes can occur in a system. For Merton, anomie means a discontinuity between cultural goals and the accepted methods available for reaching them.

Merton believes that there are 5 situations facing an actor.

- **Conformity** occurs when an individual has the means and desire to achieve the cultural goals socialised into him.
- **Innovation** occurs when an individual strives to attain the accepted cultural goals but chooses to do so in novel or unaccepted method.
- **Ritualism** occurs when an individual continues to do things as proscribed by society but forfeits the achievement of the goals.

- **Retreatism** is the rejection of both the means and the goals of society.
- **Rebellion** is a combination of the rejection of societal goals and means and a substitution of other goals and means.

Thus it can be seen that change can occur internally in society through either innovation or rebellion. It is true that society will attempt to control these individuals and negate the changes, but as the innovation or rebellion builds momentum, society will eventually adapt or face dissolution.

Almond and Powell

In the 1970s, political scientists Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell introduced a structural-functionalist approach to comparing political systems. They argued that, in order to understand a political system, it is necessary to understand not only its institutions (or structures) but also their respective functions. They also insisted that these institutions, to be properly understood, must be placed in a meaningful and dynamic historical context.

This idea stood in marked contrast to prevalent approaches in the field of comparative politics the state society theory and the dependency theory. These were the descendants of David Easton's system theory in international relations, a mechanistic view that saw all political systems as essentially the same, subject to the same laws of "stimulus and response" or inputs and outputs while paying little attention to unique characteristics. The structural-functional approach is based on the view that a political system is made up of several key components, including interest groups, political parties and branches of government.

In addition to structures, Almond and Powell showed that a political system consists of various functions, chief among them political socialization, recruitment and communication: socialization refers to the way in which societies pass along their values and beliefs to

144

succeeding generations, and in political terms describe the process by which a society inculcates civic virtues, or the habits of effective citizenship; recruitment denotes the process by which a political system generates interest, engagement and participation from citizens; and communication refers to the way that a system promulgates its values and information.

Structural functionalism and unilineal descent

In their attempt to explain the social stability of African "primitive" stateless societies where they undertook their fieldwork, Evans-Pritchard (1940) and Meyer Fortes (1945) argued that the Tallensi and the Nuer were primarily organized around unilineal descent groups. Such groups are characterized by common purposes, such as administering property or defending against attacks; they form a permanent social structure that persists well beyond the lifespan of their members. In the case of the Tallensi and the Nuer, these corporate groups were based on kinship which in turn fitted into the larger structures of unilineal descent; consequently Evans-Pritchard's and Fortes' model is called "descent theory". Moreover, in this African context territorial divisions were aligned with lineages; descent theory therefore synthesized both blood and soil as two sides of one coin (cf. Kuper, 1988:195). Affinal ties with the parent through whom descent is not reckoned, however, are considered to be merely complementary or secondary (Fortes created the concept of "complementary filiation"), with the reckoning of kinship through descent being considered the primary organizing force of social systems. Because of its strong emphasis on unilineal descent, this new kinship theory came to be called "descent theory".

With no delay, descent theory had found its critics. Many African tribal societies seemed to fit this neat model rather well, although Africanists, such as Richards, also argued that Fortes and Evans-Pritchard had deliberately downplayed internal contradictions and overemphasized the stability of the local lineage systems and their

significance for the organization of society.[39] However, in many Asian settings the problems were even more obvious. In Papua New Guinea, the local patrilineal descent groups were fragmented and contained large amounts of non-agnates. Status distinctions did not depend on descent, and genealogies were too short to account for social solidarity through identification with a common ancestor. In particular, the phenomenon of cognatic (or bilateral) kinship posed a serious problem to the proposition that descent groups are the primary element behind the social structures of "primitive" societies.

Leach's (1966) critique came in the form of the classical Malinowskian argument, pointing out that "in Evans-Pritchard's studies of the Nuer and also in Fortes's studies of the Tallensi unilineal descent turns out to be largely an ideal concept to which the empirical facts are only adapted by means of fictions." (1966:8). People's self-interest, manoeuvring, manipulation and competition had been ignored. Moreover, descent theory neglected the significance of marriage and affinal ties, which were emphasised by Levi-Strauss' structural anthropology, at the expense of overemphasising the role of descent. To quote Leach: "The evident importance attached to matrilateral and affinal kinship connections is not so much explained as explained away."

Decline of functionalism

Structural functionalism reached the peak of its influence in the 1940s and 1950s, and by the 1960s was in rapid decline. By the 1980s, its place was taken in Europe by more conflict-oriented approaches, and more recently by 'structuralism'. While some of the critical approaches also gained popularity in the United States, the mainstream of the discipline has instead shifted to a myriad of empirically oriented middle range theories with no overarching theoretical orientation. To most sociologists, functionalism is now "as dead as a dodo".

As the influence of both functionalism and Marxism in the 1960s began to wane, the linguistic and cultural turns led to a myriad of

new movements in the social sciences: "According to Giddens, the orthodox consensus terminated in the late 1960s and 1970s as the middle ground shared by otherwise competing perspectives gave way and was replaced by a baffling variety of competing perspectives. This third 'generation' of social theory includes phenomenological inspired approaches, critical theory, ethno methodology, symbolic interactions, structuralism, post-structuralism, and theories written in the tradition of hermeneutics and ordinary language philosophy."

While absent from empirical sociology, functionalist themes remained detectable in sociological theory, most notably in the works of Luhmann and Giddens. There are, however, signs of an incipient revival, as functionalist claims have recently been bolstered by developments in multilevel selection theory and in empirical research on how groups solve social dilemmas. Recent developments in evolutionary theory especially by biologist David Sloan Wilson and anthropologists Robert Boyd and Peter Richerson have provided strong support for structural functionalism in the form of multilevel selection theory. In this theory, culture and social structure are seen as a Darwinian (biological or cultural)adaptation at the group level.

Criticisms

In the 1960s, functionalism was criticized for being unable to account for social change, or for structural contradictions and conflict (and thus was often called "consensus theory").[46] Also, it ignores inequalities including race, gender, class, which causes tension and conflict. The refutation of the second criticism of functionalism, that it is static and has no concept of change, has already been articulated above, concluding that while Parsons' theory allows for change, it is an orderly process of change [Parsons, 1961:38], a moving equilibrium. Therefore referring to Parsons' theory of society as static is inaccurate. It is true that it does place emphasis on equilibrium and the maintenance or quick return to social order, but this is a product of the time in which Parsons was writing (post-World War II, and the start of

the cold war). Society was in upheaval and fear abounded. At the time social order was crucial, and this is reflected in Parsons' tendency to promote equilibrium and social order rather than social change.

Furthermore, Durkheim favored a radical form of guild socialism along with functionalist explanations. Also, Marxism, while acknowledging social contradictions, still uses functionalist explanations. Parsons' evolutionary theory describes the differentiation and reintegration systems and subsystems and thus at least temporary conflict before reintegration (ibid). "The fact that functional analysis can be seen by some as inherently conservative and by others as inherently radical suggests that it may be inherently neither one nor the other."

Stronger criticisms include the epistemological argument that functionalism is tautologous, that is it attempts to account for the development of social institutions solely through recourse to the effects that are attributed to them and thereby explains the two circularly. However, Parsons drew directly on many of Durkheim's concepts in creating his theory. Certainly Durkheim was one of the first theorists to explain a phenomenon with reference to the function it served for society. He said, "the determination of function is…necessary for the complete explanation of the phenomena" [cited in Coser, 1977:140]. However Durkheim made a clear distinction between historical and functional analysis, saying, "When…the explanation of a social phenomenon is undertaken, we must seek separately the efficient cause which produces it and the function it fulfills" [cited in Coser, 1977:140]. If Durkheim made this distinction, then it is unlikely that Parsons did not. However Merton does explicitly state that functional analysis does not seek to explain why the action happened in the first instance, but why it continues or is reproduced. He says that "latent functions …go far towards explaining the continuance of the pattern" [cited in Elster, 1990:130, emphasis added]. Therefore it can be argued that functionalism does not explain the original cause of a phenomenon with reference to its effect, and is therefore, not teleological.

Another criticism describes the ontological argument that society cannot have "needs" as a human being does, and even if society does have needs they need not be met. Anthony Giddens argues that functionalist explanations may all be rewritten as historical accounts of individual human actions and consequences (see Structuration).

A further criticism directed at functionalism is that it contains no sense of agency, that individuals are seen as puppets, acting as their role requires. Yet Holmwood states that the most sophisticated forms of functionalism are based on "a highly developed concept of action" [2005:107], and as was explained above, Parsons took as his starting point the individual and their actions. His theory did not however articulate how these actors exercise their agency in opposition to the socialization and inculcation of accepted norms. As has been shown above, Merton addressed this limitation through his concept of deviance, and so it can be seen that functionalism allows for agency. It cannot, however, explain why individuals choose to accept or reject the accepted norms, why and in what circumstances they choose to exercise their agency, and this does remain a considerable limitation of the theory.

Further criticisms have been leveled at functionalism by proponents of other social theories, particularly conflict theorists, Marxists, feminists and postmodernists. Conflict theorists criticised functionalism's concept of systems as giving far too much weight to integration and consensus, and neglecting independence and conflict Lockwood in line with conflict theory, suggested that Parsons' theory missed the concept of system contradiction. He did not account for those parts of the system that might have tendencies to Mal-integration. According to Lockwood, it was these tendencies that come to the surface as opposition and conflict among actors. However Parsons thought that the issues of conflict and cooperation were very much intertwined and sought to account for both in his model [Holmwood, 2005:103]. In this however he was limited by his analysis of

an 'ideal type' of society which was characterized by consensus. Merton, through his critique of functional unity, introduced into functionalism an explicit analysis of tension and conflict.

Marxism which was revived soon after the emergence of conflict theory, criticized professional sociology (functionalism and conflict theory alike) for being partisan to advanced welfare capitalism [Holmwood, 2005:103]. Gouldner [Holmwood, 2005:103] thought that Parsons' theory specifically was an expression of the dominant interests of welfare capitalism, that it justified institutions with reference to the function they fulfill for society. It may be that Parsons' work implied or articulated that certain institutions were necessary to fulfill the functional prerequisites of society, but whether or not this is the case, Merton explicitly states that institutions are not indispensable and that there are functional alternatives. That he does not identify any alternatives to the current institutions does reflect a conservative bias, which as has been stated before is a product of the specific time that he was writing in.

As functionalism's prominence was ending, feminism was on the rise, and it attempted a radical criticism of functionalism. It believed that functionalism neglected the suppression of women within the family structure. Holmwood [2005:103] shows, however, that Parsons did in fact describe the situations where tensions and conflict existed or were about to take place, even if he did not articulate those conflicts. Some feminists agree, suggesting that Parsons' provided accurate descriptions of these situations. Johnson in Holmwood, 2005:103]. On the other hand, Parsons recognized that he had oversimplified his functional analysis of women in relation to work and the family, and focused on the positive functions of the family for society and not on its dysfunctions for women. Merton, too, although addressing situations where function and dysfunction occurred simultaneously, lacked a "feminist sensibility" [Holmwood, 2005:103].

Postmodernism, as a theory, is critical of claims of objectivity. Therefore the idea of grand theory that can explain society in all its forms is treated with skepticism at the very least. This critique is important because it exposes the danger that grand theory can pose, when not seen as a limited perspective, as one way of understanding society.

Jeffrey Alexander (1985) sees functionalism as a broad school rather than a specific method or system, such as Parsons, who is capable of taking equilibrium (stability) as a reference-point rather than assumption and treats structural differentiation as a major form of social change. "The name 'functionalism' implies a difference of method or interpretation that does not exist." (Davis 1967: 401) This removes the determinism criticized above. Cohen argues that rather than needs a society has dispositional facts: features of the social environment that support the existence of particular social institutions but do not cause them.

The functionalist perspective, also called functionalism, is one of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology. It has its origins in the works of Emile Durkheim, who was especially interested in how social order is possible or how society remains relatively stable.

Functionalism interprets each part of society in terms of how it contributes to the stability of the whole society. Society is more than the sum of its parts; rather, each part of society is functional for the stability of the whole society. The different parts are primarily the institutions of society, each of which is organized to fill different needs and each of which has particular consequences for the form and shape of society. The parts all depend on each other.

For example, the government, or state, provides education for the children of the family, which in turn pays taxes on which the state depends to keep itself running. The family is dependent upon the school to help children grow up to have good jobs so that they can raise and

support their own families. In the process, the children become law-abiding, taxpaying citizens, who in turn support the state. If all goes well, the parts of society produce order, stability, and productivity. If all does not go well, the parts of society then must adapt to recapture a new order, stability, and productivity.

Functionalism emphasizes the consensus and order that exist in society, focusing on social stability and shared public values. From this perspective, disorganization in the system, such as deviant behavior, leads to change because societal components must adjust to achieve stability. When one part of the system is not working or is dysfunctional, it affects all other parts and creates social problems, which leads to social change.

The functionalist perspective achieved its greatest popularity among American sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s. While European functionalists originally focused on explaining the inner workings of social order, American functionalists focused on discovering the functions of human behavior. Among these American functionalist sociologists is Robert K. Merton, who divided human functions into two types: manifest functions, which are intentional and obvious, and latent functions, which are unintentional and not obvious. The manifest function of attending a church or synagogue, for instance, is to worship as part of a religious community, but its latent function may be to help members learn to discern personal from institutional values. With common sense, manifest functions become easily apparent. Yet this is not necessarily the case for latent functions, which often demand a sociological approach to be revealed.

Functionalism has received criticism for neglecting the negative functions of an event such as divorce. Critics also claim that the perspective justifies the status quo and complacency on the part of society's members. Functionalism does not encourage people to take an active role in changing their social environment, even when such change may benefit them. Instead, functionalism sees active social change as

undesirable because the various parts of society will compensate naturally for any problems that may arise.

Key Points

- In the functionalist perspective, societies are thought to function like organisms, with various social institutions working together like organs to maintain and reproduce societies.

- According to functionalist theories, institutions come about and persist because they play a function in society, promoting stability and integration.

- Functionalism has been criticized for its failure to account for social change and individual agency; some consider it conservatively biased.

- Functionalism has been criticized for attributing human-like needs to society.

- Emile Durkheim's work is considered the foundation of functionalist theory in sociology.

Terms

Functionalism

Structural functionalism, or simply functionalism, is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promotesolidarity and stability.

Social institutions

In the social sciences, institutions are the structures and mechanisms of social order and cooperation governing the behavior of a set of individuals within a given human collectivity. Institutions include the family, religion, peer group, economic systems, legal systems, penal systems, language, and the media.

- manifest function
- the element of a behavior that is conscious and deliberate
- latent function

- the element of a behavior that is not explicitly stated, recognized, or intended, and is thereby hidden

Functionalism

The functionalist perspective attempts to explain social institutions as collective means to meet individual and social needs. It is sometimes called structural-functionalismbecause it often focuses on the ways social structures (e.g., social institutions) meet social needs.

Functionalism draws its inspiration from the ideas of Emile Durkheim. Durkheim was concerned with the question of how societies maintain internal stability and survive over time. He sought to explain social stability through the concept of solidarity, and differentiated between the mechanical solidarity of primitive societies and the organic solidarity of complex modern societies. According to Durkheim, more primitive or traditional societies were held together by mechanical solidarity; members of society lived in relatively small and undifferentiated groups, where they shared strong family ties and performed similar daily tasks. Such societies were held together by shared values and common symbols. By contrast, he observed that, in modern societies, traditional family bonds are weaker; modern societies also exhibit a complex division of labor, where members perform very different daily tasks. Durkheim argued that modern industrial society would destroy the traditional mechanical solidarity that held primitive societies together. Modern societies however, do not fall apart. Instead, modern societies rely on organic solidarity; because of the extensive division of labor, members of society are forced to interact and exchange with one another to provide the things they need.

The functionalist perspective continues to try and explain how societies maintained the stability and internal cohesion necessary to ensure their continued existence over time. In the functionalist perspective, societies are thought to function like organisms, with various social institutions working together like organs to maintain and

154

reproduce them. The various parts of society are assumed to work together naturally and automatically to maintain overall social equilibrium. Because social institutions are functionally integrated to form a stable system, a change in one institution will precipitate a change in other institutions. Dysfunctional institutions, which do not contribute to the overall maintenance of a society, will cease to exist.

In the 1950s, Robert Merton elaborated the functionalist perspective by proposing a distinction between manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions are the intended functions of an institution or a phenomenon in a social system. Latent functions are its unintended functions. Latent functions may be undesirable, but unintended consequences, or manifestly dysfunctional institutions may have latent functions that explain their persistence. For example, crime seems difficult to explain from the functionalist perspective; it seems to play little role in maintaining social stability. Crime, however, may have the latent function of providing examples that demonstrate the boundaries of acceptable behavior and the function of these boundaries to maintain social norms.

Social Institutions

Functionalists analyze social institutions in terms of the function they play. In other words, to understand a component of society, one must ask, "What is the function of this institution? How does it contribute to social stability?" Thus, one can ask of education, "What is the function of education for society?" A complete answer would be quite complex and require a detailed analysis of the history of education, but one obvious answer is that education prepares individuals to enter the workforce and, therefore, maintains a functioning economy. By delineating the functions of elements of society, of the social structure, we can better understand social life.

Criticism of Functionalism

Functionalism has been criticized for downplaying the role of individual action, and for being unable to account for social change. In the functionalist perspective, society and its institutions are the primary units of analysis. Individuals are significant only in terms of their places within social systems (i.e., social status and position in patterns of social relations). Some critics also take issue with functionalism's tendency to attribute needs to society. They point out that, unlike human beings, society does not have needs; society is only alive in the sense that it is made up of living individuals. By downplaying the role of individuals, functionalism is less likely to recognize how individual actions may alter social institutions.

Critics also argue that functionalism is unable to explain social change because it focuses so intently on social order and equilibrium in society. Following functionalist logic, if a social institution exists, it must serve a function. Institutions, however, change over time; some disappear and others come into being. The focus of functionalism on elements of social life in relation to their present function, and not their past functions, makes it difficult to use functionalism to explain why a function of some element of society might change, or how such change occurs.

Theories in sociology provide us with different perspectives with which to view our social world. A perspective is simply a way of looking at the world. A theory is a set of interrelated propositions or principles designed to answer a question or explain a particular phenomenon; it provides us with a perspective. Sociological theories help us to explain and predict the social world in which we live.

Sociology includes three major theoretical perspectives: the functionalist perspective, the conflict perspective, and the symbolic interactionist perspective (sometimes called the interactionist perspective, or simply the micro view). Each perspective offers a variety of explanations about the social world and human behavior.

Functionalist Perspective

The functionalist perspective is based largely on the works of Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Merton. According to functionalism, society is a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the whole. For example, each of the social institutions contributes important functions for society: Family provides a context for reproducing, nurturing, and socializing children; education offers a way to transmit a society's skills, knowledge, and culture to its youth; politics provides a means of governing members of society; economics provides for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services; and religion provides moral guidance and an outlet for worship of a higher power.

The functionalist perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by other parts. For example, the increase in single-parent and dual-earner families has contributed to the number of children who are failing in school because parents have become less available to supervise their children's homework. As a result of changes in technology, colleges are offering more technical programs, and many adults are returning to school to learn new skills that are required in the workplace. The increasing number of women in the workforce has contributed to the formulation of policies against sexual harassment and job discrimination.

Functionalists use the terms functional and dysfunctional to describe the effects of social elements on society. Elements of society are functional if they contribute to social stability and dysfunctional if they disrupt social stability. Some aspects of society can be both functional and dysfunctional. For example, crime is dysfunctional in that it is associated with physical violence, loss of property, and fear. But according to Durkheim and other functionalists, crime is also

157

functional for society because it leads to heightened awareness of shared moral bonds and increased social cohesion.

Sociologists have identified two types of functions: manifest and latent (Merton 1968). Manifest functions are consequences that are intended and commonly recognized. Latent functions are consequences that are unintended and often hidden. For example, the manifest function of education is to transmit knowledge and skills to society's youth. But public elementary schools also serve as babysitters for employed parents, and colleges offer a place for young adults to meet potential mates. The baby-sitting and mate-selection functions are not the intended or commonly recognized functions of education; hence they are latent functions.

Conflict Perspective

The functionalist perspective views society as composed of different parts working together. In contrast, the conflict perspective views society as composed of different groups and interest competing for power and resources. The conflict perspective explains various aspects of our social world by looking at which groups have power and benefit from a particular social arrangement. For example, feminist theory argues that we live in a patriarchal society a hierarchical system of organization controlled by men. Although there are many varieties of feminist theory, most would hold that feminism "demands that existing economic, political, and social structures be changed".

The origins of the conflict perspective can be traced to the classic works of Karl Marx.

Marx suggested that all societies go through stages of economic development. As societies evolve from agricultural to industrial, concern over meeting survival needs is replaced by concern over making a profit, the hallmark of a capitalist system. Industrialization leads to the development of two classes of people: the bourgeoisie, or the owners of the means of production (e.g., factories, farms, businesses);

and the proletariat, or the workers who earn wages. The division of society into two broad classes of people the "haves" and the "have nots" is beneficial to the owners of the means of production. The workers, who may earn only subsistence wages, are denied access to the many resources available to the wealthy owners.

According to Marx, the bourgeoisie use their power to control the institutions of society to their advantage. For example, Marx suggested that religion serves as an "opiate of the masses" in that it soothes the distress and suffering associated with the working-class lifestyle and focuses the workers' attention on spirituality, God, and the afterlife rather than on such worldly concerns as living conditions. In essence, religion diverts the workers so that they concentrate on being rewarded in heaven for living a moral life rather than on questioning their exploitation.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Both the functionalist and the conflict perspectives are concerned with how broad aspects of society, such as institutions and large social groups, influence the social world. This level of sociological analysis is called macro sociology: It looks at the big picture of society and suggests how social problems are affected at the institutional level.

Micro sociology, another level of sociological analysis, is concerned with the social psychological dynamics of individuals interacting in small groups. Symbolic interactionism reflects the micro-sociological perspective, and was largely influenced by the work of early sociologists and philosophers, such as George Simmel, Charles Cooley, George Herbert Mead, and Erving Goffman. Symbolic interactionism emphasizes that human behavior is influenced by definitions and meanings that are created and maintained through symbolic interaction with others.

Sociologist W.I. Thomas (1966) emphasized the importance of definitions and meanings in social behavior and its consequences. He

suggested that humans respond to their definition of a situation rather than to the objective situation itself. Hence Thomas noted that situations that we define as real become real in their consequences.

Symbolic interactionism also suggests that our identity or sense of self is shaped by social interaction. We develop our self-concept by observing how others interact with us a label us. By observing how others view us, we see a reflection ourselves that Cooley calls the "looking glass self."

Sociological Theory/Structural Functionalism

Structural Functionalism is a sociological theory that attempts to explain why society functions the way it does by focusing on the relationships between the various social institutions that make up society (e.g., government, law, education, religion,etc).

Detailed Description

Structural Functionalism is a marete theoretical understanding of society that posits social systems are collective means to fill social needs. In order for social life to survive and develop in society there are a number of activities that need to be carried out to ensure that certain needs are fulfilled. In the structural functionalist model, individuals produce necessary goods and services in various institutions and roles that correlate with the norms of the society.

Thus, one of the key ideas in Structural Functionalism is that society is made-up of groups or institutions, which are cohesive, share common norms, and have a definitive culture. Robert K. Merton argued that functionalism is about the more static or concrete aspects of society, institutions like government or religions. However, any group large enough to be a social institution is included in Structural Functionalist thinking, from religious denominations to sports clubs and everything in between. Structural Functionalism asserts that the way society is organized is the most natural and efficient way for it to be organized.

Gender inequality offers a good illustration. According to Structural Functionalist thought, women being subordinate to men allows the cogs of society to function smoothly as everyone in the society knows his or her respective position in the hierarchy. The implication, of course, is that, because society is functioning smoothly with gender stratification, such stratification is acceptable and efforts should not be made to change the arrangement. This example illustrates that Structural Functionalism is generally seen as being supportive of the status quo.

Another key characteristic of Structural Functionalism is that it views society as constantly striving to be at a state of equilibrium, which suggests there is an inherent drive within human societies to cohere or stick together. This is known as the cohesion issue. Societies strive toward equilibrium, not through dictatorial mandate by the leaders of society but rather because the social structure of societies encourages equilibrium.

For example, Jim Crow laws in the southern United States were a formalized version of informal structural advantages that empowered whites. Because of the history of slavery in the southern United States, whites had amassed more wealth than blacks. During slavery, whites controlled the government and all of the major institutions in the South. After slavery ended, whites continued to control many of these institutions, but because they were outnumbered in some areas by blacks, threatening their dominance, they instituted formal laws, Jim Crow laws, that allowed them to maintain their structural advantages. And whites were able to pass these laws because they already controlled many of the social institutions instrumental in the passage of laws (e.g., courts, government, businesses, etc.). Thus, the advantages whites had prior to a change in society allowed them to maintain their advantages after the change through both informal and formal means because of the structure of society.

Structural Functionalism does much to explain why certain aspects of society continue as they always have, despite some phenomena being clearly less beneficial for society as a whole (e.g., Jim Crow laws). However, Structural Functionalism falls short in explaining opposition to social institutions and social structure by those being oppressed.

Assumptions

There are a number of key assumptions in Structural Functionalist theory. One of these, that societies strives toward equilibrium, was detailed above. Another assumption is that institutions are distinct and should be studied individually. Many Structural Functionalists look at institutions individually as though they are divorced from other institutions. This is a mistake, as institutions are interlinked in society and those employing a structural functionalist approach should be taking into consideration the network of relationships that exist between these institutions.

Definitions of Concepts

Social cohesion describes the bonds that bring people together in a society. In order for groups to be cohesive in a social context, positive membership attitudes and behaviors have to be produced and maintained. Social cohesion can be looked at on both an individual and group level. Individual levels include: an individual's desire or intention to remain a part of a group, her attitudes and beliefs about the group, the individuals' intention to sever, weaken, maintain, or strengthen her membership or participation in a groups, and her susceptibility to group influence. Social cohesion at a group level is directly affected by the individual members.

Social inequality refers to any scenario in which individuals in a society do not have equal social status. Areas of potential inequality include voting rights, freedom of speech and assembly, the extent of property rights and access to education, health care, quality housing

and other social goods. Social inequality is an important characteristic of Structural Functionalism as the theory assumes, since inequality exists, there needs to be a certain level of inequality in order for a society to operate. One possible function of inequality is to motivate people, as people are motivated to carry out work through a rewards system. Rewards may include income, status, prestige, or power.

Interdependence is a central theme in structural functionalism; it refers to the parts of society sharing a common set of principles. Institutions, organizations, and individuals are all interdependent with one another.

Equilibrium, in a social context, is the internal and external balance in a society. While temporary disturbances may upset the equilibrium of society, because of social structure, society will eventually return to a balanced, orderly state. That society strives toward equilibrium also means that changes happen slowly.

Propositions

Propositions are proposed relationships between two concepts. This section explores some of the propositions of structural functionalism.
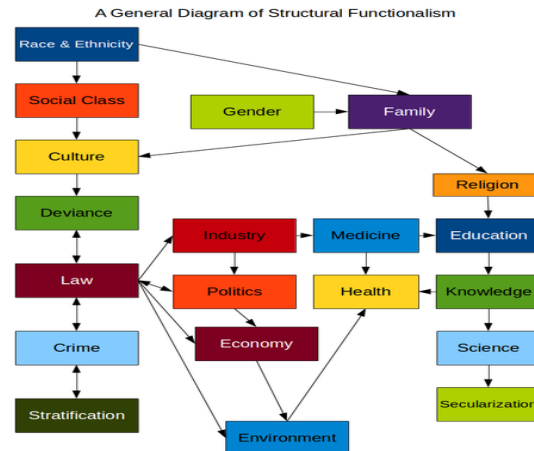
One proposition derived from Structural Functionalist theory is that people have social capital, and that greater amounts of social capital translate into benefits. Well integrated members of an institution (those with substantial social capital) will remain members of the institution in order to maximize the potential of their social capital. Schepens found support for this proposition by examining religious switching; less than 5% of church members in the Netherlands shift their church associations during their lifetime, conserving and maximizing their social capital.

One of the assumptions of Structural Functionalism is that a society is cohesive if it consists of various intermediate groups which share the same norms. This assumption leads to another proposition:

The higher the level of integration between these intermediate groups, the more cohesive society will be as a whole. The absence of social cohesion can result in greater violence toward others and one's self.
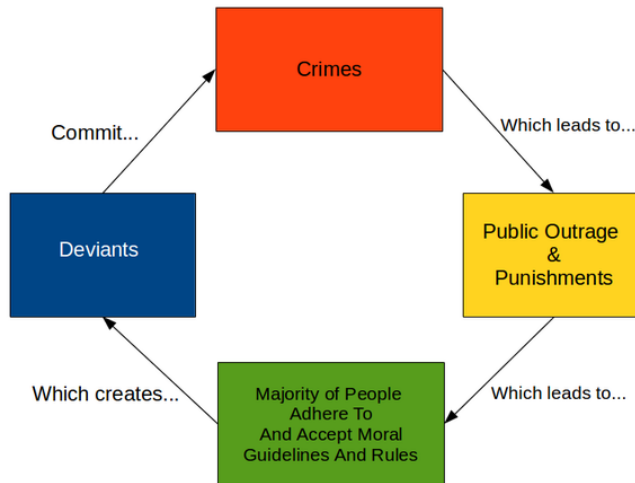
General Conceptual Diagram

The diagram below is a general conceptual diagram of Structural functionalism. It shows that all of the different organizations and institutions in society are interdependent. When one institution in society changes, other institutions accommodate that change by changing as well, though the ultimate effect is to slow overall change.

A General Diagram of Structural Functionalism

Specific Conceptual Diagram

Below is a chart depicting how deviance is functional for society and how society responds to deviance. A "deviant" individual commits an act that is deemed by the rest of society as criminal, because it leads to public outrage and punishments. Because a large portion of society respond to the action as though it is deviant, this draws a boundary between what is and is not deviant. Thus, deviance actually helps to indicate what is not deviant, or, the function of labeling behaviors or ideas as deviance is to insure that most people do not engage in those behaviors.

A Structural-Functionalist Understanding of Deviance.

History of Structural functionalism

Functionalism developed slowly over time with the help of many sociologists in different parts of the world. Perhaps the most significant contributors to the initial development of this theory are Émile Durkheim and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown. However, we begin with Herbert Spencer.

Herbert Spencer, an English sociologist, was a forerunner of formalized Structural Functioanlism. He is best known for coining the phrase "survival of the fittest" in his book *Principles of Sociology* (1896). Spencer's intention was to support a societal form of natural selection. One of the primary focii in Spencer's work was societal equilibrium. Spencer argued that there is a natural tendency in society towards equilibrium. Thus, even when the conditions of the society are altered, the resulting changes to the social structure will balance out, returning the society to equilibrium.[1]

In the late 19th century French Sociologist Émile Durkheim laid the primary foundations of Structural Functionalism. Durkheim's theory

was, at least in part, a response to evolutionary speculations of theorists such as E.B. Taylor. Durkheim originally wanted to explain social institutions as a shared way for individuals in society to meet their own biological needs. He wanted to understand the value of cultural and social traits by explaining them in regards to their contribution to the operation of the overall system of society and life. Later the focus for structural functionalism changed to be more about the ways that social institutions in society meet the social needs of individuals within that society.

Durkheim was interested in four main aspects of society: (1) why societies formed and what holds them together, (2) religion, (3) suicide, and (4) deviance and crime. Durkheim addressed his first focus in his book, The Division of Labor in Society. Durkheim noticed that the division of labor was evident across all societies and wanted to know why. Durkheim's answer to this question can be found in his idea of "solidarity". In older, more primitive societies Durkheim argued that "mechanical solidarity kept everyone together. Mechanic Solidarity here refers to everyone doing relatively similar tasks. For instance, in hunting and gathering societies there was not a substantial division of labor; people hunted or gathered. Durkheim theorized that shared values, common symbols, and systems of exchange functioned as the tools of cohesion in these societies. In essence, members of society performed similar tasks to keep the community running. In more modern and complex societies individuals are quite different and they do not perform the same tasks. However, the diversity actually leads to a different form of solidarity - interdependence. Durkheim referred to this as "organic solidarity.". Organic solidarity leads to a strong sense of individuals being dependent on one another. For instance, while a construction worker may be able to build homes for people, if he is injured on the job, he will turn to a doctor for treatment (and probably a lawyer to sue his employer). The division of labor in society requires specialization, and the result is organic solidarity.

Durkheim's work on suicide was also tied to structural functionalism. In his book, *Suicide*, Durkheim hypothesized that social relationships reduced the likelihood of suicide. By collecting data across large groups in Europe, Durkheim was able to distinguish patterns in suicide rates and connect those patterns with other variables. Throughout the book, Durkheim explained that the weaker social ties a society possessed the more likely they were to commit suicide. Inversely, the greater the cohesive bond between individuals the less likely one was to commit suicide. One concrete example Durkheim explored was the difference in solidarity between Protestants and Catholics. Due to a variety of factors, Durkheim argued that Protestants had lower social solidarity than Catholics, and their weaker bonds resulted in higher rates of suicide. Thus, solidarity helped maintain societal order.

Another thread in the development of Structural Functionalism comes from England, where it emerged from the study of anthropology in the early twentieth century in the theorizing of Bronislaw Malinowski and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown. Malinowski argued that cultural practices had physiological and psychological functions, such as the satisfaction of desires.

Radcliffe-Brown's structural functionalism focused on social structure. He argued that the social world constituted a separate "level" of reality, distinct from those of biological forms (people) and inorganic forms. Radcliffe-Brown argued that explanations of social phenomena had to be constructed at the social level. To Radcliffe-Brown this meant that people were merely replaceable, temporary occupants of social roles, that were of no inherent worth. To Radcliffe-Brown, individuals were only significant in relation to their positions in the overall structure of social roles in society.

In the United States, functionalism was formalized in sociological thinking by Talcott Parsons, who introduced the idea that there are stable structural categories that make up the interdependent

systems of a society and functioned to maintain society. He argued that this homeostasis is the critical characteristic of societies. Parsons supported individual integration into social structures, meaning that individuals should find how they fit into the different aspects of society on their own, rather than being assigned roles. Parsons saw social systems as "a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, actors who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the "optimization of gratification" and whose relation to their situations, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols." The foundation of Parsons' social system is the status-role complex, which consists of structural elements or positions that individuals hold in a system. These positions are referred to as *statuses* and are occupied by individuals who must carry out the roles in order to maintain the order of the system. Therefore, within this social system individuals perform certain roles to fulfill the system's functions; these roles are a function of their statuses. As society progresses there are new roles and statuses that occur, allowing individuals to express their unique personalities resulting in individualism.

Another important aspect of Parsons' social systems argument is his theory of action. Parsons developed the *theory of action* based on the idea that the decision making of an individual in a social system has motivational significance to himself. The individual is constantly reminded of the norms and values of society, which binds him to society. The individual is, therefore, motivated to reach personal goals that are defined by their cultural system and simultaneously these goals benefit society as a whole.

Structural functionalism was the dominant approach of sociology between World War II and the Vietnam War.

In the 1960's Structural Functionalism was quite popular and used extensively in research. It was "… perhaps the dominant

theoretical orientation in sociology and anthropology". However, by the 1970's, it was no longer so widely credited. "Structural Functionalism has lost much importance, but modified it directs much sociological inquiry."

Modern Examples of Structural Functionalist Oriented Research

September 11, 2001 modern American culture was disoriented due to an attack . This event affected both American travel customs, reflecting the Structural Functionalist idea that a change in one element of society results in changes in other aspects of society. Before the attacks airport security in the U.S. existed, but they changed substantially as a result of the attacks. Scrutiny of travelers was heightened and included new protocols, like the removal of shoes, belts, and eventually liquids, as well as random, more detailed screenings. Thus, a change in the cultural sense of security resulted in a corresponding change in travel protocol.

Increase in Technology

Modern technology has resulted in substantial changes to the economy and the military. Before the advent of telephones, the internet, and video conferencing, most business meetings occurred face to face. If an individual had a business proposal for a company in San Francisco but lived in New York, she would have to travel to San Francisco. Modern technology has changed this, reducing the necessity of business travel. As a result, the function of face to face meetings in business have changed; they are no longer a necessary part of social interactions and have therefore begun to lose their structural role.

Likewise, The traditional approach to war between two nations was an all out invasion involving hundreds of thousands if not millions of troops. During WWI, America sent over two million men to fight. During WWII, American sent over eleven million soldiers to fight. During the Korean War America sent approximately 1.5 million troops. And finally in 1990, just over 700,000 soldiers fought in Operation Desert

Storm. Due to the increase in military technology and new military tactical norms the number of military personnel present in war zones has dramatically decreased. When America invaded Iraq in 2001, they sent 150,000. Modern technology, including advanced, long-range weapons and unmanned drones, have changed the function of mass invasions.

Talcott Parsons

Talcott Parsons was heavily influenced by Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, synthesizing much of their work into his action theory, which he based on the system-theoretical concept and the methodological principle of voluntary action. He held that "the social system is made up of the actions of individuals." His starting point, accordingly, is the interaction between two individuals faced with a variety of choices about how they might act, choices that are influenced and constrained by a number of physical and social factors.

Parsons determined that each individual has expectations of the other's action and reaction to his own behaviour, and that these expectations would (if successful) be "derived" from the accepted norms and values of the society they inhabit. As Parsons himself emphasized, in a general context there would never exist any perfect "fit" between behaviours and norms, so such a relation is never complete or "perfect."

Social norms were always problematic for Parsons, who never claimed (as has often been alleged) that social norms were generally accepted and agreed upon, should this prevent some kind of universal law. Whether social norms were accepted or not was for Parsons simply a historical question.

As behaviors are repeated in more interactions, and these expectations are entrenched or institutionalized, a role is created. Parsons defines a "role" as the normatively-regulated participation "of a person in a concrete process of social interaction with specific, concrete

role-partners." Although any individual, theoretically, can fulfill any role, the individual is expected to conform to the norms governing the nature of the role they fulfill.

Furthermore, one person can and does fulfill many different roles at the same time. In one sense, an individual can be seen to be a "composition" of the roles he inhabits. Certainly, today, when asked to describe themselves, most people would answer with reference to their societal roles.

Parsons later developed the idea of roles into collectivities of roles that complement each other in fulfilling functions for society. Some roles are bound up in institutions and social structures (economic, educational, legal and even gender-based). These are functional in the sense that they assist society in operating and fulfilling its functional needs so that society runs smoothly.

Contrary to prevailing myth, Parsons never spoke about a society where there was no conflict or some kind of "perfect" equilibrium. A society's cultural value-system was in the typical case never completely integrated, never static and most of the time, like in the case of the American society in a complex state of transformation relative to its historical point of departure. To reach a "perfect" equilibrium was not any serious theoretical question in Parsons analysis of social systems, indeed, the most dynamic societies had generally cultural systems with important inner tensions like the US and India. These tensions were (quite often) a source of their strength according to Parsons rather than the opposite. Parsons never thought about system-institutionalization and the level of strains (tensions, conflict) in the system as opposite forces per se.

The key processes for Parsons for system reproduction are socialization and social control. Socialization is important because it is the mechanism for transferring the accepted norms and values of society to the individuals within the system. Parsons never spoke about

"perfect socialization" in any society socialization was only partial and "incomplete" from an integral point of view.

Parsons states that "this point is independent of the sense in which [the] individual is concretely autonomous or creative rather than 'passive' or 'conforming', for individuality and creativity, are to a considerable extent, phenomena of the institutionalization of expectations"; they are culturally constructed.

Socialization is supported by the positive and negative sanctioning of role behaviors that do or do not meet these expectations.

A punishment could be informal, like a snigger or gossip, or more formalized, through institutions such as prisons and mental homes. If these two processes were perfect, society would become static and unchanging, but in reality this is unlikely to occur for long.

Parsons recognizes this, stating that he treats "the structure of the system as problematic and subject to change," and that his concept of the tendency towards equilibrium "does not imply the empirical dominance of stability over change." He does, however, believe that these changes occur in a relatively smooth way.

Individuals in interaction with changing situations adapt through a process of "role bargaining." Once the roles are established, they create norms that guide further action and are thus institutionalised, creating stability across social interactions. Where the adaptation process cannot adjust, due to sharp shocks or immediate radical change, structural dissolution occurs and either new structures (or therefore a new system) are formed, or society dies. This model of social change has been described as a "moving equilibrium," and emphasises a desire for social order.

Davis and Moore

Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore (1945) gave an argument for social stratification based on the idea of "functional necessity" (also known as the Davis-Moore hypothesis). They argue that the most

difficult jobs in any society have the highest incomes in order to motivate individuals to fill the roles needed by the division of labour. Thus inequality serves social stability.

This argument has been criticized as fallacious from a number of different angles: the argument is both that the individuals who are the most deserving are the highest rewarded, and that *a system of unequal rewards* is necessary, otherwise no individuals would perform as needed for the society to function. The problem is that these rewards are supposed to be based upon objective merit, rather than subjective "motivations." The argument also does not clearly establish why some positions are worth more than others, even when they benefit more people in society, e.g., teachers compared to athletes and movie stars. Critics have suggested that structural inequality (inherited wealth, family power, etc.) is itself a cause of individual success or failure, not a consequence of it.

Robert Merton

Robert K. Merton made important refinements to functionalist thought. He fundamentally agreed with Parsons' theory. However, he acknowledged that it was problematic, believing that it was over generalized. Merton tended to emphasize middle range theory rather than a grand theory, meaning that he was able to deal specifically with some of the limitations in Parsons' theory. Merton believed that any social structure probably has many functions, some more obvious than others.[36] He identified 3 main limitations: functional unity, universal functionalism and indispensability. He also developed the concept of deviance and made the distinction between manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions referred to the recognized and intended consequences of any social pattern. Latent functions referred to unrecognized and unintended consequences of any social pattern.

Merton criticized functional unity, saying that not all parts of a modern complex society work for the functional unity of society.

Consequently, there is a social dysfunction referred to as any social pattern that may disrupt the operation of society. Some institutions and structures may have other functions, and some may even be generally dysfunctional, or be functional for some while being dysfunctional for others. This is because not all structures are functional for society as a whole. Some practices are only functional for a dominant individual or a group. There are two types of functions that Merton discusses the "manifest functions" in that a social pattern can trigger a recognized and intended consequence. The manifest function of education includes preparing for a career by getting good grades, graduation and finding good job. The second type of function is "latent functions", where a social pattern results in an unrecognized or unintended consequence. The latent functions of education include meeting new people, extra-curricular activities, school trips. Another type of social function is "social dysfunction" which is any undesirable consequences that disrupts the operation of society. The social dysfunction of education includes not getting good grades, a job. Merton states that by recognizing and examining the dysfunctional aspects of society we can explain the development and persistence of alternatives. Thus, as Holmwood states, "Merton explicitly made power and conflict central issues for research within a functionalist paradigm".

Merton also noted that there may be functional alternatives to the institutions and structures currently fulfilling the functions of society. This means that the institutions that currently exist are not indispensable to society. Merton states "just as the same item may have multiple functions, so may the same function be diversely fulfilled by alternative items" [cited in Holmwood, 2005:91]. This notion of functional alternatives is important because it reduces the tendency of functionalism to imply approval of the status quo.

Merton's theory of deviance is derived from Durkheim's idea of anomie. It is central in explaining how internal changes can occur in a

system. For Merton, anomie means a discontinuity between cultural goals and the accepted methods available for reaching them.

Merton believes that there are 5 situations facing an actor.

1. **Conformity** occurs when an individual has the means and desire to achieve the cultural goals socialised into him.
2. **Innovation** occurs when an individual strives to attain the accepted cultural goals but chooses to do so in novel or unaccepted method.
3. **Ritualism** occurs when an individual continues to do things as proscribed by society but forfeits the achievement of the goals.
4. **Retreatism** is the rejection of both the means and the goals of society.
5. **Rebellion** is a combination of the rejection of societal goals and means and a substitution of other goals and means.

Thus it can be seen that change can occur internally in society through either innovation or rebellion. It is true that society will attempt to control these individuals and negate the changes, but as the innovation or rebellion builds momentum, society will eventually adapt or face dissolution.

Almond and Powell

In the 1970s, political scientists Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell introduced a structural functionalist approach to comparing political systems. They argued that, in order to understand a political system, it is necessary to understand not only its institutions (or structures) but also their respective functions. They also insisted that these institutions, to be properly understood, must be placed in a meaningful and dynamic historical context.

This idea stood in marked contrast to prevalent approaches in the field of comparative politics the state-society theory and the dependency theory. These were the descendants of David Easton's system theory in international relations, a mechanistic view that saw all

political systems as essentially the same, subject to the same laws of "stimulus and response" or inputs and outputs while paying little attention to unique characteristics. The structural-functional approach is based on the view that a political system is made up of several key components, including interest groups, political parties and branches of government.

In addition to structures, Almond and Powell showed that a political system consists of various functions, chief among them political socialization, recruitment and communication: socialization refers to the way in which societies pass along their values and beliefs to succeeding generations, and in political terms describe the process by which a society inculcates civic virtues, or the habits of effective citizenship; recruitment denotes the process by which a political system generates interest, engagement and participation from citizens; and communication refers to the way that a system promulgates its values and information.

Structural functionalism and unilineal descent

In their attempt to explain the social stability of African "primitive" stateless societies where they undertook their fieldwork, Evans-Pritchard (1940) and Meyer Fortes (1945) argued that the Tallensi and the Nuer were primarily organized around unilineal descent groups. Such groups are characterized by common purposes, such as administering property or defending against attacks; they form a permanent social structure that persists well beyond the lifespan of their members. In the case of the Tallensi and the Nuer, these corporate groups were based on kinship which in turn fitted into the larger structures of unilineal descent; consequently Evans-Pritchard's and Fortes' model is called "descent theory". Moreover, in this African context territorial divisions were aligned with lineages; descent theory therefore synthesized both blood and soil as two sides of one coin (cf. Kuper, 1988:195). Affinal ties with the parent through whom descent is not reckoned, however, are considered to be merely complementary or

secondary (Fortes created the concept of "complementary filiation"), with the reckoning of kinship through descent being considered the primary organizing force of social systems. Because of its strong emphasis on unilineal descent, this new kinship theory came to be called "descent theory".

With no delay, descent theory had found its critics. Many African tribal societies seemed to fit this neat model rather well, although Africanists, such as Richards, also argued that Fortes and Evans-Pritchard had deliberately downplayed internal contradictions and overemphasized the stability of the local lineage systems and their significance for the organization of society. However, in many Asian settings the problems were even more obvious. In Papua New Guinea, the local patrilineal descent groups were fragmented and contained large amounts of non-agnates. Status distinctions did not depend on descent, and genealogies were too short to account for social solidarity through identification with a common ancestor. In particular, the phenomenon of cognatic (or bilateral) kinship posed a serious problem to the proposition that descent groups are the primary element behind the social structures of "primitive" societies.

Leach's (1966) critique came in the form of the classical Malinowskian argument, pointing out that "in Evans-Pritchard's studies of the Nuer and also in Fortes's studies of the Tallensi unilineal descent turns out to be largely an ideal concept to which the empirical facts are only adapted by means of fictions." (1966:8). People's self-interest, manoeuvring, manipulation and competition had been ignored. Moreover, descent theory neglected the significance of marriage and affinal ties, which were emphasised by Levi-Strauss' structural anthropology, at the expense of over emphasising the role of descent. To quote Leach: "The evident importance attached to multilateral and affinal kinship connections is not so much explained as explained away."

Decline of functionalism

Structural functionalism reached the peak of its influence in the 1940s and 1950s, and by the 1960s was in rapid decline. By the 1980s, its place was taken in Europe by more conflict-oriented approaches,[42] and more recently by 'structuralism'. While some of the critical approaches also gained popularity in the United States, the mainstream of the discipline has instead shifted to a myriad of empirically-oriented middle-range theories with no overarching theoretical orientation. To most sociologists, functionalism is now "as dead as a dodo".

As the influence of both functionalism and Marxism in the 1960s began to wane, the linguistic and cultural turns led to a myriad of new movements in the social sciences: "According to Giddens, the orthodox consensus terminated in the late 1960s and 1970s as the middle ground shared by otherwise competing perspectives gave way and was replaced by a baffling variety of competing perspectives. This third 'generation' of social theory includes phenomenologically inspired approaches, critical theory, ethno methodology, symbolic interactionism, structuralism, post-structuralism, and theories written in the tradition of hermeneutics and ordinary language philosophy."

While absent from empirical sociology, functionalist themes remained detectable in sociological theory, most notably in the works of Luhmann and Giddens. There are, however, signs of an incipient revival, as functionalist claims have recently been bolstered by developments in multilevel selection theory and in empirical research on how groups solve social dilemmas. Recent developments in evolutionarytheory especially by biologist David Sloan Wilson and anthropologists Robert Boyd and Peter Richerson have provided strong support for structural functionalism in the form of multilevel selection theory. In this theory, culture and social structure are seen as a Darwinian (biological or cultural) adaptation at the group level.

Criticisms

In the 1960s, functionalism was criticized for being unable to account for social change, or for structural contradictions and conflict (and thus was often called "consensus theory"). Also, it ignores inequalities including race, gender, class, which causes tension and conflict. The refutation of the second criticism of functionalism, that it is static and has no concept of change, has already been articulated above, concluding that while Parsons' theory allows for change, it is an orderly process of change, a moving equilibrium. Therefore referring to Parsons' theory of society as static is inaccurate. It is true that it does place emphasis on equilibrium and the maintenance or quick return to social order, but this is a product of the time in which Parsons was writing (post-World War II, and the start of the cold war). Society was in upheaval and fear abounded. At the time social order was crucial, and this is reflected in Parsons' tendency to promote equilibrium and social order rather than social change.

Furthermore, Durkheim favored a radical form of guild socialism along with functionalist explanations. Also, Marxism, while acknowledging social contradictions, still uses functionalist explanations. Parsons' evolutionary theory describes the differentiation and reintegration systems and subsystems and thus at least temporary conflict before reintegration (ibid). "The fact that functional analysis can be seen by some as inherently conservative and by others as inherently radical suggests that it may be *inherently* neither one nor the other." (Merton 1957: 39)

Stronger criticisms include the epistemological argument that functionalism is tautologous, that is it attempts to account for the development of social institutions solely through recourse to the effects that are attributed to them and thereby explains the two circularly. However, Parsons drew directly on many of Durkheim's concepts in creating his theory. Certainly Durkheim was one of the first theorists to explain a phenomenon with reference to the function it served for

society. He said, "the determination of function is ecessary for the complete explanation of the phenomena". However Durkheim made a clear distinction between historical and functional analysis, saying, "When…the explanation of a social phenomenon is undertaken, we must seek separately the efficient cause which produces it and the function it fulfills". If Durkheim made this distinction, then it is unlikely that Parsons did not. However Merton does explicitly state that functional analysis does not seek to explain why the action happened in the first instance, but why it continues or is reproduced. He says that "latent functions …go far towards explaining the continuance of the pattern". Therefore it can be argued that functionalism does not explain the original cause of a phenomenon with reference to its effect, and is therefore, not teleological.

Another criticism describes the ontological argument that society cannot have "needs" as a human being does, and even if society does have needs they need not be met. Anthony Giddens argues that functionalist explanations may all be rewritten as historical accounts of individual human actions and consequences (see Structuration).

A further criticism directed at functionalism is that it contains no sense of agency, that individuals are seen as puppets, acting as their role requires. Yet Homewood states that the most sophisticated forms of functionalism are based on "a highly developed concept of action", and as was explained above, Parsons took as his starting point the individual and their actions. His theory did not however articulate how these actors exercise their agency in opposition to the socialization and inculcation of accepted norms. As has been shown above, Merton addressed this limitation through his concept of deviance, and so it can be seen that functionalism allows for agency. It cannot, however, explain why individuals choose to accept or reject the accepted norms, why and in what circumstances they choose to exercise their agency, and this does remain a considerable limitation of the theory.

Further criticisms have been leveled at functionalism by proponents of other social theories, particularly conflict theorists, Marxists, feminists and postmodernists. Conflict theorists criticised functionalism's concept of systems as giving far too much weight to integration and consensus, and neglecting independence and conflict. Lockwood, in line with conflict theory, suggested that Parsons' theory missed the concept of system contradiction. He did not account for those parts of the system that might have tendencies to Mal-integration. According to Lockwood, it was these tendencies that come to the surface as opposition and conflict among actors. However Parsons thought that the issues of conflict and cooperation were very much intertwined and sought to account for both in his model. In this however he was limited by his analysis of an 'ideal type' of society which was characterized by consensus. Merton, through his critique of functional unity, introduced into functionalism an explicit analysis of tension and conflict.

Marxism which was revived soon after the emergence of conflict theory, criticized professional sociology (functionalism and conflict theory alike) for being partisan to advanced welfare capitalism thought that Parsons' theory specifically was an expression of the dominant interests of welfare capitalism, that it justified institutions with reference to the function they fulfill for society. It may be that Parsons' work implied or articulated that certain institutions were necessary to fulfill the functional prerequisites of society, but whether or not this is the case, Merton explicitly states that institutions are not indispensable and that there are functional alternatives. That he does not identify any alternatives to the current institutions does reflect a conservative bias, which as has been stated before is a product of the specific time that he was writing in.

As functionalism's prominence was ending, feminism was on the rise, and it attempted a radical criticism of functionalism. It believed that functionalism neglected the suppression of women within the

family structure. Holmwood shows, however, that Parsons did in fact describe the situations where tensions and conflict existed or were about to take place, even if he did not articulate those conflicts. Some feminists agree, suggesting that Parsons' provided accurate descriptions of these situations. [Johnson in Holmwood, 2005:103]. On the other hand, Parsons recognized that he had oversimplified his functional analysis of women in relation to work and the family, and focused on the positive functions of the family for society and not on its dysfunctions for women. Merton, too, although addressing situations where function and dysfunction occurred simultaneously, lacked a "feminist sensibility"

Postmodernism, as a theory, is critical of claims of objectivity. Therefore the idea of grand theory that can explain society in all its forms is treated with skepticism at the very least. This critique is important because it exposes the danger that grand theory can pose, when not seen as a limited perspective, as one way of understanding society.

Jeffrey Alexander (1985) sees functionalism as a broad school rather than a specific method or system, such as Parsons, who is capable of taking equilibrium (stability) as a reference-point rather than assumption and treats structural differentiation as a major form of social change. "The name 'functionalism' implies a difference of method or interpretation that does not exist." (Davis 1967: 401) This removes the determinism criticized above. Cohen argues that rather than needs a society has dispositional facts: features of the social environment that support the existence of particular social institutions but do not cause them.

Structural Functional Theory

Another framework sociologists use to understand the world is the **structural functional theory**. Its central idea is that society is a complex unit, made up of interrelated parts. Sociologists who apply this

theory study social structure and social function. French sociologist **Émile Durkheim** based his work on this theory.

Functions of Deviance

Durkheim argued that deviance is a normal and necessary part of any society because it contributes to the social order. He identified four specific functions that deviance fulfills:

1. **Affirmation of cultural norms and values:** Seeing a person punished for a deviant act reinforces what a society sees as acceptable or unacceptable behavior. Sentencing a thief to prison affirms our culturally held value that stealing is wrong. Just as some people believe that the concept of God could not exist without the concept of the devil, deviance helps us affirm and define our own norms.

2. **Clarification of right and wrong:** Responses to deviant behavior help individuals distinguish between right and wrong. When a student cheats on a test and receives a failing grade for the course, the rest of the class learns that cheating is wrong and will not be tolerated.

3. **Unification of others in society:** Responses to deviance can bring people closer together. In the aftermath of the attacks on September 11, 2001, people across the United States, and even the world, were united in their shock and grief. There was a surge in patriotic feeling and a sense of social unity among the citizens of the United States.

4. **Promoting social change:** Deviance can also encourage the dominant society to consider alternative norms and values. Rosa Parks's act of deviance in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955 led to the U.S. Supreme Court's declaration that segregation on public transportation was unconstitutional.

Strain Theory of Deviance

Sometimes people find that when they attempt to attain culturally approved goals, their paths are blocked. Not everyone has access to **institutionalized means**, or legitimate ways of achieving success. **Strain theory**, developed by sociologist **Robert Merton**, posits that when people are prevented from achieving culturally approved goals through institutional means, they experience strain or frustration that can lead to deviance. He said that they also experience **anomie**, or feelings of being disconnected from society, which can occur when people do not have access to the institutionalized means to achieve their goals.

Example: In a class of graduating high school seniors, 90 percent of the students have been accepted at various colleges. Five percent do not want to go to college, and the remaining five percent want to go to college but cannot, for any one of a number of reasons. All of the students want to succeed financially, and attending college is generally accepted as the first step toward that goal. The five percent who want to attend college but can't probably feel frustrated. They had the same goals as everyone else but were blocked from the usual means of achieving them. They may act out in a deviant manner.

Institutionalized Means to Success

In the 1960s, sociologists **Richard Cloward** and **Lloyd Ohlin** theorized that the most difficult task facing industrialized societies is finding and training people to take over the most intellectually demanding jobs from the previous generation. To progress, society needs a literate, highly trained work force. Society's job is to motivate its citizens to excel in the workplace, and the best way to do that is to foment discontent with the status quo. Cloward and Ohlin argued that if people were dissatisfied with what they had, what they earned, or where they lived, they would be motivated to work harder to improve their circumstances.

In order to compete in the world marketplace, a society must offer institutionalized means of succeeding. For example, societies that value higher education as a way to advance in the workplace must make educational opportunity available to everyone.

Illegitimate Opportunity Structures

Cloward and Ohlin further elaborated on Merton's strain theory. Deviant behavior crime in particular was not just a response to limited institutionalized means of success. Rather, crime also resulted from increased access to illegitimate opportunity structures, or various illegal means to achieve success. These structures, such as crime, are often more available to poor people living in urban slums. In the inner city, a poor person can become involved in prostitution, robbery, drug dealing, or loan sharking to make money. While these activities are clearly illegal, they often provide opportunities to make large amounts of money, as well as gain status among one's peers.

Reactions to Cultural Goals and Institutionalized Means

Merton theorized about how members of a society respond to cultural goals and institutionalized means. He found that people adapt their goals in response to the means that society provides to achieve them. He identified five types of reactions:

1. **Conformists:** Most people are conformists. They accept the goals their society sets for them, as well as the institution-alized means of achieving them. Most people want to achieve that vague status called a "good life" and accept that an education and hard work are the best ways to get there.

2. **Innovators:** These people accept society's goals but reject the usual ways of achieving them. Members of organized crime, who have money but achieve their wealth via deviant means, could be considered innovators.

3. **Ritualists:** A ritualist rejects cultural goals but still accepts the institutionalized means of achieving them. If a person who has

185

held the same job for years has no desire for more money, responsibility, power, or status, he or she is a ritualist. This person engages in the same rituals every day but has given up hope that the efforts will yield the desired results.

4. **Retreatists:** Retreatists reject cultural goals as well as the institutionalized means of achieving them. They are not interested in making money or advancing in a particular career, and they tend not to care about hard work or about getting an education.

5. **Rebels:** Rebels not only reject culturally approved goals and the means of achieving them, but they replace them with their own goals. Revolutionaries are rebels in that they reject the status quo. If a revolutionary rejects capitalism or democracy, for example, he or she may attempt to replace it with his or her own form of government

Functionalist Explanations of Crime

Overview

Functionalist explanations, like other sociological models such as labeling or conflict theory, look at the implications of crime and crime control policies, rather than directly attempting to explain the causes of criminal behavior. However, unlike other biological, psychological, and sociological models that remove blame from offenders by claiming criminals have little free will, a functionalist approach favors repression of criminal activity and the use of appropriate sanctions.

The major distinction between functionalist and all other theories of crime causation is the former's apparent positive view of deviant behavior. Ordinary crime is not a threat to the social order. In fact, society needs criminal behavior (and legal responses to it) to function properly.

Of course, the crime rate should remain within an acceptable limit, as too high a rate of crime might indicate an emerging problem,

such as the rise of anomic conditions. Overall, crime is treated as a key indicator of systemic well-being. Yet, a low crime rate is not considered necessarily indicative of social stability. Society's response to crime in the form of negative feedback helps the citizenry recognize the boundaries of acceptable behavior. This is just one aspect of a cybernetic social system attempting to remain in homeostasis while continuing to gradually make progress. Crime is part of any social system; defined as a pattern of social acts in pursuit of individual and collective goals and governed by its need to maintain its own structure.

Origins of the functionalist perspective

The metaphor upon which the functionalist perspective is based is a very simple one. Society is compared to a human body writ large, with interacting parts all working toward a common goal of keeping the organism functioning properly. The idea is not new. The Bible uses this metaphor in speaking about the church as a community:

- The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.
- For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.
- Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.
- If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.
- And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.
- If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?

- But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.
- If they were all one part, where would the body be?

The modern origin of the functionalist perspective is credited to French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1857-1917). He was particularly fascinated by how modern, secular, capitalist societies managed to remain stable despite the decline of the church, the nobility, and the old ruling elites. Where would moral beliefs come from in modern life and why would people follow them?

The society in which we live is characterized by specialization, diversity, and a highly complex division of labor. For example, in order to have a newspaper at your door each morning requires the collective efforts of reporters, editors, desktop publishing experts, advertising salesman, wire services, lumberjacks, paper processors, printers, and delivery drivers (among others). Durkheim compared this condition, which he called organic solidarity, to the early stages of human society in which everyone performed nearly identical roles (mechanical solidarity). Before the modern era, Durkheim believed that societies had a very strong collective conscience that kept most from violating the moral boundaries. With the coming of modernity the collective conscience had been weakened, leaving many unclear about the rules of everyday life.

In order to explain the contemporary moral order, Durkheim developed his functionalist approach to analyzing society. Rules and laws were essential in the modern era because they were part of the glue holding society together. Norms could not longer be passed on orally or informally enforced, and so required legislation, law enforcement, and courts.

An overall summary of functionalism as discussed by Durkheim appears below:

Functional Explanation According to Durkheim

It is Durkheim who clearly established the logic of the functional approach to the study of social phenomena, although functional explanations, it will be recalled, play a major part in Herbert Spencer's approach, and the lineaments of functional reasoning were already discernible in the work of August Comte. In particular, Durkheim set down a clear distinction between historical and functional types of inquiry and between functional consequences and individual motivations.

When the explanation of a social phenomenon is undertaken, we must seek separately the efficient cause which produces it and the function it fulfills. We use the word "function," in preference to "end" or "purpose," precisely because social phenomena do not generally exist for the useful results they produce. We must determine whether there is a correspondence between the fact under consideration and the general needs of the social organism, and in what this correspondence consists, without occupying ourselves with whether it has been intentional or not.

"The determination of function is necessary for the complete explanation of the phenomena. To explain a social fact it is not enough to show the cause on which it depends; we must also, at least in most cases, show its function in the establishment of social order."

Durkheim separated functional analysis from two other analytical procedures, the quest for historical origins and causes and the probing of individual purposes and motives. The second seemed to him of only peripheral importance for sociological inquiry since men often engage in actions when they are unable to anticipate the consequences. The quest for origins and historical causes, however, was to Durkheim as essential and legitimate a part of the sociological enterprise as was the analysis of functions. In fact, he was convinced that the full explanation of sociological phenomena would necessarily utilize both historical and functional analysis. The latter would reveal how a particular item under consideration had certain consequences for the

operation of the overall system or its component parts. The former would enable the analyst to show why this particular item, rather than some others, was historically available to subserve a particular function. Social investigators must combine the search for efficient causes and the determination of the functions of a phenomenon.

The concept of function played a key part in all of Durkheim's work from The Division of Labor, in which he sees his prime objective in the determination of "the functions of division of labor, that is to say, what social needs it satisfies," to The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, which is devoted to a demonstration of the various functions performed in society through religious cults, rites, and beliefs. An additional illustration of Durkheim's functional approach is his discussion of criminality.

In his discussion of deviance and criminality, Durkheim departed fundamentally from the conventional path. While most criminologists treated crime as a pathological phenomenon and sought psychological causes in the mind of the criminal, Durkheim saw crime as normal in terms of its occurrence, and even as having positive social functions in terms of its consequences. Crime was normal in that no society could enforce total conformity to its injunctions, and if society could, it would be so repressive as to leave no leeway for the social contributions of individuals. Deviance from the norms of society is necessary if society is to remain flexible and open to change and new adaptations. "Where crime exists, collective sentiments are sufficiently flexible to take on a new form, and crime sometimes helps to determine the form they will take. How many times, indeed, it is only an anticipation of future morality a step toward what will be." But in addition to such direct consequences of crime, Durkheim identified indirect functions that are no less important. A criminal act, Durkheim reasoned, elicits negative sanctions in the community by arousing collective sentiments against the infringement of the norm. Hence it has the unanticipated consequence of strengthening normative consensus in the common

weal. "Crime brings together upright consciences and concentrates them."

Whether he investigated religious phenomena or criminal acts, whether he desired to clarify the social impact of the division of labor or of changes in the authority structure of the family, Durkheim always shows himself a masterful functional analyst. He is not content merely to trace the historical origins of phenomena under investigation, although he tries to do this also, but he moves from the search for efficient causes to inquiries into the consequences of phenomena for the structures in which they are variously imbedded. Durkheim always thinks contextually rather than atomistically. As such he must be recognized as the direct ancestor of that type of functional analysis which came to dominate British anthropology under the impact of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski and which led. Somewhat later, to American functionalism in sociology under Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton.

There are several key concepts presented in the above passage. One is the de-emphasis on individual acts and their motivation. Durkheim felt he had to take this position to clearly separate sociological explanations of human behavior from biological and psychological ones. This can be seen most clearly in his analysis of suicide, traditionally treated as an individualistic response to personal conditions. Durkheim felt that if he could explain suicide as a social phenomenon (or social fact as he referred to such things), then sociology was a legitimate intellectual endeavor.

Similarly, Durkheim's approach led to acceptance of the collection and comparison of crime statistics as a valid method of analyzing crime causation. Building on the work of statisticians such as Adolphe Quetelet, Durkheim was the first to rely heavily on crime and suicide statistics in his approach to the study of crime. If crime rates could be shown to vary significantly from one country or geographical region to another, when comparing rural and urban populations, or by

age group, gender, religious background, or ethnicity; then Durkheim could begin to identify the cultural correlates of crime. Crime statistics today provide invaluable assistance in identifying trends and patterns, thus allowing criminal justice agencies to focus their efforts on problem areas and crime prevention strategies.

However, statistics can not explain why one individual turns to crime and another does not, particularly when both come from very similar demographic backgrounds. This is one of the major weaknesses of the functionalist (and all sociological) approaches. They deal with probabilities, not individual actors. Function can not explain motivation.

Durkheim's focus on the function of social facts led to a second major conclusion; if something exists and persists within society then it must have a role to play in the ongoing life of the social community. From this starting point it is not a major leap to assume that something functional contributes positively to society. With crime this assumption seems quite contrary to ordinary thought patterns and is unfathomable to some. It is to a discussion of the functions of crime within society and its normality we now turn.

Functionalism and the Normality of Crime

What possible positive functions could crime play within a society? Durkheim identifies several. Some of these are contradictory:

- ✓ Identification and punishment of criminals shows citizens the limits of acceptable behavior
- ✓ Crimes punished more severely demonstrate most deeply cherished values
- ✓ Criminals become negative role models for children

- ✓ Some criminal activity leads to social change (e.g. Martin Luther King)
- ✓ Existence of crime indicates society is not overly controlling its citizens (There may be little crime in repressive societies, but there are few freedoms, also)

Emile Durkheim on the Normality of Crime

Crime is normal, an inevitable and necessary part of every society. (It may take abnormal forms, such as when the crime rate is unusually high.) 'A society exempt from it would be utterly impossible' (872). Since people differ from 'the collective type,' there are some divergences which tend toward the criminal. However, what confers a 'criminal character' on divergences from the collective type is not 'the intrinsic quality of a given act but that definition which the collective consciousness lends them' (873).

Crime has an 'indirect utility' (874): In order for transformations in law and morality to be possible, 'the collective sentiments at the basis of morality must not be hostile to change, and consequently must have but moderate energy.... Every pattern is an obstacle to new patterns, to the extent that the first pattern is inflexible' (873-4). This 'moderate energy,' which permits change, also permits crime. If there were no crime, it would be evidence that change was not possible: 'To make progress, individual originality must be able to express itself' (874).

However, crime also has a direct utility. Crime 'in certain cases directly prepares these changes. Where crime exists, collective sentiments are sufficiently flexible to take on a new form, and crime sometimes helps to determine the form they will take' (874), Example, Socrates; freedom of thought was once a crime. Socrates' crime prepared the way for a 'new morality and faith which the Athenians needed, since the traditions by which they had lived until then were no longer in harmony with the current conditions of life' (874). Thus,

'contrary to current ideas, the criminal no longer seems a totally unsociable being.... On the contrary, he plays a definite role in social life' (874).

Crime and the Social System: Cybernetics

Durkheim's idea that crime was a normal part of a functioning social system was further developed by Robert Merton and Talcott Parsons. Robert Merton (1996) clarified functional analysis by separating manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions are overt and easily recognizable. Latent functions may be hidden or represent secondary effects. For example, drug addicts and alcoholics until recently could apply for Social Security benefits on the basis that they were medically incapacitated. The manifest function was to provide basic level assistance for those unable to work. However, the program had a latent crime control function. Many recipients were able to spend the government funds on drugs and alcohol. Without government aid recipients might have resorted to crime to get their drugs. However, once reports of misuse of these funds reached Congress, these groups were cut off. The resulting impact on drug-related crime has not yet been measured.

Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons further developed Durkheim's functional view of society, creating the social system model. The metaphor of a giant social organism became a more machine-like thing as Parsons further refined his thinking. Later, computer language and imagery was added, and thecybernetic approach to systems theory was developed.

A social system consisted of:
- ✓ mutually dependent parts
- ✓ parts contribute to functioning of system
- ✓ moving equilibrium; disturbance induces counter-reaction to maintain equilibrium

Disturbances could be caused by a number of factors, including crime. The system's response to crime functioned to return stability to society, thus keeping things in proper balance (homeostasis). Disturbances were seen as positive in the sense that they mandated society to come up with better solutions, thus encouraging progress.

For example, an increase in juvenile violence, once noted by the media, citizens, and societal leaders will lead to new ideas to combat it. The result may be a number of new programs. Emphasis might be placed on better parenting skills, keeping guns out of the hands of kids, better school security, greater use of prevention programs, new counseling programs, etc. If these work to reduce youth violence, then society has moved forward. If they are not effective and the problem continues, more new ideas and programs will be developed, until a combination that does work is hit upon. The society in which we live ultimately will become a better place and progress made.

The cybernetic version of this model looks at inputs and outputs, plus systemic processing. Biological, environmental, and cultural factors can be analyzed as inputs, while social institutions (e.g., family, education, religion, government, etc.) process individuals, resulting in social behavioral outcomes. Such models can be quite abstract, but can be studied using quantitative research methods such as multivariate analysis and multiple regression.

Functionalism

As a structural theory, Functionalism sees social structure or the organisation of society as more important than the individual. Functionalism is a top down theory. Individuals are born into society and become the product of all the social influences around them as they are socialised by various institutions such as the family, education, media and religion.

Functionalism sees society as a system; a set of interconnected parts which together form a whole. There is a relationship between all

these parts and agents of socialisation and together they all contribute to the maintenance of society as a whole.

Social consensus, order and integration are key beliefs of functionalism as this allows society to continue and progress because there are shared norms and values that mean all individuals have a common goal and have a vested interest in conforming and thus conflict is minimal.

Talcott Parsons viewed society as a system. He argued that any social system has four basic functional prerequisites: adaptation, goal attainment, integration and pattern maintenance. These can be seen as problems that society must solve if it is to survive. The function of any part of the social system is understood as its contribution to meeting the functional prerequisites.

Adaptation refers to the relationship between the system and its environment. In order to survive, social systems must have some degree of control over their environment. Food and shelter must be provided to meet the physical needs of members. The economy is the institution primarily concerned with this function.

Goal attainment refers to the need for all societies to set goals towards which social activity is directed. Procedures for establishing goals and deciding on priorities between goals are institutionalized in the form of political systems. Governments not only set goals but also allocate resources to achieve them. Even in a so-called free enterprise system, the economy is regulated and directed by laws passed by governments.

Integration refers primarily to the 'adjustment of conflict'. It is concerned with the coordination and mutual adjustment of the parts of the social system. Legal norms define and standardize relations between individuals and between institutions, and so reduce the potential for conflict. When conflict does arise, it is settled by the

judicial system and does not therefore lead to the disintegration of the social system.

Pattern maintenance refers to the 'maintenance of the basic pattern of values, institutionalized in the society'. Institutions that perform this function include the family, the educational system and religion. In Parsons view 'the values of society are rooted in religion'.

Talcott Parsons maintained that any social system can be analysed in terms of the functional prerequisites he identified. Thus, all parts of society can be understood with reference to the functions they perform.

A main supporter of Functionalism is **Emile Durkheim** who believes that sociology is a science. He is a structuralist and positivist and thus disagrees with empathy, meanings and the social action theory.

Functionalists believe that society is based around a value consensus and social solidarity, which is achieved by socialisation and social control.

These are two types of social solidarity Durkheim believed in:

Mechanical Solidarity – These societies have people involved in similar roles so labour division is simple. Therefore, a similar lifestyle is lived with common shared norms and values and beliefs. They have a consensus of opinion on moral issues giving society a social solidarity to guide behaviour. As there is a societal agreement, there is pressure to follow the value consensus, so therefore most do.

Organic Solidarity – Industrialisation meant population grew rapidly with urbanisation occurring. As society develops, a division of labour occurs. This is when work becomes separate from the home and the state organises the education, health care and criminal justice systems. A parent back then would be the teacher, doctor, judge and jury as well as a parent.

Today people have such diverse and specialist roles that moral codes have weakened and anomie has occurred (a lack of norms and values and self-control). Social order is no-longer based on having a common set of values but rather is enshrined in the law and highlighted by deviance.

Another in support of Functionalism is **Talcott Parsons**. Parsons claims that society is the way it is as social structures are interconnected and dependant on each other. Functionalists therefore see change as evolutionary – change in one part of society will eventually occur in another. Social ills e.g. crime and deviance, have disabling effects on society and gradually effect other parts. They recognise interconnections between various parts of society occur due to a value consensus. Parsons believes that as society changes, it develops and the pattern variables within it will become more complex. Change, therefore, trickles throughout society. Parsons summed this up as the 'Organic Analogy'.

Functionalists believe that sociological matters should be explained with scientific facts. This is otherwise known as Positivism.

The founder of Positivism, Angste Comte, describes it as a method of study based primary facts, objectively measured, from which makes it possible to identify issues in society that effect individuals and leaves room for innovation in law and establishing new legislation. An example of this would be statistics. Positivists believe that sociology should adopt the methodology of the natural sciences and focus only on directly observable social facts and correlate them with other observable social facts.

Functionalism

Functionalism is the oldest, and still the dominant, theoretical perspective in sociology and many other social sciences. This perspective is built upon twin emphases: application of the scientific method to the objective social world and use of an analogy between the individual organism and society.

The emphasis on scientific method leads to the assertion that one can study the social world in the same ways as one studies the physical world. Thus, Functionalists see the social world as "objectively real," as observable with such techniques as social surveys and interviews. Furthermore, their positivistic view of social science assumes that study of the social world can be value-free, in that the investigator's values will not necessarily interfere with the disinterested search for social laws governing the behavior of social systems. Many of these ideas go back to Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), the great French sociologist whose writings form the basis for functionalist theory (see Durkheim 1915, 1964); Durkheim was himself one of the first sociologists to make use of scientific and statistical techniques in sociological research ([1951](#)).

The second emphasis, on the organic unity of society, leads functionalists to speculate about needs which must be met for a social system to exist, as well as the ways in which social institutions satisfy those needs. A functionalist might argue, for instance, that every society

will have a religion, because religious institutions have certain functions which contribute to the survival of the social system as a whole, just as the organs of the body have functions which are necessary for the body's survival.

This analogy between society and an organism focuses attention on the homeostatic nature of social systems: social systems work to maintain equilibrium and to return to it after external shocks disturb the balance among social institutions. Such social equilibrium is achieved, most importantly, through the socialization of members of the society into the basic values and norms of that society, so that consensus is reached. Where socialization is insufficient for some reason to create conformity to culturally appropriate roles and socially supported norms, various social control mechanisms exist to restore conformity or to segregate the nonconforming individuals from the rest of society. These social control mechanisms range from sanctions imposed informally--sneering and gossip, for example--to the activities of certain formal organizations, like schools, prisons, and mental institutions.

You might notice some similarities between the language used by functionalists and the jargon of "systems theorists" in computer science or biology. Society is viewed as a system of interrelated parts, a change in any part affecting all the others. Within the boundaries of the system, feedback loops and exchanges among the parts ordinarily lead to homeostasis. Most changes are the result of natural growth or of evolution, but other changes occur when outside forces impinge upon the system. A thorough-going functionalist, such as Talcott Parsons, the best-known American sociologist of the 1950s and 60s, conceptualizes society as a collection of systems within systems: the personality system within the small-group system within the community system within society (Parsons 1951). Parsons (1971) even viewed the whole world as a system of societies.

Functionalist analyses often focus on the individual, usually with the intent to show how individual behavior is molded by broader social forces. Functionalists tend to talk about individual actors as decision-makers, although some critics have suggested that functionalist theorists are, in effect, treating individuals either as puppets, whose decisions are a predictable result of their location in the social structure and of the norms and expectations they have internalized, or sometimes as virtual prisoners of the explicit social control techniques society imposes. In any case, functionalists have tended to be less concerned with the ways in which individuals can control their own destiny than with the ways in which the limits imposed by society make individual behavior scientifically predictable.

Robert Merton, another prominent functionalist, has proposed a number of important distinctions to avoid potential weaknesses and clarify ambiguities in the basic perspective. First, he distinguishes between manifest and latent functions: respectively, those which are recognized and intended by actors in the social system and hence may represent motives for their actions, and those which are unrecognized and, thus, unintended by the actors. Second, he distinguishes between consequences which are positively functional for a society, those which are dysfunctional for the society, and those which are neither. Third, he distinguishes between levels of society, that is, the specific social units for which regularized patterns of behavior are functional or dysfunctional. Finally, he concedes that the particular social structures which satisfy functional needs of society are not indispensable, but that structural alternatives may exist which can also satisfy the same functional needs.

Functionalist theories have very often been criticized as teleological, that is, reversing the usual order of cause and effect by explaining things in terms of what happens afterward, not what went before. A strict functionalist might explain certain religious practices, for instance, as being functional by contributing to a society's survival;

however, such religious traditions will usually have been firmly established long before the question is finally settled of whether the society as a whole will actually survive. Bowing to this kind of criticism of the basic logic of functionalist theory, most current sociologists have stopped using any explicitly functionalistic explanations of social phenomena, and the extreme version of functionalism expounded by Talcott Parsons has gone out of fashion. Nevertheless, many sociologists continue to expect that by careful, objective scrutiny of social phenomena they will eventually be able to discover the general laws of social behavior, and this hope still serves as the motivation for a great deal of sociological thinking and research.

Structural Theories

Introduction

Most theory is nothing more than a **hypothesis** that seems to be confirmed by observation. That is a hunch that seems 'true'. Theory is thus an **organizing principal,** a particular viewpoint from which we view the world and interpret what we see.

What you will find with theory in sociology is that competing theories often agree about what can be observed but disagree about what these observations mean. Thus where theory leads you depends on how you interpret the situation or behavior from which you start.

Example:

Both Marxism and Functionalism agree that schooling socialises students into the prevailing norms and values of a society. But, whether this is a 'good' thing or not depends on whether it is believed that the present state of a society (the status quo) is worth preserving or in need of change. You need to try and distinguish between statements of fact and statements of value.

In sociology there are two main structural approaches:

- **Consensus theory**
- **Conflict theory**

These are the theories that attempt to relate educational systems to societal outcomes.

Note: These theories look at schooling from the 'outside'.

Functionalism: The consensus approach

Functionalism investigates institutions to consider the functions they perform in society. The functionalist premise is that if an institution exists, then there must be some reason for its existence. As regards education, functionalists assume that educational institutions serve some **societal need.** Educational institutions are examined for the **positive** contribution they make towards **maintaining society.**

Education is seen as vital as regards **socialization.** All societies have to have ways of socialising new members, and some societies need **specialist institutions** for differentiating between people and allocating them to specific levels of economic activity within their society such is the case with industrial societies.

So here are two central functions performed by educational institutions:

1. General socialisation of the whole population into the dominant culture, values and beliefs of a society.

2. Selecting people for different types and levels of education.

3. These two basic intentions are suggested by Parsons. He argues that education has the two central functions outlined above. In brief, education meets the needs of the system by:

4. Making sure that all children have a basic commitment to their society's values and beliefs.

5. Preparing individuals for their specific location within the social hierarchy.

Note: Point 1 is essentially what Marxists regard as the 'hidden curriculum'.

These two functions achieve different but overlapping goals. Transmitting norms and values promotes **social solidarity. Differentiation** matches skills to societal needs and supports society's economic needs.

The idea of differentiation derives from **Durkheim.** He argued that as societies develop and become more complex they need to enhance the **division of labour** and provide specialist agencies for executing this function. Education takes over the role previously filled by the family, work and any other social location that presented a learning environment.

At the level of individuals, industrial societies require specialists and education is seen as providing the appropriate educational output. More generally, Durkheim explains this change in the nature of relationships between individuals in a society as the change from **solidaristic** to **organic** forms of social solidarity (cohesion).

The existence of a connection between personal abilities and industrial needs is assumed by the tendency towards **meritocracy.** That is, people come to fill particular positions on the basis of achievement, rather than their ascribed characteristics.

Note: The principal functionalist support for the existence and need for meritocracy is Davis and Moore, 'Some Principles of Stratification'.

However, although it is true that achievement is more important in societies such as ours, social class, gender and ethnicity remain as important 'indirect determinants' in the sense that the quality of a person's educational attainment can be related to these ascribed characteristics.

The concept of meritocracy tends to lead functionalists into the area of genetics rather than culture. It is argued that some people are quite simply 'brighter' than others, and the education system picks these people out and gives them a higher level of education. Schools are seen as neutral and impartial screening devices.

Note: These ideas are still popular and increasingly powerful.

Clearly, it would be nonsense to deny that schools do differentiate and allocate, but to subscribe to the functionalist position requires more than this. Functionalists argue that this function is a good and necessary thing.

The functionalist account is an idealised one, based on the illusion that educational attainment is based on merit. The account does not 'cash out' in terms of observable outcomes. To believe that schooling develops talents for the benefit of society we would need to show; first, that educational achievement results from ability and, second, that such abilities are taken up by the occupation system in a free market. They cannot, it is an observable fact that educational achievement is systematically related to social factors and that educational success is not clearly related to occupational attainment.

Functionalism - Good points

1. Structural perspective enables analysis to move beyond the level of the classroom or individual school.
2. Links schools to systemic needs of the wider society.
3. Identifies schools as transmitters of knowledge, norms and values and as a selecting mechanism.

Functionalism - Criticisms

1. Overstates the extent to which education serves the 'common good'. Underestimates interests of dominant groups.
2. School is a 'black box'. Does not investigate the 'meaning' of education for its participants.
3. Too much emphasis on power of school to shape attitudes. People seen as 'cultural dopes'.

Marxism: The conflict approach

For Marxists, education is apart of the **superstructure** of society. This superstructure is regarded as being ultimately subordinate to the base - the economic organization of society. The economic arrangements of a society structure the holding of wealth and capital and create social classes.

Marxists agree with functionalists that education contributes to the working of industrial society, and economic organisation. But, since Marxists disapprove of the organisation of society on capitalist lines, it follows that they disapprove of education in its present form.

Louis Althusser argued that economic relations structure education so as to **reproduce** these same economic relations. Education is part of the system of the reproduction of labour power. Schooling, argued Althusser, is an **'ideological state apparatus'**. Schools work to ensure that those who are to do the work will do so co-operatively, out of a belief that the situation is just and reasonable.

From this point of view, the failure of so many pupils in schools is not a failing of the system (as for liberals) but actually what the

schooling system is **designed to do.** So working class children who opt out, or fail, or find schools alien, are indications that schooling is working successfully. This reverses functionalism. Education is not designed to develop human potential, but to limit it.

Such an approach is clearly capable of fitting the evidence on patterns of achievement. It can also help to uncover working class attitudes to education as being realistic rather than bloody-minded. *However, is the account overly simplified? Are the working class willing fodder for the capitalists?*

Incidentally, critics have argued that the performance of the educational system in differentiating and hierarchically structuring students is not limited to capitalist economies. Karabel and Halsey point out that the actual performance of the educational system is remarkably similar in socialist countries.

Marxism - Good points

1. Unveils the interests of the dominant and powerful groups in shaping schooling.

2. Reveals the undeclared agenda of schooling. **But,** so do functionalists.

3. Documents resistance by students to negative labelling.

    Marxism - Criticism

1. People treated as 'cultural dopes'.

2. Tends towards conspiracy theory

3. Very value laden (capitalism - no advantages?).

Family Crisis - Five Major Theories

Structural Functional Theory

The first of the Big Five is Structural Functional theory, which explains society's expectations of us as members, and our inability to stray too far from those expectations. Conflict theories explain the nature of self-interest in an otherwise tolerant society. Symbolic

Interaction theory will explain socialization and acculturation, and Social Exchange theory does a good job of explaining our motivation to action. Finally, Developmental theories, as a group, will characterize a wide array of human phenomena, including our increasing ability to conceive of our culture.

Structural-Functional Theory

Focus: On the organization of society and the relationships between broad social units, such as Institutions. The group is the unit of analysis. Sociology is supposed to concentrate its efforts on theorizing about the relationships between groups of folk. A group could be a crowd of people in a movie theater, or the members of a family sitting around the dinner table, what some call "small groups". Corporations, factories, university systems, and even communities are groups too. Structural functional theory (SFT) allows for major institutions, such as the economy, religion, polity, education and family, to be considered groups in the grandest sense. In sociological analysis the dynamic of the groups in relation to other groups and the whole system is under study.

SFT is Deterministic (mechanistic). While the individual has the opportunity to deviate from social normality, socialization prohibits, and thus determines, all but a narrow latitude of behavior.

SFT is Abstract and Objective. Social structure is observable only by viewing its outcomes - the effects it has on the group. However, the group is easily observed and its behavior can be recorded and generalized to the society as a whole.

SFT is Nomothetic. It provides general laws or rules by which society and individuals are governed. SF is EXTRASPECTIVE. Trained theoreticians understand the model.

SFT is Formally stated. The theory has been written in forms that allow hypotheses to be derived and tested.

A little background and history - The early functionalists were anthropologists (i.e., Levi-Strauss, Radcliff-Brown, Malinowski, and

others). These were seminal thinkers of the middle 1800s who made direct observations of primitive cultures, theorizing about the organization of these folk in relation to Western society. While these early academicians were sometimes quite biased in their perceptions of the peoples who fell under their gaze, their theories were often quite simple and required only a few assumptions. The point they were making was this: Individual and group behavior, more often than not, serves a FUNCTION for the larger society.

For sociology, many of these functional anthropological notions were drawn together by Talcott Parsons, a young professor at Harvard University around 1950, with considerable input from early social philosophers Max Weber, Herbert Spencer, and Emile Durkheim. Parsons' work was further extended by subsequent sociologists of the time and after. Structural-functional theory became the paradigm theory in sociology for about twenty years or so, because it saliently defined society as a system with checks and balances. It was flexible enough to explain the existence of virtually any social phenomenon that might crop up, from crime in the streets to the existence of social norms regarding grace and politeness. This organizational phenomenon is based on the Unit Act:

- 1. The unit act implies an actor, someone to emit behavior.
- 2. A unit act involves an end, or a goal.
- 3. A unit act occurs in social space, consisting of:
    - -conditions for action that the actor cannot control, and
    - -means for action that the actor can control.
- 4. Norms and values that serve to shape the actor's choice of means.

The demonstrated facts are that as (actors): - we are goal directed.

- We work within system rules most of the time.

- We use our own faculties to choose appropriate options in meeting our needs.

Parsons would say these facts are evidence for faith in the Theory of Social Action. The concept of Voluntarism in action theory implies a conscious mind, capable of making decisions. We voluntarily choose to conform to social norms, to choose means that are not radically deviant, and we value goals that everybody else values. Parsons begins with social structure - revealing its consequences. One could begin with the consequences, and explain the logical development of social structure. It really doesn't matter all that much.
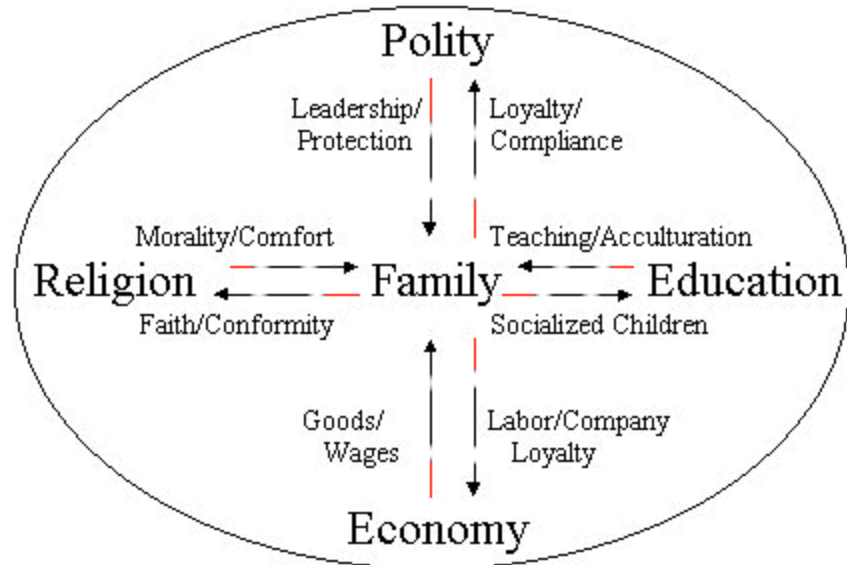
The concept of Social Integration means that there are no elements of society that are in actual conflict with each other. If socialization works, each of us values similar ideals, each holds similar goals, each understands the importance of cooperatively working toward the same ends. The culture provides the basis for meeting social and personal goals. Culture provides an environment that allows specific socialization patterns to emerge, molding each personality to relative conformity, allowing specific role performances to occur. Every aspect of society is consistent with all other parts. On a global level, Structural-Functional theory explains how and why all of the elements in a society might cooperate with each other to form social progress.

Now an institution is a social invention that meets certain requirements of a society. Institutions are sets of rules, regulations, norms, and expectations regarding the behaviors of people along cultural guidelines. Every society needs a way of processing young citizens through childhood and on into adulthood, marriage, child-rearing, and so on.

The Institution of the Nuclear Family in our own society provides individuals with a set of tried and true behavioral codes. Follow these rules and you will grow up wanting to marry one day, raise a passel of kids, and eventually bounce grandchildren on your knee. Each

institution partially meets the needs of each of the others. In exchange for the loyalty and allegiance of family members, the political institution protects us and leads us. In exchange for our labor, the economy provides us with money and goods. The Political Institution provides law and order, protection from harm, standards of health & welfare. In return, it asks for loyalty and compliance. The Economic Institution provides wages in exchange for labor, goods and services in exchange for currency, and provides a higher standard of living through cooperative competition. The Religious Institution provides moral standards for behavior, approval as a worthy person, compassion when we are troubled, allows the group to enjoy our triumphs. It asks for our acceptance of its "truths", conformity to its standards, and a little currency to keep it running. The Community Institution provides, through education, the knowledge necessary to perform in the economic arena, converts little humans into citizens in exchange for tax monies, and support. The Family Institution, of which ours is the Nuclear Family, provides an orderly process of mating and procreation, regulates sexuality, offers methods for protection of individuals during maturation, suggests strongly that mates be confidants and share each other's troubles & successes. Each institution works to benefit itself and the other four.

Parson's Structural-Functional Model Of Society – Institutional Interaction

Polity

Leadership/Protection | Loyalty/Compliance

Morality/Comfort | Teaching/Acculturation

Religion — **Family** — **Education**

Faith/Conformity | Socialized Children

Goods/Wages | Labor/Company Loyalty

Economy

Functional Requirements of Society

There are certain functional requirements that must be satisfied if a society is to survive. Within any society there are functional subsystems (institutions) that meet those requirements. Each institution is similarly structured to provide for the requirements of all the others. Individuals are socialized to wants and needs that are socially appropriate. Balance of power between institutions is always maintained, and if social needs are met, individual needs are also met. Therefore, each part of a society is interdependent with all the others. Every individual, if properly socialized, is an integrated functionary of the larger society. It is a very tidy picture of cooperative social life.

Structural-functional theory begins to answer the question of order in society. The Hobbesian Question is "in a society where competition between individuals is paramount, how is order possible?"

The answer is that human beings are social animals that create social forms (i.e., social structure), in order to organize the elements of society. Let's take an example from real life.

On October 28th, 1929, life in American society was a hectic and busy model of functionalism. Bakers were buying sacks of flour and other materials to make the bread that would be bought by families to be eaten that evening. Clothing manufacturers in the industrial northeast were creating new styles for the coming fashion season from cloth woven in mills in the southeast. The virgin wools and cottons from which cloth was woven was purchased from farmers in the south and west. School children were thinking about having fun at recess, or the hot meal their mothers would provide after their chores after school. Everybody's busy - everybody has a place in the social order. With few exceptions, even the poor were included in the social order. In fact, about 80% of the population was poor.

The next day, October 29th, 1929, the stock market crashed in New York City. This is the first day of the Great Depression. Massive, world-wide economic failure has left whole societies in poverty around the globe, with the exceptions of societies too primitive to have constructed currency based economies. They were left untouched. The Hobbesian question simply asks, Why didn't we beat each other to death for the few scraps of food still in existence? Why didn't schools shut down? Why didn't millions starve to death? Weren't we in competition for each other's goods? The answer is that we weren't entirely in competition with each other.

Think of the many ways in which the five social institutions integrated and adapted to the times. The government introduced large-scale social programs designed to aid families while simultaneously providing work and stimulating the economy. Religion consoled and comforted us, giving us faith that we could overcome current troubles. Educational facilities were turned into meeting houses and central locations for the disbursement of emergency goods. Our Polity also later

declared war on Germany and Japan, which instantly provided work for thousands. Of course, these remedies didn't begin to happen by October 30th. Social responses to crisis take time. The crisis has to soak in.

Representing the Economy, Henry Ford responded to the depression by recommending that workers plant vegetable gardens to supplement their paychecks. Mr. Ford also allowed his workers to float short term loans to get them through the temporary difficulties. The Depression would last until 1941. The general response by Government and the Economy's spokesmen was to work harder, because hard work was what made America great. These people didn't understand the economy at its most fundamental level, even though they were the ones who constructed it. There was plenty of "stuff" (i.e., products, goods, things), in fact, there was too much stuff, and that WAS the problem - we had overproduced and it was a buyer's market in the extreme. After the "work harder" strategy failed, a new set of leaders were elected to think the problem through again.

This is Parsons' Theory of Social Action in action: **Problem -> Analysis -> Strategy -> Evaluation -> New Strategy -> Solution.**

Now think about the nuclear family of the 1930s. If social theory is the study of social forms, and the family is a social form, then family studies should look at the functions of various forms of the family as they relate to the rest of society. Read that again, this time think about the dominant family form today, the Dual Earner Family, compared to the dominant family form in 1930.

In 1930, the average family was rural, lived on a farm or in a small city. Children lived under the guidance of both parents and attended school when it was convenient for the operation of the family farm. Parents' (society's) expectations of young men were that they would acquire skills necessary to make a living and go to work. They

would marry sometime after proving their hand at their livelihood. For young women, the expectation was to prepare them to be good mothers and wives - marry by 21, have children to raise, and make a home for their family. Introductions to potential marriage partners were made through relatives or friends, and through semi-official channels such as church. Courtship was managed rigidly with young men seeking permission to "see a father's daughter socially".

In the decades to follow, the gender role divisions that worked so well for pre-depression society no longer made functional sense. As society needed more workers in factories, first in the northeast, later throughout the country, women were partially redefined from wives, mothers and homemakers to workers, wives, mothers and homemakers. The war years from 1941 to 1945 are interesting in that while we were not willing as a society to commit our daughters to combat, a distinction not extended to our sons, we were quite willing to view young women as riveters in defense factories. Of course, women were once again redefined as primarily mothers and housewives after the concerted efforts of men and women succeeded in ending the war. All of this flexibility was possible, according to the SF approach, because of social structure.

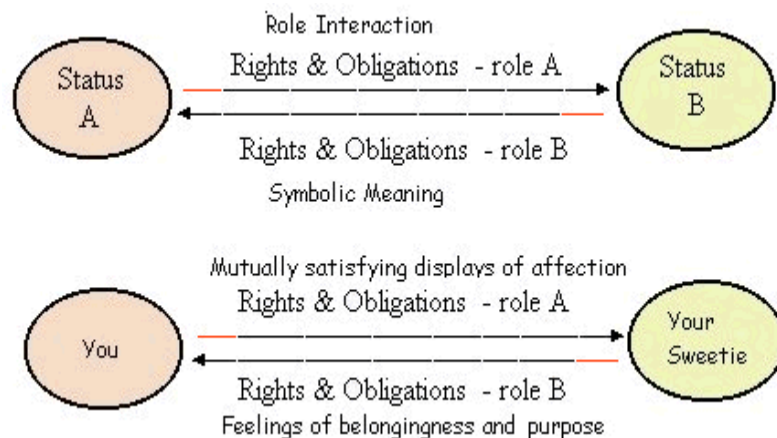**The Building Blocks of Social Structure**

The building blocks of social structure are Status (social position) and Role (the expected behavior from one occupying a social position). How do we make a connection between the Economic Institution and individuals in love with each other? Here's how: positions in social space and their associated roles make up a formally structured relationship. Whenever two or more positions are linked together through two or more role sets, we have social structure, social roles build social structure.

Virtually every relationship an individual may enter into is covered by social structural elements. What do you call the Ph.D. who

teaches your Theory Class (to his face, that is)? You use whatever name he or she demands that you use, such as Professor, Doctor, Teacher, or Mr./Ms.! What do you call your beloved sweetie pie? How about, darling, sugar, honeybunch, baby, sweetheart, lover, snug gums, pet, dearest? Each name connotes a part of your relationship with this other person. In SF terms, suppose the person occupying Status A is the eligible bachelor, college graduate with gobs of earning potential. Occupying Status B is the lovely and talented unattached, nearly graduated coed, with desires for home and family life. Both A & B are mammals with biological drives for safety, comfort and sexual outlet. Status A has been socialized to desire "love" from one such as Status B (i.e, those lips, those eyes, that curvaceous nature!). Status B has been socialized to desire "love" from one such as Status A (i.e, that professional appearance, that strong back, that studly persona).

Society actively constructs those desires in A & B, then provides critical means to allow A & B to find each other, through school, friends, church, and as a last resort, bars.

Take a look at the figure below.

Any two healthy specimens, given the appropriate attributes, can view each other in terms of the functional aspects of love. Once they find each other, they will enter into quite standardized, albeit

exotic to them, coupling rituals designed to cement reciprocal commitment, extended family loyalty, and long term association.

If structure is adaptive and integrative to the social system, it is functional and is continued. At the individual level of observation, if we observe two people interacting with each other, how might we organize our thoughts about their relationship? Person A is dressed in work clothing and is busy writing down instructions on a clipboard as they are given by Person B. Person B is dressed in a business suit. Occasionally Person B alters his instructional voice to ask a question of Person A, who stops writing and thinks for a minute before uttering two or three options for Person B to consider. Person B chooses one option or another and continues to instruct, occasionally pointing to various aspects of the room the two are standing in. What can we assume from this brief description, given our previous discussion of social institutions?

1. Both A and B work for a living.

2. A is probably working for B, who expects his money's worth (you get what you pay for!).

3. A works with his hands, perhaps a craftsman of some kind.

4. B respects A's expertise, A respects B's wishes.

5. They made initial contact through some official channel, such as the yellow pages, or through a mutual contact.

6. They are in a negotiation phase of their relationship.

7. They will come to some agreement and continue their relationship into another phase (possibly remodeling B's office).

8. Both have experience working with each other's type of person, even though they have never met before.

Therefore:

- Status A ======> determines the role of A toward === > Status B
- Person A <==== determines the role of B toward <==== Person B

Structural-Functionalists focus on such social arrangements and observe the effects. The arrangement (Social Structure) contains the linkages (roles) between people (Statuses) which enable them (provides functions) to have their needs met. A structural behavior (role behavior) is functional when it is helpful to the overall integration and adaptation of individuals to the society's requirements. Both A and B are required by society to work for a living, B needs a new office to facilitate his work, A needs B's business to facilitate his. When work finally begins, B will place a sign outside his office which reads, *Please Excuse This Inconvenience - We Are Remodeling to Better Serve You. Patrons to his office will read the sign* (a skill learned in early childhood to facilitate social interaction and progress), while A will try not to make the inconvenience too inconvenient. SF theorists maintain that all relationships are social ones, and all social relationships rely on being functional for their existence.

The Institution of the Family

Let's try another example. In order to propagate the society, there needs to be some reason for the intermingling of male and female biological juices. However, in order to maintain social order and avoid conflict, society must control that intermingling so that the resulting propagation can eventually lay claim to the properties and birthrights of the interminglers. So persons holding. Status A at birth (the ascribed status of female gender) have the world defined for them in such a way that they learn to deeply desire "love" from a person of opposite Status B (the ascribed status of male gender). How does A find B? How will she know he's the right one? Social structure comes to the rescue. Avenues of opportunity have been built so that our two lovebirds can, and most likely will, be thrown together.

Once they find each other (they go to the same church, the same school, live in the same or similar neighborhoods, shop at the same stores, share the same goals), they will enter into quite standardized, albeit exotic to them, "coupling rituals" (dates) all

designed to result in the binding of two extended families into one, to produce children, and to entrench the interminglers in the routine business of everyday family life.

Suppose A and B are not suited for "love" (they are the same sex, married to others already, have a large age difference, come from divergence social classes or have conflicting religious training, or wildly different ethnicity). Then, love will not develop between them because it is not functional to either society or to the individuals concerned. In other words, there has to exist a preponderance of similarity (homogamy) of social characteristics before love can even be considered.

In many ways, social structure is oppressive. We marry each other for love, but what has really occurred is that society has once again forced us to make the only decision that we are allowed to make. Ninety-four percent of all Americans marry at least once. Almost all who do marry cite love as the reason for their decision. Thus, love is **INTEGRATIVE** to individuals in that it helps individuals to solve personal dilemmas. Love is also **ADAPTIVE** to the social system in that it allows the system to procure behaviors from its members that are functional.

Functional Prerequisites for Institutions and Subsystems such as the Family.

Given that a family is a subsystem of the institution of the family (refer to Figure 1 again), boundaries exist around each institution and subsystems of it so that functions particular to each can be maintained. Such boundaries are both physical (e.g., marriage licenses, domestic law, single family dwellings, wedding bands, and so on) and conceptual (e.g., marriage is sacred, rights of parents to raise children as they see fit, enforcement of informal rules dealing with marital interaction, roles of husbands and wives, and so on).

The whole social system consists of as many institutions as are necessary for the social system to continue in existence. Each institutional boundary is permeable, so that it can receive information from other institutions in a cooperative manner. Thus, the family interacts with the economy to the mutual satisfaction of both. The political system interacts with education, education with the economy, and religion with the family, political system and economy.

Every possible dilemma that might erupt in social life is considered in SF theory in the form of the **A.G.I.L. model** and the **Patterned Variables of Social Interaction.** This is difficult, so read carefully.

Patterned Variables - SF divides all social interaction into two groups. Primary relationships (e.g., the warm, thoughtful, caring, intimate treatment that lovers might employ) and Secondary relationships (e.g., the businesslike, courteous, rule oriented, colder approach that one might encounter at the post office or in registering for classes at the university). There are only five potential dilemmas that exist in all social situations. These are the Patterned Variables. Through these, we determine whether others are to be treated as part of the larger society (secondary relationships), or in terms of more intimate groups (primary relationships). You will also remember that Theory is a statement of relationships between concepts (variables), that is either descriptive, explanatory, or predictive. Every scientific theory is not testable until hypotheses are derived and operationalized. Parsons would tell us that every single social interaction is guided by one side (primary or secondary) of one set of the patterned variables. The decision to treat an individual as primary or secondary depends on the role relationship that one has with the person in question.

What if the workman was also the businessman's baby brother? Then the businessman would have to decide where he stands. Usually, family ties are tighter than those entered into in a business environment, so he would forgive his brother, and hire a non-relative to

complete the work. He would know that by crossing rigid Patterned Variable lines, he himself has violated a social rule (e.g., don't hire relatives - ever!).

The "love" example also holds true to the patterned variables. Our society wants us to know that affection and business don't mix, so we unconditionally provide for those we love, and are much tougher on the rest of the population. Usually, whenever patterned variables define a dilemma (for example, the arresting officer is the perpetrator's wife), strong social norms are always upheld while still allowing affections to remain intact if at all possible (e.g., ask another officer to do the dirty work).

To put the patterned variables into perspective regarding their social implementation, Parsons gives us the A.G.I.L. model of social organization (Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency - A.G.I.L.). He divides society up conceptually into matters of: 1) Problem Solving and 2) System Maintenance. Take a look at Figure 7 below.

Adaptation and Goal Attainment are part of Problem Solving, while Integration and Latency are part of System Maintenance. Each of the pairs of patterned variables are assigned to one of the squares in the figure. In any social situation, there are always problems to be solved (needs to be met, uncertain conditions to be waded through, troubles, strife, accidents, and so on), while simultaneously the social system has to be maintained. Patterned variables are particular to problem solving and system maintenance. This little model provides us with a description of how the social system regulates itself and allows for growth and change.

Two primary goals of any system are to solve problems and maintain itself.

- Adaptation and Goal Attainment are system functions that solve problems:

- o Adaptation - refers to the search for arrangements (social structures) that allow the system to cope with external environment and change.

- o Goal Attainment - refers to the actual attempt to achieve goals that the system requires.

- Integration and Latency are system functions that maintain the system:

  - o Integration - refers to the search for arrangements that allow the system to cope with internal environment - maintains cooperation between subsystems.

  - o Latency - refers to two aspects of Maintenance: Pattern maintenance deters deviations, maintains socialization, desire to conform, permits some deviance (coffee breaks, taking personal time on the job).

  - o Tension Management houses mechanisms that forestall strain, role segregation, insulation, role priority.

Here's a short example: A U.S. Navy warship is analogous to a small society. As part of the Defense System of the United States, the little grey destroyer bobs up and down in the Atlantic Ocean. It has a physical boundary - the skin of the ship. It has a cognitive boundary as well - its abilities to steam at 30 knots, to shoot its guns at targets 5 miles away, and to remain underway for up to 30 days without refueling or replenishment. It has a name too - U.S.S. Stribling, DD867. In order to carry out its Defense function, it must organize a multitude of tasks. Therefore the ship is organized into divisions and subdivisions. There are Officers and Enlisted personnel (Management and Labor). There are different specialties - Signalmen, Navigators, Quartermasters, Radiomen, Gunners mates, Commissarymen, Enginemen, and the Deck Force. Each has its own mission to accomplish on a daily, weekly, monthly, and emergency basis.

Goal attainment is achieved simultaneously on a daily basis. There is routine maintenance of gear, food preparation, hourly plotting of the ship's course. Goals change as situations change. When environmental situations warrant - all hands are required to bend to single-minded tasks, such as replenishment, taking on fuel, moving into battle positions, and encountering emergencies. The ship is organized so that every task is choreographed to cooperate with the performance of every other task. Perfect Integration. In cases where some inefficiencies in integration occur, the ship provides for tension management - movies on the fan tail, free time in the form of liberty, delivery of propaganda and rituals for reinforcing the goals and maintaining behavior patterns.

The model works well in describing social interaction on any level of observation, from routine family functioning to large scale societal management of crisis. See if you can make sense out of the model given the following family conditions: 1) we want a new house, 2) somebody stole my socks, 3) we can't pay the rent , and 4) we buy a new computer . I'll do one for you.

We want a new house!

This is a problem to solve. We have attempted to adapt the needs of our growing family to the small house that we now are buying, but we can see it won't be big enough in the near future. In Adaptation, we treat each other equally and politely to avoid conflicts and outbursts. Everyone has to perform precisely and follow all rules to maintain the family's sanity through all this. Our goal to buy a new house requires planning and careful, even tedious, watching of the family budget so that we can save the down payment. Occasionally, we are overcome by the tedium and someone will joke or laugh at the problem to ease tension (Latency), and we take every opportunity we can to live a nice life until the new house is possible (Integration). In other words, every change or condition that affects one aspect of the family, affects all other aspects of the family. One change brings the

whole system to bear on the problem until it is solved. If the problem cannot be solved it may result in the demise of the family system.

Finally, there is the larger, sweeping model of social integration that ties together the individual personality and motivation to action, social structure and role performance, with the entire cultural system. It works like this: The culture provides the basis for all meaning for events and objects in our lives. Culture is the reasoning behind every behavior we perceive, and it even guides our very perception. To understand our culture is to become enabled to operate and interact within it - to become socialized The sets of behavior codes that a person accepts as appropriate behavior are at once avenues for us to have our needs met, and ways for society to have its needs met. That we would even know that we have space problems in the house in which we are now living is possible only because we live in a culture that defines our living arrangements for us. Culture tells us that we are cramping up. The next model explains how we come to define problems to be solved and how we are able to see the system that we are attempting to maintain.

The Concept of Social Structure

How does one encounter another? What does one make of the event? Parson's concept of social structure helps define our actions in social terms.

Beginning with the Cultural System, which provides for us three basic necessities for social living: beliefs, expressions of those beliefs, and norms to help us realize our beliefs. Using the "love" example one more time, love is part of our overall belief system. We believe, we have faith, it is a social value we hold that love is a good thing and we all should have some of it in our lives. Otherwise, why would so many of us want love above anything else we could have in life? The culture provides us with countless Expressive Symbols to use in consuming and delivering love to ourselves and others.

For example, what would you think of someone who wrote a love letter everyday to his sweetie, and filled each one with rich language such as, until I met you, I was merely trudging through life without direction. But you came into my life and suddenly my purpose is so very clear. Honey, I want to make you happy, and care for you, and have you love me just as much. You are so right for what's wrong in my life. I will love you forever. I promise. Culture also provides us with normative structure which defines and limits acceptable behavior surrounding our employ of our belief in love. People who are in love should marry each other as soon as they can. And marriage should last for as long as possible.

Society wants every single person born into it to have the same belief system, the same expressions of affection, and to abide by the same norms, rules, and avenues for its expression. To accomplish this, the culture provides for a socialization process through which Personality is developed, and Motivation for Action is felt. Society is so good at infusing the same belief system in us all that we sometimes feel as though our emotions are not socially mandated at all - they come from deep within us. Thus, we can fall in love, be swept off our feet, and succumb to the conclusion that our love is destiny. The transmission of cultural values to individuals begins with well meaning folk - our parents and attendant others (socialization agents) - who will guide us through the first few years of life, all the time throwing concepts in our path to cognate about.

True personality development begins with Cognition. Concepts are learned one at a time, in repetitions, until we come to fully understand what they mean. We form the concept of love first by associating the feelings we have at the time the concept is pointed out. Hugs and kisses are followed by "I love you"s", presents for birthdays have a card signed "I love you, honey", a new litter of puppies is experienced with a parent who says "She cares so much for her babies. That's love!".

True cognition can only occur with the introduction of language on which to base the concept. Cathexis is the process by which we receive and give elements of the culture. In the case of love, we attempt to employ the concept by getting a handle on it's use and trying it out (expressive system here, too). We ourselves must give it a try and see if we are gratified by the results. Here, the Evaluation part of Personality begins. If we give a kiss to our first love, and he or she responds in a way we desire, then love seems to work. If the response is not what we wanted, we will alter our approach, modify our actions, until it does work. We learn to love because we believe we'll like what it gets for us. This evaluation process is connected to Role Performance. What we are doing when we initiate social action (such as stealing a kiss from a potential sweetie), is attempting to behave in socially appropriate ways and still achieve gratification of our needs. Role performance and social structure are the rules by which we are gratified, and we have to learn them well.

The first rule, for love, is to define exactly who in the population is lovable (Cognitive Style). When we say that we don't find short persons attractive, this is individual variation and not social. When we say we don't find persons attractive who have no job, or are morally deficient, or have less education than us, or even are the same gender as us, we are expressing appropriate cognitive style for our culture. Once we isolate our personal pool of eligible's, we may employ expressions in the Appreciative Style by digging up our learned principles of romance and going to it. Only one more thing has to be kept in mind - the Moral Style. While society is all for love, it wants us to love only one person at a time. It has rules about this sort of thing. And if one is unlucky enough to love more than one and is found out, punishment is imminent.

Criticisms of Structural-Functionalism

With these notions, Parsons attempted to explain how we behave as individuals, and how society uses its vast power to move us

all in similar fashion through life. He is not without his critics. One of the criticisms has to do with deviance and social injustice. In other words, why is there so much departure from normal, socially appropriate behavior, and why doesn't everyone participate equally in the fruits of social life. Parsons would agree that both charges are true, and that society is a dynamic and ever changing phenomenon. He met the criticism of deviance by outlining what society does to prevent it. Parson's five lines of defense against deviance are:

- 1. Rigid socialization - primarily from family.

- 2. Mechanisms that forestall strain, such as:

    o a. Segregation by space, time, role partners.

    o b. Insulation - symbolic segregation, such as modes of address (i.e., Dr., Mr., Boss).

    o c. Status priority - role conflicts avoided by social structure - some are more important than others.

- 3. Mechanisms of tension management channel stress into socially acceptable means.

    o a. Compensatory behavior which is scaled from preferred behavior to permitted then tolerated and finally tabooed ranges from acceptable to unacceptable.

    o b. Movement to alternative status with less stress.

- 4. Mechanisms of blockage:

    o a. Small group increases cost of deviance.

    o b. Removal of advantage gained by deviance.

- 5. Removal from society for rehabilitation or Death.

Any member of society may opt for unconventional modes of behavior which run against social needs. Not all of us enjoy rigid socialization.

Each of the lines of defense is more stringent and oppressive than the previous one. If more subtle approaches fail to rehabilitate the

deviant, more blatant and forceful ones are used, including removal and death. As we will see with the next theory to be discussed (Conflict Theory), one of the major difficulties that social thinkers have with SF theory has to do with the incongruence between the picture drawn by the functionalism and obvious inequities that are present in real American social life. Functionalists paint a pretty rosy picture of social cooperation, needs being met with speed and efficiency, and have faith that the best and brightest leadership will rise to the top of the community milk bottle. One must keep in mind that the social environment in which SF theory was born was highly conservative in moral, political, and religious terms. Bad things were happening in 1950 (e.g., racism, poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, child abuse, and so on). This was sure enough, but we were relatively unaware of them as a culture.

As we approached the mid-1960s, our society had already seen the beginnings of the civil rights movement and was about to enter yet another age of dissent. This would entail anti-war sentiments which would grow to a fever pitch, and the resurgence of the feminist movement that would come in the early 1970s.

On strictly theoretical grounds, however, functionalism offered an imprecise set of propositions, too broad for empirical testing. Its assumptions were considered dangerously close to ideology and dogma. Critics felt the theory too tightly built to allow an explanation of desperately needed social change to remedy a pathological society. However, social science's reaction was not to jettison the entire paradigm of functionalism, only the name Functionalism.

For example, that little story about the businessman and the workman is really an explanation of role interaction which includes a description of the fundamental structural item for a social system - rights & obligations. This point has become the basis for role theory in psychology, and symbolic-interaction theory in social psychology. The norm of reciprocity, a key concept to both exchange theory and

symbolic-interaction, can be seen early on in the work of functionalists in their discussion of the interrelatedness of institutions, as well as individuals. Albeit on a macro-scale,, the reciprocity between institutions such as the family and the economy cannot be denied. Combinations of the status/role idea and G.H. Mead's generalized other (S-I theory) is extensively used.

Taken in historical perspective, and placed in the larger picture of events occurring during the twentieth century, functionalism's statistical explanatory power was minimal. While professors in classrooms throughout America were expounding the functional nature of society, rocks and bottles were zipping through the air as angry students protested the injustices they perceived. Campus authority was overridden in favor of some other, more important morality. The status quo, which was the standard of measurement of the 1940s and 1950s, became a symbol of all that was wrong with our society.

To see the poor fit between functionalism and reality, one only needs to gaze out the window. However, as we will see, structural-functionalism has returned to social science under a new name - General Systems Theory - which is discussed in a later chapter.

Functionalism and Parsons

A. Functionalism and sociology

Parsons and the functionalist approach to sociology occupy an intermediate position between classical and contemporary sociology. Some new sociological approaches were developed in North America before Parsons. But Parsons and the functional approach to sociology became so dominant that by the late 1950s, sociology and functionalism became more or less identical (Adams and Sydie, p. 345). This meant that sociology studied the roles of institutions and social behaviour in society, the way these are related to other social features, and developed explanations of society in social terms.

Beginning around the time that functionalism became dominant, there were many new developments in sociology. Microsociological approaches such as symbolic interactionism and the study of individual and small group interaction began, perhaps because these had not been emphasized by earlier sociologists. Conflict approaches also developed, partly in reaction to the consensus view of functionalists, and partly because functionalism was not able to explain the new social movements and developments in North America and the rest of the world.

By the late 1980s, functionalism and Parsons were more or less discredited and abandoned, replaced with a variety of sociological models that attempted to develop a variety of non-functionalist approaches to the study of sociology. More recently, some sociologists have attempted to revive functionalism, the most notable of these being Jeffrey Alexander (Wallace and Wolf, pp. 58-61). At the same time, some of the alternative approaches that were developed have functionalist aspects to them. As a result, functionalist theory and the sociology of Talcott Parsons must be studied in order to understand the development of sociological thought. In addition, some of the ideas of Parsons have proved to be useful to the study of the contemporary social world.

B. Introduction to functionalism

1. Overview. Many aspects of the functionalist approach to sociology are similar to those of other sociological approaches, but with a particular emphasis on function, interdependence, consensus, equilibrium, and evolutionary change. Some of these aspects are:

a. Macro. The focus is macro-sociological, with institutions and structures existing in the society as a whole. This is the origin of the structure part of the structural functional approach. Functionalist analysis looks on social systems as having certain needs, and society as a system of social structures (economic, legal, educational, gender

structures). If the needs are being met, then it is the social structures that meet these needs. The structures are thus functional in the sense that they help society to operate. Interconnections exist within and among these structures, and individuals and groups are constrained by these structures.

b. Function. The different parts of each society contribute positively to the operation or functioning of the system as a whole. This is the functional part of the structural functional approach. Each society has certain needs in that there are a number of activities that must be carried out for social life to survive and develop. Goods and services must be produced and distributed in order for people to survive, there must be some administration of justice, a political system must exist, and some family structure must operate so as to provide a means to reproduce the population and maintain social life on a daily basis. In the structural functional model, individuals carry out each of these tasks in various institutions and roles that are consistent with the structures and norms of the society.

c. Interdependence and equilibrium. Functionalism attempts to explain the relationship of different parts of the system to each other, and to the whole. These parts are usually work together in an orderly manner, without great conflict – Adams and Sydie note that this approach has examined "the issues of order and integration in society" (p. 343). The different parts are usually in equilibrium, or moving toward equilibrium, with consensus rather than conflict governing the inter-relationships of the various parts.

d. Evolutionary change. While equilibrium, consensus, and static rather than dynamic analysis is most common, there is some discussion of change. Change tends to be orderly and evolutionary, rather than revolutionary or with dramatic structural breaks. Conflicts or external factors stimulate adjustment of the parts to move toward a new equilibrium. As change occurs, the various parts of societies become more differentiated, with these parts adapting to new needs and

problems. Societies become more complex, with new institutions and subsystems developing that perform the new functions required to make the society operate smoothly. Note the similiarity to Durkheim's view of how the division of labour develops.

C. Origins and influence

The structural functional model comes from a variety of authors, but is most associated with Talcott Parsons. Robert Merton is another well known sociologist who provided some important structural functional theoretical statements. All of these were sociologists who were from the United States and spent most of their academic life there. As a result, this approach is often associated with sociology in the United States.

The functional approach was developed from the 1930s through the 1960s in the United States. Parsons studied Weber and Durkheim, and translated some of these into English. Parsons thus became a major interpreter of these writers in America, and his interpretation may be considered to have developed the influence of these writers in a particular way. Although a liberal within the American context, Parsons used concepts and models from Weber and Durkheim to establish a sociological approach which countered the Marxian view.

This approach dominated American sociology from the 1940s through to the early 1970s. With a few exceptions, it was the only sociological approach used, and Marxian concepts and approaches were almost entirely absent from sociology textbooks. While this approach was not conservative in the sense of attempting to return to an earlier society, it also did not encourage or support any radical change. Politically, it fit the cold war liberal and pluralist political approach that became dominant in American universities during this period. Part of this was to counter any influence of communism, socialism, or Marxism.

In the 1960s, the structural functional approach came under increasing attack and ultimately was discredited. It was unable to explain a number of features of American society, such as poverty, social change, dissent, and the continuing influence and political and economic power of the wealthy. As sociologists began to read more of Weber and Durkheim, it became clear that the structural functional interpretation missed much of the subtlety of these writers. It also became clear that Marx also had much to contribute to the analysis of social structure and social change. More recently, feminist approaches have also attacked functionalism, arguing that the structural functionalists provided a justification for male privilege and ignored the past and potential contributions of women.

Within Canadian sociology, functionalism was not as influential as in the United States. Sociology was not as well developed in Canada as in the U.S., and some of the British and European approaches were more influential here. The structural functional model also did not seem to have the same applicability here as in the U.S. partly because equality of opportunity and individualism were not as highly developed here. The different ethnic groups and their history have also been considerably different in Canada than in the United States. When Canadian sociology did develop, some of the political economic approaches were incorporated into Canadian sociology to create a somewhat different discipline than in the U.S.

As a result of challenges in the 1970s, structural functionalism fell into disfavour in the study of sociology. However, it is still an important model in a number of ways. First, outside sociology itself, many of arguments used by the structural functional approach are popular explanations. In addition, some of the structural functional arguments are used by those in power to justify inequalities and explain the value of their contribution to society. This is an consensus model, one which can be used to support the social order.

Second, it can be considered the sociological counterpart of many economic models of inequality. In particular, it fits well with the human capital model of education and the economy. It can also be considered to the counterpart of some models of liberalism in the political sphere. For example, the notion of equality of opportunity should be a basic part of this model.

Third, even though it may provide and inadequate model of explanation, it may be useful as a model for description. Much of the quantitative information concerning the structure of society has been developed by sociologists working in the functionalist perspective. While the exact connection of these quantitative studies to the structural functional approach may not be clear, much quantitative analysis makes many of the same assumptions as do functionalists. Some of these have provided very useful data for understanding society and examination of the nature of social inequality.

D. Talcott Parsons

1. Introduction

Much like Durkheim, "Parsons's primary concern throughout his life was the problem of order in society" (Adams and Sydie, p. 349), that is "how, if individuals were really separate entities pursuing their self-interest, there could be any order at all: How could there be anything but disorder?" (Johnson, p. 116). In practice, people do cooperate, and there is a degree of social integration. For Parsons this comes from the values of society and of social actors – the basis of social action can be termed voluntarism. "People act on the basis of their values; their actions are oriented and constrained by the values and norms of people around them; and these norms and values are the basis of social order"

2. Life and Influences

 a. Life. Talcott Parsons (1902-1979, United States) was the most important figure in the structural functionalist school of sociological

thought. He dominated sociology in the United States for many years, coming into disfavour in the 1960 and 1970s. In sociology today, his approach is generally treated as outmoded, although some of his ideas are now being viewed more favourably, and perhaps in a less conservative context than they were originally presented.

Parsons was born in Colorado, studied in the eastern Unitied States, and then did graduate work at the London School of Economics and then in Heidelberg, Germany. Weber's influence was still strong in Heidelberg, and part of Parsons' doctoral thesis concerned the views of Weber. Parsons became a professor at Harvard in 1927 and stayed there until his death in 1979. In 1937 he published his major work *The Structure of Social Action*. This book introduced Weber to the United States, and laid the groundwork for Parsons' later work. In 1949 he was president of the American Sociological Association, and in 1951 published *The Social System*. These works remained dominant within American sociology through the 1970s.

b. Influences. The contribution of Durkheim to Parsons' theory will be clear. Concepts such as order, solidarity, and integration, as well as some aspects of the family and sex roles are similar to what is found in Durkheim. The contribution of Weber may be less clear, but is apparent in several ways. First, Weber was concerned with (i) analysis of social structures as a whole, and (ii) social action. Parsons referred to his own theory as action theory and argued that social phenomena must be understood in terms of individual meaning, but also must be examined at the "level of collective action among groupings of actors." (Turner, p. 47). As with many functionalists, Parsons was concerned with the same issues as Weber, "how do the subjective states of actors influence emergent patterns of social organization, and vice versa?" (Turner, p. 47). He referred to his theoretical approach as a general theory of action systems.

Parsons developed many concepts and elaborate conceptual schemes that could be considered ideal types of the Weberian

type. These emphasized important features of social systems, and of the type that Parsons considered important for purposes of his analysis of social integration. They were regarded as useful in different contexts, and a means of comparing concrete situations, to see the extent to which they conform or deviate from these ideal types. (Paragraph based on Turner, pp. 47-8).

3. Action Systems

Parsons developed an analysis of psychology, economics, politics, sociology, and all social science, although much of this was never completed. For Parsons, there are many systems or action systems where "the parts are connected" (Adams and Sydie, p. 350). A system is something that has a boundary, so that there is an inside and an outside to the environment comprising the system. Examples of systems are the social, cultural, and personality systems (Wallace and Wolf, p. 28). Systems have interdependent parts, order or equilibrium, and a tendency to maintain the boundaries and relations of the parts to the whole. These could be the society as a whole, structures or institutions within society (economy, legal system, religious institutions), or smaller subsystems (family or individual) that form part of society. These are action systems in the sense that they involve social action, and each system has certain needs or conditions that are necessary for the survival and continued operation of the system. Systems also have goals that may be created as a result of needs and desires of members of these systems.

A physical analogy to the systems of Parsons is a heating or cooling system for a building. The building has boundaries, an outside and an inside, and the boundaries are generally fixed or maintained over time. There are interdependent parts to the system which function together to maintain a certain level of temperature in the building. Thermostats and furnaces or air conditioners are used to heat or cool the building, and these are self-regulating, maintaining a certain equilibrium temperature.

Parsons was primarily interested in the social system, viewing it as the preserve of sociology, and examining social interaction and the relationships among individuals. A personality system, concerning human motivation and orientation, underlies the social system. Individuals might be motivated by culture and social factors, looking for approval in social relationships. Individual personality was considered to be a combination of biological drives and culture, with actors being relatively passive. Drives may come from the behavioral or biological organism, with its "organization ... affected by the processes of conditioning and learning that occur in the individual's life." Ritzer (p. 249) notes that Parsons would be opposed to the sociobiological interpretation, arguing instead that biological drives were socially developed.

Above the social system is the cultural system, the system of patterned and ordered symbols. While it is created by humans, this is the "social stock of knowledge, symbols, and ideas" (Ritzer, p. 247). This includes language and other forms of communication, systems of morality, and all of the shared knowledge of people. Parsons refers to this as the cultural tradition, and argues that elementary communication is not possible without "some degree of conformity to the 'conventions' of the symbolic system." (Parsons, 1951, p. 11). Symbols are interpreted by individuals and individual actors in different situations so that they may react somewhat differently to them. For social interaction to occur, it is important that there be a stability in the symbol system, "a stability which must extend between individuals and over time, [and] could probably not be maintained unless it functioned in a communication process in the interaction of a plurality of actors." (Parsons, 1951, p. 11).

Because it is composed of symbols, the cultural system can move easily between systems, and strongly affects other systems. Note that it is a separate system, and one that cannot be reduced to aspects of the social system. It affects the social system, creating norms and

values that guide social behaviour, and the personality system through socialization and learning. Given the power of the cultural system to influence and control other systems, "Parsons came to view himself as a cultural determinist" (Ritzer, p. 247).

Social System. The social system was Parsons' main concern. This is society as a whole, or the various institutions such as the family within society. Parsons' definition of the social system is:

A social system consists in a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, actors who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the "optimization of gratification" and whose relation to their situations, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols.

The basic unit of the system for Parsons was the status-role bundle or complex. These are structural elements, and are not characteristics of the individual or of interaction. Rather they are like the positions within the stratification model. A status is a structural position within the social system, and a role is what the individual who has that status does. For example, brother or sister could refer to a status, and there are certain roles that are generally associated with these statuses. Note that these statuses need not be hierarchical as in the stratification model.

Within this social system, Parsons considered the needs of the system as important, and individuals fulfilled certain system functions by taking on various roles as means of carrying out the function of their statuses. Individuals are discussed by Parsons as carrying out actions that maintain order in the system. Socialization, education and learning in the child, and continued socialization throughout life are the means by which the norms and values of society are learned by individuals. This is what binds the individual to the social system as a whole. If successful, this socialization process means that the norms

and values become internalized by individuals, and when people pursue their own interests, they also serve the needs of the society as a whole.

In modern society there are many roles, statuses and opportunities for individuals to express their different personalities. For Parsons, this is a positive feature of a social system, and a flexible system of this sort is more able to maintain order. However, if people become too deviant, there are social control mechanisms that either stop the deviance (ultimately at the legal level). In most cases though, there are stronger mechanisms that the social system has to maintain order. This is the socialization process, and the continued operation of the socialization process through one's whole life. Parsons comments.

Without deliberate planning on anyone's part, there have developed in our type of social system, and correspondingly in others, mechanisms which, within limits, are capable of forestalling and reversing the deep-lying tendencies for deviance to get into the vicious circle phase which puts it beyond the control of ordinary approval-disapproval and reward-punishment sanctions.

4. Pattern Variables

Parsons constructed a set of variables that can be used to analyze the various systems. These are the "categorization of modes of orientation in personality systems, the value patterns of culture, and the normative requirements in social systems" (Turner, p. 58) These became a way of describing and classifying different societies, and the values and norms of that society. All of the norms, values, roles, institutions, subsystems and even the society as a whole can be classified and examined on the basis of these patterned variables. For Parsons, these were necessary to make the theory of action more explicit and "to develop clearer specifications of what different contingencies and expectations actors were likely to face" (Wallace and Wolf, p. 30). The patterned variables are set up as polar opposites that give the range of possible decisions and modes of orientation. Any

actual role or decision may be a combination of the two, between the opposites. For Parsons though, these provided an ideal type conceptual scheme that allowed analysis of various systems of parts of systems. The five pattern variables are as follows.

The pattern variables provide a means of looking at various forms that norms and social actions can take, and what their orientation is. These can describe the nature of societal norms, or the basic values that guide, and form the basis for decisions in, the personality system. The range of possible types of motivation and action is considerably broader in Parson's scheme than in much of the classical sociological writers, at least the utilitarians, Durkheim and Marx. Weber viewed motivation and meaning as key, but did not provide a guide concerning how to apply these in general. Perhaps these pattern variables can be thought of as a way that people do relate to situations they face, the type of orientation they have, and how they are likely to interpret meaning in each social action.

a. Affectivity and Affective Neutrality. Neutrality refer to the amount of emotion or affect that is appropriate or expected in an given form of interaction. Again, particularism and diffuseness might often be associated with affectivity, whereas contacts with other individuals in a bureaucracy may be devoid of emotion and characterized by affective neutrality. Affective neutrality may refer to self discipline and the deferment of gratification. In contrast, affectivity can mean the expression of gratification of emotions.

b. Collectivity or Self. These emphasize the extent of self interest as opposed to collective or shared interest associated with any action. Each of our social actions are made within a social context, with others, and in various types of collectivities. Where individuals pursue a collective form of action, then the interests of the collectivity may take precedence over that of the individual. Various forms of action such as altruism, charity, self-sacrifice (in wartime) can be included here. In contrast, much economics and utilitarianism assumes egoism or the self

seeking individual as the primary basis on which social analysis is to be built.

c. Particularism and Universalism. These refer to the range of people that are to be considered, whereas diffuseness and specificity deal with the range of obligations involved. The issue here is whether to react "on the basis of a general norm or reacting on the basis of someone's particular relationship to you" (Wallace and Wolf, p. 34). A particular relation is one that is with a specific individual. Parent-child or friendship relationships tend to be of this sort, where the relationship is likely to be very particular, but at the same time very diffuse. In contrast, a bureaucracy is characterized by universal forms of relationships, where everyone is to be treated impartially and much the same. No particularism or favoritism is to be extended to anyone, even to a close friend or family member.

d. Diffuseness and Specificity. These refer to the nature of social contacts and how extensive or how narrow are the obligations in any interaction. For example, in a bureaucracy, social relationships are very specific, where we meet with or contact someone for some very particular reason associated with their status and position, e.g. visiting a physician. Friendships and parent-child relationships are examples of more diffuse forms of contact. We rely on friends for a broad range of types of support, conversation, activities, and so on. While there may be limits on such contacts, these have the potential of dealing with almost any set of interests and problems.

e. Ascription and Achievement. Ascription refers to qualities of individuals, and often inborn qualities such as sex, ethnicity, race, age, family status, or characteristics of the household of origin. Achievement refers to performance, and emphasizes individual achievement. For example, we might say that someone has achieved a prestigious position even though their ascribed status was that of poverty and disadvantage.

f. Expressive and Instrumental.   Parsons regards the first half of each pair as the expressive types of characteristics and the second half of the pattern as the instrumental types of characteristics. Expressive aspects refer to "the integrative and tension aspects" (Morgan, p. 29). These are people, roles, and actions concerned with taking care of the common task culture, how to integrate the group, and how to manage and resolve internal tensions and conflicts. This may take many different forms but often is associated with the family, and more specifically with the female role in the family.

The instrumental characteristics refer to "the goal attainment and adaptation aspects" (Morgan, p. 29). These are the characteristics, people, roles, and actions associated with ideas, problem solving, getting the task done. These tasks are often associated with male roles, public activities, the economy, or politics.

These can also be used to refer to the type of society. Social action and interaction in early forms of society were more likely to be characterized by expressive characteristics. In contrast, in modern societies, with a more complex division of labour and differentiation of statuses and roles, much of social action and interaction is characterized by instrumental characteristics.

5. Functional System Problems – AGIL (P)

Social systems have needs. In order to survive and continue, each social system or subsystem has four characteristics that must be met. These are functional needs of the system, "a complex of activities directed towards meeting a need or needs of the system." (Ritzer, p. 240). The first two are necessary for survival and continued operation, with the last two being a means of regulation of the social system. These functional needs can be remembered by the acronym AGIL.

a. Adaptation (A). Each system exists in an environment, and must be able to adapt to this environment. In the process of adaptation, the

environment is also affected and may be adapted to the society. This is the mobilization of resources so that the system can survive and that things can be done to meet goals of the system. In the family or household, adaptation could include obtaining economic resources earning an income to support the family. For larger social systems, the economy is the system which allows the system to survive, grow, and change. The major institutions in the economic sphere, such as agriculture, industry and services provided through the market are the means by which adaptation takes place. These serve the function of allowing the system to survive and provide the goods and services required for society to operate. As economists describe the economy, there are many equilibrating mechanisms within the economy that produce order. The market mechanism itself can be regarded as a system that has some tendencies in the direction of stable equilibria. Some of the government institutions relating to the economy also help serve this function. Note also how the economy as a system modifies the natural environment.

b. Goal Attainment (G). Each system has certain purposes associated with it. The goals of the system must be defined, means of attempting to achieve these goals must be laid out, and then these goals must be achieved. Within the social system, the polity (political sphere and government) is an important aspect of this, setting and altering the goals for the society as a whole, and "mobilizing actors and resources to that end" (Ritzer, p. 246). The state bureaucracy and other organizations – business and nonprofit – all help to implement and achieve these goals. Smaller scale institutions also have goals, for example, the University of Regina as a system has the goal of teaching, research, and community service. Within a family or individual system, there will also be goals, although these may not be so clearly spelled out as in formal organizations. Each organization, as a subsystem, has certain goals, and within this there will be positions with roles to play in helping the organization achieve these goals. Within a business, there

will be marketing, production, finance, etc. positions that each have specific roles within the context of attempting to make profits for the business and help the business expand. Within the family, husband and wife, parents and children are each statuses with roles for meeting family goals.

c. Integration (I). This is the means by which social relationships, and interrelationships among units or groups, are regulated. "By integration Parsons means the need to coordinate, adjust, and regulate relationships among various actors or units within the system … in order to keep the system functioning" (Wallace and Wolf, pp. 39-40).

As various social processes functions occur, strains, tensions and conflicts may emerge. These are a result of the way that individuals relate to each other, and as different units carry out their tasks and roles that need to be done in a system. Means of managing these tensions, diffusing and resolving conflicts and ensuring that orderly means of carrying on activities can be ensured. At the level of society as a whole, there are a variety of institutions that do this. Religion, education, the media, the legal structures – police and courts – all play a role. Ritzer refers to these as societal community. Any institutions that help disseminate the shared culture, and reinforce "that culture through ritual celebrations of its values" (Cuff, p. 45) help in this. Sporting events could be seen in this light - anthems, rules of the game, common allegiances, etc. Where strains are great, there may be a need for social control, formal and informal sanctions, or discipline to enforce order. In general though, Parsons thought that systems develop automatic means of integration, and roles and organizations to help carry this out do develop. Within subsystems, there is a set of roles that do this, although these may not always be specialized. For example, in educational institutions, teachers carry out the roles of adaptation, goal attainment and integration as part of their activities.

d. Latency (L) or pattern maintenance (P). This is the function of pattern maintenance and Parsons also refers to this as the cultural-

motivational system (Parsons, 1967, p. 261). These are referred to as latent because they may not always be as apparent as the A, G, or I functions. For Parsons, "*All* institutionalization involves common moral as well as other values. Collectivity obligations are, therefor, an aspect of every institutionalized role. But in certain contexts of orientation-choice, these obligations may be latent … ." (Parsons, 1951, p. 99). Even though these exist they may not be readily apparent and thus are latent. The test of their nature would be to determine the actors reaction in a specific situation.

The organizations and roles that perform latent functions can be regarded as those that "furnish, maintain, and renew both the motivation of individuals and the cultural patterns that create and sustain this motivation" (Ritzer, p. 242). Parsons refers to these as fiduciary, that is, founded on trust. At the level of the social system, these are schools, educational institutions, and the major institution that is concerned with the latent function is kinship and family or other forms of personal relationships. Within this, leisure, affection, love, sex, and friendship, can all play an important function. People provide comfort, consolation and relief to each other, thus reducing tension or keeping it within manageable limits. In addition, socialization is a major function with respect to the raising of children, and also with respect to the ongoing socialization that occurs through over the life span. For Parsons, the role of women was key here, as will be seen in the following section on the family. Within organizations, there may be little of the latent functions as an explicit part of the organization, but people within any organization develop these themselves, or come to the organization with these functions developed.

While Parsons had a conservative view of women and the family, at least he did recognize the importance of the latent function, and he puts in on a par with the other three functions that must be part of any system. For Marx, social reproduction serves a similar role to that of the latent function, but Marx spent little time analyzing this,

more or less taking it for granted. Weber and Durkheim pay little attention to this function, although Durkheim appears to have recognized the problem, and may have treated it in a somewhat similar manner to that adopted by Parsons.

The AGIL functions must exist at all levels, in society as a whole, and in each subsystem. These may not be consciously worked out functions, and roles and functions can be shared among organizations or individuals. In traditional societies, most of these functions would have been centred in family and kinship structures, and in local communities. In these societies, there may have been little differentiation in functions, although culture and the integration function often came to be associated with religion. As societies have developed, these functions tend to evolve, with different institutions developing different functions, and with different functions developing within each organizations. Specialized functions and roles develop, and specialized institutions to carry these out also evolve, and it is best to have specialized roles and specialized institutions to carry out the functions of a modern, complex society. These may develop in an evolutionary fashion, without any conscious consideration, much like Durkheim's "natural" development of the division of labour. Or, as in bureaucracies, they may be consciously worked out organizational structures. Some of this can be seen by examining Parsons' view of change.

6. Parsons's analysis of the family

In traditional societies, where families were the basis for social organization, many of the societal functions (AGIL) were carried out in the family or in kinship-based groupings. Even in medieval times, there was little distinction between public and private, and the family and household served the function of producer, consumer and reproducer. As the division of labour developed in modern times, many of the functions formerly carried out in the family began to be performed in other institutions. The producer role generally became

part of the economic structures of society and were detached from the household. Later, some of the socialization function became detached from the family and moved to educational institutions – or the socialization and education functions became separated. While some analysts have looked on this as indicating a decline in the family, Parsons argued that social evolution and change has led to a change in the functions of the family. This is part of the separation of the AGIL functions from each other, so that separate structures, institutions, and statuses become responsible for carrying out each of these four functions. Parsons views this functional differentiation positively, arguing that specialized roles mean that functions can be better carried out. While this specialization may create problems of integration, there will also be new values, rules, and norms that lead to new forms of integration in a more complex and more productive society.

In the family, the public (jobs) and private (home) have become separated, with "the invention of romantic love and the development of the division of labour inside families along sex lines aids this separation. Economic organizations have to develop an authority system independent of kinship" (Knapp, p. 205). For Parsons, the family serves two essential functions in modern society, (a) the socialization of children, and (b) "stabilization of the adult personalities of the population of the society" (Morgan, p. 27). These can be considered to be essential functions of society – primarily integrative (I) and latent (L) – that create problems for society if they are not carried out. Too often the earlier, classical theorists had taken these for granted, and considered them to be outside the scope of sociological analysis.

The structure of the modern nuclear family could be illustrated as follows (from Morgan, p. 29). Note that there are two dimensions to family structure, neither of which can be reduced to the other.

The socialization process is on the vertical axis, and this generational axis is the main form in which Parsons views power as being exercised in the family. The father is the head of the family in

that he represents the family unit, and power is exercised by the parents over the children. This is for the children's own good. Recall that power for Weber was often legitimate, and much power within the family is accepted by the subordinate as legitimate. Johnson notes that Parsons did not "depict the father as dominating his wife and children but only as having power by virtue of being their representative" (Johnson, p. 124). As such, Parsons may have ignored the power that husbands have over wives, especially when the different activities of husbands and wives and the income differerences are considered.

With respect to the horizontal axis, Parsons argued that the instrumental role should be carried out by the husband. In order to survive, the family needed the income from the husband's occupation, while the family also depended on the wife's expressive and integrative activity. This could involve attempts to respond to the psychological needs of the husband and children, providing nurturing and warmth, and taking care of the family and household needs. This was functional (a) for the whole family unit, and also (b) "functional for marital solidarity because it prevented potentially divisive competition between husband and wife." It was also functional for (c) society as a whole by providing a link of the private family to the society (through the husband). Johnson notes how this has been criticized by many, but feels that Parsons was correct to make power and instrumental/expressive functions as independent dimensions. Power could go with either instrumental or expressive, although in different forms. (paragraph based on Johnson, p. 125).

Parsons saw socialization within the family as having two different aspects: (a) it is the way in which the individual internalizes the culture of a society or group, and (b) it is the process whereby the individual learns and prepares to take on an autonomous role. Parsons is concerned with the whole social system, and the functioning of that system, at the same time that he is concerned with the family and the socialization process. Adults must be prepared for their roles within

society if the society is to continue functioning, and the socialization process achieves this. The family is also an autonomous and isolated unit, and the socialization process prepares each child to form a new isolated family unit of his or her own. Morgan notes that this combines the views of Freud (development of personality) and Durkheim (internalization of culture). Each ignored the contribution of the other, and Parsons attempts to combine these. Socialization thus is not just a cultural process of internalization of societal values (cultural system) but is also one of developing a personality (personality system). The result of the socialization process is that the personality becomes a mirror image of the experienced social system. (Morgan, p. 30).

While the family is isolated and autonomous, it is also linked to the wider system through the father's instrumental role. The role of the husband and father is to have a status in the occupational structure (i.e. a job), and he would be subject to social disapproval if he did not have a job. The social status of the family as a whole is based on the occupation and income of the husband. This instrumental role serves the dual function of linking the family to the outside world and maintaining the family as a viable entity (adaptation function). There are strains for the husband within this role though, because (a) work itself may be unsatisfying, (b) there is little chance for real social relationships outside the family, and (c) the family and the outside activities may have conflicting demands.

By carrying out the expressive role, the wife is just as necessary for the proper functioning of the family. She not only cares for the children and socializes them, but also provides the emotional support for her husband. In doing this, her role is also to provide for internal maintenance of the family unit. She is linked to the wider society as well, through family and friends, and these undoubtedly provide guidance for assisting in the socialization process. At the same time strains do exist in her role. There are strains associated with (a) the socialization role as opposed to the emotional support for the husband

role. There is also (b) a clash between the ideology of equality of opportunity and the role of wife and mother. Note also that an individual family member may perform more than one role. For example, the roles of wife and mother are often identified as a single role, when in fact they may more properly be considered to be different roles. As wife, the adult woman in a family unit may not have great power, perhaps not entirely due to male dominance, but due to the limited opportunities women faced to earn income. As mother, the adult woman in this unit may have considerable power and status. Johnson notes that "women as wives tend to relatively powerless compared to women as mothers" (p. 127).

In spite of these strains and conflicts, Parsons feels that the nuclear family, with this strict division of roles, is well suited to modern industrial society. The differentiation by sex is functional for the individual, the family, and the society as a whole. For Parsons, having definiteness of status is important, both for the individuals involved, and for children who are seeking role models. Uncertainty and confusion in sex role definition can be damaging to individual personalities and to the social system as a whole.

Criticisms of Parsons's theory of the family. Parsons' analysis of the family has been subject to much criticism. The fixed nature of roles, the static nature of the family, the rigid division between instrumental and expressive roles, the underestimation of the extent of power (usually male), and the inherently conservative and consensus nature of this approach, all have been subject to severe criticism. Many families today might be considered dysfunctional by Parsons, because they do not perform the functions described by Parsons. Some have argued that confusion concerning roles affect family and socialization negatively, thus weakening the whole society. The family of Parsons was a well established white family in North America in the 1940s and 1950s, usually of middle class or perhaps working class origin and status. Black, immigrant, poor or working class families, and even upper class families,

are all considerably different from the ideal types described by Parsons. It is difficult to know how Parsons would have reacted to the changes in family and household structures that have occurred in the last 20-30 years – decline in number of children, older age of marriage and childbearing, women entering the labour force, single parent families, blended families, same sex families, etc. Judged by the AGIL criteria, pattern variables, and social differentiation, it could be argued that these latter changes in the family have become necessary as a result of other social changes, and may be functional for and promote stability in the operation of the social system.

Parsons's contributions. Parsons brought discussions of the family into the mainstream of sociology, and developed an analysis of the social system that has the family as an essential part, assisting in the latent and integrative functions. This is something that none of the classical sociologists recognized as necessary. The recognition of instrumental and expressive roles is a useful one, and if it is possible for these to be combined in the same person, with each individual carrying out different combinations of these, these concepts might be considered more acceptable. Johnson argues that Parsons was able to separate power as a concept from the instrumental-expressive concept, and that this multidimensionality of functionalism is a useful approach. In this sense, Parsons makes use of Weberian methodological approaches. Perhaps some of these concepts and approaches could be combined with feminist or other theoretical approaches to produce a more complete model of the social system.

4. Sociology

Sociology involves the study of social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behaviour The scope of sociology is extremely broad, ranging from the analysis of interactions between individuals to the investigation of global social processes (Giddens 1997). Dependent on the "sociological imagination" (Mills 1976), sociology examines how private experiences and personal

difficulties are entwined with the structural arrangements of society. As such, sociology provides a complement to the more individually focused discipline of psychology.

Sociology is a social science, where divisions between the disciplines are not clear cut, and they share common interests, concepts and methods (Giddens, 1997). Sociology is perhaps closest to anthropology. However, because it evolved from the industrial revolutions in Europe and America, sociology is often identified more closely with relatively modern, urbanised societies, and focuses on the problems of complex social arrangements.

The sociology of the family encompasses a wide range of issues, including teenage childbearing, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, the experiences of mothering, domestic violence, child and elder abuse, and divorce. It also is closely linked to a number of other fully-fledged fields in sociology, such the sociology of childhood, sociology of gender, social gerontology, death and dying, the sociology of sexuality and the sociology of emotions.

This section of the paper is limited to covering the main theoretical traditions of "modern sociology", while highlighting a selection of key areas in which there is particular interest in the family. A discussion of the post-modern critiques of sociology is included at the end of this section.

4.1 Explanatory framework

The sociology of the family has three main theoretical traditions. These are structural-functionalism, symbolic interactions and conflict theories that include feminism. Some of these traditions are overlapping and to separate them is somewhat of an artifice, but for the sake of clarity, this section of the paper describes them as if they were stand-alone bodies of theory and research.

4.1.1 Structural functionalism

Functionalist theories in sociology explain social institutions like the family primarily in terms of the functions they perform (Jary and Jary 1991). Functionalism begins with the observation that behaviour in society is structured, and that relationships between individuals are organised in terms of rules and are therefore patterned and recurrent. Functionalists then examine the relationship between the different parts of the structure and their relationship to society as a whole. At its simplest, functionalism focuses on effects such as the effect of the family on other parts of the social structure and on society as a whole. Generally, however, a functionalist analysis includes an examination of the contribution an institution makes to the maintenance and survival of the social system. For example, in simplistic terms, a major function of the family is the socialisation of new members of society.

The structural-functionalist perspective of the family, closely associated with Parsons, focuses on the family and its relationship to society (McLennan, Ryan and Spoonley 2000). Parsons (1951) argued that the family fulfils a number of functions within society, but identified two of these as key. The first was the socialisation of children into the appropriate values and norms of society. Focusing on North American culture in particular, Parsons theorised that the role of the family was to ensure that independence and a motivation to achieve was instilled in children's personalities. The second function of the family was the stabilisation of the adult personality through marriage, which served as the antidote to the emotional stresses and strains of everyday life.

Parson's theory included the differentiation of gender roles within the family, with each partner filling one of two somewhat opposing but complementary functions. Men were characterised as fulfilling an instrumental role, with women's more expressive nature providing the complement. Parsons argued that the expressive role was

assigned to women as a result of the primarily expressive bond between mother and children.

While structural functionalism was the dominant theoretical perspective, particularly in North America, during the 1950s and 1960s, functionalist theories of the family have since been highly critiqued, not least because they provide little consideration of alternative family forms or family pathologies, other than to argue that such variations are either inherently "dysfunctional" or fulfil some latent function in broader society. Furthermore, functionalist theories tend to justify the sexual division of labour, and ignore gender inequalities inherent in Parson's "complementary roles" structure.

4.1.2 Symbolic interactions

Symbolic interactionism, associated with the theories of Mead, Goffman and Becker, focuses on the small-scale phenomena that constitute everyday interactions in an attempt to understand how individuals experience and understand their social worlds, and how different people come to share a common definition of reality (Berger and Luckmann 1967).

Symbolic interactions is based on the premise that it is only through the social behavior of individuals that society can come into being at all, and as such, society is ultimately created, maintained, and changed by the social interaction of its members. Because human beings communicate with one another by means of symbols, interactions are based on the meanings that individuals impart to these symbols (Blumer 1969). Symbolic interactionism emphasises the ability of individuals to actively or constructively interpret symbols in their actions. In contrast, functionalism suggests that social structures determine actions.

Symbolic interactions theories of the family examine the family at a more micro level than functionalism, focusing on the ways that families create and re-create themselves at an everyday level. Rather

than seeing family roles as pre-existing and given structures that are adopted unproblematic ally, this school of thought focuses on the meanings and lived experience associated with those roles and how they are constructed through interaction.

What symbolic interactions lacks in macro theories of the family, it makes up for in detailed understandings of family relations, as there is a substantial body of research focusing on almost every conceivable aspect of family life. The diversity of this research is evident in the array of topics it covers. They range from how children interpret the symbolic value of the contents of their school lunch (Kaplan 1999, 2000), the experiences of divorced fathers (Arendell 1995), the symbolic mechanism of rituals such as family meals and holidays (DeVault 1991), the experiences of breastfeeding mothers (Blum 1999) (Bentovim 2002), to the meanings different family member attach to consumption and money (Pugh 2002, Zelizer 1997). Work in this area includes research on the ways couples negotiate the division of visible and invisible labour within the family (Hochschild and Machung 1989), studies of the ways men and women experience parenthood (Arendell 2000, Garey 1999) explorations into the ways children experience childhood, including school, childcare and the more general pace of life (Corsaro 1997, James and Prout 1997, Thorne 1997) and cross-cultural and cross-class comparisons of family experiences (Glenn, Change and Forcey 1994, North 2000).

~4 ~
Interactionist Theory

The interactionist perspective is one of the key academic perspectives in sociology. It focuses on the conclusive details of what goes on in an individual's everyday life. An interactionist studies how individuals use symbols to communicate to each other.

Definition: The interactionist perspective is one of the major theoretical perspectives within sociology. It focuses on the concrete details of what goes on among individuals in everyday life. Interactionists study how we use and interpret symbols not only to communicate with each other, but also to create and maintain impressions of ourselves, to create a sense of self, and to create and sustain what we experience as the reality of a particular social situation. From this perspective, social life consists largely of a complex fabric woven of countless interactions through which life takes on shape and meaning.

Symbolic interactionism is a school of thought in sociology that explains social behavior in terms of how people interact with each other via symbols; in this view, social structures are best understood in terms of such individual interactions. Symbolic interactionism was developed by thinkers such George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer in the 20th century. Mead believed that one's self develops through social interactions. Moreover, how people communicate and interact with each other depends on how they interpret factors such as language, actions, and statuses (potential symbols). For example, one might interpret a handshake as either a friendly greeting or cool farewell, depending on context (the symbolism of a handshake varies). Sometimes symbols change; long hair in males once symbolized rebellion, but now does not.

The Interactionist perspective is usually considered to consist of three related "sub-perspectives" (Phenomenology, Symbolic Interaction and Ethnomethodology). Only a basic understanding of the overall perspective is required. You are not expected to have a detailed knowledge and understanding of each of these sub-perspectives.

1. Human behavior is a product of the way we interpret the social world on a daily basis. The social world is created and recreated by people going about their lives.

2. The way in which people interpret and give meaning to the behavior of others is a significant factor in the understanding of the social world.

3. "Society" is seen as an "elaborate fiction" that we create in order to help us to make sense of the bewildering range of behavior that we experience on a daily basis. "Society" does not have an objective existence, as such, since it is experienced subjectively by people.

4. For Mead, social life consists of people interacting (that is, behaving with reference to each other - taking note of the way people behave towards each other), setting up mutual expectations - or norms - and then acting with reference to these norms.

5. The concept of categorisation is important because people classify various similar phenomena in their daily lives in order to make sense of these phenomena.

6. The process of labelling (giving names to the phenomena we classify) is significant because the labels we create (mother, criminal, insane and the like) help us to define (or stereotype) the nature of the social categories we create. In modern societies people tend to behave towards each other on the basis of the labels that each person attracts from others.

7. 7. Some labels are termed "master labels" because they are so powerful they condition every aspect of our behavior towards

the person so labelled. Examples of master labels in our society might be: Criminal, homosexual, heterosexual, mad and so forth.The labels we attract (either through choice (achievement) or through being given them (ascription) are important because people's knowledge of a label serves to unlock the assumptions we hold about particular social categories. This conditions the way in which we feel it is ppropriate to behave towards a person.

8. For Interactionists, social order is:
   a. Ultimately a product of our mind (we make ourselves believe that the social world has order and predictability and, by so doing, help to convince each other by our actions that this is indeed the case).
   b. Real only for as long as we are able to individually and collectively maintain this belief. In this respect, for as long as people define a situation as real it will be real in its consequences...

9. All social interaction involves meanings and interpretations and the Interactionist perspective highlights the way in which the social world is actively constructed by people going about the process of making sense of the actions of others.

Key Points

- Symbolic interactionism has roots in phenomenology, which emphasizes the subjective meaning of reality.

- Symbolic interactionism proposes a social theory of the self, or a looking glass self.

- Symbolic interactionists study meaning and communication; they tend to usequalitative methods.

- Symbolic interactionism has been criticized for failing to take into account large-scale macro social structures and forces.

Terms

- **Phenomenology**

  A philosophy based on the intuitive experience of phenomena, and on the premise that reality consists of objects and events as consciously perceived by conscious beings.

- **behaviorism**

  an approach to psychology focusing on behavior, denying any independent significance for mind, and assuming that behavior is determined by the environment

Role theory

Assumes that people are primarily conformists who try to achieve the norms that accompany their roles; group members check each individual's performance to determine whether it conforms with that individual's assigned norms, and apply sanctions for misbehavior in an attempt to ensure role performance.

Examples

A good example of the looking glass self is a person trying on clothes before going out with friends. Some people may not think much about how others will think about their clothing choices, but others can spend quite a bit of time considering what they are going to wear. While they are deciding, the dialogue taking place inside their mind is usually a dialogue between their "self" (that portion of their identity that calls itself "I") and that person's internalized understanding of their friends and society (a "generalized other"). An indicator of mature socialization is when an individual quite accurately predicts how other people think about him or her. Such an individual has incorporated the "social" into the "self."

The symbolic interaction perspective, also called symbolic interactionism, is a major framework of sociological theory. This perspective relies on the symbolic meaning that people develop and rely upon in the process of social interaction. Although symbolic

interactionism traces its origins to Max Weber's assertion that individuals act according to their interpretation of the meaning of their world, the American philosopher George Herbert Mead introduced this perspective to American sociology in the 1920s.

Symbolic interaction theory analyzes society by addressing the subjective meanings that people impose on objects, events, and behaviors. Subjective meanings are given primacy because it is believe that people behave based on what they believe and not just on what is objectively true. Thus, society is thought to be socially constructed through human interpretation. People interpret one another's behavior and it is these interpretations that form the social bond. These interpretations are called the "definition of the situation." For example, why would young people smoke cigarettes even when all objective medical evidence points to the dangers of doing so? The answer is in the definition of the situation that people create. Studies find that teenagers are well informed about the risks of tobacco, but they also think that smoking is cool, that they themselves will be safe from harm, and that smoking projects a positive image to their peers. So, the symbolic meaning of smoking overrides those actual facts regarding smoking and risk.

Critics of this theory claim that symbolic interactionism neglects the macro level of social interpretation—the "big picture." In other words, symbolic interactionists may miss the larger issues of society by focusing too closely on the "trees" rather than the "forest". The perspective also receives criticism for slighting the influence of social forces and institutions on individual interactions.

Interactionism

In sociology, **interactionism** is a theoretical perspective that derives social processes (such as conflict, cooperation, identity formation) from human interaction. It is the study of how individuals act within society. Interactionist theory has grown in the latter half of the

twentieth century and has become one of the dominant sociological perspectives in the world today. Interactionism was first linked to the work of James Parker. George Herbert Mead, as an advocate of pragmatism and the subjectivity of social reality is considered a leader in the development of interactionism. Herbert Blumer expanded on Mead's work and coined the term "symbolic interactionism".

Interactionism has several subdivisions:

- Phenomenology
- Verstehen
- Social action
- Ethnomethodology
- Symbolic interactionism
- Social constructionism

Interactions

Interactionism is micro-sociological and believes that meaning is produced through the interactions of individuals.

The social interaction is a face-to-face process consisting of actions, reactions, and mutual adaptation between two or more individuals. It also includes animal interaction such as mating. The interaction includes all language (including body language) and mannerisms. The goal of the social interaction is to communicate with others. If the interaction is in danger of ending before one intends it to, it can be conserved by conforming to the others' expectations, by ignoring certain incidents or by solving apparent problems. Erving Goffman underlines the importance of control in the interaction. One must attempt to control the others' behavior during the interaction, in order to attain the information one is seeking and in order to control the perception of one's own image. Important concepts in the field of interactionism include the "social role" and Goffman's "presentation of self".

Interactionist methodology

Interactionists want to understand each individual, and how they act within society. In extreme cases, they would deny class as an issue, and would say that we cannot generalize that everyone from one social class thinks in one way. Instead they believe everyone has different attitudes, values, culture and beliefs. Therefore it is the duty of the sociologist to carry out the study within society. They set out to gather qualitative data.

Rejection of Structuralist methods

nteractionist reject statistical (quantitative) data, a method preferred by structuralists. These methods include; experiments, structured interviews, questionnaires, non-participant observation and secondary sources. They have a few basic criticisms, namely:

- Statistical data is not "valid". This is to say that these methods don't provide us with a true picture of society on the topic being researched.
- Research is biased and therefore not objective. Whilst the sociologist would be distant, it is argued that a hypothesis means the research is biased towards a pre-set conclusion (Rosenhan experiment in 1973). This is again rejected by Interactionists, who claim it is artificial, and also raises ethical issues to experiment on people.

Preferred Interactionist Methods

Interactionists prefer several methods to contrast with Structuralist methods, namely; unstructured interviews, covert participant observation, overt participant observation, and analysing historical, public and personal documents by content analysis.

Interactionist methods generally reject the absolute need to provide statistics. This allows cause and effect to be shown, as well as isolating variables so that relationships and trends can be distinguished

over time. Instead, interactionists want to "go deep" to explain society. This draws criticisms such as:

- Information and sociological research cannot be compared or contrasted, hence we can never truly understand how society changes. Data are not reliable.
- The information that is gathered is interpreted (hence the name "Interpretivist") by a sociologist, therefore it isn't objective, but biased.

Despite these criticisms, interactionist methods do allow flexibility. The fact that there is no hypothesis means that the sociologist is not rooted in attempting to prove dogma or theory. Instead, researchers react to what they discover, not assuming anything about society. (This is not entirely true. There can be hypotheses for many studies using interactionist methods. The researcher may then be inclined to observe certain events happening while ignoring the bigger picture. This will still bias the results, if such studies are not well conducted. This is arguably why some theorists have turned to this method. It also shows how human behavior is affected and altered through interactions i.e. socialization.

Case studies

- **Field experiments:** David Rosenhan 1973. Studied the treatment of mental health in California and got 8 normal researchers to carry out the study at 12 hospitals. Critics say the method is unethical, and the vast majority of Interactionists concur.
- **Unstructured interviews:** William Labov 1973. Study of socio-linguistics. Joan Smith 1998. Aaron Cicourel and John Kitsuse 1963 ethno-methodology study in American schools. Howard Becker 1971.
- **Participant observation:** John Howard Griffin, Michael Haralambos.

Interactionist links to other theories

Interactionism, or the idea that individuals have more awareness, skill and power to change their own situation, links to several other theories.

Neo-Marxists

Pluralism

Pluralism is the idea that the "public gets what the public wants." It is the notion that our lives offer choice like a representative democracy. This idea of consumer choice means that each individual has power as a consumer to change any aspect of life if he/she wishes to do so. The situation that exists is, according to the theory, a reflection of the norms, values and beliefs of the majority of people. It fits with the idea of individual power, although interactionist sociologists may not accept the idea that we are all labeled as "consumers".

Introduction

The second major sociological perspective, after Functionalism, at which we have to look is called "Interactionism". This perspective is normally considered to consist of three possible variations, namely:

- Phenomenology.
- Symbolic Interaction.
- Ethnomethodology.

Somewhat confusingly, not all textbooks refer to this group of theoretical ideas as "Interactionism" - some refer to them as "phenomenological" theories or "Social Action" theories - but whatever the terminology used, it's evident that they refer to a quite specific way of looking at and explaining the social world - a way that is qualitatively different to both Functionalist perspectives (as we have seen) and Conflict perspectives.

In general, Interactionist perspectives tend to concentrate on relatively small-scale levels of social interaction (between individuals,

small social groups and so forth) and, for this reason, they are sometimes referred-to as a "micro level of sociological analysis".

The basic ideas that Interactionist sociologists have in common (and which make them different in many respects to macro perspectives like Functionalism and Marxist Conflict theories) can be summarised as follows:

1. They focus on the way in which individuals (or "social actors" as Interactionists like to call them) act (that is, make conscious choices about their behavior based upon the way they interpret situations) - rather than simply react to social stimulation.

As you will, no-doubt, recall, positivist sociology (and, in particular, the types of positivist theories we looked at earlier) adopts an opposite viewpoint, whereby people's behavior is viewed in terms of the way "forces external to the individual" (whether this be "society" in the case of Functionalists, or biology / genes (in the case of non-sociological perspectives).

2. The way in which different social actors interpret the behavior of others is significant as a means of understanding the way in which the world is socially constructed.

This "social construction" of the world is focused upon the meanings people give to behavior and the way in which they interpret the meaning of behavior.

A simple example here might be if we were standing at some traffic lights waiting to cross the road. If we see a car go through a red traffic signal we may interpret that behavior as "wrong" (because it is dangerous) and / or "illegal" (because it breaks the law).

If, however, the car that races through a red light has a flashing blue light and a wailing siren we may interpret that behavior as "understandable", given that we assume the police officers in the car have a very good reason for acting both dangerously and illegally.

As an aside, this example also illustrates something about the idea of "meanings" in Interactionist thought, since if you think about it there is no necessary relationship between a "red light" and the action "stop"; it's only because we have been socialised to make an association between the two things that a red light actually means stop to us.

If you imagine, for example, someone from a society where cars do not exist, they would not associate red traffic lights with "stop" or "it's dangerous to cross the road when the light is green" because thatsymbolic association between the two things would not be a part of what Interactionists can their "symbolic system of meaning" or "world view".

The above ideas will, as you might expect, be significant when we look more specifically at crime and deviance since if social behavior is constructed from meanings and interpretations about people's behavior, the concept of "crime", for example, must also be one that is socially constructed (and this, if you think about it, will have important implications for the way in which we are able to both think about "what is crime" and "who are the criminals in our society").

Thinking about the above ideas, if concepts of "criminal behavior" are socially constructed, what does this tell us about the possibility of explaining criminal behavior in terms of the personal / social characteristics of people who break the law?

3. The social context within which people interact is significant for both their interpretation of the behavior of others and the way they themselves choose to behave at any given time.

We can see the relationship between the social context in which interaction takes place and the ability of people to (theoretically at least) behave in any way imaginable by examining two concepts developed by the Symbolic Interactionist George Herbert Mead (see "Mind, self and Society", 1933).

Mead argued that while we are each conscious, thinking, individuals, the way in which we choose to behave is conditioned by the social context of that behavior. In particular, Mead argued that our behavior as individuals is conditioned by two aspects of our self-awareness.

a. The "I" aspect which largely consists of spontaneous actions and

b. The "Me" aspect which consists of an awareness of how other people expect us to behave at any given moment and in any given situation.

The "I" and the "Me" are parallel parts of what Mead called "The Self" and it is the ability of human beings to develop a "self-concept" that, Mead argued, makes us different to the vast majority of animals.

If we look at an example of the "I" and the "Me" both of these points should become a little clearer.

If someone accidentally puts their hand into a fire, the "I" aspect of the self is expressed by such things as feeling pain, pulling your hand out of the flames quickly and so forth.

The "Me" aspect of the self, however, will condition how the person who has burnt their hand will react.

This reaction will be conditioned by such things as:

1. Who we are (social factors such as gender, age and so forth).
2. Where we are (at home, in public and so forth).
3. Who we are with (our family, friends, people we don't know, alone and the like).

Thus, if you are a young child, your reaction to being burnt may be to cry.

If, on the other hand, you are a young man, you may feel that crying is not a socially-acceptable reaction - so you may swear very loudly instead.

Swearing loudly may be acceptable if you are at home by yourself - or with someone who accepts the fact you swear on occasions - but may not be acceptable if, for example, you are fixing someone's fire as part of your job.

Similarly, if you had been messing around with a group of friends when you burnt your hand, their reaction to your accident may be to laugh and make fun of your pain. Laughter would not be an appropriate reaction if it was your child that had burnt their hand...

As you may imagine, the list of possible responses to the act of "burning yourself" is many and varied and each will depend upon who you are and the social context in which the act takes place. This, interestingly enough, also tells us something about the way Interactionists view the possibility of our being able, as sociologists, to predict people's behavior.

This, if you think about it, is going to be extremely difficult - if not impossible - because behavior is not, according to Interactionists, a simple response to some form of external stimulation. In effect, people will react differently to the same social stimulation depending upon the circumstances in which the act takes place.

If we look at this in relation to crime and deviance, we can see that for Interactionists one of the problems we have, in trying to explain why people commit crimes, for example, is that they may not interpret their behavior as criminal in the first place. If they don't see what they are doing as criminal (or, perhaps more importantly, other people do not interpret it as criminal), then how is it possible for us, as sociologists, to explain behavior in terms of an individual's social characteristics?

This has important implications for the way we can theorise both crime and the criminal, since for a crime to have taken place it is evident that someone has to react to someone's behavior - and, as we shall see, this is not automatically the case.

Thinking about your own experience, have there been times when you have technically broken the law (for example, taking a pen from work, making a personal 'phone call on your employer's time or perhaps buying something cheaply that you suspect has been stolen) without anyone reacting to your behavior as if you were a criminal?

If the answer is yes, what does this tell us about the way crime and criminality is socially constructed?

Interactionist Theories of Crime and Deviance

We can begin to look at Interactionist theories of crime and deviance by noting that they are fundamentally critical of the type of Functionalist / Ecological and (Functionalist) Sub-Cultural theories at which we have previously looked.

Such criticism stems from the observation that these types of "theories of crime" all assume that various socially-produced categories such as "Law", "Crime", "Criminal / Non-criminal", etc. are somehow clear and unambiguous.

By this I mean the idea that somehow we either "all agree" about what constitutes a crime or that we "all know" when someone is a criminal or non-criminal. In basic terms, we can express this idea in the simple formulation that a "criminal" is someone who "breaks the law".

While this may, on one level, be true enough (a criminal is, by definition, someone who has broken a legal rule), Interactionists argue that such a basic idea is not sufficient or sophisticated enough for sociological purposes.

Such "common-sense" definitions and prescriptions might suffice in everyday life; for the sociologist interested in explaining human behavior, however, they are clearly inadequate, since it is evident that not everyone who breaks a law is considered to be a criminal (we may not, for example, know that someone has broken the law). Similarly, as I've already suggested, people may technically break

the law without seeing themselves as anything other than a morally upright citizen

Think about the laws you've broken - do you consider yourself to be a criminal and if not, why not?

If you have broken a law and do not consider yourself to be a criminal think about:

a. Would you consider someone who has done exactly the same thing as a criminal?
b. What type of act would you consider to be "really criminal"?

In the previous theories at which we have looked, there appears to be a common thread of shared meaning that sees "criminals" as people who have both broken - and been subject to the due process of – the law. Such people are, as we have seen, considered to be "different" from the vast majority of "law-abiding" citizens and the task of this type of sociology, therefore, is to discover how such people are different - whether this difference is located in such things as:

• Their socialisation (Merton)
• Differential Association (Sutherland)
• Status frustration (Cohen)

or whatever.

According to Interactionists, theories of crime and deviance that simply accept the distinction between "criminals and non-criminals" as unproblematic (and then try to explain this difference in some way) are guilty of alogical error, namely the error of assuming that deviance is a quality of what someone does...

In Interactionist terms, we can express this as the idea that deviance is not a quality of the act (what someone does or doesn't do).

Methodologically, we can note that because various types of Positivist / Functionalist theory make the (unwarranted according to Interactionists) assumption that deviance is a quality of what someone

does, they are led inexorably to theorise deviance in terms of the qualities that people do or do not possess...

To explore this idea further - and to begin to see how Interactionists theories the nature of crime and deviance - we need to start to look at the way societies produce various forms of legal rules (and why they produce them) and, most importantly, at the way in which various formal and informal rules of behavior are enforced.

If deviance is a quality of what someone does, how might a Functionalist sociologist explain the fact that while drinking alcohol is legal over a certain age in Britain but illegal in a country such as Saudi Arabia?

Are Criminals Different To Non-Criminals?

As we have seen, Interactionists begin by questioning the assumption that ideas such as "law" and "crime" are clear and unambiguous. Instead, they stress the idea that such social categories are, by definition,socially produced - and that they change over time (in the same society) and space (between different societies).

Necessarily, therefore, any theoretical explanation of crime and deviance must consider two major concepts:

Power- in terms of the ability to make laws, apply them to people's behavior and so forth.

Ideology- in terms of decisions that have to be made by someone as to which types of human behavior are to be criminalised and so forth.

In this sense, the concepts of power and ideology combine to define both the nature of law, crime and so forth and, by extension, criminality. Thus, although in one sense a criminal is someone who breaks the law, it does not follow logically that the only people who break laws are "criminals".

As self-report studies frequently show, while many people in our society break a variety of different laws, only a proportion of "potential criminals" are actually criminalised. In effect, people may

extensively "break the law" without ever being arrested, charged and convicted of an offence.

Given the general extent of law-breaking in any society, it follows that one of the main questions asked by Interactionists is that of, "Are deviants really different to non-deviants".

More importantly, how can we tell if they are and can we maintain the (criminological) convenient idea that there is a relatively easy distinction to be made between deviants and non-deviants / criminals and non-criminals?

The implication of the above is that if large numbers of apparently "law-abiding" people in our society routinely break the law (either accidentally or deliberately) - yet are not viewed as criminals (either by themselves or by others) this must tell us something significant about the process of criminalization.

What it should tell us, Interactionists argue, is that deviance is not a quality of what you do (your behavior). As Becker ("Outsiders", 1963) puts it:

"Deviance is not a simple quality present in some kinds of behavior and absent in others. [It] is not a quality that lies in the behavior itself, but in the interaction between those who commit acts and those who respond to them".

Examples of this idea are not particularly difficult to find:
- You can steal a book and be arrested, charged and eventually criminalised.
- I, on the other hand, can steal a book and not be arrested, charged or criminalised.

What are the implications of the above for?
1. The methodological question of the identification of criminals?

2. Theories of crime and criminality that rest upon Official Statistics of crime?

Similarly, the same basic form of behavior can be considered deviant in one context but perfectly normal in another. For example, In peace time, killing someone may be seen as murder - everyone has a duty not to go around killing each other. Murdering someone is a crime and hence deviant.

In time of war, however, the reverse is true. To kill the enemy is considered a duty, whereas refusing to kill an enemy is seen as deviant.

The above involves the same basic form of behavior (killing someone) - but the key point to understand is the idea of differential perception – and hence interpretation - of that behavior.

In this respect, the social context within which behavior takes place is significant insofar as it tells us how to interpret behavior.

Not only does it tell us how to interpret behavior, of course, it also tells us how to act towards that behavior - and this, according to Interactionists, represents the key to understanding crime and deviance.

How Do Interactionists Study Deviance?

Having looked briefly at what, according to Interactionists, crime and deviance are not, it would be useful to examine how various Interactionist sociologists have argued that we should perceive and study these phenomena.

In the first place, deviance is seen fundamentally as a quality of how we, as individuals, identify and interpret the social context of people's behavior.

This idea is normally expressed as a process of labelling (hence the idea of "Labelling Theory" - an area that we will examine in more detail in a moment).

Secondly, it must also be a quality of how we react to people's behavior.

This idea is normally expressed as the "social reaction" to behavior.

In methodological terms, according to Interactionist sociology:

1. All human behavior has a social context.
2. The social context is defined by the participant's involvement in - and perception of - the situation in which they find themselves. This idea is frequently expressed as the individual having to ask him / herself: "What is going-on in this situation?" before they can decide how to adopt appropriate forms of behavior for the situation.
3. If we put this in methodological terms, the "ideological frameworks" that people bring into any social situation will be used to:
    a. Tell them what is going-on (that is, how to interpret behavior).
    b. Tell them how to react / respond appropriately.

An example here might be as follows:

If you drive through a red traffic light and are identified by a police officer, you are liable to be criminalised (that is, once you have been put through a legal process, you will be labelled as a criminal). In Interactionist terms, there happened to be a strong social reaction to your behavior, principally because you were seen by a police officer - and it is their job to arrest people who break the law.

If, on the other hand, you had not been seen by anyone, then there clearly would have been no strong social reaction to your behavior (mainly because no-one was there to see it). It is, of course, perfectly possible that you, as a law-abiding citizen, could decide that you have witnessed a criminal act and could then proceed to arrest yourself - possible, but not very likely...

However, if you had been driving a fire engine (rather than your 16-valve, triple-cam, turbo-charged Reliant Robin with the "go-faster"

stripes) on your way to a fire when you were identified by a police officer going through a red light, the social context of your behavior has changed - and hence the interpretation of that behavior will also change. The police officer is likely to interpret your motive for breaking the law in a different way - one that rationalises your behavior and hence involves no strong social reaction (on the contrary, the police officer might well congratulate you for driving so well in a potentially dangerous situation).

As Bilton et al ("Introductory Sociology") note:

"We need to ask why is it that behavior in some contexts and engaged in by some people comes to be defined and processed as "criminal", while other behavior and actors experienced no such labelling?".

David Matza: "Delinquency and Drift", 1964.

Matza's analysis of deviance (in particular juvenile delinquency) stems from a basic rejection of Functionalist-derived sub-cultural theories.In this respect, he begins by arguing that deviants do not necessarily reject the values of wider society. On the contrary, according to Matza, deviants are similar to everyone else.

He supports this contention - deviants are not particularly "different" - by arguing that murderers, for example, frequently demonstrate what he argues is both a genuine sense of remorse and a recognition that they have "done something wrong".

In sociological terms, therefore, the significance of such evidence is that in order to recognise / acknowledge that you have "done something wrong" you must hold very similar values to the people who are condemning your behavior.

In order to feel shame, guilt and so forth, you have to hold the kind of values shared by people in society as a whole - since if you didn't, you would feel that you had done nothing wrong for which to feel guilty.

Two points are useful to note here:

Firstly, in psychological terms, the condition where an individual does not feel guilt for his / her actions is called "psychopathic". A psychopathic personality cannot be held responsible for their wrongdoing because they suffer from a mental disorder that prevents them recognising the rights of others.

A major question here, of course, is the ability to prove, empirically, that such a "personality-type" actually exists - an important question that needs to be considered, but, in this context, we'll simply assume that psychopathic is a mental disorder.

Secondly, it is always possible that people who express remorse, guilt and so forth for their behavior only seem to do so after they have been caught - it is, as Matza recognises, entirely possible that such expressions are simply part of a social process whereby the apprehended criminal expresses such things because they either feel it is expected of them or, of course, because they hope for more lenient treatment...

Assuming, for the sake of argument, that Matza's interpretation is correct, this has important ramifications for his theory, because it indicates that it may not be possible to easily differentiate between "criminals" and "non-criminals" on the basis of some form of commitment to a "deviant sub-cultural value system".

For Matza, the solution to the apparent contradiction noted above (doing something deviant and feeling remorse for having done it) is to be found in the idea of a "dual value system".

Conventional and Subterranean values

Matza argues that, as part of the general socialisation process in society, people are socialised into what he called:

"Conventional values":

These are the basic values that we try to live up to in our normal, everyday, life. In terms of deviance, perhaps, a conventional value might be that you do not murder people.

However, although we are mainly socialised into such values (through both our primary and secondary socialisation), we are also necessarily aware of what Matza called:

"Subterranean values":

These are values that coexist with conventional values, in the sense that we know they exist (we know, for example, that people murder other people and that murder is considered criminal).

This "co-existence" however is one in which subterranean values are normally buried "deep-down" in our personal value system - we know these things exist and are possible but, by and large, we do not give into them.

What are the implications of this idea of a "dual value system" for theories which depend upon a clear separation between "criminals" and "non-criminals"?

If we assume, therefore, that such a dual value system potentially exists, the next problem to solve is that, if subterranean values are normally kept "well-hidden", why do they "come to the surface" in some people's behavior?

Matza argues that in certain social contexts people may "give-in" to their knowledge of subterranean values (for example, amongst a group of friends who are telling sexist jokes we may feel obliged to laugh along with the crowd even though, normally, we may feel that we are not sexist and we may feel uneasy or guilty about our behavior).

For Matza, therefore, the major distinguishing feature of, for example, juvenile delinquents, is that they are more-likely to be people who give-in to the expression of subterranean values in "inappropriate" ways and social settings.

Thus, for young males and females their "normal" leisure lifestyle tends to put them into social contexts where pressure for the expression of subterranean values can be relatively high. For example:

Frequenting pubs and night-clubs in groups;

Competition between males in order to "impress" others;

Social behavior that may involve large amounts of alcohol, soft drugs and so forth that may temporarily cause individuals to "lose control").

For older males and females, on the other hand, if they have a more-conventionally-settled lifestyle (a bit of DIY, the evening spent watching television and so forth) then the pressure to give-in to subterranean values may not be as great, simply because their social situation is different (or, of course, they may give-in to different subterranean values – beating your partner, for example - that can be more-easily hidden).

Having explained why people give-in to subterranean values, Matza has next to show that - having "given-in" - people have to resolve the contradiction between their conventional values and their deviant behavior. In order to "square this moral circle", Matza argues that people are forced to try and rationalise (to themselves and to others) their lapse into subterranean values. To do this he argues that they employ "techniques of neutralisation" - that is, ideas which somehow serve to both justify and explain why the individual did something that was "out of character".

Techniques of Neutralisation

Matza notes a number of classic "techniques of neutralisation" and these include such things as:

1. Denial of Responsibility:

The idea that "something made me do it" (for example, "I was drunk...").

2. Denial of Victim:

Although, in itself, deviance is seen as wrong, the victim somehow deserved what happened (for example, "He kept taking the mick out of me in front of my friends all night long...so I hit him."). An ugly variant of this form of neutralisation sometimes occurs in cases of rape, whereby the act is "justified" by arguing that the victim "led me on".

3. Denial of Injury: The victim is not seen as having been harmed (for example, stealing something from the workplace - "The company didn't miss it. They can afford it and anyway, everyone does it...".

4. Condemnation of the Condemnatory:

Again, this involves a clear admission that the act was wrong but is neutralised by the idea that "everyone does it" ("I know I shouldn't drink and drive, but I thought a couple of pints on my way home wouldn't hurt"). This may also involve the actor neutralising their deviance by reference to luck, fate or whatever ("If I hadn't turned down that road I'd never have been caught...".

5. Appeal to Higher Loyalties:

This makes reference to some "higher" moral standard against which the deviant's behavior should be judged. For example, "My mate was attacked. I couldn't just leave him to get beaten-up". This may also involve a form of "conspiratorial closeness" between the deviant and social control agents - the idea that deviant act was something that any "normal person" would have done in the circumstances (such as "helping a mate in trouble.".

Having explained the idea of "delinquency", Matza then uses the concept of "drift" to explain the relationship between conventional and subterranean values. In so doing, he also explains why young people (and especially males) appear to go through periods of "trouble" in their late teens while, once they are older they no-longer exhibit similar forms of behavior.

Deviance is not seen by Matza to involve a commitment to "deviant values"; therefore, people tend to "drift" into and out of deviant behavior. For young people especially, in our society, Matza sees this period in their lives as one of transition from the norms that govern childhood behavior to the norms that govern adult behavior. In this period of "normative confusion", the individual is perhaps "more-likely" to give-in to subterranean values at inappropriate times. Once the passage to full adulthood is made - and greater responsibilities are taken-on by the individual - Matza argues that the pull of subterranean values is loosened and conventional values start to exert a much stronger influence.

What implications does Matza's theory have for the way "juvenile delinquents" should be treated by control agencies such as the police and courts? Suggest policing strategies that could be adopted to deal with "juvenile delinquents"

Could the strategies you have suggested be used effectively with non juvenile crimes (please explain why / why not)?

Evaluation

To evaluate Matza's ideas, it might be useful to firstly note a number of potential problems before, secondly, looking at the evidence of other studies of juvenile behavior.

1. Firstly, Matza's theory seems to explain some forms of juvenile deviance, but how applicable is it to other forms of deviance? (You might like to think about whether it is intended to apply to crimes such as murder, fraud, rape and so forth where they are committed by adults).

2. Secondly, it is by no means certain that juveniles are actually able to drift into and out of deviance in this way. What happens, for example, when a juvenile is punished / stigmatized - is it possible to then simply re-enter "conventional society" on the same terms as prior to the stigmatisation?

3. Finally, Matza doesn't adequately explain why juvenile delinquency is primarily a male phenomenon - where does females figure in this picture?

Further Studies To Consider : Both Peter Willmott ("Adolescent Boys in East London") and David Downes in his similar study of East London adolescents provide evidence to suggest that Matza's concept of delinquency and drift may have some substance:

Wilmott, by default, criticised sub-cultural theories because he found little evidence to support the idea that juvenile deviance was either planned or based around clear sub-cultural values. In this respect, Wilmott argued that deviant behavior by working class boys was both highly visible and more-likely to come to the attention of the police.

The police - by identifying this group, ideologically, as "trouble" - consequently target them for closer observation and, thereby, find evidence to confirm their perception of such people as "potential troublemakers".

Downes, similarly, found no evidence to support sub-cultural theories such as "status deprivation" (A. Cohen) and little resentment at lack of employment opportunities (Cloward and Ohlin).

What he did find, however, was that the lack of satisfaction through work led the youths in his study to stress "leisure values" which made them more disposed than their middle class peers to indulge in "fun" and "exiting" activities that led them into conflict with the law / police. Like Matza, Downes saw these forms of deviance as unplanned, relatively petty and involved no long-term commitment to "deviant values".

Matza's ideas, while forming a bridge between sub-cultural and Interactionist theories are, as has been noted, relatively limited in their explanatory scope (they basically focus upon the behavior of young working class males).

What would be useful now, therefore, is to look at further developments in Interactionist theorising - and to do this we need to look at a particular form of theory - "Labelling Theory" - that has been the hallmark of Interactionist perspectives on crime and deviance for the past thirty years.

Labeling Theory

The main basis of labeling theories of crime and deviance is the idea that, in order to understand these social phenomena, we have, as sociologists, to take account not simply of what people do or do not do (behavior) but also, more importantly, the social context of that behavior.

- In this respect, we are dealing with such questions as:
- How behavior is interpreted (and by whom)
- Why it is interpreted in particular ways at different times.

Methodologically, since questions about "how" and "why" behavior is interpreted inevitably involves subjective judgments (both on the part of the participants and sociologists who gather data through interpretive methods - such as overt / covert observation, unstructured interviews and so forth), this form of sociology is frequently referred to as "subjective sociology".

In terms of "theoretical explanations of deviance", labeling theory is significant because it switches the focus of attention away from trying to find "causes of crime" in people's behavioral background (what you do) onto the location of behavior within a subjective social context, whereby the most significant variable involved is how people react to what you do or, in many instances, do not do (you may recall that we've come across this idea before, in relation to Hagan's attempt to operationalize the concept of deviance).

For labelling theorists, therefore, the "causes of crime" (if we can presume to talk about such ideas as "causality" in such a context - a methodologically-debatable point) are to be found not in the qualities

possessed by "deviants and criminals" but, rather, in the patterns of social interaction that exist in any social group, institution or society.

In this respect, one argument here is that if crime and deviance can only be understood - as social behavior - by our understanding of how people interpret behavior (their subjective understanding and so forth), it appears a somewhat futile exercise to try and theorise / explain crime in "objective" terms. For example,

Although "crime" is an objective social category, insofar as we can measure it by reference to the existence of law (if you break the law then you are technically a criminal), the idea of "criminality" is rather-more of a subjective category - mainly because it is dependent upon the social reaction to the behavior of the "law-breaker".

Explain, in your own words, the idea of criminality being a "subjective categorisation".

In effect, although people break laws all the time, only a certain proportion of all law-breakers are ever identified and labeled as criminals.

For Labeling theorists, therefore, understanding criminality involves a dual process, namely:

Behavior and the Social Reaction to that behavior.

It is because of this subjective element of "social reaction" that, according to such theorists, it is not possible to understand the former without taking account of the latter - they are, in effect, two sides of the same coin. In order to understand crime and, more importantly, the process of criminalization, therefore, it is evident that we must look at such things as:

The law makers

1. Who makes laws and why are laws made?
2. The law-breakers
3. In particular, the social reaction to people's behavior.

The law enforcers

That is, the role of the police, courts, etc. in the labelling process. In addition, the role of the mass media, moral entrepreneurs and so forth will be important in relation to both definitions of law breaking (social reaction) and law enforcement (this idea will be developed further when we look at Deviancy Amplification).

The Community (the "general public"):

Again, since the social reaction from the "general public" tends to be articulated through the mass media, the role of the latter in the labeling will need closer investigation.

Where Functionalists, for example, assume that laws - and the moral values upon which they are based - are somehow absolute (based upon fundamental, deeply-held values - or "mores"), Interactionists argue that all behavior - and hence all systems of law - is morally relative:

What disgusts me, for example, might appear quite normal to you...

For labelling theorists, however, the central idea of "moral relativism" (while clearly important in a theoretical sense) is of less significance than the idea that I may be able to do something to you as a result of my disgust at your behavior. In this respect, two ideas / concepts are important here:

1. Ideology:

If all behavior is seen to be morally relative (that is, nothing is absolutely and forever right or wrong), it follows that, in order for me to define your behavior as deviant, I have to impose upon you my conception of morality.

2. Power:

While it is all very well my being disgusted by your behavior (defining it as deviant), in order for me to do something about your behavior I have to possess the power that gives some substance to my

disapproval - only if I possess power can I try to stop you behaving in a way that disgusts me.

Using a textbook, make a note of how the concepts of "ideology" and "power" are defined.

We can use an example to explore these two ideas as follows:

Let's imagine that you "borrow" my pen and refuse to return it.

This is behavior of which I disapprove (ideology) and if I am powerless to react to this situation then all that effectively happens is that I lose a pen and you gain one. I know that you are a slimy, sneaky, thief (and so do you) but since I can do nothing to make the label stick to you, then effectively you are not a criminal / deviant.

However, although I may be personally powerless to stop you stealing my pen, it just so happens that the pen was given to me by my uncle who is a policeman. As you may imagine, he is very upset at my allegation of theft and he decides to go around to your house, whereupon he arrests you on suspicion of theft.

You are eventually charged, the case goes to court and you are convicted of theft. Unfortunately you couldn't afford to hire an expensive lawyer and are sentenced to three years imprisonment.

In prison, you spend your time associating with other criminals and, by and by, you pass the time learning all kinds of new crime techniques.

Having paid your debt to society, you leave prison, but are unable to find a job because of the stigmatising "criminal" label that has been successfully attached to you (Interactionists call this particular form of labelling a "master label" because all of your behavior is subsequently interpreted by others in the light of the label you have attracted). Alone, poverty-stricken and without a friend to call your own, you turn to the only thing you have left - your new-found crime skills.

Being a generally vindictive sort of person, you decide to burgle my house and steal my pen and - because you are now so good at your job - you leave no clues. I am powerless to act against you (because I don't know who burgled my house) and you retire to Brighton to live-off your ill-gotten gains. You have now, according to Interactionists, embarked upon a "deviant career".

A silly example perhaps (aren't they all?), but it demonstrates the crucial idea that power is a significant variable in the criminalization / labeling process.

The power to:

a. Define behavior as deviant (did you really steal my pen or simply, as you claim, borrow it?).
b. Apply labels such as "criminal".
c. Make those labels stick. Even though you rejected the label of "criminal", I was able to do something to you that forced the label to stick (I got you sent to prison).

In order to examine the relationship between ideology, power and deviance more closely, we can look at a classic Interactionist model, namely that of the "Deviancy Amplification System". We can use this model to illustrate a number of the processes involved in the criminalization process and, in particular, we can use it to look at the role played by the mass media as a powerful agency of social control.

This is discussed in greater detail in the next set of Teachers' Notes: "Deviancy Amplification: An Interactionist Model".

Sociological Theory/Symbolic Interactionism

This approach stands in contrast to the strict behaviorism of psychological theories prevalent at the time it was first formulated (in the 1920s and 1930s), behaviorism and ethology, and also contrasts with structural-functionalism. According to Symbolic Interactionism, humans are distinct from infrahuman's (lower animals)simply respond to their environment (i.e., a stimulus evokes a response or stimulus ->

response) whereas humans have the ability to interrupt that process (i.e., stimulus -> cognition -> response). Additionally, infrahuman's are unable to conceive of alternative responses to gestures. Humans, however, can. This understanding should not be taken to indicate that humans never behave in a strict *stimulus -> response* fashion, but rather that humans have the capability of not responding in that fashion (and do so much of the time).

This perspective is also rooted in phenomenological thought (see social constructionism and phenomonology. According to symbolic interactionism, the objective world has no reality for humans, only subjectively-defined objects have meaning. Meanings are not entities that are bestowed on humans and learned by habituation. Instead, meanings can be altered through the creative capabilities of humans, and individuals may influence the many meanings that form their society (Herman and Reynolds 1994). Human society, therefore, is a social product.

It should also be noted that symbolic interactionists advocate a particular methodology. Because they see *meaning* as the fundamental component of human/society interaction, studying human/society interaction requires *getting at* that meaning. Thus, symbolic interactionists tend to employ more qualitative rather than quantitative methods in their research.

Additional Concepts

Society

In symbolic interactionist thought, there is a difference between infrahuman and human society. In infrahuman life, cooperation is physiologically determined. In other words, it is not a cognitive process; it results from instinct and biological programming rather than conscious thinking. In human society, cooperation is cognitive and conscious. Human cooperation can only be brought about by:

- each acting individual ascertaining the intention of the acts of others
- each acting individual deciding on his/her own response on the basis of that intention

Another distinction drawn between infrahumans and humans is in the types of communication employed. Infrahuman communication is gestural; it takes place immediately, without any interruption of the act for interpretation or assigning meaning. In contrast to infrahuman communication, human communication is meaningful in that gestures are symbolic and do not invoke immediate responses - humans must interpret gestures and assign them meaning. Because human communication involves interpretation and the assignment of meaning, it is only possible when there is consensus in meaning. Meanings for symbols must be shared.

Shared meaning necessarily takes place through role-taking; in order to complete an act, the actor must put himself in the position of the other person. Behavior is viewed as *social* not simply when it is a response to others, but rather when it has incorporated in it the behavior of others. Human beings respond to themselves as other persons respond to them, and in so doing they imaginatively share the conduct of others.

Self

The **self** refers to the conscious, reflective personality of an individual. It is the entity the person envisions when he/she thinks about who they are. In order to understand the concept of self, it is important to understand that the development of self is only possible through role-taking. In order to look upon yours*elf*, you have to be able to take the role of another, which, in turn, allows you to reflect upon yours*elf*. Because role-taking is a necessary part of self-development, it is concurrent with the development of self.

- According to Mead (1967), the self develops in a series of three stages:

- preparatory stage - meaningless imitation by the infant

- play stage - actual playing of roles occurs; but no unified conception of self develops

- game stage - this is the completion stage of self-development; the child finds who he or she is; the child also must respond to simultaneous roles; the individual can act with a certain amount of consistency in a variety of situations because he/she acts in accordance with a generalized set of expectations and definitions he/she has internalized

The *self* consists of two parts, the *I* and the/ *Me*. The *I* is the impulsive tendency of the individual (similar to Freud's notion of the Id). The *I* is the spontaneous, unorganized aspect of human existence. The/*Me* is the incorporated other (seegeneralized other) within the individual. The incorporated or generalized other supplies an organized set of attitudes and definitions, understandings and expectations (or meanings) that are common to the group to which the individual belongs (similar to Freud's concept of the superego).

According to Mead's presentation of the *I* and the *Me*, action begins in the form of the *I* and ends in the form of the *Me*; the *I* gives propulsion while the *Me* gives direction. Additionally, the *I*, being creative and spontaneous, provides for change in society. The *Me*, being regulatory, works to maintain society. Thus, in the concept of *self* is a powerful and comprehensive understanding of how humans function in society and, in turn, how society functions (by both changing and remaining constant). The concept also depicts the relationship between the individual and society (Meltzer 1978).

According to Meltzer (1978), there are three implications of selfhood:

- the possession of self makes of the individual a society in miniature; humans can engage themselves in interaction; they can view themselves in a new way
- the ability to act toward oneself makes possible an inner experience which need not reach overt expression; humans can have a mental life
- an individual with a self can direct and control his behavior

It is also important to recognize that the self and the mind are twin emergents in the social process...

Mind

The *Mind* or mental component of man emerges out of human communication. The mind is only present when significant symbols (as opposed to gestures that do not have meaning but simply evoke responses) are being used in communication. In this sense, *mind* is a process manifested whenever the individual is interacting with himself using significant symbols (symbols or gestures with interpretations or meanings).

The mind is also the component of the individual that interrupts responses to stimuli. It is the mind that attempts to pre-vision the future by exploring possible outcomes of actions before proceeding with actions. In minded behavior, the individual carries on an internal conversation.

The Historical Roots of Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism, especially the work of George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), traces its roots to two intellectual traditions: pragmatism and psychological behaviorism. Mead adopted from the pragmatists three important themes: (1) a focus on the interaction between actors and the social world, (2) a view of both actors and the social world as dynamic processes, and (3) the centrality of actors' ability to interpret the social world. In sum, both pragmatism and symbolic interactionism view thinking as a process. Mead recognized

the importance of overt, observable behavior, but expanded the understanding of mental capacities of most psychological behaviorists by stressing the importance of covert behavior. Unlike the radical behaviorists, Mead believed that there were significant differences between human beings and animals, particularly the human capacity to use language and dynamically created social reality.

The Ideas of Mead

Mead's most widely read work, Mind, Self and Society, gives priority to society over the mind and highlights the idea that the social leads to the development of mental states. To Mead, the mind is a process, not a thing, and is found in social phenomena rather than within individuals. The act is the fundamental union in Mead's theory, and it is represented by four stages: impulse, perception, manipulation, and consummation. The basic mechanism of the social act, according to Mead, is the gesture. Mead pays particular attention to one kind of gesture, significant symbols, which make it possible for humans to think, to communicate, and to be stimulators of their own actions.

The self-occupies a central place in Mead's theory. Mead defines the self as the ability to take oneself as an object and identifies the basic mechanism of the development of the self as reflexivity - the ability to put ourselves into the place of others and act as they act. Mead makes it clear that a self can arise only through social experiences, and he traces its development to two stages in childhood: the play stage and the game stage. During the play stage, children learn how to take the attitude of particular others to themselves, but it is only during the game stage that children learn how to take the roles of many others and the attitude of the generalized other. Mead also discussed the difference between the "I" and the "me" in his theory of the self. The "I" is the immediate response of an individual to the other; it is the unpredictable and creative aspect of the self. The "me" is the organized set of attitude of others that an individual assumes; it is how society dominates the individual and is a source of social control.

The Basic Principles of Symbolic Interactionism

The basic principles of symbolic interactionism include the following: (1) human beings possess the capacity for thought, which is shaped by social interaction; (2) people learn meanings and symbols through social interaction; and (3) people are able to modify or alter the meanings and symbols they use in interactions by interpreting the situations they are engaged in.

Socialization is one way individuals learn to think, interact with one another, and understand how to use meanings and symbols. Defining the situation is another way that individuals actively engage in creating the social world. Finally, developing a "looking-glass" self helps individuals to perceive and judge the impressions we make on others we interact with.

The Work of Goffman

Erving Goffman (1922-1982) focused on dramaturgy, a view of social life as a series of dramatic performances, and he was interested in how the self is shaped by the dramatic interactions between social actors and their audiences. The basic unit of analysis in Goffman's work is a team, which is any set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single act or routine. The central theme in his work is impression management, or the techniques that social actors use to maintain particular images of themselves when they encounter problems during interactions. As a general rule, most individuals feel the need to hide certain things about themselves when they are engaged in a performance. Goffman used the concepts of front stage, personal front, setting, appearance, manner, and back stage to discuss the theater of social life. According to Goffman, fronts tend to become institutionalized and are therefore selected rather than created. Personal fronts consist of appearance, or expressive equipment that tells the audience what kind of role the performer expects to play in a

particular situation. The back stage is where actors engage in informal action that is suppressed when on front stage.

Goffman also addressed the issue of stigma in his work. Stigmas emerge when there is a gap between a person's virtual social identity and actual social identity. Goffman differentiated between discredited stigmas, which actors assume when their stigmas are evident to audience members (like loss of a nose) and discreditable stigmas, which audience members are unaware of unless an actor discloses this information (like his being infertile.) According to Goffman, we all possess some type of stigma, depending on the situations we are in.

Later in his career Goffman moved away from symbolic interactionism to the study of small-scale structures or frames. Frames are understood by Goffman as rules that constrain social action and function to organize experience. He also described frames as the rituals of everyday life. Goffman's move toward studying frames and rituals led him away from his earlier cynical view social life and brought him closer to Durkheim's work The Elementary Forms of Religious Life.

Criticisms of Symbolic Interactionism and Its New Directions

Symbolic interactionism has been criticized for relying too much on qualitative methodology and for failing to incorporate quantitative methodology into its research program. It has also been criticized for being too vague on the conceptual front and for downplaying large-scale social structures. Given its micro-level focus, some have argued that symbolic interactionism is not microscopic enough, because it tends to ignore psychological factors.

Symbolic interactionists are currently trying to answer some of these criticisms by integrating micro- and macro-level theories and synthesizing their approach across other fields of study. For example, some scholars are redefining Mead's theory to show that it accounts for both micro- and macro-level phenomena. Others are using role theory as a way to integrate structure and meaning. Some symbolic

interactionists are focusing more attention on culture and are working within cultural studies to examine the role communication technologies play in producing and representing social reality.

Symbolic interactionism has changed considerably since its inception. According to one symbolic interactionist, Gary Fine, the field has fragmented, resulting in greater diversity. It has expanded beyond its concerns with micro-level relations, incorporated ideas from other theoretical perspectives, and been adopted by sociologists who would not define themselves as symbolic interactionists.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism, or interactionism for short, is one of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology. This perspective has a long intellectual history, beginning with the German sociologist and economist, Max Weber (1864-1920) and the American philosopher, George H. Mead (1863-1931), both of whom emphasized the**subjective meaning** of human behavior, the social process, and pragmatism. Although there are a number of versions of interactionist thought, some deriving from phenomenological writings by philosophers, the following description offers a simplified amalgamation of these ideas, concentrating on points of convergence. Herbert Blumer, who studied with Mead at the University of Chicago, is responsible for coining the term, "symbolic interactionism," as well as for formulating the most prominent version of the theory (Blumer 1969).

Interactionists focus on the subjective aspects of social life, rather than on objective, macro-structural aspects of social systems. One reason for this focus is that interactionists base their theoretical perspective on their image of humans, rather than on their image of society (as the functionalists do). For interactionists, humans arepragmatic actors who continually must adjust their behavior to the actions of other actors. We can adjust to these actions only because we are able to interpret them, i.e., to denote them symbolically and treat

the actions and those who perform them as symbolic objects. This process of adjustment is aided by our ability to imaginatively rehearse alternative lines of action before we act. The process is further aided by our ability to think about and to react to our own actions and even ourselves as symbolic objects. Thus, the interactions theorist sees humans as active, creative participants who construct their social world, not as passive, conforming objects of socialization.

For the interactionist, society consists of organized and patterned interactions among individuals. Thus, research by interactionists focuses on easily observable face-to-face interactions rather than on macro-level structural relationships involving social institutions. Furthermore, this focus on interaction and on the meaning of events to the participants in those events (the definition of the situation) shifts the attention of interactionists away from stable norms and values toward more changeable, continually readjusting social processes. Whereas for functionalists socialization creates stability in the social system, for interactionists negotiation among members of society creates temporary, socially constructed relations which remain in constant flux, despite relative stability in the basic framework governing those relations.

These emphases on symbols, negotiated reality, and the social construction of society lead to an interest in the **roles** people play. Erving Goffman (1958), a prominent social theorist in this tradition, discusses roles dramaturgically, using an analogy to the theater, with human social behavior seen as more or less well scripted and with humans as role-taking actors. Role-taking is a key mechanism of interaction, for it permits us to take the other's perspective, to see what our actions might mean to the other actors with whom we interact. At other times, interactionists emphasize the improvisational quality of roles, with human social behavior seen as poorly scripted and with humans as role-making improvisers. Role-making, too, is a key mechanism of interaction, for all situations and roles are inherently

ambiguous, thus requiring us to create those situations and roles to some extent before we can act.

Ethnomethodology, an offshoot of symbolic interactionism, raises the question of how people who are interacting with each other can create the illusion of a shared social order even when they don't understand each other fully and in fact have different points of view. Harold Garfinkel, a pioneer in these investigations, demonstrated the problem by sending his students out to perform "experiments in trust," called breachingexperiments, in which they brought ordinary conversations to an abrupt halt by refusing to take for granted that they knew what the other person was saying, and so demanded explanations and then explanations of the explanations (Garfinkel 1967). More recently, ethnomethodologist researchers have performed minutely detailed analyses of ordinary conversations in order to reveal the methods by which turn-taking and other conversational maneuvers are managed.

Interactionists tend to study social interaction through **participant observation**, rather than surveys and interviews. They argue that close contact and immersion in the everyday lives of the participants is necessary for understanding the meaning of actions, the definition of the situation itself, and the process by which actors construct the situation through their interaction. Given this close contact, interactionists could hardly remain free of value commitments, and, in fact, interactionists make explicit use of their values in choosing what to study but strive to be objective in the conduct of their research.

Symbolic interactionists are often criticized by other sociologists for being overly impressionistic in their research methods and somewhat unsystematic in their theories. These objections, combined with the fairly narrow focus of interactionist research on small-group interactions and other social psychological issues, have relegated the interactionist camp to a minority position among sociologists, although a fairly substantial minority.

Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Sociologists use a variety of theoretical perspectives to make sense of the world. These perspectives or theories provide a framework for understanding observations on topics such as deviance. The **symbolic interactions perspective** of sociology views society as a product of everyday social interactions of individuals. Symbolic interactionists also study how people use symbols to create meaning. In studying deviance, these theorists look at how people in everyday situations define deviance, which differs between cultures and settings.

Theory of Differential Association

Sociologist **Edwin Sutherland** studied deviance from the symbolic interactionist perspective. The basic tenet of his **theory of differential association** is that deviance is a learned behavior—people learn it from the different groups with which they associate. His theory counters arguments that deviant behavior is biological or due to personality. According to Sutherland, people commit deviant acts because they associate with individuals who act in a deviant manner.

He further explained exactly what one learns from people who commit deviance. He said that the future deviant learns values different from those of the dominant culture, as well as techniques for committing deviance.

Example: In a gang environment, current gang members resocialize new members to norms that oppose those of the dominant culture. From the gang, these new members learn that stealing, carrying a gun, and using drugs are acceptable behaviors, whereas they were not before. In the meantime, the norms they learned at home are no longer acceptable within the gang environment, and they must reject those norms and values to accept the new ones. Current gang members also teach new members how to commit specific deviant acts, such as hotwiring a car or breaking into a home.

Part of Sutherland's theory is that if people learn deviance from others, the people with whom we associate are of utmost importance. The closer the relationship, the more likely someone is to be influenced. Parents who worry that their children are socializing with an undesirable crowd have a justified concern.

Example: *If an adolescent changes schools and his new peer group smokes marijuana, the new student is more likely to smoke marijuana. On the other hand, if a student moves to a new school where no one smokes marijuana, he is less likely to take up the habit.*

Deviant Subcultures

When individuals share a particular form of deviance, they often form a deviant subculture, a way of living that differs from the dominant culture and is based on that shared deviance. Within the deviant subculture, individuals adopt new norms and values and sometimes feel alienated from the larger society. They end up relying more on the group to which they feel they most belong. When an individual becomes a member of a deviant subculture, the members of his immediate group often become his primary source of social interaction. The deviant feels comfortable among others who have also been rejected from the dominant society.

Example: People released from prison often find that the dominant society does not welcome them back with open arms, and they often drift toward other ex-convicts to attain a sense of belonging and purpose, thereby forming a subculture. This deviant subculture helps to explain why rates of recidivism, or repeated offenses by convicted criminals, are so high. The ex-convict subculture sanctions and encourages further acts of deviance.

Control Theory

Sociologist Walter Reckless developed the control theory to explain how some people resist the pressure to become deviants. According to control theory, people have two control systems that work

against their desire to deviate. Each person has a set of inner controls and outer controls.

- Inner controls are internalized thought processes such as a sense of morality, conscience, or religious beliefs. People may also refrain from doing acts of deviance because they fear punishment or couldn't live with the guilt that would come from acting outside of society's norms. Inner controls represent a sort of internalized morality.

- Outer controls consist of the people in our lives who encourage us not to stray. They could be family members, police officers, clergy, or teachers. Whoever they are, they influence us to conform to society's expectations. A person who is tempted to engage in a deviant act can resist the temptation by imagining how others would react to his or her behavior.

Travis Hirschi and Control Theory

Sociologist Travis Hirschi elaborated on the control theory. He identified four elements that would render an individual more or less likely to commit deviance: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

- **Attachment:** People who feel a strong attachment to other people, such as family or close friends, are less likely to be deviant. If people have weak relationships, they feel less need to conform to the other person's or group's norms. They are more likely to commit a deviant act.

- **Commitment:** Individuals who have a sincere commitment to legitimate goals are more likely to conform to society's norms. Those goals could be a legitimate job, higher education, financial stability, or a long-term relationship. When people have little confidence in the future, they are more likely to engage in deviance.

- **Involvement:** The more involved people are with legitimate activities, the less likely they are to deviate from appropriate behavior. A person with a job, a family, and membership in several clubs or organizations is less likely to commit deviance. Not only does he not have time to waste in potentially harmful activities, but he has a lot to lose if he does.
- **Belief:** An individual who shares the same values as the dominant society, such as respect for authority, the importance of hard work, or the primacy of the family, is less likely to commit deviance. Individuals whose personal belief systems differ from those of the dominant society are more likely to commit deviance. A person raised to believe that it is acceptable to cheat, lie, and steal will probably not integrate into mainstream society as well as someone whose beliefs conform to the values of the larger society.

Labeling Theory

A key aspect of the symbolic interactionist perspective of deviance is labeling theory. First proposed by sociologist Howard Becker in the 1960s, labeling theory posits that deviance is that which is so labeled. No status or behavior is inherently deviant until other people have judged it and labeled it deviant.

Example: Some parents absolutely prohibit physical punishment of children, such as spanking, while other parents regularly use physical punishment to enforce household rules. Are parents who spank their children deviant? The answer depends on what is considered acceptable behavior within that given household, or within the greater society in which the family lives. Though spanking is inherently neither right nor wrong, it is subject to the often harsh judgment of others.

Primary and Secondary Deviance

Sociologist Edwin Lemert differentiated between primary deviance and secondary deviance. The difference between primary

300

deviance and secondary deviance is in the reactions other people have to the original act of deviance.

Primary deviance is a deviant act that provokes little reaction and has limited effect on a person's self-esteem. The deviant does not change his or her behavior as a result of this act.

Example: An adolescent who smokes cigarettes with other adolescents is not at risk of being labeled a deviant among her peers, since they all smoke. Even though adolescents who smoke cigarettes are considered deviant by the larger American society, that teenager's actions go relatively unnoticed, unpunished, and therefore unchanged. The primary deviance is of little consequence.

Secondary deviance includes repeated deviant behavior that is brought on by other people's negative reactions to the original act of primary deviance.

Example: The same adolescent moves to a new school where his peers never smoke and where smoking is considered a deviant behavior. The students call him names and exclude him from all of their social activities. Because of their reactions to his smoking, he feels like an outcast and begins to smoke more, perhaps engaging in other deviant activities, such as alcohol or drugs.

According to Lemert, the reactions to the adolescent's primary deviance provoked a form of secondary deviance. Because his alleged friends reacted so negatively to his behavior, he began to engage in more of the deviant behavior. This repeated deviance results in the adolescent having a deviant identity. He now has a "reputation," and no one looks at him in quite the same way as before.

Chambliss and the Saints and Roughnecks

In the 1970s, sociologist William Chambliss studied two groups of high school boys to find out how strongly labels affected them. The eight boys in the group Chambliss called the Saints came from middle-class families. Society expected them to do well in life. The six boys in

the other group, the Roughnecks, came from lower-class families in poorer neighborhoods. The community generally expected them to fail. Both groups engaged in deviant behaviorskipping school, fighting, and vandalizing propertybut suffered different consequences. The teachers, the police, and the community excused the Saints' behavior because they believed the Saints were good boys overall. The same people saw the Roughnecks as bad and prosecuted them for their behavior more often.

Years later, all but one of the Saints had gone to college and subsequently into professional careers. Two Roughnecks went to college on athletic scholarships, graduated, and became coaches. Two never graduated from high school, and the other two ended up in prison.

Chambliss discovered that the boys' social class had much to do with the public's perception of them and the ways the public perceived their acts of deviance. He also hypothesized that a deviant label can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Roughnecks had heard for so long that they were never going to amount to much that they behaved in accordance with the negative expectations others had of them.

4) Interactionist perspective

Interactionists disagree with functionalist on both the idea that society has a consensus about what crime is and the idea that crime is caused by "external forces". Instead Blumer said everybody commits crimes and deviance, it is more important to look at the way society reacts to this behavior.

Howard Becker said that society creates rules, and by doing this anyone who acts outside of these rules is a deviant. Therefore the act itself isn't deviant, it is how we label that act that makes it deviant. Interactionists would point out how in one context, an act is considered deviant, in another it is normal it is only when it is done in a way that is not publicly defined as proper that it becomes deviant. For example,

killing is not always deviant or criminal, during war it is more deviant to refuse to kill.

Interactionists say this labelling can lead to groups being victimized for crime. For example, the police might label black youths as more likely to be a criminal. So people of this group are more likely to be charged with a criminal offence. Furthermore, interactionists say this labelling can mean a person is singled out as deviant; this could result in the selffulfilling prophecy of this person becoming the deviant they were labelled as.

Interactionists say that this targeting of certain groups by agents of social control can actually lead to a deviancy amplification spiral. This means that the public take sympathy with the way certain groups are treated, for example over-the-top media hatred, and this causes some of the public to join this victimized group of deviants. An example of this could be that after disturbances by mods and rockers in Clacton in 1984 led to heavy-handed treatment from the police, and this then led to more young people joining the mods and rockers out of hatred for the police.

Evaluation

- The interactionist approach draws attention to the importance of labelling and societal reaction
- It has also highlighted the fact that we have perceptions of a typical criminal; for example, the image the tabloids project of criminals.
- - However critics point out that interactionists fail to say why people still commit crimes even though they know they are considered deviant
- - Interactionists also ignore why certain people are labelled as deviant and other people aren't

Symbolic Interaction Theory

Symbolic interaction theory was developed in the fields of social psychology and sociology. The theory is a broad set of premises about how an individual self is defined and how society is defined. We will focus on only a small portion of the theory. Two basic premises of the theory that we will examine are:

Premise 1: The self is defined through interaction with other people.

Symbolic interaction theory contends that to develop a sense of self as a human being, one must interact with other people. Other people respond to an individual (both verbally and nonverbally) about how he or she is doing, what he or she is supposed to be doing, what the value or worth of that individual is, and how the individual is identified. Other people's responses shape how an individual defines the self.

Because dress is a part of our interactions with others, we learn some things about ourselves through the responses others give. In addition, we interact with others on the basis of what their appearances mean to us.

Premise 2: Society is created through coordinated interactions of individuals.

Society requires some amount of coordination and cooperation among individuals in the society. Otherwise, people would constantly run in to other people on the street, and no one would have a clue as to who someone approaching them might be. Laws, rules, and patterns of expected behavior develop in a society to help people interact and live together.

Dress is one of the things that helps individuals to coordinate their interactions. Through development of shared meanings of dress, individuals can at least guess what another person's roles are and can have a sense of the person with whom they are interacting. That helps individuals adjust their actions toward others and carry on interactions with them. Of course, those guesses about who someone is may be

based on erroneous stereotyping, so the process of interaction on the basis of appearances has endless difficulties and pitfalls. Nevertheless, human beings continue to use appearance as part of the basis of social interaction. Perhaps that is why appearance is somewhat to highly important to many individuals.

The Looking Glass Self

Cooley (1902) long ago compared the process of development of self to looking in a mirror. He outlined the general process as:

1. Individuals attempt to perceive themselves by imagining how others perceive them, or by asking themselves: "How do I appear before others?"

2. This process of using other people as mirrors to tell us who we are is **the "looking glass self"** process.

3. We may reject or accept other people's reflections of the self, but these reflections nevertheless have an impact.

4. So, who we are depends very much on:

   - the people we interact with

   - their reactions to us and evaluations of us

   - our reflections on these reactions as guides to future behavior

The Self as Process

Learning about the self is a life-long endeavor that never ends. As a person ages and experiences life, the self continually changes and adjusts its definition. Development of the self can be described as a multi-step process (over-simplified if taken too literally):

1. An individual tries out a behavior, such as some form of dress.

2. The individual receives reactions about the behavior from others.

3. The individual reflects on reactions and appraisals by others to understand their meanings.

4. Based on these meanings, the individual tries out more behaviors or keeps performing the same behavior (i.e., changes a hairstyle or continues to wear hair that way).

We learn the self, or who we are, through continued reflection and action. This constant experimentation and exploration is called the self-indication process(Blumer). Our reflections on others' responses or how we interpret what other people mean is as crucial to self as is our own behavior and the responses of others.

Special types of referents:

Significant others -- people whose opinions have important impact on the self, such as parents, best friends, one's spouse, one's child

Reference groups -- groups to whom the individual looks for ideas on how to behave and think (you may or may not belong to the group, such as cool kids at school, high fashion models, your soccer team)

Generalized other -- general notion of what people on the whole think (you may have a generalized other of what moms are like, what lovers are like, or what people in society in general think)

Development of Meanings of Dress

Symbolic interaction theory also helps us understand how styles and modes of dress become meaningful. Herbert Blumer contended that meanings arise from interaction.

1. Human beings act toward things on the basis of meanings that the things have for them.

2. Meanings are directly attributable to the social interaction one has with others.

3. Meanings are created, maintained and modified through an interpretive process used by a person in dealing with the things she/he encounters.

So, it is people interacting who derive meanings of new styles on the market as fashionable or hot and who designate some forms of

dress as nerdy, weird, or uncool. We see new fashion ideas promoted in magazines, shown in stores, and worn by innovative consumers in public or in the media. Who or what group wears a style helps to give that style meaning. Right now, if Ricky Martin wears something, it is cool. The fashion process and change over time also changes meanings of styles constantly, from "in" to "out" and "attractive" to "dowdy".

Meanings are also created through more personal interactions. For example, if you give a gift of a sweater to a friend, and the friend likes it, your friendship is forever reflected in that sweater.

Symbolic Interaction Terminology

Some specialized terms from the theory are helpful in thinking about the process of symbolic social interaction:

1. **Program:** behavior presented by an individual

2. **Review:** responses, reactions by others, feedback

3. **Validation of the Self:** review that positively reinforces or rewards a program; a positive review

4. **Challenge to the Self:** review that is punished or negatively reinforces a program; a negative review

5. **Cognitive Dissonance:** feelings of discomfort due to inconsistency in concept of self and responses from others

   Most people seek psychological consistency between their sense of self and reviews they receive from others. Feelings of cognitive dissonance often move an individual to make a change in behavior to alleviate or remedy the lack of match of self and others' reviews.

6. **Discourse:** interaction involving program and review

   In essence, discourse is communication that involves feedback loops.

7. **Negotiation of Meanings:** Extended discourse to establish coordination of understandings

Meaningful social interaction requires some degree of mutual interpretation of symbols. For example, friends may briefly discuss why one of them is wearing a suit to classes one day. Finding out that the friend in the suit is going to receive a scholarship award that afternoon from the president of the university at a ceremony in her college helps the other friends to understand the meanings and intentions behind wearing a suit. The negotiation also helps her friends learn more about who she is and what her accomplishments are. This negotiation clarified meanings of wearing of the suit and meanings of the wearer to the group.

8. **Taking on the Role of the Other:** Placing oneself in another person's position in order to understand the other or to understand the self from the other's point of view.

   This seeing of the self and the world from another person's perspective is:

   o crucial to the looking glass self

   o crucial to coordinated interactions

   o crucial to society

9. **Definition of the Situation**: we try to figure out what is going on or the situation in which we are involved by observing behavior of others and the physical setting we are in

   Clothing and other aspects of dress are often cues to help us determine the type of social situation we are experiencing. We may even check before going to an event (a party, business meeting) to find out what degree of formality and professionalism is required at the event. That information helps us fit in with the definition of the situation.

10. **Alignment of Actions**: Based on the meanings of dress worn by others and your own sense of self and the social situation you are in, you "align your actions" to others and the situation. In

other words, you behave, to some extent, in a manner that you think is appropriate, expected, and "normal". Some people in some cases purposely violate others' expectations to disrupt social interaction and other people, a sort of "anti-alignment" (that actually requires some alignment to know how to offend).

~5 ~
The Sociological Perspective

Introduction

The sociological perspective is defined by three philosophical traditions (or "paradigms"): structure-functionalism (i.e., "consensus"), Marxism ("conflict"), and symbolic interactionism. Structure-functionalism focuses on how society is organized and how social institutions meet the needs of people living within a collectivity. The Marxian paradigm guides inquiries into the use and misuse of power within and across social systems. Symbolic interactionism focuses on how individuals influence and are influenced by society. It guides investigations into how the rules of society are re-created everyday through our interactions with one another.

The following introduction to these paradigms relies in part upon materials found in *The Structure of Sociological Theory,* written by Jonathan H. Turner. To help us learn about these paradigms, we will apply them to an example of gender inequality after they are described in this introduction.

Structure-Functionalism (Consensus)

Structure-functionalism relies upon an "organic" analogy of human society as being "like an organism," a system of interdependent parts that function for the benefit of the whole. Thus, just as a human body consists of parts that function as an interdependent system for the survival of the organism, society consists of a system of interdependent institutions and organizations that function for the survival of the society.

Relying upon the successes of biologists in understanding the human body, functionalists took a similar approach to understanding human social systems. Social systems were dissected into their "parts,"

or institutions (family, education, economy, polity, and religion), and these parts were examined to find out how they worked and their importance for the larger social system. The rationale was that if scientists could understand how institutions worked, then their performance could be optimized to create an efficient and productive society. This approach as proved to be very successful and is the predominant philosophy guiding macro-level sociology today.

Structure-functionalism arose in part as a reaction to the limitations of utilitarian philosophy, where people were viewed as strictly rational, calculating entrepreneurs in a free, open, unregulated, and competitive marketplace. The tenet of functionalism, and the fundamental building block of all sociology, is that people behave differently in groups than they do as individuals. Groups have "lives of their own," so to speak. Or, as you might hear from a sociologist, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Anyway, the point is, that just as the "invisible hand of order" can guide economic relations, "social forces" can guide social relations, and thus yield for society very positive outcomes (volunteerism, democracy, laws, moral and ethical standards for behavior, family and educational systems, communities) and very negative outcomes (discrimination, organized crime, moral decay, warfare, poverty).

The idea of the functionalists was to create a science of society that could examine the parts of human social systems and make them work for the betterment of all. And it is the task of sociologists to use scientific principles to help create the best form of society possible.

Listed below are the central tenets of the functionalist approach to understanding human social systems. We will use these tenets throughout this course to gain a functionalist perspective on social problems facing America today.

1. Society as a system of interrelated parts functioning for the good of the whole.

2. Keep in mind that functionalism is always oriented toward what is good for the whole. As we examine different philosophical foundations of sociology, we will note the advantages and disadvantages of this perspective.

3. All social systems have four key functions: Adaptation, Goal-Attainment, Integration, Latency. These functional imperatives roughly correspond to the five institutions of human societies (economics, politics, family/education, and religion). By understanding which functional imperative is most closely related to social problems America, we can understand the importance of the issue and its likely impact on the well-being of America.

4. Social action takes place within a social system of cultural norms and institutional structures. In Sociology 235, we will use structure-functionalism primarily as a guide for understanding macro-level (societal) issues. And, although structure-functionalism is well equipped to analyze and understand societal conflict, we will use it mainly for understanding how social order is possible.

Marxism (Conflict)

Although Karl Marx's idea of a communist utopian society failed due to an inadequate understanding of human motivation and organization, as well as a reliance upon the flawed labor theory of value (See:The Labor Theory of Value by Donald C. Ernsberger and response by Salvor Hardin), his identification of potential problems with human social systems still is a crucial element of all the social sciences. His hypotheses that human societies can experience sufficient organized and intentional exploitation by powerful elites to lead to their collapse have received enough support that citizens should be aware of these potential problems and maintain a constant vigil against their becoming too severe.

Listed below are the central tenets of the Marxian approach to

understanding human social systems. We will use these tenets throughout this course to gain a Marxian perspective on social problems in America.

1. Society as a system of competing parts in conflict for scarce resources. From the perspective of Marxism, the fundamental processes of society are competition and conflict, rather than cooperation for the good of the whole, which we noted (with qualifications) was the emphasis in structure-functionalism.

2. All social systems have a small minority of powerful elites. For Marx, these persons/organizations were those most closely linked with the means of production: the owners of large industries.

3. Social action takes place within an arena of conflict and exploitation between dominant and secondary segments of society. With the Marxian approach, it is instructive to identify the dominant and secondary segments that affect and will be affected by the outcome of social action regarding current issues. Using Marxism, we anticipate that dominant segments will use their power to exploit resources from secondary segments of society.

Marx's Dialectical Materialism

To understand Marxian social philosophy, it is instructive to review its underlying principle, which is dialectical materialism. The dialectic consists of three parts: the thesis (the status quo, or our current understanding of "reality"), the antithesis (a contradiction to the status quo, or a recognized flaw in our current understanding of "reality"), and the synthesis (a suggested alternative to the status quo, or an improved understanding of "reality"). In one sense, the dialectic refers to inherent, inevitable conflict. Thus, citizens must inevitably wrestle with society as it is, the recognized flaws in society, and suggested alternatives for an improved society. In another sense, the dialectic is a method for achieving progress. Thus, citizens can use the dialectical way of thinking to constantly improve society by recognizing and attempting to overcome its flaws.

Marx focused on material conditions (e.g., food, clothing, housing, access to health care and education). For Marx, the dialectic represented inherent conflict between the means and relations of production. Owners were forced to exploit labor to achieve the competitive edge over their rivals in the capitalist economy, but in the process, destroyed the very source of their profit: labor.

Thus, Marx used dialectical materialism to understand capitalist society and its flaws for the purpose of suggesting an alternative that would create a better society.

Thesis: Means of production. The status quo was capitalist society, which required the lowest possible labor costs.

Antithesis: Relations of production. Marx witnessed first-hand the horrific conditions of manual labor in industrialized England in the mid-19th century.

Synthesis: Communism. To eliminate poverty and the misuse of power in capitalist society, Marx proposed a society that would end the

holding of private property--people would work for the common good and share in the fruits of their labor.

Marx's understanding of societies, the people that live in them, and capitalist economy was sufficiently flawed that his suggested solution to capitalism was itself inherently flawed. Marxian social philosophy is valuable today, however, because it reminds us of the potential exploitation of the less powerful by the more powerful and of the need for the less powerful to be mindful of this potential.

Symbolic Interactionism

Where did society come from, anyway? Well, from us! From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, society is in a constant state of re-creation through interaction and negotiation of meanings. We created the rules we live by, and, importantly, we re-create these rules everyday through our interactions with one another. Mostly, societies are conservative with respect to social change. But, our redefining of: 1) the symbolic meanings we attach to things and events, 2) our sense of morality and ethics, and 3) what we choose to value have important implications for the rules we create and the ways we choose to live with one another.

Listed below is a very abbreviated outline of the central tenets of the symbolic interactionist approach to understanding human social systems. We will use these tenets throughout this course to gain a symbolic perspective on social problems in America.

1. Key concepts: definition of the situation, perception, social construction of reality, morality. From the symbolic interactionist perspective, morality, ethics, values, even reality are not "given," we create them, through our interactions with one another. Reality is a marketplace of ideas, where not everyone has an equal say-so.

2. Social action is influenced by person's beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and negotiations of meanings. The rules are open for grabs. If you do not like your society: work hard to change it!

Example: Gender Role Inequalities

For the same job, job experience, and education, women typically earn significantly less income than their male counterparts. This gap in income earnings is one example of gender role inequalities. The question is, "So What?" Are these inequalities bad for society as a whole. If so, how do we change them? To provide some experience in applying sociological theory to issues facing contemporary society, the following example interprets gender role inequalities from the perspectives of structure-functionalism, Marxism, and symbolic interactionism.

Some important definitions and concepts:

Social Stratification: Positions in a social system are organized into layers with resultant inequalities.

Socialization: Learning of cultural norms through language and behavior.

- Language takes on a realist quality such that it influences individual behavior.

- Behavior toward persons is based in part on their gender

Structure Functionalism

Structure functionalism focuses on what is good for the whole of society. The SF perspective argues that social stratification can be good for society if it motivates persons in lower SES positions to better themselves so they can experience upward social mobility.

- Gender role inequalities have functions and dysfunctions.

- Society both benefits and suffers from gender role relationships.

- The "balance" of functions and dysfunctions determines social action.

- If gender role inequalities, on the whole, are deemed dysfunctional, then macro-level changes in norms are introduced.
- Affirmative action and gender role inequalities?

Marxism

Conflict theory focuses on the exploitation of power and the means to achieve power in society.

- Gender role inequalities reflect exploitation of dominant (male) segments of society over secondary (female) segments of society.
- Females may be alienated from society due to gender role inequalities.
- Social change requires a move from false consciousness to class consciousness.
- Formal and informal organizations aimed at raising consciousness of gender role inequalities.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism focuses on the effect of language and behavior and how it affects and is affected by groups, organizations, and society.

- Gender role inequalities are learned through language.
- Behavior toward persons is based in part on their gender.
- Society, and therefore language, is dynamic--in a constant state of creation and negotiation of rules.
- Individual impacts on gender role inequalities?

Sociological Theories To Explain Deviance

Cultural Transmission/Differential Associations Theory

All behavior is learned; therefore deviant behavior is also learned. The theory focuses on the key variables involved in learning. These variables are:

1. age of the "learner"
2. intensity of contact with the deviant "teacher
3. ratio of "good" to "bad" social contacts in the "learner's" life

Theory predicts that the younger the "learner" is, in an intense relationship with the deviant "teacher", and the more contacts with significant others who are "deviant", then the greater the likelihood the "learner" will also be deviant. The reverse is also true.

Theory has both strengths and weaknesses. Think about what they might be.

Control Theory

This theory asks a different question than most of the others; it does not ask "why does someone commit deviance?" but rather control theory asks "why do most of us **not** commit deviance?" In other words, why do most of us, most of the time, act "correctly?"

The theory answers that question this way -- that "normal behavior" is shaped by the power of social control mechanisms in our culture. Put differently, the social bonds that connect people help to keep us from committing deviance.

So what are the basic social factors/components of a social bond between individuals?

attachment-- a measure of the connectedness between individuals
commitment-- a measure of the stake a person has in the community
involvement-- a measure of the time/energy a person is spending on activities that are helpful to the community

belief-- a measure of the person's support for the morals and beliefs of the community

The theory argues that there tends to be an inverse correlation between these factors and deviant behavior. What does that mean? Be able to explain it.

The theory has both strengths and weaknesses. Think about what they might be.

Labeling Theory

Also note that this theory combines two theoretical perspectives--conflict theory and symbolic interactionism. You should be able to explain what that last sentence means, okay?

the theory explains deviance as a social process whereby some people are able to define others as deviant. It emphasizes that the deviance is relative -- it is not until a label is given to someone by someone else in a position of social power that the person actually "becomes" a deviant.

-- has some important terms linked to the theory:
-- primary deviance -- behavior that does not conform to the social norms, but the behavior might be temporary, fleeting, exploratory, trivial, or especially, concealed from most others. The person who commits the deviant act does not see him/herself as deviant; put differently, it is not internalized as a part of the person's self concept

-- secondary deviance -- behavior that does not conform to the social norms, but 1) the behavior tends to be more sustained over time. The person continues to do the deviant behavior **even after** being caught and labeled by a social institution. The person accepts the deviant label, incorporating it into the person's self concept.

-- deviant career -- continued secondary deviance, that becomes one's "job" and becomes one's primary economic activity. Person accepts the deviant label.

-- radical non-intervention: labeling theory's solution, at least to juvenile deviance. Has two parts: 1) preferably do not label anyone, but especially not a juvenile. Sociology knows that many adolescents reduce or stop their deviance as they become adults and accept adult

statuses and roles. So labeling them might in fact **prevent** that "becoming good" transition as they become adults, and 2) **if** anyone has to be labeled, label fairly -- don't "peak" and notice social class, race, sex, etc., and therefore label some individuals differently than others.

-- the theory has both strengths and weaknesses. Think about what they might be.

Structural Strain Theory/Anomie Theory

-- theory explains deviance as the outcome of social strains due to the way the society is structured. For some people, the strain becomes overwhelming to the point where they do deviance as a way to manage the strain. Often their deviance is due to their feelings of **anomie** -- meaningless due to not understanding how the social norms are to effect them. This is usually because the norms are weak, confusing, or conflicting.

-- there is a social consensus in the society about **socially approved goals** that each person ought to strive for and the **socially approved of means** to attain those goals. This consensus is largely due to a shared value system in the society.

Subcultural Theories

-- there are several subcultural theories, but they all "work" like this: a person may be a member of a subculture within a larger culture; e.g., a member of a gang which lives inside of America. In the subculture, a particular behavior may be "normal"/conforming behavior but from the perspective of the larger culture, the behavior is considered to be deviant.

-- theory makes it clear we need to ask "who has the power to decide what is 'normal' and what is deviant behavior?" These theories often are linked with labeling theory.

-- a person in such a subculture may feel **role conflict** or **role strain** trying to balance the norms of two very diverse groups of which one is a member

-- theory has strengths and weaknesses. Think what they might be.

Medicalization of Deviance

-- theory argues that in the last 100+ years, there has been a shift in which social institution primary is associated with the labeling/"handling" of deviance and deviants. In earlier times in Western Europe and America, the religious institutions had the social power to define/label deviant behavior and to "treat" it (e.g., exorcisms, etc.). But now science and especially medicine as a subset of science has taken over much of the social control processing of deviants.

-- this shift, it is argued by those who support the theory, is a more humane way of understanding deviant behavior. People are not "evil" but they are "sick." However, the "sick" label still has social consequences that "stick" to the person so labeled. Some of these consequences are:

It absolves one of responsibility for the deviant behavior there is little or no stigma (so the theory claims) to the label of sick so long as the person fulfills the "sick role" appropriately, he or she is able to not receive a harsh negative label. But the sick role **is** a role and has a complicated behavioral set that the person has to follow or else. the key part of the sick role is that one has to accept that medical perspective is "correct" and therefore anything prescribed by physicians must be donea more optimistic view of deviancebut there is also a "down" side to the medicalization of deviance. What is it?

I also expect you to recall from your Introduction to Sociology class or your Introduction to Social Problems class the following three theoretical perspectives in sociology and how they would discuss deviance. If you feel unsure, check out the link below. Which of the

above theories that I wrote about would fit into which of these three theoretical perspectives?

- Structural Functionalism/"Order" Perspective
- Conflict Perspective
- Symbolic Interactionist Perspective, especially Goffman

Description

People act based on symbolic meanings they find within any given situation. We thus interact with the symbols, forming relationships around them. The goals of our interactions with one another are to create shared meaning.Language is itself a symbolic form, which is used to anchor meanings to the symbols.

Key aspects are:

- We act toward others based on the meaning that those other people have for us.

- Meaning is created in the interactions we have with other people in sharing our interpretations of symbols.

- Meanings are modified through an interpretive process whereby we first internally create meaning, then check it externally and with other people.

- We develop our self-concepts through interaction with others.

- We are influenced by culture and social processes, such as social norms.

- Our social structures are worked out through the social interactions with others.

So what?Using it

Pay attention to the symbols within the persuasive context and utilize them. You can place the symbols there. How people interpret them includes how you interpret them.

Defending

Pay attention to the symbols within the persuasive context and notice how they are affecting what happens.

Introduction to Sociology/Sociological Theory

Introduction

Sociologists develop theories to explain social phenomena. A *theory* is a proposed relationship between two or more *concepts*. In other words, a theory is explanation for why a phenomenon occurs. An example of a sociological theory is the work of Robert Putnam on the decline of civic engagement.Putnam found that Americans involvement in civic life (e.g., community organizations, clubs, voting, religious participation, etc.) has declined over the last 40 to 60 years. While there are a number of factors that contribute to this decline (Putnam's theory is quite complex), one of the prominent factors is the increased consumption of television as a form entertainment. Putnam's theory proposes:

The more television people watch, the lower their involvement in civic life will be.

This element of Putnam's theory clearly illustrates the basic purpose of sociological theory: it proposes a relationship between two or more concepts. In this case, the concepts are *civic engagement* and *television watching.* The relationship is an *inverse* one - as one goes up, the other goes down. What's more, it is an explanation of one phenomenon with another: part of the reason why civic engagement has declined over the last several decades is because people are watching more television. In short, Putnam's theory clearly encapsulates the key ideas of a sociological theory.

Sociological theory is developed at multiple levels, ranging from *grand theory* to highly contextualized and specific *micro-range theories*. There are many *middle-range* and *micro-range* theories in sociology. Because such theories are dependent on context and specific to certain

situations, it is beyond the scope of this text to explore each of those theories. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce some of the more well-known and most commonly used grand and middle-range theories in sociology.

Importance of Theory

In the theory proposed above, the astute reader will notice that the theory includes two components: The data, in this case the findings that civic engagement has declined and TV watching has increased, and the proposed relationship, that the increase in television viewing has contributed to the decline in civic engagement. Data alone are not particularly informative. If Putnam had not proposed a relationship between the two elements of social life, we may not have realized that television viewing does, in fact, reduce people's desire to and time for participating in civic life. In order to understand the social world around us, it is necessary to employ theory to draw the connections between seemingly disparate concepts.

Another example of sociological theorizing illustrates this point. In his now classic work, *Suicide*,[2] Emile Durkheim was interested in explaining a social phenomenon, suicide, and employed both data and theory to offer an explanation. By aggregating data for large groups of people in Europe, Durkheim was able to discern patterns in suicide rates and connect those patterns with another concept (or variable): religious affiliation. Durkheim found that Protestants were more likely to commit suicide than were Catholics. At this point, Durkheim's analysis was still in the data stage; he had not proposed an explanation for the different suicide rates of the two groups. It was when Durkheim introduced the ideas of *anomie* and *social solidarity* that he began to explain the difference in suicide rates. Durkheim argued that the looser social ties found in Protestant religions lead to weaker social cohesion and reduced social solidarity. The higher suicide rates were the result of weakening social bonds among Protestants.

While Durkheim's findings have since been criticized, his study is a classic example of the use of theory to explain the relationship between two concepts. Durkheim's work also illustrates the importance of theory: without theories to explain the relationship between concepts, we would not be able to understand cause and effect relationships in social life. And to find the cause and effect relationship is the major component of the sociological theory.

Prominent Sociological Theories

As noted above, there are many theories in sociology. However, there are several broad theoretical perspectives that are prominent in the field (they are arguably paradigms). These theories are prominent because they are quite good at explaining social life. They are not without their problems, but these theories remain widely used and cited precisely because they have withstood a great deal of criticism.

As the dominant theories in sociology are discussed below, you might be inclined to ask, "Which of these theories is *the best*?" As is often the case in sociology, just because things are different doesn't mean one is better than another. In fact, it is probably more useful and informative to view these theories as *complementary*. One theory may explain one element of society better than another. Or, both may be useful for explaining social life. In short, all of the theories are correct in the sense that they offer compelling explanations for social phenomena.

Structural-Functionalism

Structural-Functionalism is a sociological theory that originally attempted to explain social institutions as collective means to meet individual biological needs (originally just *functionalism*). Later it came to focus on the ways social institutions meet social needs (structural-functionalism).

Structural-functionalism draws its inspiration primarily from the ideas of Emile Durkheim. Durkheim was concerned with the question of how societies maintain internal stability and survive over time. He

sought to explain social cohesion and stability through the concept of solidarity. In more "primitive" societies it was mechanical solidarity, everyone performing similar tasks, that held society together. Durkheim proposed that such societies tend to be segmentary, being composed of equivalent parts that are held together by shared values, common symbols, or systems of exchanges. In modern, complex societies members perform very different tasks, resulting in a strong interdependence between individuals. Based on the metaphor of an organism in which many parts function together to sustain the whole, Durkheim argued that modern complex societies are held together by organic solidarity (think interdependent *organs*).

The central concern of structural-functionalism is a continuation of the Durkheimian task of explaining the apparent stability and internal cohesion of societies that are necessary to ensure their continued existence over time. Many functionalists argue that social institutions are functionally integrated to form a stable system and that a change in one institution will precipitate a change in other institutions. Societies are seen as coherent, bounded and fundamentally relational constructs that function like organisms, with their various parts (social institutions) working together to maintain and reproduce them. The various parts of society are assumed to work in an unconscious, quasi-automatic fashion towards the maintenance of the overall social *equilibrium*. All social and cultural phenomena are therefore seen as being *functional* in the sense of working together to achieve this state and are effectively deemed to have a *life* of their own. These components are then primarily analysed in terms of the function they play. In other words, to understand a component of society, one can ask the question, "What is the function of this institution?" A *function*, in this sense, is the contribution made by a phenomenon to a larger system of which the phenomenon is a part.

Thus, one can ask of education, "What is the function of education for society?" The answer is actually quite complex and requires a detailed analysis of the history of education (see, for

326

instance, this article on the history of education), but one obvious answer is that education prepares individuals to enter the workforce. By delineating the functions of elements of society, of the social structure, we can better understand social life.

Durkheim's strongly sociological perspective of society was continued by Radcliffe-Brown. Following Auguste Comte, Radcliffe-Brown believed that the social constituted a separate *level* of reality distinct from both the biological and the inorganic (here *non-living*). Explanations of social phenomena therefore had to be constructed within this social level, with individuals merely being transient occupants of comparatively stable social roles. Thus, in structural-functionalist thought, individuals are not significant in and of themselves but only in terms of their social status: their position in patterns of social relations. The social structure is therefore a network of statuses connected by associated roles.

Structural-functionalism was the dominant perspective of sociology between World War II and the Vietnam War.

Limitations

Structural-functionalism has been criticized for being unable to account for social change because it focuses so intently on social order and equilibrium in society. For instance, in the late 19th Century, higher education transitioned from a training center for clergy and the elite to a center for the conduct of science and the general education of the masses.[5][6] In other words, education did not always serve the function of preparing individuals for the labor force (with the exception of the ministry and the elite). As structural-functionalism thinks about elements of social life in relation to their present function and not their past functions, structural-functionalism has a difficult time explaining why a function of some element of society might change or how such change occurs. However, structural-functionalism could, in fact, offer an explanation in this case. Also occurring in the 19th Century (though

begun in the 18th) was the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution, facilitated by capitalism, was increasingly demanding technological advances to increase profit. Technological advances and advanced industry both required more educated workforces. Thus, as one aspect of society changed - the economy and production - it required a comparable change in the educational system, bringing social life back into equilibrium.

Another philosophical problem with the structural-functional approach is the ontological argument that society does not have *needs* as a human being does; and even if society does have needs they need not be met. The idea that society has *needs* like humans do is not a tenable position because society is only alive in the sense that it is made up of living individuals. Thus, society cannot have wants and/or needs like humans do. What's more, just because a society has some element in it at the present that does not mean that it must necessarily have that element. For instance, in the United Kingdom, religious service attendance has declined precipitously over the last 100 years. Today, less than 1 in 10 British attend religious service in a given week.[9] Thus, while one might argue that religion has certain functions in British society, it is becoming apparent that it is not necessary for British society to function.

Another criticism often leveled at structural-functionalist theory is that it supports the status quo. According to some opponents, structural-functionalism paints conflict and challenge to the status quo as harmful to society, and therefore tends to be the prominent view among conservative thinkers.

Manifest and Latent Functions

Merton (1957) proposed a distinction between manifest and latent functions. *Manifest* functions are the intended functions of a phenomenon in a social system. *Latent* functions are the unintended functions of a phenomenon in a social system. An example of manifest

and latent functions is education. The manifest purpose of public education is to increase the knowledge and abilities of the citizenry to prepare them to contribute in the workforce. A latent function of the public education system is the development of a hierarchy of *the learned*. The most learned are often also the most affluent. Thus, while education's manifest function is to empower all individuals to contribute to the workforce and society, it also limits some people by creating boundaries of entry into occupations.

Conflict Theory

A prominent sociological theory that is often contrasted with structural-functionalism is conflict theory. Conflict theory argues that society is not best understood as a complex system striving for equilibrium but rather as a competition. Society is made up of individuals competing for limited resources (e.g., money, leisure, sexual partners, etc.). Broader social structures and organizations (e.g., religions, government, etc.) reflect the competition for resources in their inherent inequalities; some people and organizations have more resources (i.e., power and influence) and use those resources to maintain their positions of power in society.

Conflict theory was developed in part to illustrate the limitations of structural-functionalism. The structural-functionalist approach argued that society tends toward equilibrium, focusing on stability at the expense of social change. This is contrasted with the conflict approach, which argues that society is constantly in conflict over resources. One of the primary contributions conflict theory presents over the structural-functional approach is that it is ideally suited for explaining social change, a significant problem in the structural-functional approach.

The following are three primary assumptions of modern conflict theory:

- Competition over scarce resources is at the heart of all social relationships. Competition rather than consensus is characteristic of human relationships.
- Inequalities in power and reward are built into all social structures. Individuals and groups that benefit from any particular structure strive to see it maintained.
- Change occurs as a result of conflict between competing interests rather than through adaptation. Change is often abrupt and revolutionary rather than evolutionary.

A heuristic device to help you think about society from a conflict perspective is to ask, "Who benefits from this element of society?" Using the same example as we did above, we can ask, "Who benefits from the current higher educational system in the U.S.?" The answer, of course, is the wealthy. Why? Because higher education in the U.S. is not free. Thus, the educational system often screens out poorer individuals not because they are unable to compete academically but because they cannot afford to pay for their education. Because the poor are unable to obtain higher education, this means they are also generally unable to get higher paying jobs which means they remain poor. This can easily translate into a vicious cycle of poverty. Thus, while the function of education is to educate the workforce, it also has built into it an element of conflict and inequality, favoring one group (the wealthy) over other groups (the poor). Thinking about education this way helps illustrate why both structural-functionalist and conflict theories are helpful in understanding how society works.

Conflict theory was elaborated in the United Kingdom by Max Gluckman and John Rex, in the United States by Lewis A. Coser and Randall Collins, and in Germany by Ralf Dahrendorf, all of whom were influenced by Karl Marx, Ludwig Gumplovicz, Vilfredo Pareto, Georg Simmel, and other founding fathers of European sociology.

Limitations

Not surprisingly, the primary limitation of the social-conflict perspective is that it overlooks the stability of societies. While societies are in a constant state of change, much of the change is minor. Many of the broader elements of societies remain remarkably stable over time, indicating the structural-functional perspective has a great deal of merit.

As noted above, sociological theory is often complementary. This is particularly true of structural-functionalism and social-conflict theories. Structural-functionalism focuses on equilibrium and solidarity; conflict-theory focuses on change and conflict. Keep in mind that neither is better than the other; when combined, the two approaches offer a broader and more comprehensive view of society.
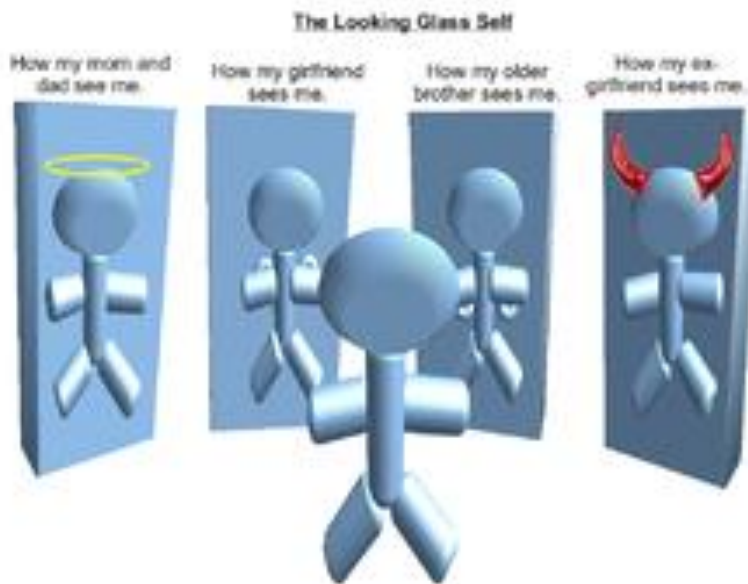
Symbolic Interactionism

In contrast to the rather broad approach toward society of structural-functionalism and conflict theory, **Symbolic Interactionism** is a theoretical approach to understanding the relationship between humans and society. The basic notion of symbolic interactionism is that human action and interaction are understandable only through the exchange of meaningful communication or symbols. In this approach, humans are portrayed as *acting* as opposed to being *acted upon*.

The main principles of symbolic interactionism are:

1. human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that things have for them
2. these meanings arise from social interaction
3. social action results from a fitting together of individual lines of action

This approach stands in contrast to the strict behaviorism of psychological theories prevalent at the time it was first formulated (in the 1920s and 1930s). According to Symbolic Interactionism, humans are distinct from infrahumans (lower animals) because infrahumans

simply respond to their environment (i.e., a stimulus evokes a response or stimulus -> response) whereas humans have the ability to interrupt that process (i.e., stimulus -> cognition -> response). Additionally, infrahumans are unable to conceive of alternative responses to gestures. Humans, however, can. This understanding should not be taken to indicate that humans never behave in a strict *stimulus -> response* fashion, but rather that humans have the capability of not responding in that fashion (and do so much of the time).

The Looking Glass Self

This drawing illustrates the idea of the "looking-glass self" by illustrating that we can internalize how other people view us and then reflect upon those external appraisals without having to actually converse with others.

This perspective is also rooted in phenomenological thought (see social constructionism and phenomenology). According to symbolic interactionism, the objective world has no reality for humans, only

subjectively-defined objects have meaning. Meanings are not entities that are bestowed on humans and learned by habituation. Instead, meanings can be altered through the creative capabilities of humans, and individuals may influence the many meanings that form their society.[11] Human society, therefore, is a social product.

Neurological evidence based on EEGs supports the idea that humans have a "social brain," that is, there are components of the human brain that govern social interaction. These parts of the brain begin developing in early childhood (the preschool years) and aid humans in understanding how other people think. In symbolic interactionism, this is known as "reflected appraisals" or "the looking glasses self" and refers to our ability to think about how other people will think about us. A good example of this is when people try on clothes before going out with friends. Some people may not think much about how others will think about their clothing choices, but others can spend quite a bit of time considering what they are going to wear. And while they are deciding, the dialogue that is taking place inside their mind is usually a dialogue between their "self" (that portion of their identity that calls itself "I") and that person's internalized understanding of their friends and society (a "generalized other"). An indicator of mature socialization is when an individual quite accurately predicts how other people think about him/her. Such an individual has incorporated the "social" into the "self."

It should also be noted that symbolic interactionists advocate a particular methodology. Because they see *meaning* as the fundamental component of human and society interaction, studying human and society interaction requires *getting at* that meaning. Thus, symbolic interactionists tend to employ more qualitative rather than quantitative methods in their research.

Limitations

The most significant limitation of the symbolic-interactionist perspective relates to its primary contribution: it overlooks macro social structures (e.g., norms, culture) as a result of focusing on micro-level interactions. Some symbolic interactionists, however, would counter that if *role theory* (see below) is incorporated into symbolic interactionism - which is now commonplace - this criticism is addressed.

Role Theory

Another more micro-oriented approach to understanding social life that also incorporates the more structural elements of society is Role Theory. Role theory posits that human behavior is guided by expectations held both by the individual and by other people. The expectations correspond to different roles individuals *perform* or *enact* in their daily lives, such as secretary, father, or friend. For instance, most people hold pre-conceived notions of the role expectations of a secretary, which might include: answering phones, making and managing appointments, filing paperwork, and typing memos. These role expectations would not be expected of a professional soccer player.

Individuals generally have and manage many roles. Roles consist of a set of rules or norms that function as plans or blueprints to guide behavior. Roles specify what goals should be pursued, what tasks must be accomplished, and what performances are required in a given scenario or situation. Role theory holds that a substantial proportion of observable, day-to-day social behavior is simply persons carrying out their roles, much as actors carry out their roles on the stage or ballplayers theirs on the field. Role theory is, in fact, predictive. It implies that if we have information about the role expectations for a specified status (e.g., sister, fireman, and prostitute), a significant portion of the behavior of the persons occupying that position can be predicted.

What's more, role theory also argues that in order to change behavior it is necessary to change roles; roles correspond to behaviors and vice versa. In addition to heavily influencing behavior, roles influence beliefs and attitudes; individuals will change their beliefs and attitudes to correspond with their roles. For instance, someone over-looked for a promotion to a managerial position in a company may change their beliefs about the benefits of management by convincing him/herself that they didn't want the additional responsibility that would have accompanied the position.

Many role theorists see *Role Theory* as one of the most compelling theories bridging individual behavior and social structure. Roles, which are in part dictated by social structure and in part by social interactions, guide the behavior of the individual. The individual, in turn, influences the norms, expectations, and behaviors associated with roles. The understanding is reciprocal.

Role Theory includes the following propositions:

✓ people spend much of their lives participating as members of groups and organizations
✓ within these groups, people occupy distinct positions
✓ each of these positions entails a role, which is a set of functions performed by the person for the group
✓ groups often formalize role expectations as norms or even codified rules, which include what rewards will result when roles are successfully performed and what punishments will result when roles are not successfully performed
✓ individuals usually carry out their roles and perform in accordance with prevailing norms; in other words, role theory assumes that people are primarily conformists who try to live up to the norms that accompany their roles
✓ group members check each individual's performance to determine whether it conforms with the norms; the anticipation that others will apply sanctions ensures role performance

Limitations

Role theory has a hard time explaining social deviance when it does not correspond to a pre-specified role. For instance, the behavior of someone who adopts the role of bank robber can be predicted - she will rob banks. But if a bank teller simply begins handing out cash to random people, role theory would be unable to explain why (though *role conflict* could be one possible answer; the secretary may also be a Marxist-Communist who believes the means of production should belong to the masses and not the bourgeoisie).

Another limitation of role theory is that it does not and cannot explain how role expectations came to be what they are. Role theory has no explanation for why it is expected of male soldiers to cut their hair short, but it could predict with a high degree of accuracy that if someone is a male soldier they will have short hair. Additionally, role theory does not explain when and how role expectations change.

Impression Management

An extension of *role theory*, impression management is both a theory and process. The theory argues that people are constantly engaged in controlling how others perceive them. The process refers to the goal-directed conscious or unconscious effort to influence the perceptions of other people by regulating and controlling information in social interaction. If a person tries to influence the perception of her or his own image, this activity is called *self-presentation*.

Erving Goffman (1959), the person most often credited with formally developing impression management theory, cast the idea in a dramaturgical framework.[15][16] The basic idea is that individuals in face-to-face situations are like actors on a stage performing roles (see role theory above). Aware of how they are being perceived by their audience, actors manage their behavior so as to create specific impressions in the minds of the audience. Strategic interpersonal

behavior to shape or influence impressions formed by an audience is not a new idea. Plato spoke of the "great stage of human life" and Shakespeare noted that "All the world is a stage, and all the men and women merely players".

Social Constructionism

Social constructionism is a school of thought introduced into sociology by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann with their 1966 book *The Social Construction of Reality*. Social constructionism aims to discover the ways that individuals and groups create their perceived reality. Social constructionism focuses on the description of institutions and actions and not on analyzing cause and effect. Socially constructed reality is seen as an on-going dynamic process; reality is re-produced by people acting on their interpretations of what they perceive to be the world external to them. Berger and Luckmann argue that social construction describes both subjective and objective reality - that is that no reality exists outside what is produced and reproduced in social interactions.

A clear example of social constructionist thought is, following Sigmund Freud and Émile Durkheim,[19] religion. Religion is seen as a socially constructed concept, the basis for which is rooted in either our psyche (Freud) or man's need to see some purpose in life or worship a higher presence. One of the key theorists of social constructionism, Peter Berger, explored this concept extensively in his book, *The Sacred Canopy*.
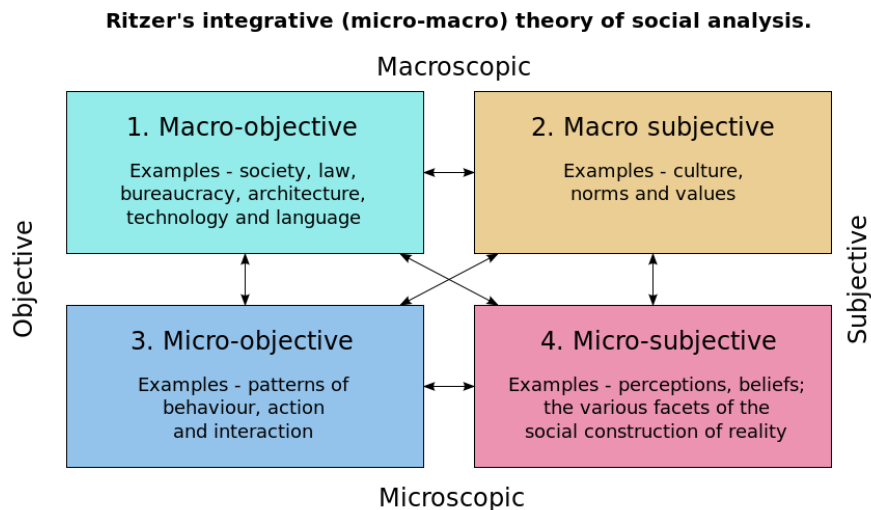
Social constructionism is often seen as a source of the postmodern movement, and has been influential in the field of cultural studies.

Integration Theory

Recently, some sociologists have been taking a different approach to sociological theory by employing an integrationist approach - combining micro- and macro-level theories to provide a

comprehensive understanding of human social behavior. Numerous models could be presented in this vein. George Ritzer'sIntegration Model is a good example.

Ritzer proposes four highly interdependent elements in his sociological model: a macro-objective component (e.g., society, law, bureaucracy), a micro-objective component (e.g., patterns of behavior and human interaction), a macro-subjective component (e.g., culture, norms, and values), and a micro-subjective component (e.g., perceptions, beliefs). This model is of particular use in understanding society because it uses two axes: one ranging from objective (society) to subjective (culture and cultural interpretation); the other ranging from the macro-level (norms) to the micro-level (individual level beliefs).

Ritzer's integrative (micro-macro) theory of social analysis.

Macroscopic

	1. Macro-objective	2. Macro subjective	
Objective	Examples - society, law, bureaucracy, architecture, technology and language	Examples - culture, norms and values	**Subjective**
	3. Micro-objective	4. Micro-subjective	
	Examples - patterns of behaviour, action and interaction	Examples - perceptions, beliefs; the various facets of the social construction of reality	

Microscopic

The integration approach is particularly useful for explaining social phenomenon because it shows how the different components of social life work together to influence society and behavior.

If used for understanding a specific cultural phenomenon, like the displaying of abstract art in one's home, the integration model depicts the different influences on the decision. For instance, the model

depicts that cultural norms can influence individual behavior. The model also shows that individual level values, beliefs, and behaviors influence macro-level culture. This is, in fact, part of what David Halle finds: while there are art consumption differences based on class, they are not predicted solely by class. Displayers of abstract art tend not only to belong to the upper-class, but also are employed in art-production occupations. This would indicate that there are multiple levels of influence involved in art tastes – both broad cultural norms and smaller level occupational norms in addition to personal preferences.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM THEORY

Adapted from Scott Plunkett's Course Pack

OVERVIEW

- Symbolic interaction theory describes the family as a unit of interacting personalities.
- This theory focuses attention on the way that people interact through symbols:
    - words, gestures, rules, and roles.
- The symbolic interaction perspective is based on how humans develop a complex set of symbols to give meaning to the world (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993).
- Meaning evolves from their interactions in their environment and with people.
- These interactions are subjectively interpreted through existing symbols.
- Understanding these symbols is important in understanding human behavior.
- Interactions with larger societal processes influence the individual, and vice-versa.
- It is through interaction that humans develop a concept of larger social structures and also of self concept.

- Society affects behavior through constraints by societal norms and values.
- Self concept also affects behavior.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS (LAROSSA & REITZES, 1993)

George Herbert Mead (1934) often cited as the main contributor to symbolic interactionism

Never published his theory

- Blumer, his student published it after his death
- Meaning evolves from gestures (an action which produces a response in another)
- Language is a set of shared meaning
- Taking the role of the generalized other defined as the ability to extend interpersonal meanings to an entire group

Herbert Blumer (1969) Mead's Student

- Credited with the term "symbolic interactionism." He also summarized the basic assumptions of symbolic interaction from Mead's earlier work.

- Major Assumptions about Self and Family (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993)Individuals are not born with a sense of self but develop self concepts through social interaction
- Self concept is developed through the process of interaction and communication with others
- Self concept is shaped by the reactions of significant others and by our perceptions of their reactions
- Self concept, once developed, provides an important motive for behavior.
- Self fulfilling prophecy is the tendency for our expectations, and/or other's expectations of us to evoke expected responses

- Humans interact and develop roles in the family according to symbols used to describe the family.
- These roles are based on the symbolic meaning attached to each role.
- How family members react to a situation is determined by how they interpret the situation. So, it is important to understand the symbols the family uses to understand their interactions and behaviors.
- In a family, complicated sets of meanings are transmitted through symbols that permit each member to communicate with each other and share experiences (Peterson, 1986).

Core Principles of Social Interaction Theory

1. Meaning

1. Meaning itself is not inherent in objects
2. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that they have assigned to them
3. Meaning arises in the process of interaction between people. that is, it takes place in the context of relationships whether with family or community
4. Meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with things he or she encounters
5. Once people define a situation as real, it's very real in its consequences

2.Language

- As human beings we have the unique ability to name things
- As children interact with family, peers, and others, they learn language and, concurrently, they learn the social meanings attached to certain words
    - That is, language is the source of meaning

- Meaning arises out of social interactions with one another, and language is the vehicle

- In Mead's view, social life and communication between people are possible only when we understand and can use a common language, (Wood, 1997)

3. **Thought or "Minding"**

- An ability distinctly different from animals in that we have the ability to think about things rather than simply reacting instinctually

- An inner conversation with oneself

- A reflective pause through which we modify our interpretation of symbolan ability to take the role of "The Other"

Major Premises of Symbolic Interaction Theory

1. Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning they have

- These things do not have an inherent or unvarying **meaning**

- Rather, their meanings differ depending on how we define and respond to them

- how we define, or give meaning to the things we encounterwill shape our actions toward them

- Therefore, if we wish to understand human behavior we must know how people define the things objects, events, individuals, groups, structuresthey encounter in their environment

2. **The meaning attributed to those things arises out of social interaction with others**

- We are not born knowing the meanings of things

- We don't learn these meanings simply through individual experiences, but rather through the interactions with others

3. **These meanings are modified through an interpretive process**

- The meanings of the things we encounter, though formed by social interaction, are altered through our understandings
- An individual's interpretation of the meaning will guide and determine action

Major Assumptions of Symbolic Interactionism Theory

1. *People are unique creatures because of their ability to use symbols.*
2. *People become distinctively human through their interaction with others.*
3. *People are conscious and self-reflective beings who actively shape their own behavior.*
4. *People are purposful creatures who act in and toward situations.*
5. *Human society consists of people engaging in symbolic interaction.*
6. *The 'social act' should be the fundamental unit of social psychological analysis.*
7. *To understand people's social acts, we need to use methods that enable us to discern the meanings they attribute to these acts.*

Major Concepts, Definitions and Terms

1. **Identities** - the self meanings in a role.
2. **Language** – A system of symbolds shared with other memebers of society, used for the purposes of communication and representation
3. **Looking Glass Self -** the mental image that results from taking the role of the other. imaging how we look to another person.
4. **Meaning** – the purpose or significance attributed to something. Meaning is determined by how we respond to and make use of it

5. **Mind** – A process of mental activity consisiting of self, interaction, And reflection, based on socially acquired symbols. Does not refer to an inner psychic world separated from society.

6. **Naming or Labeling –** Name calling can be devastating because it forces us to view ourselves. through a warped mirror. Name calling like stupid can lead to a self fulfilling prophecy. If a person sees himself as stupid he is likely to act stupid.

7. **Roles-** refer to "collections of expectations that define regularized patterns of behavior within family life" (Peterson, 1986, p. 22).

8. Roles within the family may include but not be limited to the following: nurturer, socializer, provider, and decision-maker.

9. **Role-taking**-is the ability to see oneself as an object, in other words, to be able to see how others perceive oneself.

10. Role-taking allows the individual to monitor and coordinate personal behavior in order to facilitate interaction with others and also to anticipate the responses of other individuals.

11. **Role conflict-** refers to the situation in which there are conflicting expectations about a specified role.

12. **Role making-** is the "process of improvising, exploring, and judging what is appropriate on the basis of the situation and the response of others at the moment" (Peterson, 1986, p. 23).

The Self

- According to Mead, self does not exist at birth but is developed through interaction with others
- Emerges from the social interaction of humans in which the individual takes on the role of the "other" and internalizes the attitudes and perceptions of others through those interactions

- The interaction of an individual's self-conception ("I") and the generalized, perceived view that others have of the individual
- The ongoing process of combining the **"I"** and the **"ME."**

"I"

- An individual's self-conception
- The subjective self

"Me" - The "Generalized Other"

1. The generalized, perceived view that others have of the individual
2. The mental image of onself that is based on expectations and responses from others
3. The image of the self seen in other people's reactions

Self-concept: the image we have of who and what we are (formed in childhood by how significant others treat/respond to us). The self-concept is not fixed and unchanging – if in childhood your teachers tell you you're stupid, but later in life your teachers and friends begin to treat you as if you're very bright, your self-concept is likely to change.

Self-fulfilling prophecy- The tendency for our expectations to evoke responses in others that confirm what we originally anticipated. Each one of us affects how others view themselves. Our expectations evoke responses that confirm what we originally anticipated. Phenomenon: The way I choose to see the world creates the world I see.

Significant symbol – A word or gesture that has a common meaning to an individual and others.

Social Act – Behavior that in some way takes into account the "other" person, group or social organization, and is guided by what they do. It emerges through the process of communication and interaction.

Symbol manipulation – The means through which we motivate others to action through the use of symbols

Since people are symbolic creatures, they can interpret and talk about

their inner experiences, such as their thoughts or desires, thus enhancing communnication and interactions with others

The Problem of Sociology (1908)

Society: exists where a number of individuals enter into interaction (interaction is the key to everything with Simmel), which arises on the basis of certain drives or for the sake of certain purposes. Unity (or sociation) in the empirical sense constitutes the interaction of elements (ie. individuals in the case of society).

Individuals are the loci of all historical reality, but the materials of life are not social unless they promote interaction. This follows since only this sociation can transform the a mere aggregation of isolated individuals into specific forms of being with and for one another.

In terms of Simmel's famous form/content dichotomy: any social phenomenon is composed of two elements which in reality are inseparable   (distinction   is   only   analytical).
1) Content: the interest, purpose, or motive of the phenomenon or interaction
2) Form: the mode of interaction among individuals through/in the shape of which the specific content achieves social reality. Furthermore, the existence of society requires a reciprocal interaction among its individual elements, mere spatial or temporal aggregation of parts is not sufficient.

According to Simmel, THE TASK OF SOCIOLOGY is to analytically separate these forms of interaction or associations from their contents and to bring these together under a consistent scientific viewpoint. Form/content analysis rests upon two principles:

- the same form of association is observed in dissimilar contents and in relation to differing purposes; and
- content is expressed through a variety of different forms of sociation as its medium.

According to Simmel you can have a little society or a lot of society. Basically there is no such thing as society ''as such'' - the 'quantity' of society boils down to the degree or kind of interaction or sociation that occurs.

Simmel conceives sociology as the science of social forms (in a sense affording form analytic primary over content - although in reality they are inseparable). He makes use of a helpful analogy of geometry as the study of forms (ie. shapes) which may exist in an unlimited variety of physical materials. Simmel believes that sociology should leave the examination of the content of societal interaction to other sciences (such as psychology or economy) in the way that geometry leaves content analysis to the physical sciences.

Q: Is the task of a science to discover timelessly valid laws or to present and conceptualize real, unique historical processes?
A: Not surprisingly Simmel doesn't answer this question straight-forwardly. On the one hand a conceptual object (form) may be abstracted from social phenomena which holds unique properties and operates according to laws relating to the objective nature of these phenomena across distinct spatiotemporal instances. On the other hand, sociation may be examined in terms of the actual unfolding of social interaction in specific times and places (a historical type of analysis).

?: So what is he saying? IMHO, social interactions in reality are complex phenomena (integrated form/content) and it is appropriate for some scientific disciplines to explore the ways in which actual cases of sociation unfold. Sociology, however, should concern itself with abstracting generalizable social forms from a cross section of actual phenomena and identifying specific characteristics, features, and dynamics of these forms that remain valid across a wide array of forms. Basically, he thinks that the dilemma can be resolved by reconceptualizing sciences as specifically concerned with either formal or content-related aspects of actual phenomena or objects.

All this said, how are we supposed to study society? Simmel acknowledges that serious problems of methodology face sociology - a product of the complex nature of the subject matter and the task of formal analysis that he proposes. In the end, though, he believes that the sociologist must employ intuitive procedures to express sociological relevance by means of examples. This involves a comparative analysis of specific occurrences (content) and the deductive analysis - or reconstruction - of the relations, connections, and dynamics that can be observed among facially disparate examples.

Forms of Social Interaction

Exchange (1907)

Simmel views exchange as the purest and most concentrated form of significant human interaction. In fact, much action that may initially appear to be unilateral actually involves reciprocal effects (ie. is a form of exchange) and generally all interactions may more-or-less be conceived of as exchange. One characteristic of exchange is that the sum of values (of the interacting parties) is greater afterward than it was before - ie. each party gives the other more than he had himself possessed.

The Nature of Economic Exchange

Economic Exchange - regardless of whether it involves material objects, labor, or embodied labor - entails the sacrifice of some good that has other potential uses. To some extent value attached to a particular object (ie material or in the form of labor) comes about through the process of exchange itself. The Isolated Individual behaves as if in relations of exchange, but in this case with the natural order rather than with a second free agent. Sacrifice is a major component of exchange and may in some case take the form of an ''opportunity cost'' in the traditional economic sense. In addition, the give-and-take between sacrifice and attainment within the individual underlies every two-sided exchange. (By formulating exchange in this way, Simmel

furthers his argument for the generalization of exchange, even in the case of the isolated individual.)

Exchange as Creative Process

Simmel believes that exchange is just as productive or creative of values as is ''production'' in the common sense. Along these lines exchange constitutes a displacement of materials between individuals, while production involves an exchange of material with nature. Value and exchange (as an actually inseparable factor) constitute the foundation of our practical life in the sense that we relate to the objects around us by conferring them with value in

The Significance of Sacrifice

Sacrifice is not always just an external barrier to our goals; it is rather the inner condition of the goal and of the way to is. Only through elimination the resistance that stands between us and our goals do our powers, abilities, and capacities have an opportunity to demonstrated and prove themselves. This follows along Simmel's general principle that (absolute) unity evolves through a dialectical process of synthesis and contradiction.

Exchange (here expressed as labor) can occur in two forms distinguished on the basis of the sacrifice involved: 1) absolute - the sacrifice is the desire for comfort and leisure where work is annoying and troublesome; and 2) relative - indirect sacrifice (of non-labor) occurs in cases where the work is performed indifferently or actually carries a positive value - an opportunity cost dynamic is working here.

The Relativity of Value

Value is not contained within an individual object; but rather is a product of a process of comparison, the content of which does not lie within these things themselves. We project the concept of determinacy of value back into the thing, which we presumed the objects to have had before the comparison. ie: value is relative and exists only within a dynamic of comparison.

The Source of Value

We can conceive of economic activity (a form of exchange) as a sacrifice in return for a gain where the value of the gain from an object derives from the measure of the sacrifice demanded in acquiring that object. Value is always situationally determined in such a way that in the moment of the exchange - of the making of the sacrifice - the value of the exchanged object forms the limit which is the highest point to which the value of the object being given away can rise. Therefore an exchange is always ''worth it'' to the parties involved, at least at the actual instant the exchange takes place. Simmel suggests that sacrifice itself can produce value. We need only thing of the case of ''easy money'' and how easily it is spent: the easy-come-easy-go principle. Economic value therefore does not reside in some the self-existence of an object, but comes to an object only through the expenditure of another object which is given for it.

The Process of Value Formation: Creating Objects through ExchangeSimmel quotes the fairy godfather of the U of C (ie Kant): ''The conditions of experience are at the same time the conditions of the objects of experience.'' hmmmm.... Turning to the matter at hand, Simmel goes on to say that the possibility of economy is at the same time the possibility of the objects of economy. The transaction between two possessors of objects which bring them into the 'economic' relation (ie reciprocal sacrifice) at the same time elevates each of these objects to the category of value. Simmel also states that exchange is neither giving or receiving per se, but rather is a new third process that emerges when those processes are simultaneously the cause and effect of each other. I chalk this up as a classic ''simmelism'' - exchange is the dynamic (dialectical?) interaction between giving and receiving.

Primitive Exchange,Subjectively, the action of exchange stands outside evaluation of the equality or inequality of the items exchanged. In this respect, factors of utility and scarcity do not themselves generate value, beyond the instances where useful or scarce objects are desired

in exchange. A wholly one-sided desire for an object must first be satisfied through actual possession of the object in order for other objects to be compared to it. Before this stage the object of obsessive desire is in a sense ''priceless'' before it can obtain value by comparison with other objects (and the potential of exchange). This discussion highlights the dynamics underlying the relative value of things.

Value and Price : As stated above in slightly different terms: in each individual case of exchange no party pays a price which under the circumstances is too high for the thing obtained.

The concept of a generalized equivalence of price and value can be approached from two considerations:

- relative stability of relations which determine the majority of exchange transactions, and
- analogies which set uncertain value-relations according to the norms of existing ones. A standard of value arises - at least in part - from the fact that labor power acts on various materials and fashions products so that it creates the possibility of exchange - labor power is perceived as a sacrifice which one makes for the sake of the fruits of labor. (This line of thought marks point at which Simmel's work may be compared to theorists who engage in a more detailed and explicit analysis of labor power and its dynamics.) Simmel notes the universal correlation between scarcity-value and exchange value, but stresses the reverse relation whereby we can modify the level or degree of scarcity. Simmel also states that the aversion to economic exchange in primitive cultures results from a lack of a generally accepted standard of value and the intimate link between the individual and the product of their labor. (ie a lack of a normative context for the process of exchange)

The Cultural Foundations of Exchange

In early cultures sacral and legal forms, as well as public and traditional arrangements helped to develop the transsubjective element the very nature of exchange demands. Exchange is originally a matter of (customary, fixed) social arrangements, until individuals become sufficiently acquainted with objects and their respective values to be able to set the terms of exchange from case to case. Simmel declares exchange a sociological structure sui generis: a primary form and function of interindividual life. Further, exchange is the economic realization of the relativity of things - which can evolve only through a reaching out beyond the individual possible only in a plurality (hence the social nature of exchange).

Conflict (1908)

Conflict resolves divergent dualisms, in such a way as achieves some kind of unity, even though one of the conflicting parties may be injured or destroyed. Therefore, conflict has the positive characteristic of resolving the tension between contrasts. Indifference (as in the rejection or termination of sociation) is a purely negative phenomenon. Simmel also contends that conflict is necessary for (societal) change to occur since a purely harmonious group (a pure ''unification'') is not only empirically unreal, but could not support real life process.

Society, then, is actually the result of both the positive and negative categories of interaction, which manifest themselves as wholly positive. This brings up the issue of the apparent dualisms Georg is always bandying around. When he actually addresses the subject he makes the point that he does not promote the traditional notion of polar differentiations. Rather he thinks that we must think of these polar differentiations as of one life. We might construct these conceptual categories to help us understand reality, but the actual reality we seek to comprehend (ie life) exists as an integrated, unitary phenomenon. So Simmel supports the notion of unity rather than dualism. A similar line of thought can be seen in Ch 24 of this same text - which we will be getting to later.

Some of the confusion around the concept of unity, Simmel believes lies in its two-fold meaning:

- unity as consensus and concord of interacting individuals (as opposed to dissensus and discord)
- unity as total group-synthesis of persons, energies, and forms

In certain cases of interaction, opposition is actually an element in the relationship itself. Conflict may not be only a means of preserving the relation, but also one of the concrete functions which actually constitute the relation itself. This is a case of conflict in its latent form (he cites marriage, the Hindu caste system, and the necessary distance and aversions of urban life as examples). Simmel notes that conflict must cooperate with unity in generating social structure. His analysis returns to the notion that elements of a relationship (or a social structure) may not actually be experiences as conflictual/unifying but that this tendency to interpret separateness may constitute an artifact of hindsight and post facto perspective. Reality is dynamic and unity, but our interpretations and attempts to comprehend it tend to impose a dualistic/categorical matrix for interpretation.

Antagonism does not itself produce sociation, but it is a sociological element almost never present in it. Fighting is in some cases a means determined by a superior purpose, while in other cases there are inner engergies which can be satisfied only through conflict (fighting as an end in itself). Antagonistic game: game carried on without any prize for victory, but which exists only for the fight itself. Antagonists unite under the same set of rules/norms in order to fight.

Legal Conflict: has an object and can successfully be terminated through voluntary concession of that object, therefore legal conflict is not conflict for the sake of fighting (cf antagonistic game). Legal conflict with respect of form is an absolute instance, where claims on both sides are exercised with pure objectivity and with all means permitted; it is further pure conflict in the sense that nothing enters its whole action

which does not belong to the conflict as such and serves its purpose. This eliminating of all that is not conflict (for example personal elements) can tend to result in a formalism which becomes independent of all contents. Legal conflict rests on a broad basis of unities and agreements between the enemies, since both are equally subordinated to the law.

Conflicts over causes: cases where the parties involved in a conflict have the same objective interests - the conflict interests (and therefore the conflict itself) are differentiated from the personalities involved. There are two possible arrangements here: 1) the conflict can focus on purely objective decisions, leaving all personal elements outside itself and in a state of peace, or 2) conflicts may involve the persons in their subjective aspects without leading to any alteration or disharmony of the so-existing objective interests common to both parties. In the case of (1) above, there are two possible outcomes: a) useless embitterments and other forms of personalization of conflict may be eliminated, or b) parties may develop a consciousness of being mere representatives of supra-individual claims - ie. fighting for a cause. Simmel notes that the latter may result in the radicalism and mercilessness of conflict observed in many idealistically-inclined persons. Simmel cites Marxism as a struggle for super-personal goals. Here, the objectifications of conditions of labor are no longer a personal struggle or repression since antagonists are not personal, but have been elevated/generalized to the level of classes - ie. the bourgeoisie and working class as opposed to specific owners or workers. In this instance as in other similar cases where an individual is in the position of fighting for a larger superpersonal aim, this common basis of the conflict increases - rather than decreases - the irreconcilability, intensity and stubborn consistency of the fight.

Common qualities vs. memberships as bases of conflict Two kinds of commonality may form the bases of particularly intense antagonism:

1) common qualities and 2) common membership is a larger social structure Dissonance appears (relatively) more intense and extreme against a generally homogenous and harmonious background of relations between parties. The more we have in common with another party as whole persons, the easier it is for our totality to be involved in every single relation to that party. Therefore conflict among similar parties tends to occur more often in the context of intimate relationships in which betrayal/conflict seems relatively more intense especially in contrast with the harmonious state of past relations - et tu Brute?

A final instance of conflict on the basis of common membership is the case of the renegade. Here conflict results from separation of previously homogenous elements. Recall of the earlier state of agreement and the fact that there is "no going back" makes conflict more sharp and bitter than if no relationship had existed in the past.

Domination (1908)

Yet another one of those one-word titles - kind of like Cher, Sting, Bono, Edge, Weiland, etc. anyhow.... Domination may facially appear as a desire to completely determine the actions of another party. This is not really the case since what ego truly seeks is that her/his influence should be reflected and act back upon her/him. Domination is, therefore a case of interaction, rather than a unidirectional dynamic. The notion of society is, in fact, dependent on the independent significance of (both) interaction parties - ie. a societas leonina is no society at all.

Authority relations actually possess more freedom on the part of the party subjected to the authority than is generally supposed. An authority structure can come about in two different ways: **1) Individual:** a person of superior significance or strength acquires an overwhelming weight of his opinions, a faith, or a confidence which attain a character of objectivity (ie: to "take someone's word as gospel") **2) Institutional:** a supra-individual power clothes a person with a

reputation, dignity, power of ultimate decision which would never flow from that person's individuality Simmel suggests that the voluntary faith of the party subjected to authority supports the notion that such relations are not totally determined by the super ordinate. As evidence he cites the very "feeling of oppressiveness" of authority which he supposes would be absent in if the autonomy of the subordinate were eliminated.

Prestige (as distinguished from authority) lacks the element of super-subjective significance and lacks the identity of the personality with an objective power or norm. As such, prestige is determined solely by the strength of the individual and often leaves less room for criticism than is possible with the distance inherent between the parties in more objective authority relations.

Superordination

Superordination may be exerted by 1) an individual, 2) a group, or 3) an objective force (social or ideal).

Subordination of a group under an individual can lead to decisive unification of the group in one of two ways:

- A pre-existing organic group consists of an internal unit with its head. Here the ruler leads the group forces and will of the group finds unitary expression or body.

- A group unites in opposition to its head and forms a party against the head. Here superordination by the ruler is the actual cause of sociation among group members.

Simmel also brings up the point that not just equal, but also unequal, relations of group members to the dominating head can give solidity to the social form characteristic of subordination under the individual. Here the varying distance or closeness to the leader creates a differentiation. In such a case, the formal characteristics of subordination under the individual may obtain even where the super ordinate is a "collective individual" so-to-speak (Simmel uses the

example of "the Brahman" in the Hindu caste system). Common enmity is a particularly potent catalyst to groups solidarity in cases where the common adversary is also the common ruler. Simmel suggests that there is at least a latent character of enmity in most relations to the ruler which exist as a combination of obedience and opposition. Contrary to the foregoing, in some cases common subordination of a group to a ruling power can lead to dissociation.

Simmel cites a "threshold phenomenon": when enmity between social elements exceeds a certain limit common oppression has a dissociative effect. There are two reasons: 1) once there is a domination resentment in a certain direction additional strain only served to intensify the general irritation, and 2) common suffering by pressing suffering elements closer together reveals more strikingly their inner distance and irreconcilability.

The Higher Tribunal another unifying element of subordination; a party (abstract or consisting of a person or group of individuals) which exists on a higher plane to which all members of a group occupy an equally subordinate position and to which one appeals for decisions or whose interference one accepts because it is felt to be legitimate. Removing discord between parties is often easier is they both stand under such a higher power. Such a higher tribunal may be pre-existing, or a transformation of elements could bring about a new situation where parties are places upon a new and common basis.

Subordination under a Plurality

The significance (or effect) of super ordination by a plurality for the subordinates varies greatly from case to case. One of the most important factors distinguishing this form of subordination (from that under an individual) lies in that character of objectivity obtaining to the relationship. This characteristic excludes certain feelings, impulses, and leanings that are effective in individual (but not in collective) actions. The source of variation in the subjective

condition of this relationship lies in the particular expression of this "objective" characteristic in actual instances. For example in certain cases subordination under a plurality may give the relationship an air of distance or impartiality that can benefit the subordinate. On the other hand this objectivity often displays a negative character in case of collective behavior - namely, the suspension of certain norms to which the single individual ordinarily adheres. The brutality and mercilessness observed in crowd action or riots, Simmel believes, results because a collective has no subjective state of mind and is unable to mentally recreate suffering - an essential source of compassion - in the same way as an individual can.

Simmel distinguishes between two kinds of collectivities: 1) an abstract plurality such as a church, state, or similar entity that could be described as a 'legal person.' Such a group is the result of a plurality as a self-consistent and particular structure - the embodiment of an abstraction.

2) a physically co-present mass which is simple a group of people gathered in physical and temporal proximity/contact. It is to this latter kind of plurality that Simmel primarily attributes the negative attributes of the suspension of personal differences, which occurs in both types of collectivities. A classic example of this second type is the 'crowd' so-called - in fact Simmel seems to jump on the 'crowd mentality' bandwagon that was making the rounds at the turn of the century (maybe he shared a seat with Gustave LeBon:)

Subordination under a Principle

Subordination to an impersonal objective principle precludes a real, immediate interaction to the effect that the individual is deprived of some degree of freedom - ie we are subordinated in a relationship to an idea or ideal construction that we did not initiate and which we have little/no ability to alter. However, for modern objective individuals - according to Georg - subordination to a law which functions as the

representative of impersonal, uninfluencable powers is a more dignified condition than to be engaged in a more personal relation of subordination.

Changing gears a little, Simmel finds that Plato recognizes that the best means of counteracting selfishness among rulers is government by impersonal law. On the other hand Plato also believed that in the ideal state, the welfare of the whole required that the ruler stay above the law. Rigidity was felt to be a serious weakness of law, since rigid laws were poorly able to adapt to changing conditions. Plato felt that there should be laws that must never be broken only in the case where there were no true statesmen. Subordination under objects was one form of sub. under a principle that Simmel found particularly harsh and unconditional, since as much as a person is subordinated by virtue of belonging to a thing, s/he psychologically sinks to the category of mere thing. Some examples would be Russian serfdom, patriarchal relations (belonging to a person), and to some extent in the case of the modern factory worker. Conscience: the superordinate principle can be interpreted as a psychological crystallization of an actual social power - the case of the moral imperative. The content of morality comes from social norms which are internalized into the individual through the process of socialization. So the moral command has the dual character of being at the same time personal and impersonal. At a higher state of morality, however, the contrast between individual and totality disappears and the norm acts as an end in itself which must be satisfied for its own sake - an abstract ideal. In practice, however, motivation for adhering to norms is mixed: a combination of individual, social, and abstract objectives.

Sociability

Society must be considered a reality in a double sense. On the one hand are the individuals in their directly perceptible existence, the bearers of the processes of association, who are united by these processes into the higher unity which is the society. On the other hand,

there the interests which, living in the individuals, motivate such a union.

It is for the sake of special needs and interests that individuals unite (in economic associations, blood fraternities and the like). Above their special content, though, all associations are accompanied by a feeling for, by a satisfaction in, the very fact that one is associated with others and that the solitariness of the individual is resolved into togetherness, a union with others. There is in all effective motive to associate a feeling of worth in, a valuing of the form of association as such, a drive which presses toward this form of existence. The impulse to sociability distills our of the realities of social life (content) the pure essence of association (form), of the associative process as a value and a satisfaction.

Play draws its great essential themes from the realities of life: chase and cunning; proving of physical and mental powers, the contest and reliance on chance. By freeing these themes (forms) from the substance of real life, play gets its cheerfulness but also the symbolic significance that distinguishes it from pure pastime. Similarly, sociability makes up its substance from numerous fundamental forms of serious relationships among individuals, a substance spared the frictional relations of real life. But out of its formal relations to real life, sociability takes on a symbolically playing fullness of life and a significance which superficial rationalism always seeks only in the content. Only the sociable gathering is "society" without qualifying adjectives, because it alone presents the pure, abstract play form, all the specific contents of the one-sided and qualified societies being dissolved away.

Sociability is, then, the play-form of association. Since sociability in its pure form has no ulterior end, no content, and just involves the satisfaction of the impulse to sociability - the process remains strictly limited to its personal bearers. Therefore, the character of purely sociable association is determined by the variety of personality traits possessed by the participants. It is important that the persons should

360

not display their individualities with too much abandon. Particularly relevant here is the sense of tact, which guides the self-regulation of the individual in her/his personal relations to others where no outer or directly egoistic interests provide regulations. In sociability, whatever the personality has of objective importance, of features which have their orientation toward something outside the circle, must not interfere with purely sociable interaction. The most purely and deeply personal qualities must be excluded from sociability - it would be tactless to do otherwise. There is an upper and a lower sociability threshold for the individual - s/he should remove the objective qualities of personality, but should stop short of displaying the purely subjective and inward parts of her/his personality.

According to Kant: everyone should have that measure of freedom which could exist along with the freedom of every other person. Simmel says something similar of sociability: everyone should have as much satisfaction of the sociability impulse as is consonant with the satisfaction of the impulse for all others. Put in a slightly different way: everyone should guarantee to the other that maximum of sociable values which is consonant with the maximum of values received by that person. Sociability creates an ideal sociological world, one in which the pleasure of the individual is always supposed to be contingent upon the joy of others. The world of sociability is an artificial, ideally democratic one, made up of beings who have renounced both the objective and the purely personal features of the intensity and extensiveness of life in order to bring about themselves as pure interaction.

Inasmuch as sociability is the abstraction of association, it demands the purest, most transparent, most engaging kind of interaction - that among equals. This kind of dynamic which is right and proper in the sociable context becomes a lie when this is mere pretense and the interaction is guided by purposes other than pure sociability.

Conversation is the epitome of sociability as the abstraction of the forms of sociological interaction. In sociable conversation, the

content is not important per se, but the form the conversation takes as an end in itself is crucial to its function/purpose. In order that this play may retain its self-sufficiency at the level of pure form, the content must receive no weight of its own account. It is not the content of sociable conversation is a matter of indifference; it must be interesting, gripping, even significant - only it is not the purpose of the conversation that these qualities should square with objective results, which stand by definition outside the conversation. The content of conversation, however, is to be kept above all individual intimacy, beyond everything purely personal that would not fit into the categories of sociability.

Forms of Individuality

Subjective Culture (1908)

Simmel believes that nature and culture are only two different ways of looking at the same phenomenon, since the state of culture can be caused by its "natural" originating conditions.

The concept of nature carried two different meanings: 1) it signifies the all-inclusive complex of phenomena connected in causal chains - nature purely as a course of events, and 2) it signifies a particular phase in the development of a subject - nature takes on a narrower/local meaning at the point beyond which cultural development replaces it.

Cultivation: the transformation of a subject that involved the development of a latent (natural) structural potential that cannot be realized by the subject itself, but require an external agency such as culture for expression.

The Culture of a subject is the emergence of an altered state of existence through a process of interaction between natural forces and an intentional teleological intervention with follows the natural proclivities of the subject. As such, only humans are appropriate objects for culture, since only they contain developmental potential whose goals are determined purely in the teleology of its own nature - ie. the

human being is intentionally goal directed and can alter his/her development through the deliberate application of technique at a certain point.

Culture exists only to the extent that the individual draw into his/her development external forms. Along these lines, even the highest accomplishments in specific fields (such as objects of art or works of religious faith) only have cultural significance to the extent that they become a general means for the cultivation of many individual souls. The more these products are separated from the subjectivity of their creator, the more integrated in to the objective order - the more these objects contain a cultural significance.

There are two sides to the concept of Culture:

Objective Culture: ideals or objects in such a state of development, elaboration, or perfection that they can lead the individual psyche to fulfillment or indicate a path to a heightened state of existence for individuals or collectivities.

Subjective Culture: the extent to which the individual (or collectivity) makes use of these objective cultural products for the purpose of development - it designates the level of development thus attained.

The relationship between objective and subjective culture: Subjective culture is the overarching goal such that objective culture (a state of cultivation or manipulation) exists as a means toward the end of the subjective cultural development of a person/collectivity. There can be no subjective culture without objective culture, but objective culture can possess a degree of independence to the extent that cultural/cultivating objects may exist yet fail to be utilized for the purpose of cultural development.

In periods of high social complexity and extensive division of labor, accomplishments of culture can come to occupy an independent realm. The cultural object comes to be more perfected and intellectual and also more objectified along the lines of the internal logic of its own instrumentality. The supreme cultivation of subjects does not, however, increase proportionally. In effect objective culture outpaces subjective culture. This disparity between the level of objective cultural production and the cultural level of the individual represents one of the main sources of dissonance in modern life - as manifested in a dissatisfaction with technical progress.

Group Expansion and the Development of Individuality (1908)

Group Expansion and the Transformation of Social Bonds Individuality in being and action generally increases to the degree that the social circle encompassing the individual expands. Quantitative expansion of the group will produce an increase in social differentiation.

Competition tends to develop the specialty of the individual in direct ratio to the number of participants. Strangely, this process will inevitably produce a gradual increasing likeness between two isolated groups (of increasing size). How is this so? Simmel says that there are only a limited number of fundamental human formation that can accompany groups expansion and differentiation. The more of these formations that are present in a group - i.e. the greater the dissimilarity of constituent elements - the greater the likelihood that an ever increasing number of structures will develop in one group that have equivalents in another. In short, likening will come about if for no other reason than because even within very diverse groups, the forms of social differentiation are identical or approximately the same.

Accompanying a process differentiation of social groups there arise a need and an inclination to reach out beyond the original spatial, economic, and mental boundaries of the group and, in connection with the increase in individualization and concomitant mutual repulsion of group elements, to supplement the original centripetal forces of the lone group with the centrifugal tendency that forms bridges with other groups. Simmel also notes that the modern association gravitates toward an all-embracing union of organizations by virtue of interpenetrating division of labor, leveling that results from equal justice and the case economy, and solidarity of interests in the national economy.

The Relation between Personal and Collective Individuality This basic idea can be generalized to the proposition that in each person (other things being equal) there exists an unalterable ratio between individual and social factors that changes only in form. If the social circle in which we are active enlarges, there is more room in it for the development of our individuality; but as parts of this whole, we have less uniqueness: the larger whole is less individual as a social group. Expressed a different way, the elements of a distinctive social circle are undifferentiated, while the elements of a circle that is not distinctive are

differentiated

As an example of this condition, Simmel cited the example of the Quakers. Although espousing religious principles of the mode extreme individualism and subjectiveness, Quakerism binds its members to a highly uniform and democratic way of life that seeks to exclude individual differences. Quakers are therefore individual only in collective matters, and in individual matters they are socially regulated.

The basic relation as a dualistic drive: we live as an individual within a social circle, with tangible separation from its other members, but also as a member of this circle, with separation from everything that does not belong to this group. Simmel believes that this principle can apply to characteristics other than group size, for example fashion. Along these lines, in one group the totality may have a very individual character at the same time as its parts are very much alike; conversely with another group the totality may be less colorful and less molded on an extreme while its parts are strikingly different from one another. We are able to exert some control over such matters, though. For example in a narrow circle, one can preserve one's individuality in one of two ways: (1) lead the circle, or (2) exist in it only externally, being independent of it in all essential matters. Simmel observes that the latter requires either great stability of character or eccentricity - both traits which are rather conspicuous in small group situations.

According to Simmel, we are surrounded by concentric circles of special interest - enclosing us narrowly or broadly. Although commitment to a narrow circle is generally less conducive to the strength of individuality (than is the case with general circles), it is psychologically significant that in a very large cultural community belonging to a family promotes individuality. The family as a collective individual offers its members a preliminary differentiation that at least prepares them for differentiation in the sense of absolute individuality. On the other hand, the family offers members shelter behind which that absolute individuality can develop until it has the strength to stand up

against the greatest universality. In fact, the family has a peculiar sociological double role: (1) it is the extension of one's own personality; and (2) it constitutes a complex within which the individual distinguishes him/herself from all others, and in which s/he develops a selfhood and an antithesis. This nature of the family highlights an epistemological difficulty in sociology that is particularly the case of intermediate level structures: on the one hand, such circles function as entities with an individual character, but on the other hand they also function as higher-order complexes that may include complexes of a lower order.

Simmel identifies three levels of collecitvity: the single individual, smaller circles composed of them, and large groups embracing everyone (or at least multiple individuals or intermediate complexes). In general, he feels that the first and third parts are oriented toward one another and create a common antithesis against the middle level, manifested in objective as well as subjective relational patterns between people with these levels. A personal, passionate commitment by the individual human being usually involves the narrowest and the widest circles, but not the intermediate ones. Part of this can be accounted for by the fact that larger circles tend to encourage individual freedom, while more limited groups tend to restrict it.

The meaning of individuality, according to Simmel, can be separated into two more specific meanings: (1) individuality in the sense of freedom and responsibility for oneself that comes from a broad and fluid social environment; and (2) in the qualitative sense that an individual being distinguishes her/himself from all others, that being different has a positive meaning and value for that person's life. The first corresponds to a 18th cent. Enlightenment view of individuality (valuing what human beings have in common), while the latter corresponds to a 19th cent Romantic formulation (which values what separates us).

Simmel refers to an "objective mind" - the traditions and experiences of one's group, set down in thousands of forms; the art and learning that are present in tangible structures; all the cultural materials that the historical group possesses as something subjective and yet accessible to everyone. This generally accessible Mind provides both the material and the impetus for the development of distinct personal mental types. It is the essence of "being cultured" that our purely personal dispositions are sometimes realized as the form of what is given as a content of objective culture (Geist), sometimes as the content of what is given as a form of objective culture. Only in this synthesis does our mental life attain its full idiom and personality. As the circle increases, so do its cultural offerings and therefore the possibilities of our fully developing our inner lives, personalities.

The preeminent historical instance of the correlation between social expansion and the individuation of life contents and forms is provided by the emergence of the cash economy. The cash economy changes conditions along two lines: (1) the effects of money extend in to unboundable distances, and ultimately engender from the whole civilized world a single economic circle; and (2) money causes an enormous individualization of the participant in the economy.

Considerations of individuality in the political sphere tend to turn on questions of either the creation of an embracing public realm and the enhancement of the significance of its central organs, or on the autonomy of individual elements. In the religious realm, polytheism with a set of separate gods with control over discrete portions of existence tends to correspond toward the dynamics earlier identified as characteristic of "narrow circles." Believers in different circles were often separated from each other be sharp internal and local boundaries, and often mutual indifference or hostility. The advent of an integrated monotheistic deity (e.g. Christianity) more closely resembles the broader circles identified above. Here, there seemed to be a dual trend within Christianity - on the one hand a thorough leveling of all believers

368

(more character of Protestantisms), and on the other a tendency toward papal absolutism (Catholicism).

Ethics and Interests The expansion of the circle that fills the view and interest of individuals may frequently five rise to a particular form of egoism that engenders a real and ideal restriction of social spheres - promoting a greateartedness that extends beyond the narrow interest circle of solidary comrades. Expansion, however, may also allow for the development of a more narrow, instrumental self-interest as is seen in the economic realm.

Through the elaboration of functional social organs, the large circle gains a special intrapersonal freedom and autonomy of being for its members, which permits the originally direct interaction of individuals to crystallize and be transferred to particular persons and complex structures. In effect the person must no longer devote his/her entire personality to such functional interactions (i.e. less personal investment involved in going to the 7 - 11 to buy a quart of milk than in going down the road to get it from a neighboring farmer with a cow). This leaves more room for personal individualization.

Fashion

Imitation

The charm of imitation can be found partly in the fact that it makes possible an expedient test of power which, however, requires no great personal and creative application but is displayed easily and smoothly - because its contents are a given quantity. Imitation further gives to the individual the satisfaction of not standing alone in his/her actions. Where imitation is a productive factor, we can see it as representing one of the fundamental tendencies of our (human) character - the part of us that contents itself with similarity, uniformity, adaptation of the special to the general, and which accentuates the constant element of change. Imitation, however, tends to be a negative

and obstructive principle where prominence is given to change, individual difference, independence and relief from generality.

Fashion

Fashion: (1) is the imitation of a given example and satisfies the demand for social adaptation; (2) leads the individual upon the road which furnishes a general condition, which resolves the conduct of every individual into a mere example; (3) satisfies in no less degree the need of differentiation, the tendency towards dissimilarity, the desire for change and contrast by means of a constant change of contents (of fashion); and (4) differs between the different classes such that fashions of the upper stratum of society are never identical with those of the lower.

Fashion is a product of class distinction and operates like a number of other forms (e.g. honor), the double function of which consists of revolving within a given circle and at the same time emphasizing it as separate from others. Union and separation are, therefore, the two fundamental functions inseparably amalgamated in the form of fashion. Even though the individual object with it creates/recreates generally represents a more or less individual need, fashion is a product of social demands (as evinced by its collective, classed nature).

Although fashion occasionally will affect objectively determined subjects such as religious faith, scientific interests, even socialism or individualism, it does not become operative as fashion until these subjects can be considered independent of the deeper human motives from which they have arisen. The rule of fashion applies to externals (clothing, social conduct, amusements) for here no dependence if placed on real vital motives of human action. It is acceptable to imitate with respect to these superficial fields, where it would be a sin to follow in important matters.

The motive of foreignness, which fashion employs in its socializing endeavors, is restricted to higher civilization, because novelty (which foreign origin guarantees in extreme form) is often regarded by "primitive" races as an evil. Simmel contends that in (modern) civilization the exceptional, bizarre, conspicuous, or whatever departs from the customary norm exercises a peculiar (unique) charm entirely independent of material justification.

Two social tendencies are essential to the establishment of fashion: the need of union and the need of isolation. The very character of fashion demands that it should be exercised at one time only by a portion of the given group, the greater majority being on the road to adopting it (i.e. real fashion is not something everybody can express at the same time). The distinctiveness of a fashion is destroyed by mass adoption. By reason of this peculiar play between the tendency towards universal acceptance and the destruction of its very purpose to which this general adoption leads, fashion includes a peculiar attraction of limitation, the attraction of a simultaneous beginning and end, the charm of novelty coupled to that of transitoriness.

The fashionable person is regarded with mingled feelings of approval and envy; we envy her/him as an individual but approve of that person as a member of a set or group. Fashion furnishes an ideal field for individuals with dependent natures, whose self-consciousness, however, requires a certain amount of prominence, attention, and singularity. Fashion can raise even the unimportant individual by making him/her the representative of a class, the embodiment of a joint spirit. In a sense, a person can achieve a sense, expression of differentiation at an individual level by, ironically, conforming to a set of standards held by a wider group. You can have too much of a good thing, though. In the case of a type Simmel identified as "the dude," exaggerated adherence to the demands of fashion subsumes the individualistic and peculiar character of fashion - making this type into a follower of the highest order. It is also interesting to note that the same combination which

extreme obedience to fashion acquires can also be attained by opposition to it. Whoever consciously avoids following the fashion does not attain the consequent sensation of individualization through any real individual qualification, but through the mere negation of the social example. This amounts to inverse imitation, but is similar in many respects.

Women and fashion Simmel believes that the fact that fashion expresses and at the same time emphasizes the tendency towards equalization and individualization, and the desire for imitation and conspicuousness, perhaps explains why it is that women, broadly speaking, are its staunchest adherents. He believes that as a consequence of women's historical socially disadvantaged status, they (like all groups in a weak position) tend to adhere strictly to custom (which is "appropriate"), and steer clear of individualization. Fashion is an ideal form of expression/individualization for such groups because it on the one hand involves imitation, with the individual relieved of responsibility for her/his tastes and actions. Yet there is still a certain conspicuousnes, an emphasis on an individual accentuation of personality. It should probably be added that fashion generally applies in aspects of society considered superficial or of secondary importance in promoting a social position of dominance. Therefore more powerful groups are likely to let fashion slide. For a woman, then, fashion in a certain sense gives a compensation for her lack of position in a class based on a calling or profession - giving a sense of solidarity with a larger group.

By reason of its peculiar inner structure, fashion furnishes a departure of the individual, which is always looked upon as proper. No matter how extravagant the form of appearance or manner of expression, as long as it is fashionable, it is protected against those painful reflections which the individual otherwise experiences when s/he becomes the object of attention. All concerned actions are characterized by the loss of this feeling of shame. Further, fashion is

also a social form of great expediency because (like law) it affects only the externals of life, only those sides of life turned to society. It provides us with a formula by means of which we can unequivocally attest our dependence upon what is generally adopted, our obedience to the standards established by our time, our class, and our narrower circle. But at the same time, it enables us to withdraw the freedom given us in life from externals and concentrate it more and more in our innermost natures.

Simmel contends that the real variability of historical life is vested in the middle classes, and for this reason the history of social and cultural movements has fallen into a different pace since this class has become a dominant force. For this reason, fashion, which represents the variable and contrasting forms of life, has since then become much broader and more animated. Social advance above all is favorable to the rapid change of fashion. The modern world has brought some specific changes that have expanded fashion: technological advances in material production and expansion of the market economy. Both of which increase the scope of fashion and contribute to a general increase of the rate of cyclical changes in fashion. In effect, since individual fashions are easier to produce and spread, they tend to be less durable.

Conflict in Modern Culture (1918)

Culture refers to a state where life produces certain forms in which it expresses and realizes itself - forms which are frameworks for the creative life which soon transcends them. Form acquires a fixed identity, a logic and lawfulness of its own; a rigidity which inevitably places it at a distance from the spiritual dynamic which created it and which makes that form independent. (In a round-about way, Simmel is - or will be - making the argument that the pure existential content of life constantly seeks expression, but this is only possible through form, which imposes a structure and fixity alien to life in its purest sense. What is building here is an ultimately fundamental conflict between content and form on the most basic level of life.)

History as an empirical science is devoted to examining the succession of cultural forms and through analysis of their changes, aims to discover the real carriers and causes of change in each particular case. This constant change in the content of culture bears testimony to the infinite fruitfulness of life.

Life in its true state is formless yet it constantly generates forms for itself (against which life is always in latent opposition). Therefore, life perceived the ''form as such'' as something forced upon it. Simmel notes the concern in his day regarding the increasing lack of form in modern life. He notes, however, that aside from a mere negative dying out of traditional forms there is also a simultaneous positive drive towards life which is actively repressing these forms.

Georg goes off on something of a tangent regarding the ''central idea of the epoch'' (which - on the surface at least - resembles Mannheim's 'spirit of the age'). The significance of this section to the rest of the chapter (imho) is basically illustrative to the more central themes. To summarize, every age is characterized by a dominant cultural form which represents the expression of the highest level of human advancement. For instance - Classical Greece: idea of being; Christian Middle Ages: concept of God; Renaissance: concept of nature; 17thC: concept of natural law, and later spiritual personality (ego); 19thC: society?; late 19th/early 20thC: concept of life.

Simmel notes that in his contemporary society the spirit of the age - so to speak - was not so much cultural and unitary as in earlier epochs, but was much more fragmentary and to the extent that it did exist was based more on specialized occupational experience than on culture per se. In effect there is no dominant form through which life is expressed in modern life.

In the case of art, for example, Simmel draws a contrast between Impressionism and Expressionism. The former, he notes, has as its intention a representation or imitation of a being or an event (ie.

some form of life/existence). Expressionism, on the other hand, has as its aim the manifestation of inner emotion in the work exactly as experience by the artist such that the emotions are extended and continued in the art. In its ultimate sense, Expressionism seeks to escape from form in the expression of the artistic impulse to that the art may not just represent but be the impulse itself. Unlike other art traditions, the Expressionist art form does not have meaning by itself - i.e. there is no necessary correspondence between the artistic impulse and the means through it is expressed as art.

Simmel also uses the examples of youth culture (and the search for originality), recent philosophical movements (something about Pragmatism), and contemporary religion (popularity of mysticism) to further illustrate the dialectic relationship between form and content and the seeming lack of form in modern culture - but (imho) not nearly to the effect as his more extended discussion on art.

The meat-and-potatoes (or potatos if you are a certain ex VP) of Simmel's argument is the following: There is a basic conflict inherent in the nature of cultural life. Life must either produce forms or proceed through them. Forms, however, belong to an entirely different order of being than life as such - demanding some content above and beyond life. Forms in their rigidity, in effect, contradict the fluid, dynamic essence of life. Form and life are thesis and antithesis. Life wishes to obtain something that it cannot achieve: to transcend all forms and exist in its "naked immediacy" - life per se. The concept of life, however, cannot be freed from logical imprecision since the process of conceptualization itself always involves the generation of form.

In conclusion, Simmel suggests that perhaps formlessness is merely the appropriate form of contemporary life.

On The Significance of Numbers For Social Life

Simmel feels that certain aspects of social life are strongly related to groups size. For instance, there is a tendency for greater

group size to be associated with a greater level of structural differentiation (specialized organs to promote and maintain the interests of the group) as well as with a lesser degree of personal interaction (as seen in urban life).

I. Small Groups

A. Socialism: only works in small groups that are homogenous and where each individual can personally see the contributions of the other group members and the returns of socialism. A complex division of labor, however, is necessary to bind a large groups of people together via specialization and interdependence. As pertains to socialism, in a large group the division of labor would carry over into private life and result in feelings of inequality. Comparisons between individual achievement would become difficult.

B. Religious Sects: the tie of solidarity lies in the self-awareness that they are a small group singled out from the larger whole. These sects need the larger group as a contrast against which to realize their own specific nature. (Weber goes into greater detail about religious sects and the characteristics that distinguish them from larger churches - particularly selectivity - in ''Protestant sects and the spirit of capitalism'' in Gerth and Mills).

C. Aristocracies: aside from a relatively limited size, it also appears that there is an absolute size limit beyond which an aristocracy cannot be maintained. The aristocratic class must be surveyable by every member and each element must be personally acquainted with every other. Relations by blood and marriage as well as practice of primogeniture prevent expansion of the group. In fact aristocratic class consciousness is often only realized in the context of excluding outsiders. In safeguard its own survival, the small group (eg. a political aristocracy) must to preempt the personalities of its members and adopt a more confrontational stance against adversaries than would be seen in a larger group.

I. Large Groups: the Mass

Generally speaking, large groups show less radicalism and decisiveness than smaller groups. The mass, however is an exception to the rule. When activated by political, social, or religious movements large groups can be ''ruthlessly radical,'' especially when gathered in physical proximity and under the influence of nervous excitement. The key is that the mass can only be animated and guided by simple ideas - this is basically the ''lowest-common-denominator view of crowd dynamics.

II. Group Size, Radicalism, and Cohesiveness

Small parties are more radical than large ones, with the ideas that form the basis of the group itself put a limit on the radicalism. Small groups are more unitary and thus display a greater degree of solidarity, which in turn results in the potential for greater radicalism. A large party, on the other hand, must moderate its positions in order to cater to its heterogeneous constituency and maintain its support. The issue of completeness of a groups must be distinguished from that of size per se. A group's stance toward completeness often has important implications for the way in which that party deals with non-membership and competition.

III. Paradoxes in Group Structure

Large groups create organs/structures that take the place of the personal interaction of small group situations in mediating the needs and actions of individuals. They are the abstract form of group cohesion, but can no longer exist once the groups exceeds a certain size. Beyond this point, they achieve a super-personal character with which they confront the individual - the alienation of organs in large groups such that they attain an objective/abstract character.

IV. Numerical Aspects of Prominent Group Members

Structural differences among groups related to numerical differences are even more distinct in the roles played by certain prominent and effective members. Maintaining proportionality, exceptional groups are more effective in society with larger absolute numbers. So the relationship between elements depends not only upon their relative proportions, but also their absolute numbers.

V. Custom, Law, Morality

The three general norms of custom, law, and morality develop into objective and super-social phenomena. The process can schematically be represented as follows:

content ---] normative form ---] particularistic content -- (objectification/abstraction)--].

Over the course of history the same contents of relations have been clothed in different motivations or forms - eg. what has in one place/time been a custom has in others been expressed as a law or a matter of private morality.

Morality: develops in the individual through a second subject that confronts him in himself - by virtue of the fundamental capacity of our mind to place itself in contrast to itself and to view and treat itself as if it were somebody else. (This general process bears some resemblance to Mead's generalized other, Cooley's looking glass self, and -believe it or not- Hegel's idea). Morality is experienced as an internal, individualistic phenomenon that could be described as individual conscience.

Law is an external type of normative form that mediates the relations between individuals. Law in general has the following features:develops in larger groups with an increasing unity among its partscoercively enforced through an object legal system, therefore, requires social organs to maintainhas a code: precisely defined and externally enforces content of lawlaw is universally applied (at least in principle) has a highly objectified content/character.

Custom is another type of external norm involved in the interrelations of individuals - with the following characteristics: -exists within small groups or within solidarity parts of a larger society develops in instances where legal coercion is not permissible and individual morality is not reliableit is normatively enforced through the immediate interactions between individualshas a strong component of internalizationcustom is class/estate specific

The Isolated Individual and The Dyad

The Isolated Individual although isolation may appear to be a strictly individual condition, it in no way implies the absence of society. In fact, isolation can only attain its positive significance only as society's effect at a distance. In effect isolation is a form of interaction (characterized by distance) between an individual and an imagined/abstract society.

Isolation may also exist as an interruption or periodic occurrence in a given relationship between individuals - some relationships may be defined by this denial of isolation. A tension exists between isolation and interaction for the individuals within social groups (cf. Simmel on urban life - simultaneous proximity and distance). Isolation is a very specific relation to society that both cause and effect of change in social groups.

Freedom has a dual nature. It has negative connotations: the absence of social content. But is also has a positive aspect for the social individual: a specific relationship of that individual to the environment. Implications for Freedom for the structure of society:

1. For the social individual, freedom is neither a state that always exists and can be taken for granted, nor a possession of a material substance that can be acquired all at once. As a result freedom emerges as a continuous process of liberation - freedom taking the form of conflict between the individual and conflicting social demands/social ties. Therefore Freedom is an act of maintaining

individual autonomy in the face of conflicting and competing forms of sociation that attempt to claim precedence over the individual.

2. Freedom is something positive in the sense that a person does not just want to be free, but in addition wishes to use that freedom for some purpose - in particular, that individual seeks to exert her/his own will over others.

The Dyad

Simmel presents a justification of why the dyad constitutes a form: 1) a high degree of variation in the individualities and unifying motives does not alter the identity of these forms; and 2) these forms may exist between groups as well as individuals.

The dyad possesses unique characteristics that distinguish it form other forms of sociation. The dyad does not attain a super-individual life beyond that the individual might feel to be independent of him/herself. Each of the two fools confronted only be the other, not an overarching collectivity. This form of sociation is further dependent upon the specific identities of the two members - ie. any two people won't do. Death is an inherent part of the life of the individual and the dyad.

Triviality: a characteristic tied in with the inseparability of the dyad from the immediacy of its interaction. Triviality connotes a measure of frequency, of the consciousness that the content of life is repeated, while the value of this content depends on a certain measure of rarity.

Intimacy: like the dyad depends on the principle that the sociological process remains within personal interdependence and does not result in a structure that develops beyond its elements. The whole effective structure of intimacy is based on what each of the two participants gives or shows only to the one other person and to nobody else. Intimacy is, therefore, based on exclusivity of content of a relationship between members, regardless of the nature or identity of that content. Also

absent from the dyad is a delegation of duties and responsibilities to the impersonal group structure.

Monogamous Marriage

Marriage does not seem to appear to have the essential sociological character of the dyad - absence of a super-personal unit. There is a feeling that marriage is something super-personal which is valuable and sacred in itself, and which lies beyond whatever un-sacredness each of its elements may possess. (Although Simmel does not put it this way, this follow from the fact that marriage is - or can be - an institution independent of the process of interaction that constitutes the dyad.) The rise of the group unit from the structure of marriage is facilitated by the incomparable closeness of the relationship which promotes a suspension of egoism of each not only in favor of the other, but for the sake of the general relationship per se. Another source of this character of marriage is the socially regulated and historically transmitted nature of the marriage form. Marriage, for instance, technically requires the official recognition of an external authority (law or religion). Modern marriage, however, seems to have a weaker objective character than unions of the past - a greater generalization of a social form corresponds to a greater degree of individuality, creativity, and differentiation within that relationship.

Just to liven things up....Simmel addresses the peculiar nature of sex (I guess some kinds of sex would be more peculiar than others, anyhow...). Sexual intercourse is an ultimately intimate act between individuals that nonetheless exists as the most fundamentally universal relation across humanity - and is in fact an a priori for the survival of the species. Marriage also exhibits a duality: it requires sex, but it also requires more than sex (sex is a necessary but not sufficient component of marriage).

Expansion of the Dyad

Dyad v. Triad: Among three elements, each one operates as an intermediary between the other two, exhibiting the twofold function of such an organ which is to unite and to separate - such an arrangement is not possible with only two elements. Addition of the third element also provides the opportunity of the development of an external super-individual character and the internal development of parties (the taking of sides and formation of majority in a dispute).

Types of individuality: Strong personality usually intensifies the formation of a plurality through opposition, while the decided personality tends to avoid groups where it might be confronted by a majority (and is almost predestined for dyadic relationships).

In comparison to larger groups, the dyad: 1) favors a relatively greater individuality of their members, but 2) also presupposes that the groups form does not lower individual particularity to an average level. Friendship is a truer case of the dyad than marriage, because the former is more dependent on the individualities of its elements. Marriage, on the other hand, is based of difference that is primarily species-differentiation (ie the complementary character of the sexes - according to Simmel, that is).

Dyadic relationships are dramatically changes by the addition of one additional element. However there is little or no significant alteration of the characteristics of the triad with the addition of more elements. In a way the marginal significance or effect of additional units of a relationship disappears or at least diminishes greatly after the third.

Although there is no question of status in a dyad, the sociological situation between the super ordinate and subordinate is changes after the third element is added. Rather than solidarity, larger groups are characterized by party formation.

Formation of standpoint occurs along a continuum ranging from impartiality to the radical exclusion of all mediation. A point on this continuum is occupied by every decision made concerning groups that a

party has contact with - by every decision involving intimate or superficial cooperation, benevolence, or toleration, our prestige, etc. In essence every decision we (or any party) make traces an ideal line around us that contributes to defining ourselves through our position in various relations. The more close and solidary an individual's relation is to a social circle, the more difficult it is for him/her to live with others that are not in complete harmony.

The Triad

Having in the previous chapter described the significance of the addition of a third element to a relationship (dyad), Simmel now goes on to describe the dynamics that underlie several specific forms of interaction between parties of three triads.

The Non-Partisan and the Mediator

Isolated elements are unified by their common relation to a phenomenon that lies outside them. For a dyad, it may be the third element that serves to close the circle between the two (Simmel uses the example of the addition of a child to a marriage). This can occur in two ways: 1) the third element may directly start or strengthen the union of the two, or 2) the relation of each element of the dyad to the third may produce a new and indirect bond between them.

Non-Partisan: third element functions by 1) producing concord of two colliding parties and withdraws after creating direct contact between the unconnected elements; or 2) acting as an arbiter who balances contradictory claims and eliminates what is incompatible in them. The third party's role is one of affective mediation - depriving conflicting claims of their affective character by neutrally formulating them and presenting them to the two parties. The mediator simply guides process of coming to terms, while on the other hand the arbitrator must end by taking sides. The non-partisanship required for mediation has one of two presuppositions. The third element is non-partisan either by: 1) standing above the contrasting interests and

opinions (ie. not concerned), or 2) being equally with both sides. In the first case, the mediator must, however, be subjectively interested in the parties involved in this conflict towards which s/he has this objective stance - a fusion of personal distance and personal interest characteristic of the non-partisan position. The second instance poses special difficulties for the mediator with regards to the tension of personal interests in both sides involved, and often does not result in successful mediation.

The Arbitrator: second form of accommodation by means of an impartial third element. In this case, the conflicting parties must agree both to arbitration and to the specific third party to serve as arbitrator, to whom they relinquish the final decision of the conflict in question. These features imply a commitment on the part of both parties to a resolution of the conflict.

The Tertius Gaudens

In some instances the relationship between parties and non-partisan emerges as a new relationship: elements that have never before formed an interactional unit may come into conflict. A third previously unconnected non-partisan element may spontaneously seize upon the opportunity that conflict between the other two offers.

In one kind of arrangement, the advantage of the tertius accrues from the fact that the two in conflict hold each other in check and the third is able to make a gain that would be otherwise denied by the two. On the other hand, the advantage for the tertius is a product of the action one of the two conflicting parties intents to bring about for its own purposes.

The tertius, however, may make his/her own direct or indirect gain by turning toward one of the conflicting parties in a non-objective fashion. There are two main variants of this type of relation: 1) the two are hostile toward one another and compete for the favor of the third element; or 2) they compete for the favor of the third element and

therefore are hostile. The advantage of impartiality for the tertius derives from its ability to make a decision depending on certain circumstances - ones that would be most beneficial to the third.

There is a great deal of variability in the character of the tertius gaudens both with respect to the degree of advantage gained and the amount of power that must be expended to achieve it. For instance, the sheer power of the tertius need not be great with respect to the two conflicting parties - it is only important that the superadded power of the tertius give one of the two superiority. An example of this would be the inordinate influence of small parliamentary parties in cases where their support is needed to shift the balance of power between two evenly matched adversaries. One of the most crucial elements of the tertius is its freedom of action and ability to choose between several alternative courses of action - something that is often not possible for large parties that are definitely committed to a prescribed course of action. The advantage of the tertius disappears if the conflicting parties should become a unit.

Divide et Imperia

In this case, the third element intentionally produces the conflict in order to gain a dominating position. In the most basic case of ''divide and rule,'' a superior prevents the unification of elements that do not yet positively strive after unification - but might eventually do so. Here it is the form of association itself with is feared, since it may be combined with a dangerous content - from the point of view of the dominant party.   A more direct case would be one in which the superordinate party actually prevents two parties which seen unification from doing so.

An even more active part of the third party is required in the case in which it seeks to create jealousy between two other elements. By doing this, the third seeks to maintain an already existing prerogative by preventing a coalition of the other two from arising. This may take

such a course as the unequal distribution of values which breeds jealousy and distrust between two parties.

The most extreme form of divide et impera involved the unleashing of positive battle between two parties, which may be motivated by the third's intentions regarding the two other parties or objects lying outside them. In cases where the third element is directed toward the domination of the other two parties, two sociological considerations are important: 1) certain elements are formed in such a way that they can only be fought successfully by similar elements, and 2) the third may support one of them long enough for the other to be suppressed, whereupon the first is easy prey for the third.

The Secret and the Secret Society

Knowledge of One Another

The first condition of having to deal with somebody at all is to know with whom one has to deal. Knowledge of another person is reciprocal, but generally not equal on both sides. One can, however, never know another person absolutely since this would amount to a sharing of experiences. We, nevertheless, form some personal unity out of those of his fragments through which another is accessible to us. The unity that may develop depends upon what that other person permits us to see about him/herself. Psychological knowledge of a person is not mere stereotype of that person, but depends (like knowledge of all external nature) upon the forms which the cognizing mind brings to it and in which it receives the give.

Knowledge of External Nature v. Knowledge of Persons

A particular person is conceived of differently by various other persons. Every relationship gives rise to a picture of each of the involved individuals in the other; a picture which interacts with the actual relation. On the other hand, the real interaction between these persons is also based upon the mental conceptions which they have of each other. Here we have a circuit of relations between real persons and

mental conceptions. Differences in actual relations of persons A and B to C create different mental images of C on the part of A and B and account for disparity in the way A and B view C.

Truth, Error, and Social Life

Our conduct is based upon our knowledge of total reality - knowledge which is, in turn, characterized by peculiar limitations and distortions. We preserve and acquire not only so much truth, but also so much ignorance and error, as is appropriate for our practical activities. The truth as well as self-deception can play adaptive roles as we deal with the exigencies of life.

The Individual as an Object of Knowledge

With regard to the inner life of a person with whom we interact, s/he may intentionally either reveal the truth about her/him or deceive us by lie and concealment. No other object of knowledge can reveal or hide itself in this way, since no other object is able to modify its behavior in view of the fact that it is perceived by another.

The Nature of the Psychic Process and of Communication Mental processes involve a filtering and organization of information into a more logical form than that in which the stimuli actually exist in nature. In communication to another, the fragments we reveal about our inner life are not a representative selection of our psychological being, but are made from the standpoint of reason, value, and the relation to the listener and her/his understanding. What we say (or otherwise express to others) is not an immediate and accurate presentation of what actually occurs in us during the particular moment of communication, but is a transformation of our inner reality, which is teleologically directed, reduced, and recomposed in respect to our relations to that other person.

The Lie

The lie consists in the fact that the liar hides his/her true idea form the other. A lie must involve a lying subject. Sociological structures vary significantly depending on the amount of lying which operates in them. The lie may have more dire consequences in modern life since with increasing complexity of society follows an increasing interdependency upon others for knowledge of information that we cannot directly obtain ourselves. The quantity of potential opportunities for lying and their impact are generally increased. The generally greater distance between individuals makes it not only easier to lie, but also makes detection of a lie more difficult.

The lie may have some positive applications: in the case where a first organization of a group is at stake, organization will take place

through the subordination of the weak under the physically and intellectually superior. The lie of superiority may be used in order to maintain this organization and the state of subordination. In general, intra-group interaction based on truthfulness will be more appropriate as the welfare of the many (as opposed to the few) is the norm of the group.

Faithfulness and Gratitude

Faithfulness

Faithfulness is significant as a sociological form of the second order, as the instrument of relations which already exist and endure. This phenomenon is necessary for society to exist and persist for any length of time. Faithfulness entails a specific psychic and sociological state, which insures the continuance of a relationship beyond the forces that first brought it about, which survives these forces with the same synthesizing effect they themselves had originally - in a sense, an inertia of existing sociations which is one of the a priori conditions of society.

The external sociological situation of togetherness appropriates the particular feelings that properly correspond to it even though they did not justify the beginnings of the relationship. Once the existence of a relationship has found its psychological correlate (faithfulness), this faithfulness is followed also by the feelings, affective interests, and inner bonds that properly belong to the relationship. Faithfulness or loyalty is the emotional reflection of the autonomous life of the relation. Aimed solely at the preservation of the relationship to the other, faithfulness if a consummately sociological feeling.

Gratitude

Like faithfulness, gratitude originates in the interactions of human beings. In a sense it is the moral memory of mankind. It establishes a bond of interaction, of the reciprocity of service and return service even where not guaranteed by external coercion - in this

capacity it supplements the legal order. One of the most powerful means of social cohesion, gratitude connects human actions with what has gone before, enriches them with the element of personality, and gives them the continuity of interactional life. Gratitude, further, is a type of exchange that does not require a return in kind (ie in the same form). Generally there are not interactions involving the giving and taking of things in which both sides of the exchange are exactly equal. The giving of a gift must not be considered isolation - especially as regards equivalency - but in relation to the total personalities of the two parties. In a sense, gratitude actually consists, not in the return of a gift, but in the consciousness that it cannot be returned - that there is something which places the receiver into a certain permanent position with respect to the giver.

The first gift, given in spontaneity, has a voluntary character which no return gift can have; it has a freedom without any duty. A gift once accepted, may engender an inner relation which can never be eliminated completely, because gratitude is perhaps the only feeling which can be morally demanded and rendered under all circumstances.

Out of the three sociological perspectives, the one that seemed most interesting to me is the symbolic interactionism theory. At first glance, this reminded me of Egyptian hieroglyphics, which was the basic form of symbolic communication in ancient Egypt (Hruby, 2003). Henslin describes the symbolic interactionism theory on page 21 as "a theoretical perspective in which society is viewed as composed of symbols that people use to establish meaning, develop their views of the world, and communicate with one another" (Henslin, 2007). It fascinates me that perhaps our entire way of thinking and living revolves around the interpretation of symbols and the meaning behind those symbols.

George Herbert Mead is often believed to be the founding father of the symbolic interactionism theory, although he never published his theory. In fact, his theory and works were only first

published by his student, Herbert Blumer, after Mead's death (Plunkett). Blumer studied with Mead at the University of Chicago and after publishing Mead's ideas and summarizations of the theory, Blumer was given credit for the term "symbolic interactionism" (McClelland, 2000). I find it interesting that even though Mead did a lot of the work and came up with most of the theory himself, it was his student who got the credit in the end. In fact, more than one of his students benefited from Mead's finished and unfinished works and were able to compile his beliefs so that the public was aware of the theory (Cronk, 2005).

Essentially, Herbert Blumer believed that there were three core principles that contributed to symbolic interactionism: meaning, language, and thought (Nelson, 1998). The symbolic theory bases itself on the meaning that humans give to the people and things around us. It is this meaning that establishes the basis for symbolic interpretation. Language is the second principle believed by Blumer to be a core to the theory. Language is how humans give a voice to their interpretations of the symbols (Nelson, 1998). The third principle, thought, is the process in which humans can arrive at a different interpretation for the same symbol (Nelson, 1998). What seem like three simple things, really make up a form of communication when brought together.

We use symbols every day in everything that we do, whether we realize this or not. The use of symbolism dates back to the eighteenth century when Scottish philosophers believed that people compare themselves to others when evaluating their own actions (Henslin, 2007). Henslin describes symbols simply as "the things to which we attach meaning". He goes on to say that without symbols, we would be no better than animals. Symbols are what give us the ability to differentiate between relationships of a family member or of a romantic partner. Without symbols, we would not label one person as our "mother" and another person as our "husband" or "wife". They would all be one and the same to us (Henslin, 2007).

I think we take the basic theory of symbols for granted. Such simple things as time, size, quantity, and goals all revolve around symbols (Henslin, 2007). It still amazes me that pretty much everything we think, do, or plan to do revolve around our personal interpretation of symbols and their meaning to us as individuals. Everything that we communicate to others is based on a purely basic form of symbolism.

Theoretical Approaches to Sociology of Education

Objective:

After going through this unit you will be able:

- ✓ To explain Durkheim's theory of Functionalism
- ✓ To state the key features of Structural Functionalists
- ✓ To explain the contribution of Conflict theory to sociology of education
- ✓ To critically evaluate Interactionism
- ✓ To apply the Open Systems Approach to education

Introduction

Theory means different things to different people. It could be defined as a conceptual scheme designed to explain observed regularities or relationships will be twenty two or more variables. Theoretical perspectives are used to provide logical explanation for why things happen the way they do. There are always various interpretations of events in our everyday life. Similarly there are several sociological perspectives on why things happen the way they do in society. These theories result in different interpretations of the same information because they focus on different aspects.

In the behavioral sciences, no theory is absolutely true. No theory is a final formulation because new knowledge keeps on modifying or even repudiates existing theories. A theory is not judged productive solely in terms of the answers it gives; but equally in the number of questions it raises.

We are going to take a look at the key aspects of the following theories which have made major contribution to the field of sociology of education:

✓ Functionalism
✓ Conflict Theory
✓ Interactions
✓ Open Systems Approach

Functionalism

One of the core perspectives of sociology is functionalism, consensus or equilibrium theory. A sociologist using this approach assumes that in society everything (even crime), no matter how seemingly strange, out of place, or harmful, serves a purpose.

Functionalism views society as a self-regulating system of interrelated elements with structured social relationships and observed regularities. Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), is considered to be the first person to recommend that a sociological approach be used in the study of education.

He said that society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity. Education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child, from the beginning ng, the essential similarities that collective life demands. Durkheim attempted to understand why education took the forms it did, rather than judge those forms. He points out that, "Education is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined----."

✓ Durkheim observed that education takes different forms at different times and places showing that we cannot separate the educational system from the societ y for they reflect each other.

- ✓ He stressed that in every time and place education is closely related to other institutions and to current values and beliefs.
- ✓ Durkheim outlined his beliefs about the functions of schools and their relationship to society.
- ✓ Durkheim argued that education has many functions:

1. To reinforce social solidarity

--- History: Learning about individuals who have done good things for the many makes an individual feel insignificant.

--- Pledging allegiance: Makes individuals feel part of a group and therefore less likely to break rules.

2. To maintain social role

--- School is a society in miniature. It has a similar hierarchy, rules, expectations to the "outside world." It trains young people to fulfill roles.

3. To maintain division of labour.

--- School sorts students into skill groups, encouraging students totake up employment in fields be suited to their abilities.

- ✓ According to him, moral values are the foundations of the social order and society is perpetuated through its educational institutions.
- ✓ Any change in society reflects a change in education and vice versa. In fact education plays an active role in the process of change.
- ✓ Durkheim was interested in the way that education could be used to provide French citizens the sort of shared, secular background that would be necessary to prevent anomie in modern societies. He equated classrooms to 'small societie s' or agents of socialization.
- ✓ The school acts as an in termediary between the affective morality of the family and the rigorous morality of the life in society.
- ✓ Durkheim spoke about issues which are real even today- the needsof different segments of society with respect to education, discipline in schools, the role of schools in preparing young people

for society, the relationship of e ducation to social change, cross-cultural research and the social system of school and classroom.

Structural Functionalists

Structural functionalists believe that society leans towards equilibrium and social order. They see society like a human body, in which each part plays a role and all are dependent on each other for survival. Institutions such as education are like important organs that keep the society/body healthy and well. Social health means the same as social order, and is guaranteed when n early everyone accepts the general moral values of their society.

✓ Structural functionalists believe the aim of key institutions, such as education, is to socialize children and teenagers .

✓ Socialization is the process by wh ich the new generation learns the knowledge, attitudes and values that they will need as productive citizens.

✓ Although this aim is stated in the formal curriculum, it is mainly achieved through   "the hidden curriculum" , a subtler, but nonetheless powerful, indoctrination of the norms and values of the wider society.

✓ Students learn these values because their behavior at school is regulated until they gradually internalize and accept them.

✓ Education must, however perform another function. As various jobs become vacant, they must be filled with the appropriate people. Therefore the other purpose of education is to sort and rank individuals for placement in the labour market.

✓ Those with high achievement will be trained for the most important jobs and in reward, be given the highest incomes. Those who achieve the least, will be given the least demanding (intellectually at any rate, if not physically) jobs , and hence the least income.

Drawback of structural Functionalism

- According to Sennet and Cobb, "to believe that ability alone decides who is rewarded is to be deceived".
- Meighan agrees, stating that large numbers of capable students from working class backgrounds fail to achieve satisfactory standards in school and therefore fail to obtain the status they deserve.
- Jacob believes this is because the middle class cultural experiences that are provided at school may be contrary to the experiences working-class children receive at home.
- In other words, working class children are not adequately prepared to cope at school. They are th erefore "cooled out" from school with the least qualifications, hence they get the least desirable jobs, and so remain working class.
- Sargent confirms this cycle, arguing that schooling supports continuity, which in turn supports social order.

Criticism of Functionalism

Functionalism fails to re cognize the number of divergent interests, ideologies and conflicting interest groups in society. In heterogeneous societies each sub-group may have its own agenda to further its own interests.

It is difficult to analyze individual interactions such as classroom dynamics of teacher-student or student-student interactions from this perspective.

It does not deal with the 'content' of the educational process- what is taught and how it is taught.

Individuals do not merely carry out roles within the structure, they create and modify them.

Conflict Theory

The perspective of conflict theory, contrary to the structural functionalist perspective, believes that society is full of social groups with different aspirations, different access to life chances and gain

different social rewards. Relations in society, in this view, are mainly based on exploitation, oppression, domination and subordination.

The several social theories that emphasize social conflict have roots in the ideas of Karl Marx (1818-1883), the great German theorist and political activist. The Marxist conflict approach emphasizes a materialist interpretation of history, a dialectical method of analysis, a critical stance toward existing social arrangements, and a political program of revolution or, at least, reform.

Conflict theories draw attention to power differentials, such as class conflict, and generally contrast traditional or historically-dominant ideologies. Conflict theory is most commonly associated with Marxism, but as a reaction to functionalism and positivist methods may also be associated with critical theory, feminist theory, queer theory, postmodern theory, post-structural theory, postcolonial theory, and a variety of other perspectives.

Some conflict theorists like Max Weber (1864-1920) believe education is controlled by the state wh ich is controlled by the powerful, and its purpose is to reproduce existing inequalities, as well as legitimize 'acceptable' ideas which actually work to reinforce the privileged positions of the dominant group. Connell and White state that the education system is as much an arbiter of social privilege as a transmitter of knowledge.

✓ Education achieves its purpose by maintaining the status quo, where lower-class children become lower class adults, and middle and upper class children become middle and upper-class adults.

✓ McLeod argues that teachers treat lower-class kids like less competent students, placing them in lower "tracks" because they have generally had fewer opportunities to develop language, critical thinking, and social skills prior to entering school than middle and upper class kids.

- ✓ When placed in lower tracks, lower-class kids are trained for blue-collar jobs by an emphasis on obedience and following rules rather than autonomy, higher-order thinking, and self-expression.
- ✓ They point out that while private schools are expensive and generally reserved for the upper classes, public schools- like Municipal schools, especially those that serve the poor, are under - funded, understaffed, and growing worse.

Schools are also powerful agents of socialization that can be used as tools for one group to exert power over others – for example, by demanding that all students learn English, schools are ensuring that English-speakers dominate students from non-English speaking backgrounds

This cycle occurs because the dominant group has, over time, closely aligned education with middle class values and aims, thus alienating people of other classes.

Many teachers assume that students will have particular middle class experiences at home, and for some children this assumption isn't necessarily true. Some children are expected to help their parents after school and carry considerable domestic responsibilities in their often single-parent home.

The demands of this domestic labour often make it difficult for them to find time to do all their homework and this affects their academic performance.

Where teachers have softened the formality of regular study and integrated student's preferred working methods into the curriculum, they noted that particular students displayed strengths they had not been aware of before.

However few teacher deviate from the traditional curriculum and the curriculum conveys what constitutes knowledge as determined by the state - and those in power. This knowledge isn't very meaningful to many of the students, who see it as pointless.

Wilson & Wyn state that the students realise there is little or no direct link between the subjects they are doing and their perceived future in the labour market.

Anti-school values displayed by these children are often derived from their consciousness of their real interests.

Sargent believes that for working class students, striving to succeed and absorbing the school's middle class values, is accepting their inferior social position as much as if they were determined to fail.

Fitzgerald states that "irrespective of their academic ability or desire to learn, students from poor families have relatively little chance of securing success".

On the other hand, for middle and especially upper-class children, maintaining their superior position in society requires little effort. The federal government subsidies 'independent' private schools enabling the rich to obtain 'good education' by paying for it.

With this 'good education', rich children perform better, achieve higher and obtain greater rewards. In this way, the continuation of privilege and wealth for th e elite is made possible.

Conflict theorists believe this social reproduction continues to occur because the whole education system is overlain with ideology provided by the dominant group.

In effect, they perpetuate the myth that education is available to all to provide a means of achieving wealth and status. Anyone who fails to achieve this goal, according to the myth, has only themselves to blame.

Wright agrees, stating that "the effect of the myth is to…stop them from seeing that their personal troubles are part of major social issues". The duplicity is so successful that many parents endure appalling jobs for many years, believing that this sacrifice will enable their children to have opportunities in life that they did not have themselves.

These people who are poor and disadvantaged are victims of a societal confidence trick. They have been encouraged to believe that a major

goal of schooling is to strengthen equality while, in reality, schools reflect society's intention to maintain the previous unequal distribution of status and power.

Drawback of Conflict Theory

This perspective has been criticized as deterministic, pessimistic and allowing no room for the agency of individuals to improve their situation.

It should be recognized however that it is a model, an aspect of reality which is an important part of the picture.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism, or interactionism for short, is one of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology. This perspective has a long intellectual history, beginning with the German sociologist and economist, Max Weber (1864-1920) and the American philosopher, George H. Mead (1863-1931), both of whom emphasi zed the subjective meaning of human behavior, the social process, and pragmatism. Herbert Blumer, who studied with Mead at the University of Chicago, is responsible for coining the term, "symbolic interactionism," as well as for formulating the most prominent version of the theory.

Interactionists focus on the subjective aspects of social life, rather than on objective, macro-structural aspects of social systems.

One reason for this focus is that interactionists base their theoretical perspective on their image of humans, rather than on their image of society (a s the functionalists do).

For the interactionist, society consists of organized and patterned interactions among individuals.

Research by interactionists focuses on easily observable face-to-face interactions rather than on macro-level structural relationships involving social institutions.

Furthermore, this focus on interaction and on the meaning of events to the participants in those events shifts the attention of interactionists away from stable norms and values toward more changeable, continually readjusting social processes.

Whereas for functionalists socialization creates stability in thesocial system, for interactionists negotiation among members of society creates temporary, socially constructed relations which remain in constant flux, despite relative stability in the basic framework governing those relations.

For interactionists, humans are pragmatic actors who continually must adjust their behavior to the actions of other actors. We can adjust to these actions only because we are able to interpret them.

This approach focuses attention on interactions between groups peers, teacher-student, teacher principal, on student attitudes and achievement, on students' values, on their self concepts and their effect on aspirations and the relationship between students' socio-economic status and their achievement.

Two interaction theories are of great importance in sociology of education. They are labeling theory and exchange theory. The labelingtheory is concerned with how the self-identity and behavior of individuals may be determined or influenced by the terms used to describe or classify them, and is associated with the concept of a self-fulfilling prophecy and stereotyping. If a child is repeatedly told that s/he is stupid or lazy, s/he will make the 'label' a part of her/his self-concept and behave accordingly.

Students almost always fulfill teachers' expectations.

Exchange theory emphasizes the idea that social action is the result of personal choices made by considering relative benefits and costs. Thetheory of social exchange predicts that people will make choices with the intention of maximizing benefits. A key component of this theory is the postulation of the "comparison level of alternatives",

which is the actor's sense of the best possible alternative (i.e., the choice with the highest benefits relative to costs)based on th e assumption that there are costs and rewards involved in our interactions. The reasons that make people to engage in a social exchange are:

- ✓ anticipated reciprocity;
- ✓ expected gain in reputation and influence on others
- ✓ altruism and perception of efficacy
- ✓ direct reward.

Reciprocal interactions bind individual and groups with obligations. From 1975 onwards, a growing number of educationists felt that a radical approach was needed to understand educational systems. As a reaction to 'macrocosmic' approaches which had little emphasis on interaction, they based their ideas on symbolic interaction.

Ethnomethodology is a partial offshoot of phenomenological sociology with deep roots in classical social theory and sociolinguistics. It is the descriptive study of the reporting and accounting practices ('methods') through which socially embedded actors come to attributemeaning and rationality to their own and others' behavior.

Ethnomethodologists study interactive, ad hoc sense maki ng at the sites where social structures are produced and reproduced through talk and coordinated action.

Applied to education this has taken the form of studying interaction processes in classrooms, the management and the use of knowledge, the question- what is to be 'educated', curriculum content etc. Interactionists tend to study social interaction through participant observation, rather than surveys and interviews. They argue that close contact and immersion in the everyday lives of the participants is necessary for understanding the meaning of actions, the definition of the situation itself, and the process by which actors construct the situation through their interaction. Given this close contact,

interactionists cannot remain free of value commitments, and, in fact, interactionists makeexplicit use of their values in choosing what to study but strive to be objective in the conduct of their research.

Drawbacks of Symbolic interactionism

Symbolic interactionists are often criticized by other sociologists for being overly impressi onistic in their research methods and somewhat unsystematic in their theories.

Open System Theory

Open system theory was initially developed by Ludwig von Bertanlanffy (1956), a biologist, but it was immediately applicable across all disciplines. It defines the concept of a system, where "all systems are characterized by an assemblage or combination of parts whose relationsmake them interdependent".

A system is defined by its properties

A system is a - physical and / or conceptual entity composed of interrelated and interacting parts   existing in an environment with which it may also interact

The system has a preferred state

The parts of the system may in turn be systems themselves

Systems approach is the process of understanding how things influenceone another within a whole. In nature systems approach examples include ecosystems in which various elements such as air, water, movement, plant and animals work together to survive or perish. In organizations, systems consist of people, structures, and processes that work together to make an organization healthy or unhealthy.

A systems thinking has been defined as an approach to problem solving, by viewing "problems" as parts of an overall system, rather than reacting to specific part, outcomes or   events and potentially contributing to further development of unintended consequences. Systems approach is not one thing but a set of habits or

practices within a framework that is based on the belief that the component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation. Systems approach focuses on cyclical rather than linear cause and effect.

The open systems approach to modeling the key variables, both inside the organization and outside it, is an investigative tool that promotes critical examination of an organization (or part thereof.) It enables those using it to more quickly be in a position of understanding these key variables and their interrelationships. The technique is scaleable up and down. That is it can be used to describe situations and systems at both a macro and micro level. For instance, it is quite practical to use the technique for a department (as the system) within an organization (the environment.)

✓ Existing in an environment (with which systems may interact). An environment surrounds all systems. The environment contains other systems

✓ Closed systems do not interact with the environment. A totally closed system is a convenient theoretical abstraction - all systems are affected to some extent by their environment.

✓ Open systems interact with their environment. The environment may impose conditions and contingencies on the system.

✓ Conditions. One set of circumstances in the environment, which the system encounters. In a dynamic environment the conditions will change with time.

✓ Contingency. An unexpected, sharp change in circumstances in the environment, which will disturb the system the system, or place the system under shock.

The Education System

The analysis of educational systems falls into 2 main areas: process and structure. Processes are the action parts of the system

bringing structure alive. Examples of processes include teaching, learning, communication and decision making as well as those formal and informalactivities that socialize students into their place in school and later life roles. These are dynamic parts of the education system.

Structure of a system includes the hierarchy or roles people play – administrators, teachers, staff, parents and of course students as well as the organization of learning, classroom and school lay out, types of school and structure of curriculum.

We cannot ignore the schools environment which consists of groups, organizations, other institutions and even the global society outside the school all of which influence school functioning. For example, parents sometimes put pressure on the management to start a co-curricular activity like roller skating or introduce the services of a counselor for the students, communities may provide unequal academic opportunities to different groups of students and the government political economic structures shape policies and resources available to schools.

The Open Systems Approach to Education

The open systems perspective looks at the education system as a whole, integrated entity. This

1) provides a useful way of visualizing many elements in the system; helps to order observations and data.
2) represents a generalized picture of complex interacting elements and sets of relationships.

The figure below shows basic components in any social system. These components are the organization, the environment, input, output and feedback

Step 1: Organization

Focus your attention at the central box, the organization. This refers to the centre of activity. It represents society (say India), an institution (such as education), an organization (such as a particular

school), a subsystem (such as a classroom), or an interaction (such as between a teacher and students or between peers). For purposes of discussion this is referred as 'the organization'. It is in the organization that the activities take place, showing that it is more than a structure, positions, roles, and functions. Within its boundaries is a structure consisting of parts and sub-parts, positions and roles. Though it is referred as a structure, it is the personnel here who carry out activities and take decisions. The processes in the system bring it alive.

Informal structure

These processes do not take place in a vacuum. The decision makers holding positions and carrying out roles in the organization are constantly responding to the demands from both inside and outside of the organization. The boundaries remain pliable, flexible in order to respond to the demands of the environment. This is called as open system or open boundaries. Students' experiences depend upon their social class boundaries, the responses of the school staff to their behavior within schools and action of students and staff that create school cultures.

Environment : The environment refers to everything that surrounds the organization and influences it in some way. Typically environment includes other surrounding systems. For schools an important aspect of environment is financial from where they get their money. Another critical factor is what rules are imposed on the schools as schools exist in the maze of socio, economic and political expectations such as the recent notification by the government that no child should be detained /failed in any class up to the 8[th]standard. Another important aspect of environment is employment market and the job skills needed for it.

Organizations depend on environment to get their information and resources. For every school the factors in the environment will differ and change over time. The set of challenges will

be different. Interactions with the environment could be desirable or unpleasant. They take place in form of inputs and outputs.

Input

An organization receives inputs in terms of information, raw materials, personnel, finances and new ideas from the environment. Persons who belong to an organization are also part of surrounding communities and bring in influences from the environment. For most organizations some inputs are undesirable but unavoidable like new legal restrictions, competition etc. Organizations are able to exert some control over some inputs like selection of teachers, textbooks, and curriculum.

They have less control over admissions.

Output

Output refers to material items and non-material ideas that leave the organization such as products, waste, information, evolving culture and new technology. There may be personnel spanning boundary lines, like salesmen, secretary. Normally speaking for universities and colleges new knowledge is in terms of research papers and articles.

Feedback

A key aspect of the systems model is the process of feedback. It implies that the organization's leader s are constantly learning about and adapting to changes and demands of the environment through the news it receives. Organizational personnel compare the current affairs with desired goals and environmental feedback to determine the new course of action.

Uses of Open Systems approach

It facilitates analysis of a complex problem by focusing on specific important elements within the system and in the environment. A problem can thus be simplified and outlined more clearly.

Interactions among elements or variables in the system and in the environment, and their likely effects on the system can be identified and analyzed.

- ✓ Likely future developments and their implications can be considered in the same way.
- ✓ The tabulating of variables, trends and implications can serve as a useful stimulus to both logical and imaginative thinking, by forcing people to think of various possibilities and changes, and their effects on the problem situation, that is it facilitates brainstorming within a rational framework.
- ✓ This leads to understanding of problems and development of alternative solutions that are essential for sound decision-making.
- ✓ A systematic analysis of a business problem and likely future developments (whether this be a case study or real life situation) promotes:
- ✓ better decision-making
- ✓ better planning
- ✓ better preparedness
- ✓ adoption of the system concerned (often the firm) to the environment
- ✓ the possibility of adjusting relevant variables in the environment in order to achieve the preferred state of the system
- ✓ the recognition and consideration of some of the intangible, unquantifiable and future oriented variables which are often overlooked in business situations because it is difficult to get to grips with them.

This could be particularly useful- in analyzing the economic and political environment and in the development of scenarios for future-oriented planning.

References:

1) M. Francis Abraham, Modern Sociological Theory and Introduction, Oxford University Press. 2008
2) Jeanne H. Ballantine and Joan Z. Spad (Ed) Schools and Society: A sociological approach to education, 3[rd]Edition, Sage publications India Pvt. Ltd. 2008
3) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Systems_thinking
4) http://en.wikipedia.org/wik i/Structural_functionalism
5) http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/soc/s00/soc11101/IntroTheori es/Conflict.html
6) http://www.criminology.fsu.edu/crimtheory/conflict.htm
7) http://www.newworldencyclopedi a.org/entry/Conflict_theory
8) http://family.jrank.org/pages/1679/Symbolic-Interactionism.html
9) http://www.acceleam.com/business_process/systems_analysis _03.html
10) http://managementhelp.org/systems/systems.htm

~**6** ~
Structural Theory

A *structural* theory may be defined as one which tends to organize a set of propositions and, in the realm of the natural sciences, a set of observations to which they refer as a whole made up of interdependent parts. A *structure* may be defined as a functional whole presiding over a system of transformations and governed by self-regulating mechanisms.

Such a definition applies equally well to inanimate material systems (self-regulating machines), to constructions of the mind (logico mathematical wholes, as for instance set theory), to living organisms, or

to subsystems of living organisms. This last category would include the psychical apparatus in Freud's sense, and that apparatus can thus be deemed the object of a structural theory in psychoanalysis.

From its earliest formulations, Freudian meta psychology may indeed be looked upon as a structural theory according to the above definition, for it was meant to describe the functioning of a system made up of interdependent elements, namely the psychical apparatus as a whole. This was clear in Freud's workas early as the "Project for a Scientific Psychology" (1950c [1895]) and his reformulation of the ideas of the "Project" five years later in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900a). During this first period in the development of psychoanalysis, Freud was already specifying local aspects of an overall functioning. After describing how ideas are linked together, for instance, he observed that their concatenations crossed at "nodal points" which it was the task of analysis to locate: "The logical chain corresponds not only to a zigzag, twisted line, but rather to a ramifying system of lines and more particularly to a converging one. It contains nodal points at which two or more threads meet" (1895d, p. 290). Sometimes, even, several interconnected nodes were observable, like those constituting what Freud called a "pathogenic organization."

The whole of Freud's subsequent work strove for an ever more refined and better articulated description of the operation of the psychical apparatus as a structure, and this at a number of levels. It is thus possible to distinguish those writings in which Freud described partial, local aspects of that operation in terms of a network as, for example, the breast feces penis money interplay of symbolic equivalents and indeed the term complex itself denotes such a local organization; those writings concerned with modalities of overall mental functioning characteristic of particular groups of individuals (for example, the obsession structure); and those writings whose subject was the general laws of mental functioning. Two major stages in Freud's approach to these laws were represented by the meta psychological

papers of 1915 and by his introduction in the 1920 1923 period of a second topography and a second theory of the instincts.

The structural view was always paralleled in Freud by a developmental approach to the same issues. If one accepts the idea that any structure may be apprehended in terms of its genesis (the successive stages of its establishment), and that any genetic process presents its own diachronic structure, it would seem that the two perspectives must be inextricably linked. The structural and the developmental have nevertheless often been opposed to each other by psychoanalysts, who have privileged one to the detriment of the other.

This separation has been spurred by two currents of thought. The first, within psychoanalysis itself, accompanied the advent of child psychoanalysis and of theoretical options that stressed development. The chief figures here were Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, and their more or less direct heirs, among them Margaret Mahler, Frances Tustin, Donald Meltzer, Donald W. Winnicott, and Serge Lebovici. In the wider general cultural framework, a second contributing factor was the "structure versus history" debate that stirred up so many disciplines during the nineteen seventies (Green, 1963). The origins of that debate may be traced back to linguistics, to the moment around 1910 when Ferdinand de Saussure introduced an avenue of research which treated language as a system of signs each of which derived its meaning from its relationship with the others: in other words, a structural approach to language sharply opposed to the hitherto dominant diachronic one. This orientation was further refined later by many linguists, notably by Roman Jakobsen, who inspired Jacques Lacan. In another area, Claude Lévi Strauss revolutionized traditional cultural anthropology by asserting that the kinship relationships observable in any given society were structures, and added that in all societies the taboo on incest was "the rule of rules."

It is important to note that two major schools of thought, though radically at odds with one another, considered themselves, or

412

were considered by others, to be "structural" psychoanalysis. The first was "ego psychology," developed above all in the United States under the influence of Heinz Hartmann. The qualifier "structural" refers in this instance to ego psychology's embrace of the second Freudian topography, in which the id ego superego system a set of polarities and complementarities unquestionably implies a structural conception of psychoanalysis, as envisaged in the latter part of Freud's work. Inasmuch, however, as the developmental axis was dominant for the ego psychologists, French speaking authors have tended to characterize their doctrine as "genetic psychoanalysis," and in many cases expressed strong reservations about what they deemed an "objectivist realism" which by overvaluing "direct observation" of children's behavior was liable to water psychoanalysis down into a mere developmental psychology.

In any event, Jacques Lacan is thought to stand in diametrical opposition to ego psychology, referring directly as it does to Saussure, Jakobsen, and Lévi Strauss. For Lacan language constituted the paradigmatic structure of the psyche, and more especially of the unconscious, which he therefore described as "structured like a language." Language was a system of signs none of which signified anything in itself, for meaning arose solely from the place and function of a given sign within the system as whole. In his later work, however, Lacan distanced himself somewhat from this linguistic orientation and called upon logical mathematical models borrowed from topology, notably metaphorical uses of the Möbius strip and the Borromean chain. He was led eventually to distinguish three main types of structures in the sense of modalities of the functioning of a whole: the structures of neurosis, marked by repression, the structures of perversion, characterized by disavowal, and the structures of psychosis, produced by foreclosure.

Sociology

Sociology is the study of human social behavior and its origins, development, organizations, and institutions. It is a social science which uses various methods of empirical investigation and critical analysis to develop a body of knowledge about human social actions, social structure and functions. A goal for many sociologists is to conduct research which may be applied directly to social policy and welfare, while others focus primarily on refining the theoretical understanding of social processes. Subject matter ranges from the micro level of individual agency and interaction to the macro level of systems and the social structure.

The traditional focuses of sociology include social stratification, social class, social mobility, religion, secularization, law, and deviance. As all spheres of human activity are affected by the interplay between social structure and individual agency, sociology has gradually expanded its focus to further subjects, such as health, medical, military and penal institutions, the

Internet, environmental sociology, political economy and the role of social activity in the development of scientific knowledge. The range of social scientific methods has also expanded. Social researchers draw upon a variety of qualitative techniques. The linguistic and cultural turns of the mid twentieth century led to increasingly interpretative, hermeneutic, and philosophic approaches to the analysis of society. Conversely, recent decades have seen the rise of new analytically, mathematically and computationally rigorous technique, such as agent based modeling and social network analysis.

Classification

Sociology should not be confused with various general social studies courses which bear little relation to sociological theory or social science research methodology. The US National Science Foundation classifies Sociology as a STEM Field.

IBN Khaldun (1332- 1406)

Sociological reasoning predates the foundation of the discipline. Social analysis has origins in the common stock of Western knowledge and philosophy, and has been carried out from as far back as the time of ancient Greek philosopher Plato if not before. The origin of the survey, i.e., the collection of information from a sample of individuals, can be traced back at least early as the Domesday Book in 1086,[9][10] while ancient philosophers such as Confucius wrote on the importance of social roles. There is evidence of early sociology in medieval Islam. Some consider Ibn Khaldun, a 14th century ArabIslamic scholar from North Africa, to have been the first sociologist; his Muqaddimah was perhaps the first work to advance social scientific reasoning on social cohesion and social conflict. Most sociological concepts were used in English prior to their adoption as the technical language of sociology.

The word sociology (or "sociologie") is derived from both Latin and Greek origins. The Latin word: socius, "companion"; the suffix logy, "the study of" from Greek λογία from λόγος, lógos, "word", "knowledge". It was first coined in 1780 by the French essayist Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès (1748–1836) in an unpublished manuscript. Sociology was later defined independently by the French philosopher of science, Auguste Comte (1798–1857), in 1838. Comte used this term to describe a new way of looking at society. Comte had earlier used the term "social physics", but that had subsequently been appropriated by others, most notably the Belgian statistician Adolphe Quetelet. Comte endeavored to unify history, psychology and economics through the scientific understanding of the social realm. Writing shortly after the malaise of the French Revolution, he proposed that social ills could be remedied through sociological positivism, an epistemological approach outlined in The Course in Positive Philosophy [1830–1842] and A General View of Positivism (1848). Comte believed a positivist stage would mark the final

era, after conjectural theological and metaphysical phases, in the progression of human understanding. In observing the circular dependence of theory and observation in science, and having classified the sciences, Comte may be regarded as the first philosopher of science in the modern sense of the term.[22]
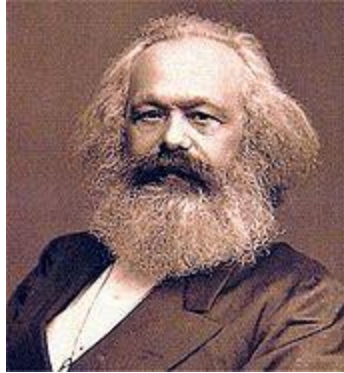
Auguste Comte (1798 1857)

Comte gave a powerful impetus to the development of sociology, an impetus which bore fruit in the later decades of the nineteenth century. To say this is certainly not to claim that French sociologists such as Durkheim were devoted disciples of the high priest of positivism. But by insisting on the irreducibility of each of his basic sciences to the particular science of sciences which it presupposed in the hierarchy and by emphasizing the nature of sociology as the scientific study of social phenomena Comte put sociology on the map. To be sure, [its] beginnings can be traced back well beyond Montesquieu, for example, and to Condorcet, not to speak of Saint Simon, Comte's immediate predecessor. But Comte's clear recognition of sociology as a particular science, with a character of its own, justified Durkheim in regarding him as the father or founder of this science, in spite of the fact that Durkheim did not accept the idea of the three states and criticized Comte's approach to sociology.

— Frederick Copleston A History of Philosophy: IX Modern Philosophy 1974, [23]
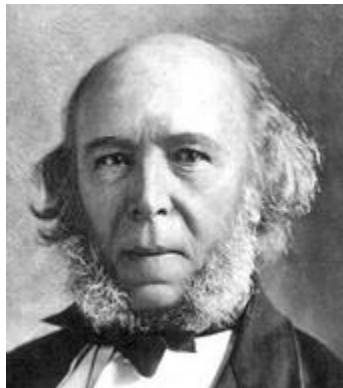
Karl Marx (1818 1883)

Both Auguste Comte and Karl Marx (1818 1883) set out to develop scientifically justified systems in the wake of European industrialization and secularization, informed by various key

movements in the philosophies of history and science. Marx rejected Comtean positivism[citation needed] but in attempting to develop a science of societynevertheless came to be recognized as a founder of sociology as the word gained wider meaning. For Isaiah Berlin, Marx may be regarded as the "true father" of modern sociology, "in so far as anyone can claim the title."

To have given clear and unified answers in familiar empirical terms to those theoretical questions which most occupied men's minds at the time, and to have deduced from them clear practical directives without creating obviously artificial links between the two, was the principle achievement of Marx's theory. The sociological treatment of historical and moral problems, which Comte and after him, Spencer and Taine, had discussed and mapped, became a precise and concrete study only when the attack of militant Marxism made its conclusions a burning issue, and so made the search for evidence more zealous and the attention to method more intense.

Herbert Spencer (1820 1903)

Herbert Spencer (27 April 1820 – 8 December 1903) was one of the most popular and influential 19th century sociologists. It is estimated that he sold one million books in his lifetime, far more than any other sociologist at the time. So strong was his influence that many other 19th century thinkers, including Émile Durkheim, defined their ideas in relation to his. Durkheim's Division of

417

Labour in Society is to a large extent an extended debate with Spencer from whose sociology, many commentators now agree, Durkheim borrowed extensively. Also a notable biologist, Spencer coined the term "survival of the fittest". Whilst Marxian ideas defined one strand of sociology, Spencer was a critic of socialism as well as strong advocate for a laissez faire style of government. His ideas were highly observed by conservative political circles, especially in the United States and England.

Émile Durkheim

Formal academic sociology was established by Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), who developed positivism as a foundation to practical social research. While Durkheim rejected much of the detail of Comte's philosophy, he retained and refined its method, maintaining that the social sciences are a logical continuation of the natural ones into the realm of human activity, and insisting that they may retain the same objectivity, rationalism, and approach to causality. Durkheim set up the first European department of sociology at the University of Bordeaux in 1895, publishing his Rules of the Sociological Method(1895).

For Durkheim, sociology could be described as the "science of institutions, their genesis and their functioning".

Durkheim's seminal monograph, Suicide (1897), a case study of suicide rates amongst Catholic and Protestant populations, distinguished sociological analysis from psychology or philosophy. It also marked a major contribution to the theoretical concept of structural functionalism. By carefully examining suicide statistics in different police districts, he attempted to demonstrate that Catholic communities have
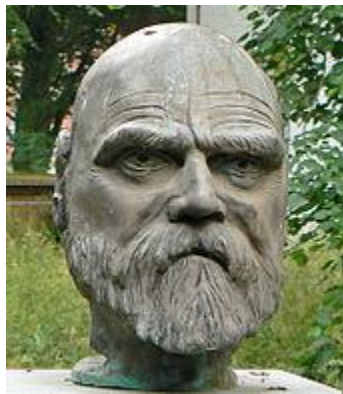
a lower suicide rate than that of Protestants, something he attributed to social (as opposed to individual or psychological) causes. He developed the notion of objective sui generis "social facts" to delineate a unique empirical object for the science of sociology to study.[28] Through such studies he posited that sociology would be able to determine whether any given society is 'healthy' or 'pathological', and seek social reform to negate organic breakdown or "social anomie".

Sociology quickly evolved as an academic response to the perceived challenges of modernity, such as industrialization, urbanization, secularization, and the process of "rationalization". The field predominated in continental Europe, with British anthropology and statistics generally following on a separate trajectory. By the turn of the 20th century, however, many theorists were active in the Anglo Saxon world. Few early sociologists were confined strictly to the subject, interacting also with economics, jurisprudence, psychology and philosophy, with theories being appropriated in a variety of different fields. Since its inception, sociological epistemologies, methods, and frames of inquiry, have significantly expanded and diverged.

Durkheim, Marx, and the German theorist Max Weber (1864 1920) are typically cited as the three principal architects of social science. Herbert Spencer, William Graham Sumner, Lester F. Ward,Vilfredo Pareto, Alexis de Tocqueville, Werner Sombart, Thorstein Veblen, Ferdinand Tönnies, Georg Simmel and Karl Mannheim are occasionally included on academic curricula as founding theorists. Each key figure is associated with a particular theoretical perspective and orientation.

Marx and Engels associated the emergence of modern society above all with the development of capitalism; for Durkheim it was connected in particular with industrialization and the new social division of labor which this brought about; for Weber it had to do with the emergence of a distinctive way of thinking, the rational calculation

which he associated with the Protestant Ethic (more or less what Marx and Engels speak of in terms of those 'icy waves of egotistical calculation'). Together the works of these great classical sociologists suggest what Giddens has recently described as 'a multidimensional view of institutions of modernity' and which emphasizes not only capitalism and industrialism as key institutions of modernity, but also 'surveillance' (meaning 'control of information and social supervision') and 'military power' (control of the means of violence in the context of the industrialization of war).

Ferdinand Tönnies' bust in Husum, Germany

The first college course entitled "Sociology" was taught in the United States at Yale in 1875 by William Graham Sumner. In 1883 Lester F. Ward, the first president of the American Sociological Association, published Dynamic Sociology or Applied social science as based upon statistical sociology and the less complex sciences and attacked the laissez faire sociology of Herbert Spencer and Sumner. Ward's 1200 page book was used as core material in many early American sociology courses. In 1890, the oldest continuing American course in the modern tradition began at the University of Kansas, lectured by Frank W. Blackmar. The Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago was established in 1892 by Albion Small, who also published the first sociology textbook: An introduction to the study of society 1894. George Herbert Mead and Charles Cooley, who had met at the University of Michigan in 1891 (along with John Dewey), would move to Chicago in 1894. Their influence gave rise to social psychology and the symbolic interactionism of the modern Chicago School.[38] The American Journal of Sociology was founded in 1895, followed by the American

Sociological Association (ASA) in 1905. The sociological "canon of classics" with Durkheim and Max Weber at the top owes in part to Talcott Parsons, who is largely credited with introducing both to American audiences. Parsons consolidated the sociological tradition and set the agenda for American sociology at the point of its fastest disciplinary growth. Sociology in the United States was less historically influenced by Marxism than its European counterpart, and to this day broadly remains more statistical in its approach.

The first sociology department to be established in the United Kingdom was at the London School of Economics and Political Science (home of the British Journal of Sociology) in 1904. Leonard Trelawny Hob house and Edvard Westermarck became the lecturers in the discipline at the University of London in 1907. Harriet Martineau, an English translator of Comte, has been cited as the first female sociologist. In 1909 the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie (German Sociological Association) was founded by Ferdinand Tönnies and Max Weber, among others. Weber established the first department in Germany at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in 1919, having presented an influential new anti positivist sociology. In 1920, Florian Znaniecki set up the first department in Poland. The Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt (later to become the Frankfurt School of critical theory) was founded in 1923. International co operation in sociology began in 1893, when René Worms founded the Institut International de Sociologie, an institution later eclipsed by the much larger International Sociological Association (ISA), founded in 1949.[47]

Positivism and anti positivism

Positivism

The overarching methodological principle of positivism is to conduct sociology in broadly the same manner as natural science. An emphasis on empiricism and the scientific method is sought to provide a

tested foundation for sociological research based on the assumption that the only authentic knowledge is scientific knowledge, and that such knowledge can only arrive by positive affirmation through scientific methodology.

"Our main goal is to extend scientific rationalism to human conduct... What has been called our positivism is but a consequence of this rationalism."

The term has long since ceased to carry this meaning; there are no fewer than twelve distinct epistemologies that are referred to as positivism. Many of these approaches do not self identify as "positivist", some because they themselves arose in opposition to older forms of positivism, and some because the label has over time become a term of abuse by being mistakenly linked with a theoretical empiricism. The extent of anti positivist criticism has also diverged, with many rejecting the scientific method and others only seeking to amend it to reflect 20th century developments in the philosophy of science. However, positivism (broadly understood as a scientific approach to the study of society) remains dominant in contemporary sociology, especially in the United States.

Loic Wacquant distinguishes three major strains of positivism: Durkheimian, Logical, and Instrumental. None of these are the same as that set forth by Comte, who was unique in advocating such a rigid (and perhaps optimistic) version. While Émile Durkheim rejected much of the detail of Comte's philosophy, he retained and refined its method. Durkheim maintained that the social sciences are a logical continuation of the natural ones into the realm of human activity, and insisted that they should retain the same objectivity, rationalism, and approach to causality. He developed the notion of objective *sui generis* "social facts" to delineate a unique empirical object for the science of sociology to study.

The variety of positivism that remains dominant today is termed *instrumental positivism*. This approach eschews epistemological and metaphysical concerns (such as the nature of social facts) in favor of methodological clarity, replicability, reliability and validity.s This positivism is more or less synonymous with quantitative research, and so only resembles older positivism in practice. Since it carries no explicit philosophical commitment, its practitioners may not belong to any particular school of thought. Modern sociology of this type is often credited to Paul Lazarsfeld,[28] who pioneered large scale survey studies and developed statistical techniques for analyzing them. This approach lends itself to whaRobert K. Merton called middle range theory: abstract statements that generalize from segregated hypotheses and empirical regularities rather than starting with an abstract idea of a social whole.

Anti positivism

Reactions against social empiricism began when German philosopher Hegel voiced opposition to both empiricism, which he rejected as uncritical, and determinism, which he viewed as overly mechanistic. Karl Marx's methodology borrowed from Hegelian dialecticism but also a rejection of positivism in favour of critical analysis, seeking to supplement the empirical acquisition of "facts" with the elimination of illusions. He maintained that appearances need to be critiqued rather than simply documented. Early hermeneuticians such as Wilhelm Dilthey pioneered the distinction between natural and social science ('Geisteswissenschaft'). Various neo Kantian philosophers, phenomenologist and human scientists further theorized how the analysis of the social world differs to that of the natural world due to the irreducibly complex aspects of human society, culture, and being.[56]

At the turn of the 20th century the first generation of German sociologists formally introduced methodological anti positivism, proposing that research should concentrate on human

cultural norms, values, symbols, and social processes viewed from a resolutely subjective perspective. Max Weber argued that sociology may be loosely described as a science as it is able to identify causal relationships of human "social action" especially among "ideal types", or hypothetical simplifications of complex social phenomena. As a non positivist, however, Weber sought relationships that are not as "historical, invariant, or generalizable" as those pursued by natural scientists. Fellow German sociologist, Ferdinand Tönnies, theorized on two crucial abstract concepts with his work on "Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft" (lit. community and society). Tönnies marked a sharp line between the realm of concepts and the reality of social action: the first must be treated axiomatically and in a deductive way ("pure sociology"), whereas the second empirically and inductively ("applied sociology").

Max Weber *Sociology is* the science whose object is to interpret *the meaning of social action* and thereby give a *causal explanation* of the way in which the *action proceeds* and the *effects which it produces*. By 'action' in this definition is meant the human behavior when and to the extent that the agent or agents see it as *subjectively meaningful* ... the meaning to which we refer may be either (a) the meaning actually intended either by an individual agent on a particular historical occasion or by a number of agents on an approximate average in a given set of cases, or (b) the meaning attributed to the agent or agents, as types, in a pure type constructed in the abstract. In neither case is the 'meaning' to be thought of as somehow objectively 'correct' or 'true' by some metaphysical criterion. This is the difference between the empirical sciences of action, such as sociology and history, and any kind of *prior* discipline, such as jurisprudence, logic, ethics, or aesthetics

whose aim is to extract from their subject matter 'correct' or 'valid' meaning.

Max Weber the Nature of Social Action 1922,

Both Weber and Georg Simmel pioneered the "Verstehen" (or 'interpretative') method in social science; a systematic process by which an outside observer attempts to relate to a particular cultural group, or indigenous people, on their own terms and from their own point of view. Through the work of Simmel, in particular, sociology acquired a possible character beyond positivist data collection or grand, deterministic systems of structural law. Relatively isolated from the sociological academy throughout his lifetime, Simmel presented idiosyncratic analyses of modernity more reminiscent of the phenomenological and existential writers than of Comte or Durkheim, paying particular concern to the forms of, and possibilities for, social individuality. His sociology engaged in a neo Kantian inquiry into the limits of perception, asking 'What is society?' in a direct allusion to Kant's question 'What is nature?'

Georg Simmel

The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life. The antagonism represents the most modern form of the conflict which primitive man must carry on with nature for his own bodily existence. The eighteenth century may have called for liberation from all the ties which grew up historically in politics, in religion, in morality and in economics in order to permit the original natural virtue of man, which is equal in everyone, to develop without inhibition; the nineteenth

century may have sought to promote, in addition to man's freedom, his individuality (which is connected with the division of labor) and his achievements which make him unique and indispensable but which at the same time make him so much the more dependent on the complementary activity of others; Nietzsche may have seen the relentless struggle of the individual as the prerequisite for his full development, while socialism found the same thing in the suppression of all competition – but in each of these the same fundamental motive was at work, namely the resistance of the individual to being leveled, swallowed up in the social technological mechanism.

Theoretical frameworks

The contemporary discipline of sociology is theoretically multi paradigmatic. Modern sociological theory descends from the historical foundations of functionalist (Durkheim) and conflict centered (Marx) accounts of social structure, as well as the micro scale structural (Simmel) and pragmatist (Mead) theories of social interaction. Contemporary sociological theory retains traces of these approaches.

Presently, sociological theories lack a single overarching foundation, and there is little consensus about what such a framework should consist of. However, a number of broad paradigms cover much present sociological theorizing. In the humanistic parts of the discipline, these paradigms are referred to as *social* theory, and are often shared with the humanities. The discipline's dominant scientifically oriented areas generally focus on a different set of theoretical perspectives, which by contrast are generally referred to as *sociological* theory. These include sociological field theory, new institutionalism, social networks, social identity, social and cultural capital, toolkit and cognitive theories of culture, and resource mobilization. Analytical sociology is an ongoing effort to systematize many of these middle range theories.

Functionalism

A broad historical paradigm in sociology and anthropology, functionalism addresses the social structure as a whole and in terms of the necessary function of its constituent elements. A common analogy (popularized by Herbert Spencer) is to regard norms and institutions as 'organs' that work toward the proper functioning of the entire 'body' of society. The perspective was implicit in the original sociological positivism of Comte, but was theorized in full by Durkheim, again with respect to observable, structural laws. Functionalism also has an anthropological basis in the work of theorists such as Marcel Mauss, Bronisław Malinowski and Radcliffe Brown. It is in Radcliffe Brown's specific usage that the prefix 'structural' emerged. Classical functionalist theory is generally united by its tendency towards biological analogy and notions of social evolutionism. As Giddens states: "Functionalist thought, from Comte onwards, has looked particularly towards biology as the science providing the closest and most compatible model for social science. Biology has been taken to provide a guide to conceptualizing the structure and the function of social systems and to analyzing processes of evolution via mechanisms of adaptation ... functionalism strongly emphasizes the pre eminence of the social world over its individual parts (i.e. its constituent actors, human subjects)."

Conflict theory

Functionalism aims only toward a general perspective from which to conduct social science. Methodologically, its principles generally contrast those approaches that emphasize the "micro", such as interpretive or symbolic interactions. Its emphasis on "cohesive systems", however, also holds political ramifications. Functionalist theories are often therefore contrasted with "conflict theories" which critique the overarching socio political system or emphasize the inequality of particular groups. The works of Durkheim and Marx

epitomize the political, as well as theoretical, disparities, between functionalist and conflict thought respectively:

To aim for a civilization beyond that made possible by the nexus of the surrounding environment will result in unloosing sickness into the very society we live in. Collective activity cannot be encouraged beyond the point set by the condition of the social organism without undermining health.

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

20th century social theory

The functionalist movement reached its crescendo in the 1940s and 1950s, and by the 1960s was in rapid decline. By the 1980s, functionalism in Europe had broadly been replaced by conflict oriented approaches. While some of the critical approaches also gained popularity in the United States, the mainstream of the discipline instead shifted to a variety of empirically oriented middle range theories with no single overarching theoretical orientation. To many in the discipline, functionalism is now considered "as dead as a dodo."

As the influence of both functionalism and Marxism in the 1960s began to wane, the linguistic and cultural turns led to myriad new movements in the social sciences: "According to Giddens, the orthodox consensus terminated in the late 1960s and 1970s as the middle ground shared by otherwise competing perspectives gave way and was replaced by a baffling variety of competing perspectives. This third 'generation' of social theory includes phenomenologically inspired approaches, critical theory, ethno methodology, symbolic

interactionism, structuralism, post structuralism, and theories written in the tradition of hermeneutics and ordinary language philosophy."

The structuralize movement originated from the linguistic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure and was later expanded to the social sciences by theorists such as Claude Lévi Strauss. In this context, 'structure' refers not to 'social structure' but to the semiotic understanding of human culture as a system of signs. One may delineate four central tenets of structuralism: First, structure is what determines the structure of a whole. Second, structuralists believe that every system has a structure. Third, structuralists are interested in 'structural' laws that deal with coexistence rather than changes. Finally, structures are the 'real things' beneath the surface or the appearance of meaning.

Post structuralist thought has tended to reject 'humanist' assumptions in the conduct of social theory. Michel Foucault provides a potent critique in his archaeology of the human sciences, though Habermas and Rorty have both argued that Foucault merely replaces one such system of thought with another. The dialogue between these intellectuals highlights a trend in recent years for certain schools of sociology and philosophy to intersect. The anti humanist position has been associated with "postmodernism," a term used in specific contexts to describe an era or phenomena, but occasionally construed as a method.

Structure and agency

Structure and agency form an enduring ontological debate in social theory: "Do social structures determine an individual's behaviour or does human agency?" In this context 'agency' refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and make free choices, whereas 'structure' relates to factors which limit or affect the choices and actions of individuals (such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, and so on). Discussions over the primacy of either structure or agency relate to the

core of sociological epistemology ("What is the social world made of?", "What is a cause in the social world, and what is an effect?"). A general outcome of incredulity toward structural or agential thought has been the development of multidimensional theories, most notably the action theory of Talcott Parsons and Anthony Giddens's theory of structuration.

Research methodology

Sociological research methods may be divided into two broad categories:

- ✓ Quantitative designs approach social phenomena through quantifiable evidence, and often rely on statistical analysis of many cases (or across intentionally designed treatments in an experiment) to create valid and reliable general claims
- ✓ Qualitative designs emphasize understanding of social phenomena through direct observation, communication with participants, or analysis of texts, and may stress contextual and subjective accuracy over generality

Sociologists are divided into camps of support for particular research techniques. These disputes relate to the epistemological debates at the historical core of social theory. While very different in many aspects, both qualitative and quantitative approaches involve a systematic interaction between theory and data. Quantitative methodologies hold the dominant position in sociology, especially in the United States. In the discipline's two most cited journals, quantitative articles have historically outnumbered qualitative ones by a factor of two. (Most articles published in the largest British journal, on the other hand, are qualitative.) Most textbooks on the methodology of social research are written from the quantitative perspective, and the very term "methodology" is often used synonymously with "statistics." Practically all sociology Ph.D. program in the United States require training in statistical methods. The work produced by quantitative

researchers is also deemed more 'trustworthy' and 'unbiased' by the greater public, though this judgment continues to be challenged by anti positivists.

The choice of method often depends largely on what the researcher intends to investigate. For example, a researcher concerned with drawing a statistical generalization across an entire population may administer a survey questionnaire to a representative sample population. By contrast, a researcher who seeks full contextual understanding of an individual's social actions may choose ethnographic participant observation or open ended interviews. Studies will commonly combine, or 'triangulate', quantitative and qualitative methods as part of a 'multi strategy' design. For instance, a quantitative study may be performed to gain statistical patterns or a target sample, and then combined with a qualitative interview to determine the play of agency.

Sampling

The bean machine, designed by early social research methodologist Sir Francis Galton to demonstrate the normal distribution, which is important to much quantitative hypothesis testing.

Quantitative methods are often used to ask questions about a population that is very large, making a census or a complete enumeration of all the members in that population infeasible. A 'sample' then forms a manageable subset of a population. In quantitative research, statistics are used to draw inferences from this sample regarding the population as a whole. The process of selecting a sample is referred to as 'sampling'. While it is usually best to sample randomly, concern with differences between specific subpopulations sometimes calls for stratified sampling. Conversely, the impossibility of

random sampling sometimes necessitates non probability sampling, such as convenience sampling or snowball sampling.
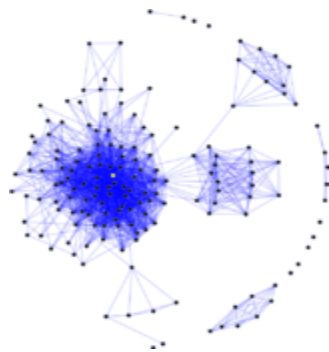
Methods

The following list of research methods is neither exclusive nor exhaustive:

✓ Archival research or the Historical method: draws upon the secondary data located in historical archives and records, such as biographies, memoirs, journals, and so on.

✓ Content analysis: The content of interviews and other texts is systematically analyzed. Often data is 'coded' as a part of the 'grounded theory' approach using qualitative data analysis (QDA) software, such as NVivo, Atlas.ti, or QDA Miner.

✓ Experimental research: The researcher isolates a single social process and reproduces it in a laboratory (for example, by creating a situation where unconscious sexist judgments are possible), seeking to determine whether or not certain social variables can cause, or depend upon, other variables (for instance, seeing if people's feelings about traditional gender roles can be manipulated by the activation of contrasting gender stereotypes). Participants are randomly assigned to different groups which either serve as controls acting as reference points because they are tested with regard to the dependent variable, albeit without having been exposed to any independent variables of interest or receive one or more treatments. Randomization allows the researcher to be sure that any resulting differences between groups are the result of the treatment.

✓ Longitudinal study: An extensive examination of a specific person or group over a long period of time.

✓ Observation: Using data from the senses, the researcher records information about social phenomenon or behavior. Observation techniques may or may not feature participation. In participant observation, the researcher goes into the field (such as a

community or a place of work), and participates in the activities of the field for a prolonged period of time in order to acquire a deep understanding of it. Data acquired through these techniques may be analyzed either quantitatively or qualitatively.

✓ Survey research: The researcher gathers data using interviews, questionnaires, or similar feedback from a set of people sampled from a particular population of interest. Survey items from an interview or questionnaire may be open ended or closed ended. Data from surveys is usually analyzed statistically on a computer.

Computational sociology

A social network diagram: individuals (or 'nodes') connected by relationships.

Sociologists increasingly draw upon computationally intensive methods to analyze and model social phenomena. Using computer simulations, artificial intelligence, text mining, complex statistical methods, and new analytic approaches like social network analysis, computational sociology develops and tests theories of complex social processes through bottom up modeling of social interactions.

Although the subject matter and methodologies in social science differ from those in natural science or computer science, several of the approaches used in contemporary social simulation originated from fields such as physics and artificial intelligence. By the same token, some of the approaches that originated in computational sociology have been imported into the natural sciences, such as measures of network centrality from the fields of social network analysis and network science. In relevant literature, computational sociology is often related

to the study of social complexity. Social complexity concepts such as complex systems, non linear interconnection among macro and micro process, and emergence, have entered the vocabulary of computational sociology. A practical and well known example is the construction of a computational model in the form of an "artificial society", by which researchers can analyze the structure of a social system.

Practical applications of social research

Social research informs politicians and policy makers, educators, planners, lawmakers, administrators, developers, business magnates, managers, social workers, non governmental organizations, non profit organizations, and people interested in resolving social issues in general. There is often a great deal of crossover between social research, market research, and other statistical fields.

Areas of sociology

1) **Social organization** is the study of the various institutions, social groups, social stratification, social mobility, bureaucracy, ethnic groups and relations, and other similar subjects such as education, politics, religion, economy and so forth.

2) **Social psychology** is the study of human nature as an outcome of group life, social attitudes, collective behavior, and personality formation. It deals with group life and the individual's traits, attitudes, beliefs as influenced by group life, and it views man with reference to group life.

3) **Social change and disorganization** is the study of the change in culture and social relations and the disruption that may occur in society, and it deals with the study of such current problems in society such as juvenile delinquency, criminality, drug addiction, family conflicts, divorce, population problems, and other similar subjects.

4) **Human ecology** deals with the nature and behavior of a given population and its relationships to the group's present social

institutions. For instance, studies of this kind have shown the prevalence of mental illness, criminality, delinquencies, prostitution, and drug addiction in urban centers and other highly developed places.

5) **Population or demography** is the study of population number, composition, change, and quality as they influence the economic, political, and social system.

6) **Sociological theory and method** is concerned with the applicability and usefulness of the principles and theories of group life as bases for the regulation of man's environment, and includes theory building and testing as bases for the prediction and control of man's social environment.

7) **Applied sociology** utilizes the findings of pure sociological research in various fields such as criminology, social work, community development, education, industrial relations, marriage, ethnic relations, family counseling, and other aspects and problems of daily life.

Scope and topics

Culture

For Simmel, culture referred to "the cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms which have been objectified in the course of history". Whilst early theorists such as Durkheimand Mauss were influential in cultural anthropology, sociologists of culture are generally distinguished by their concern for modern (rather than primitive or ancient) society. Cultural sociology is seldom empirical, preferring instead the hermeneutic analysis of words, artifacts and symbols. The field is closely allied with critical theory in the vein of Theodor W.

Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and other members of the Frankfurt School. Loosely distinct to sociology is the field of cultural studies. Birmingham School theorists such as Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall questioned the division between "producers" and "consumers" evident in earlier theory, emphasizing the reciprocity in the production of texts. Cultural Studies aims to examine its subject matter in terms of cultural practices and their relation to power. For example, a study of a subculture (such as white working class youth in London) would consider the social practices of the group as they relate to the dominant class. The "cultural turn" of the 1960s, which ushered in structure list and so called postmodern approaches to social science and placed culture much higher on the sociological agenda.

Criminality, deviance, law and punishment

Criminologists analyze the nature, causes, and control of criminal activity, drawing upon methods across sociology, psychology, and the behavioral sciences. The sociology of deviance focuses on actions or behaviors that violate norms, including both formally enacted rules (e.g., crime) and informal violations of cultural norms. It is the remit of sociologists to study why these norms exist; how they change over time; and how they are enforced. The concept of deviance is central in contemporary structural functionalism and systems theory. Robert K. Merton produced a typology of deviance, and also established the terms "role model", "unintended consequences", and "self fulfilling prophecy".

The study of law played a significant role in the formation of classical sociology. Durkheim famously described law as the "visible symbol" of social solidarity. The sociology of law refers to both a sub discipline of sociology and an approach within the field of legal studies. Sociology of law is a diverse field of study which examines the interaction of law with other aspects of society, such as the development of legal institutions and the effect of laws on social change and vice versa. For example, an influential recent work in the field relies on statistical analyses to argue that the increase in incarceration in the US over the last 30 years is due to changes in law and policing and not to an increase in crime; and that this increase significantly contributes to maintaining racial stratification.

Economic sociology

The term "economic sociology" was first used by William Stanley Jevons in 1879, later to be coined in the works of Durkheim, Weber and Simmel between 1890 and 1920.[100] Economic sociology arose as a new approach to the analysis of economic phenomena, emphasizing class relations and modernity as a philosophical concept. The relationship between capitalism and modernity is a salient issue,

perhaps best demonstrated in Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1905) and Simmel's The Philosophy of Money (1900). The contemporary period of economic sociology, also known as new economic sociology, was consolidated by the 1985 work of Mark Granovetter titled "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness". This work elaborated the concept of embeddedness, which states that economic relations between individuals or firms take place within existing social relations (and are thus structured by these relations as well as the greater social structures of which those relations are a part). Social network analysis has been the primary methodology for studying this phenomenon. Granovetter's theory of the strength of weak ties andRonald Burt's concept of structural holes are two best known theoretical contributions of this field.

Environment

Environmental sociology is the study of human interactions with the natural environment, typically emphasizing human dimensions of environmental problems, social impacts of those problems, and efforts to resolve them. As with other subfields of sociology, scholarship in environmental sociology may be at one or multiple levels of analysis, from global (e.g. world systems) to local, societal to individual. Attention is paid also to the processes by which environmental problems become *defined* and *known* to humans.

Education

The sociology of education is the study of how educational institutions determine social structures, experiences, and other outcomes. It is particularly concerned with the schooling systems of modern industrial societies. A classic 1966 study in this field by James Coleman, known as the "Coleman Report", analyzed the performance of over 150,000 students and found that student background and socioeconomic status are much more important in determining

educational outcomes than are measured differences in school resources (*i.e.* per pupil spending). The controversy over "school effects" ignited by that study has continued to this day. The study also found that socially disadvantaged black students profited from schooling in racially mixed classrooms, and thus served as a catalyst for desegregation busing in American public schools.

Family, gender, and sexuality

"Rosie the Riveter" was an iconic symbol of the American home front and a departure from gender roles due to wartime necessity.

Family, gender and sexuality form a broad area of inquiry studied in many subfields of sociology. The sociology of the family examines the family, as an institution and unit of socialization, with special concern for the comparatively modern historical emergence of the nuclear family and its distinct gender roles. The notion of "childhood" is also significant. As one of the more basic institutions to which one may apply sociological perspectives, the sociology of the family is a common component on introductory academic curricula. Feminist sociology, on the other hand, is a normative subfield that observes and critiques the cultural categories of gender and sexuality, particularly with respect to power and inequality. The primary concern of feminist theory is the patriarchy and the systematic oppression of women apparent in many societies, both at the level of small scale interaction and in terms of the broader social structure. Feminist sociology also analyses how gender interlocks with race and class to produce and perpetuate social inequalities. "How to account for the differences in definitions of femininity and masculinity and in sex role across different societies and historical periods" is also a concern. Social psychology of gender, on the other hand, uses experimental methods to uncover the micro processes of gender

stratification. For example, one recent study has shown that resume evaluators penalize women for motherhood while giving a boost to men for fatherhood. Another set of experiments showed that men whose sexuality is questioned compensate by expressing a greater desire for military intervention and sport utility vehicles as well as a greater opposition to gay marriage.

Health and illness

The sociology of health and illness focuses on the social effects of, and public attitudes toward, illnesses, diseases, disabilities and the aging process. Medical sociology, by contrast, focuses on the inner workings of medical organizations and clinical institutions. In Britain, sociology was introduced into the medical curriculum following the Goodenough Report (1944).

Internet

The Internet is of interest to sociologists in various ways; most practically as a tool for research and as a discussion platform. The sociology of the Internet in the broad sense regards the analysis of online communities (e.g. newsgroups, social networking sites) and virtual worlds. Online communities may be studied statistically through network analysis or interpreted qualitatively through virtual ethnography. Organizational change is catalyzed through new media, thereby influencing social change at large, perhaps forming the framework for a transformation from an industrial to an informational society. One notable text is Manuel Castles' The Internet Galaxy the title of which forms an inter textual reference to Marshall McLuhan's The Gutenberg Galaxy.

Knowledge and science

The sociology of knowledge is the study of the relationship between human thought and the social context within which it arises, and of the effects prevailing ideas have on societies. The term first came into widespread use in the 1920s, when a number of German speaking

theorists, most notably Max Scheler, and Karl Mannheim, wrote extensively on it. With the dominance of functionalism through the middle years of the 20th century, the sociology of knowledge tended to remain on the periphery of mainstream sociological thought. It was largely reinvented and applied much more closely to everyday life in the 1960s, particularly by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in The Social Construction of Reality(1966) and is still central for methods dealing with qualitative understanding of human society (compare socially constructed reality). The "archaeological" and "genealogical" studies of Michel Foucault are of considerable contemporary influence.

The sociology of science involves the study of science as a social activity, especially dealing "with the social conditions and effects of science, and with the social structures and processes of scientific activity." Important theorists in the sociology of science include Robert K. Merton and Bruno Latour. These branches of sociology have contributed to the formation of science and technology studies.

Literature

Sociology of literature is a subfield of sociology of culture. It studies the social production of literature and its social implications. A notable example is Pierre Bourdieu's 1992 *Les Règles de L'Art: Genèse et Structure du Champ Littéraire*, translated by Susan Emanuel as *Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (1996). None of the founding fathers of sociology produced a detailed study of literature, but they did develop ideas that were subsequently applied to literature by others. Marx's theory of ideology was directed at literature by Pierre Macherey, Terry Eagleton and Fredric Jameson. Weber's theory of modernity as cultural rationalisation, which he applied to music, was later applied to all the arts, literature included, by Frankfurt School writers such as Adorno and Jürgen Habermas. Durkheim's view of sociology as the study of externally defined social facts was redirected

towards literature by Robert Escarpit. Bourdieu's own work is clearly indebted to Marx, Weber and Durkheim.

Media

As with cultural studies, media study is a distinct discipline which owes to the convergence of sociology and other social sciences and humanities, in particular, literary criticism and critical theory. Though the production process or the critique of aesthetic forms is not in the remit of sociologists, analyses of socialising factors, such as ideological effects and audience reception, stem from sociological theory and method. Thus the 'sociology of the media' is not a sub discipline per se, but the media is a common and often indispensable topic.

Military

Military sociology aims toward the systematic study of the military as a social group rather than as an organization. It is a highly specialized subfield which examines issues related to service personnel as a distinct group with coerced collective action based on shared interests linked to survival in vocation and combat, with purposes and values that are more defined and narrow than within civil society. Military sociology also concerns civilian military relations and interactions between other groups or governmental agencies. Topics include the dominant assumptions held by those in the military, changes in military members' willingness to fight, military unionization, military professionalism, the increased utilization of women, the military industrial academic complex, the military's dependence on research, and the institutional and organizational structure of military.

Political sociology

Historically political sociology concerned the relations between political organization and society. A

typical research question in this area might be: "Why do so few American citizens choose to vote?" In this respect questions of political opinion formation brought about some of the pioneering uses of statistical survey research by Paul Lazars field. A major subfield of political sociology developed in relation to such questions, which draws on comparative history to analyze socio political trends. The field developed from the work of Max Weber and MoiseyOstrogorsky.

Contemporary political sociology includes these areas of research, but it has been opened up to wider questions of power and politics. Today political sociologists are as likely to be concerned with how identities are formed that contribute to structural domination by one group over another; the politics of who knows how and with what authority; and questions of how power is contested in social interactions in such a way as to bring about widespread cultural and social change. Such questions are more likely to be studied qualitatively. The study of social movements and their effects has been especially important in relation to these wider definitions of politics and power.
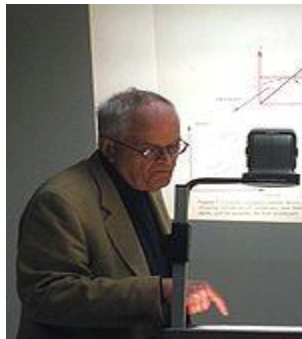
Race and ethnic relations

The sociology of race and of ethnic relations is the area of the discipline that studies the social, political, and economic relations between races and ethnicities at   all levels of society. This area encompasses the study of racism, residential segregation, and other complex social processes between different racial and ethnic groups. This research frequently interacts with other areas of sociology such as stratification and social psychology, as well as with postcolonial theory. At the level of political policy, ethnic relations are discussed in terms   of either assimilations or multiculturalism. Anti   racism forms another style of policy, particularly popular in the 1960s and 70s.

Religion

The sociology of religion concerns the practices, historical backgrounds, developments, universal themes and roles of religion in

society. There is particular emphasis on the recurring role of religion in all societies and throughout recorded history. The sociology of religion is distinguished from the philosophy of religion in that sociologists do not set out to assess the validity of religious truth claims, instead assuming what Peter L. Berger has described as a position of "methodological atheism". It may be said that the modern formal discipline of sociology began with the analysis of religion in Durkheim's 1897 study of suicide rates amongst Roman Catholic and Protestant populations. Max Weber published four major texts on religion in a context of economic sociology and his rationalization thesis: The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1905), The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism (1915), The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism (1915), and Ancient Judaism (1920). Contemporary debates often center on topics such as secularization, civil religion, and the role of religion in a context of globalization and multiculturalism.

Social networks

A social network is a social structure composed of individuals (or organizations) called "nodes", which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships, or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige. Social networks operate on many levels, from families up to the level of nations, and play a critical role in determining the way problems are solved, organizations are run, and the degree to which individuals succeed in achieving their goals. Social network analysis makes no assumption that groups are the building blocks of society: the approach is open to studying less bounded social systems, from non local communities to networks of exchange. Rather than treating individuals (persons, organizations, states) as discrete units of analysis,

444

it focuses on how the structure of ties affects individuals and their relationships. In contrast to analyses that assume that socialization into norms determines behavior, network analysis looks to see the extent to which the structure and composition of ties affect norms. Unlike most other areas of sociology, social network theory is usually defined in formal mathematics.

Social psychology

Sociological social psychology focuses on micro scale social actions. This area may be described as adhering to "sociological miniaturism", examining whole societies through the study of individual thoughts and emotions as well as behavior of small groups. Of special concern to psychological sociologists is how to explain a variety of demographic, social, and cultural facts in terms of human social interaction. Some of the major topics in this field are social inequality, group dynamics, prejudice, aggression, social perception, group behavior, social change, nonverbal behavior, socialization, conformity, leadership, and social identity. Social psychology may be taught with psychological emphasis. In sociology, researchers in this field are the most prominent users of the experimental method (however, unlike their psychological counterparts, they also frequently employ other methodologies). Social psychology looks at social influences, as well as social perception and social interaction.

Stratification

Social stratification is the hierarchical arrangement of individuals into social classes, castes, and divisions within a society. Modern Western societies stratification traditionally relates to cultural and economic classes arranged in three main layers: upper class, middle class, and lower class, but each class may be further subdivided into smaller classes (e.g. occupational). Social stratification is interpreted in radically different ways within sociology. Proponents of structural functionalism suggest that, since the stratification of classes

and castes is evident in all societies, hierarchy must be beneficial in stabilizing their existence. Conflict theorists, by contrast, critique the inaccessibility of resources and lack of social mobility in stratified societies.

Karl Marx distinguished social classes by their connection to the means of production in the capitalist system: the bourgeoisie own the means, but this effectively includes the proletariat itself as the workers can only sell their own labour power (forming the material base of the cultural superstructure). Max Weber critiqued Marxist economic determinism, arguing that social stratification is not based purely on economic inequalities, but on other status and power differentials (e.g. patriarchy). According to Weber, stratification may occur amongst at least three complex variables: (1) Property (class): A person's economic position in a society, based on birth and individual achievement. Weber differs from Marx in that he does not see this as the supreme factor in stratification. Weber noted how managers of corporations or industries control firms they do not own; Marx would have placed such a person in the proletariat. (2) Prestige (status): A person's prestige, or popularity in a society. This could be determined by the kind of job this person does or wealth. and (3) Power (political party): A person's ability to get their way despite the resistance of others. For example, individuals in state jobs, such as an employee of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or a member of the United States Congress, may hold little property or status but they still hold immense power Pierre Bourdieu provides a modern example in the concepts of cultural and symbolic capital. Theorists such as Ralf Dahrendorf have noted the tendency toward an enlarged middle class in modern Western societies, particularly in relation to the necessity of an educated work force in technological or service based economies. Perspectives concerning globalization, such as dependency theory, suggest this effect owes to the shift of workers to the Third World.

Urban and rural sociology

Urban sociology involves the analysis of social life and human interaction in metropolitan areas. It is a discipline seeking to provide advice for planning and policy making. After the industrial revolution, works such as Georg Simmel's The Metropolis and Mental Life (1903) focused on urbanization and the effect it had on alienation and anonymity. In the 1920s and 1930s The Chicago School produced a major body of theory on the nature of the city, important to both urban sociology and criminology, utilising symbolic interactionism as a method of field research. Contemporary research is commonly placed in a context of globalization, for instance, in Saskia Sassen's study of the "Global city". Rural sociology, by contrast, is the analysis of non-metropolitan areas.

Work and industry

The sociology of work, or industrial sociology, examines "the direction and implications of trends in technological change, globalization, labour markets, work organization, managerial practices and employment relations to the extent to which these trends are intimately related to changing patterns of inequality in modern societies and to the changing experiences of individuals and families the ways in which workers challenge, resist and make their own contributions to the patterning of work and shaping of work institutions."

Sociology and the other academic disciplines

Sociology overlaps with a variety of disciplines that study society, in particular anthropology, political science, economics, and social philosophy. Many comparatively new fields such as communication studies, cultural studies, demography and literary theory, draw upon methods that originated in sociology. The terms "social science" and "social research" have both gained a degree of autonomy since their origination in classical sociology. The distinct field

of social psychology emerged from the many intersections of sociological and psychological interests, and is further distinguished in terms of sociological or psychological emphasis.

Sociology and applied sociology are connected to the professional and academic discipline of social work. Both disciplines study social interactions, community and the effect of various systems (i.e. family, school, community, laws, and political sphere) on the individual. However, social work is generally more focused on practical strategies to alleviate social dysfunctions; sociology in general provides a thorough examination of the root causes of these problems.[132] For example, a sociologist might study why a community is plagued with poverty. The applied sociologist would be more focused on practical strategies on what needs to be done to alleviate this burden. The social worker would be focused on action; implementing these strategies "directly" or "indirectly" by means of mental health therapy, counseling, advocacy, community organization or community mobilization.

Social anthropology is the branch of anthropology that studies how contemporary living human beings behave in social groups. Practitioners of social anthropology, like sociologists, investigate various facets of social organization. Traditionally, social anthropologists analyses non industrial and non-Western societies, whereas sociologists focused on industrialized societies in the Western world. In recent years, however, social anthropology has expanded its focus to modern Western societies, meaning that the two disciplines increasingly converge.

Sociobiology is the study of how social behavior and organization have been influenced by evolution and other biological process. The field blends sociology with a number of other sciences, such as anthropology, biology, and zoology. Sociobiology has generated controversy within the sociological academy for allegedly giving too much attention to gene expression over socialization and environmental

factors in general (see 'nature versus nurture'). Entomologist E. O. Wilson is credited as having originally developed and described Sociobiology.

Irving Louis Horowitz, in his The Decomposition of Sociology (1994), has argued that the discipline, whilst arriving from a "distinguished lineage and tradition", is in decline due to deeply ideological theory and a lack of relevance to policy making: "The decomposition of sociology began when this great tradition became subject to ideological thinking, and an inferior tradition surfaced in the wake of totalitarian triumphs." Furthermore: "A problem yet unmentioned is that sociology's malaise has left all the social sciences vulnerable to pure positivism to an empiricism lacking any theoretical basis. Talented individuals who might, in an earlier time, have gone into sociology are seeking intellectual stimulation in business, law, the natural sciences, and even creative writing; this drains sociology of much needed potential."[136] Horowitz cites the lack of a 'core discipline' as exacerbating the problem. Randall Collins, the Dorothy Swaine Thomas Professor in Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania and a member of the Advisory Editors Council of the Social Evolution & History journal, has voiced similar sentiments: "we have lost all coherence as a discipline, we are breaking up into a conglomerate of specialties, each going on its own way and with none too high regard for each other."

In 2007, The Times Higher Education Guide published a list of 'The most cited authors of books in the Humanities' (including philosophy and psychology). Seven of the top ten are listed as sociologists: Michel Foucault (1), Pierre Bourdieu(2), Anthony Giddens (5), Erving Goffman (6), Jürgen Habermas (7), Max Weber (8), and Bruno Latour (10).

Journals

The most highly ranked general journals which publish original research in the field of sociology are the American Journal of Sociology and the American Sociological Review. The Annual Review of Sociology, which publishes literature reviews, is also highly ranked. Many other generalist and specialized journals exist.

Sociological theory

In sociology, sociological theories are statements of how and why particular facts about the social world are related. They range in scope from concise descriptions of a single social process to paradigms for analysis and interpretation. Some sociological theories explain aspects of the social world and enable prediction about future events, while others function as broad perspectives which guide further sociological analyses.

Sociological theory vs. social theory

Kenneth Allan proposed the distinction between sociological theory and social theory. In Allan's usage, sociological theory consists of abstract and testable propositions about society. It often heavily relies on the scientific method, which aims for objectivity, and attempts to avoid passing value judgments. In contrast, social theory, according to Allan, focuses on commentary and critique of modern society rather than explanation.[4] Social theory is often closer to Continental philosophy, less concerned with objectivity and derivation of testable propositions, and more likely to pass normative judgments. Sociological theory is generally created only by sociologists, while social theory can frequently come from other disciplines.

Prominent sociological theorists include Talcott Parsons, Robert K. Merton, Randall Collins, James Samuel Coleman, Peter Blau, Marshal McLuhan, Immanuel Wallerstein, George Homans, Harrison White, Theda Skocpol, Gerhard Lenski,Pierre van den

Berghe and Jonathan H. Turner. Prominent social theorists include: Jürgen Habermas, Anthony Giddens, Michel Foucault, Dorothy Smith, Alfred Schütz, Jeffrey Alexander, and Jacques Derrida. There are also prominent scholars who could be seen as being in between social and sociological theories, such as Harold Garfinkel, Herbert Blumer, Claude Lévi Strauss, Pierre Bourdieu and Erving Goffman.

History of sociological theories

The field of sociology itself and sociological theory by extension is relatively new. Both date back to the 18th and 19th centuries. The drastic social changes of that period, such as industrialization, urbanization, and the rise of democratic states. The oldest sociological theories deal with broad historical processes relating to these changes. Since then, sociological theories have come to encompass most aspects of society, including communities, organizations and relationships.

List of sociological theories

Social conflict is the struggle between segments of society over valued resources. Due to social conflict, it turned a small population into capitalists in the nineteenth century. Capitalists, are people who own and operate factories and other businesses in pursuit of profits. However, capitalism turned most people into industrial workers, whom Marx called proletarians. Proletarians are people who sell their labour for wages. Conflict theories draw attention to power differentials, such as class, gender and race conflict, and contrast historically dominant ideologies. It is therefore a macro level analysis of society that sees society as an arena of inequality that generates conflict and social change.[8] Karl Marx is the father of the social conflict theory, which is a component of the four major paradigms of sociology.[citation needed] Other important sociologists associated with this theory include Harriet Martineau, Jane Addams and W.E.B. Du Bois. This sociological approach doesn't look at how social structures help society

to operate, but instead looks at how "social patterns" can cause some people in society to be dominant, and others to be oppressed. However, some criticisms to this theory are that it disregards how shared values and the way in which people rely on each other help to unify the society.

Structural functionalism or Functionalism is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social structures that shapes society as a whole. This approach looks at both social structure and social functions. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions and institutions. Important sociologists associated with this approach include Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, Herbert Spencer, Talcott Parsons, and Robert K. Merton. A common analogy, popularized by Herbert Spencer, presents these parts of society as "organs" that work toward the proper functioning of the "body" as a whole. A criticism for this approach is that it disregards any inequalities that exists within a society, which in turn causes tension and conflict and the approach ends up being politically conservative. So in order to focus on this topic, the social conflict theory was made.

Interpretivism or Symbolic interaction; also known as Interactionism, is a sociological theory that places emphasis on micro scale social interaction to provide subjective meaning in human behavior, the social process and pragmatism. The approach focuses on creating a framework for building a theory that sees society as the product of the everyday interactions of individuals. Society is nothing more than the shared reality that people construct as they interact with one another.] This approach sees people interacting in countless settings using symbolic communications. Therefore, society is a complex, ever changing mosaic of subjective meanings. However some criticisms to this approach are that it only looks at what is happening in

one particular social situation, and disregards the effects that culture, race or gender may have on the people in that situation. Some important sociologists associated with this approach include Max Weber, George Herbert Mead, Erving Goffman, George Homans and Peter Blau.

Contemporary perspectives

Positivism is a philosophy developed by Auguste Comte (widely regarded as the first true sociologist) in the middle of the 19th century that stated that the only authentic knowledge is scientific knowledge, and that such knowledge can only come from positive affirmation of theories through strict scientific method. Society operates according to laws like the physical world. Introspective and intuitional attempts to gain knowledge are rejected. The positivist approach has been a recurrent theme in the history of western thought, from the Ancient Egyptians to the present day.

Anti positivism (also non positivist or interpretive sociology) is the view in social science that the social realm may not be subject to the same methods of investigation as the natural world; that academics must reject empiricism and the scientific method in the conduct of social research. Interpretivists hold that researchers should focus on understanding the meanings that social actions have for the people being studied.

Field theory examines social fields, which are social environments in which competition takes place (e.g., the field of electronics manufacturers). It is concerned with how individuals construct such fields, with how the fields are structured, and with the effects the field has on people occupying different positions in it.

Middle Range theory is an approach to sociological theorizing aimed at integrating theory and empirical research, developed by Robert K. Merton. It is currently the de facto dominant approach to sociological theory construction, especially in the United States. Middle range

theory starts with an empirical phenomenon (as opposed to a broad abstract entity like the social system) and abstracts from it to create general statements that can be verified by data.

Mathematical theory, also known as formal theory, is the use of mathematics to construct social theories. Mathematical sociology aims to take sociological theory, which is strong in intuitive content but weak from a formal point of view, and to express it in formal terms. The benefits of this approach include increased clarity and the ability to use mathematics to derive implications of a theory that cannot be arrived at intuitively. The models typically used in mathematical sociology allow sociologists to understand how predictable local interactions are often able to elicit global patterns of social structure.

Socialization is the means by which human infants begin to acquire the skills necessary to perform as a functional member of their society, and are among the most influential learning processes one can experience. Sociologists use the term socialization to refer to the lifelong social experience by which people develop their human potential and learn culture. Unlike other living species, humans need socialization within their cultures for survival.

Structure and agency theory – The question over the primacy of either structure or agency in human behavior is a central debate in the social sciences. In this context, agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices. Structure, in contrast, refers to the recurrent patterned arrangements which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available.

Critical theory is any sociological theory that aims to critique and change society and culture, not simply to document and understand it.

Ethno methodology examines how people make sense out of their social lives in the process of living, as if each individual were a researcher engaged in inquiry. It is the study of how people attempt to make sense of their everyday surroundings. Harold Garfinkel (1967) is

the one who devised this approach. It begins by pointing out that everyday behavior rests on a number of assumptions. Those assumptions are usually predictable due to the reaction of people or their behavior in everyday reality.

Interpretive sociology is a theoretical perspective based on the work of Max Weber, proposes that social, economic and historical research can never be fully empirical or descriptive as one must always approach it with a conceptual apparatus.

Network theory is a structural approach to sociology that is most closely associated with the work of Harrison White, who views norms and behaviors as embedded in chains of social relations.

Phenomenological sociology is an approach within the field of sociology that aims to reveal what role human awareness plays in the production of social action, social situations and social worlds. In essence, phenomenology is the belief that society is a human construction. The social phenomenology of Alfred Schütz influenced the development of the social constructionist and ethno methodology. It was originally developed by Edmund Husserl.

Post colonial theory is a post modern approach that consists of the reactions to and the analysis of colonialism.

Rational choice theory models social behavior as the interaction of utility maximizing individuals. "Rational" implies cost effectiveness is balanced against cost to accomplish a utility maximizing interaction. Costs are extrinsic; meaning intrinsic values such as feelings of guilt will not be accounted for in the cost to commit a crime.

Social constructionist is a sociological theory of knowledge that considers how social phenomena develop in particular social contexts.

Dramaturgy or Dramaturgical Perspective is a specialized symbolic interactions paradigm developed by Erving Goffman, seeing life as a performance. As "actors," we have a status, which is the part that we play, where we are given various roles. These roles serve as a

script, supplying dialogue and action for the characters (the people in reality). They also involve props and certain settings. For instance, a doctor (the role), uses instruments like a heart monitor (the prop), all the while using medical terms (the script), while in his doctor's office (the setting).In addition, our performance is the "presentation of self," which is how people perceive us, based on the ways in which we portray ourselves. This process, sometimes called impression management, begins with the idea of personal performance.

Anomie theory, also known as normlessness, is where society provides little moral guidance to individuals. It is difficult for individuals to find their place in the society without clear rules or norms to help guide them. Sociologist Emile Durkheim observed that social period of disruption. The economic depression results in greater anomie and higher rates of suicide and crimes.] Merton theorizes that anomie (normative breakdown) and some forms of deviant behavior derive largely from a disjunction between "culturally prescribed aspirations" of a society and "socially structured avenues for realizing those aspirations. In other words, a gap between people's aspirations and their access to legitimate means of achieving them results in a breakdown of values, at both societal and individual levels. In The Division of Labor in Society, Durkheim described anomie as one result of an inequitable division of labour within the society; such inequality, Durkheim wrote, causes a breakdown or lack of rules in society and results in class conflict. In Suicide, Durkheim viewed anomie as an outcome of rapid social and economic change and hypothesized that it explained a particular kind of suicide that occurs when individuals experience marked and sudden changes in their social condition. Broadly speaking, then, during times of great upheaval, increasing numbers of individuals' 'cease to accept the moral legitimacy of society," as sociologist Anthony R. Mawson, University of Keele, UK, notes.

Grounded theory is a systematic methodology in the social sciences involving the generation of theory from data.

Thomas theorem refers to situations that are defined as real are real in their consequences. Suggests that the reality people construct in their interaction has real consequences for the future. For example, a teacher who believes a certain student to be intellectually gifted may well encourage exceptional academic performance.

Social Exchange Theory says that the interaction that occurs between people can be partly based on what someone may "gain and lose" by being with others. For example, when people think about who they may date, they'll look to see if they other person will offer just as much (or perhaps more) than they do. This can include judging an individual's looks and appearance, or their social status.

Feminism is a collection of movements aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights for women. The theory focuses on how gender inequality shapes social life. This approach shows how sexuality both reflects patterns of social inequality and helps to perpetuate them. Feminism, from a social conflict perspective, focuses on gender inequality and links sexuality to the domination of women by men.

Postmodernism is a theoretical perspective approach that criticizes modernism and believes anti theory and anti method and has a great mistrust of grand theories and ideologies. Due to human subjectivity, theorists believe that discovering the objective truth is impossible or unachievable.] This is due to a perspective that sees society as ever changing along with the assumption that truth is constantly subject to change. A post modern theorist's purpose is to achieve understanding through observation, rather than data collection. This approach uses both micro and macro level analysis. A question that is asked by this approach would be, "How do we understand societies or interpersonal relations, while rejecting the theories and methods of the

social sciences, and our assumptions about human nature? or How does power permeate social relations or society, and change with the circumstances? " An example of a famous Post Modernist is MichaelFoucault. He was a French philosopher and one of the most influential post modernist of all time.

Pure sociology is a theoretical paradigm developed by Donald Black that explains variation in social life with social geometry, that is, locations in social space. A recent extension of this idea is that fluctuations in social space called social time are the cause of social conflict.

Theories in subfields of sociology

Criminology

Criminology the scientific study of crime and criminals.

The general theory of crime: States that the main factor behind criminal behavior is the individual's lack of self control. Differential association theory: The theory was developed by Edwin Sutherland and it examines the acts of a criminal from the perspective that they are learned behaviors.

Labeling theory: It is the main idea that deviance and conformity result not so much from what people do as from how others respond to these actions. It also states that a society's reaction to specific behaviors are a major determinant of how a person may come to adopt a "deviant" label.[45] This theory stresses the relativity of deviance, the idea that people may define the same behavior in any number of ways. Thus the labelling theory is a micro level analysis and is often classified in the

social interactionist approach.Bryant, Lee. "The Labelling Theory", History Learning Site, 2000 2012, retrieved March 13, 2013.

Control theory: The theory was developed by Travis Hirschi and it states that a weak bond between an individual and society itself allows the individual to defy societal norms and adopt behaviors that are deviant in nature.

Rational choice theory: States that people commit crimes when it is rational for them to do so according to analyses of costs and benefits, and that crime can be reduced by minimizing benefits and maximizing costs to the "would be" criminal.

Social disorganization theory: States that crime is more likely to occur in areas where social institutions are unable to directly control groups of individuals.

Social learning theory: States that people adopt new behaviors through observational learning in their environments.

Strain theory: States that a social structure within a society may cause people to commit crimes. Specifically, the extent and type of deviance people engage in depend on whether a society provides the means to achieve cultural goals.

Sub cultural theory: States that behavior is influenced by factors such as class, ethnicity, and family status. This theory's primary focus is on juvenile delinquency.

Psychopath: serious criminals who do not feel shame or guilt from their actions. They do not fear punishment and have little sympathy for the people they harm. These individuals are said to have a psychological disorder as psychopathic or antisocial personality disorder. They exhibit a variety of maladaptive traits such as rarely experiencing genuine affection for others. They are skilled at faking affection, are irresponsible, impulsive, tolerate little frustration and they pursue immediate gratification. Robert Hare, one of the world's leading experts on psychopathic, developed an important assessment device for

psychopathic, the Psychopath Checklist Revised. For many, this measure is the single, most important advancement to date toward what will hopefully become our ultimate understanding of psychopathic (McCann, Weiten, 641).

Containment theory: when an individual has a stronger conscience it will make one more tolerable to frustrations and therefore are less likely to be involved in criminal activities.

White collar crime: defined by Edwin Sutherland as crime committed by persons of high social position in the course of their occupation (Sutherland and Cressey, 1978:44). The white collar crime involves people making use of their occupational position to enrich themselves and others illegally, which often causes public harm. In white collar crime, public harm wreaked by false advertising, marketing of unsafe products, embezzlement, and bribery of public officials is more extensive than most people think, most of which go unnoticed and unpunished.

Corporate crime: refers to the illegal actions of a corporation or people acting on its behalf. Corporate crime ranges from knowingly selling faulty or dangerous products to purposely polluting the environment. Like white collar crime, most cases of corporate crime go unpunished, and many are not ever even known to the public.

Organized crime: a business that supplies illegal goods or services, including sex, drugs, and gambling. This type of crime expanded among immigrants, who found that society was not always willing to share its opportunities with them. A famous example of organized crime is the Italian Mafia.

Hate crime: a criminal act against a person or a person's property by an offender motivated by racial, ethnic, religious or other bias. Hate crimes may refer to race, ancestry, religion, sexual orientation and physical disabilities. According to a Statistics Canada publication, "Jewish" community has been the most likely the victim of hate crime in

Canada during 2001 2002. Overall, about 57 percent of hate crimes are motivated by ethnicity and race, targeting mainly Blacks and Asians, while 43 percent target religion, mainly Judaism and Islam. A relatively small 9 percent is motivated by sexual orientation, targets gays and lesbians.

Physical traits do not distinguish criminals from non criminals, but genetic factors together with environmental factors are strong predictors of adult crime and violence. Most psychologists see deviance as the result of "unsuccessful" socialization and abnormality in an individual personality.

Sociology of science and technology

Sociologists have been active in developing theories about the nature of science and technology:

- ✓ "Institutional" sociology of science (Robert K. Merton) (1960s)
- ✓ Social construction of technology (1980s) – variant of SSK focusing on technology studies.
- ✓ Actor network theory (1980s)
- ✓ Normalization process theory (2000s)
- ✓ Theories of technology

Social movements

American Civil Rights Movement is one of the most famous social movements of the 20th century. Here, Martin Luther King is giving his "I Have a Dream" speech, in front of the Lincoln Memorial during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

Sociologists have developed various theories about social movements [Kendall, 2005]. Chronologically (by approximate date of origin) they

Include:

- ✓ Collective behavior/collective action theories (1950s)
- ✓ Relative deprivation theory (1960s)

- ✓ Value added theory (1960s)
- ✓ Resource mobilization/Political process theory (1970s)
- ✓ Frame analysis theory (1970s)
- ✓ New social movement theory (1980s)
- ✓ New cultural theory (1990s) James M. Jasper, Jeff Goodwin et al.

Structure and agency

In the social sciences there is a standing debate over the primacy of structure or agency in shaping human behavior. Agency is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices. Structure is the recurrent patterned arrangements which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available. The structure versus agency debate may be understood as an issue of socialization against autonomy in determining whether an individual acts as a free agent or in a manner dictated by social structure.

The debate over the primacy of structure or agency relates to an issue at the heart of both classical and contemporary sociological theory: the question of social ontology: "What is the social world made of?" "What is a cause of the social world, and what is an effect?" "Do social structures determine an individual's behaviour or does human agency?"

For functionalists such as Émile Durkheim, structure and hierarchy are essential in stabilising the very existence of society. Theorists such as Karl Marx, by contrast, emphasise that the social structure can act to the detriment of the majority of individuals in a society. In both these instances "structure" may refer to something both material (and "economic") and cultural (e.g. related to norms, customs, traditions and ideologies).

Some theorists put forward that what we know as our social existence is largely determined by the overall structure of society. The perceived agency of individuals can also mostly be explained by the operation of this structure. Theoretical systems aligned with this view

include: structuralism, and some forms of functionalism and Marxism (all of which in this context can be seen as forms of holism   the notion that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts"). In the reverse of the first position, other theorists stress the capacity of individual "agents" to construct and reconstruct their worlds. Theoretical systems aligned with this view include: methodological individualism, social phenomenology, interactionism and ethno methodology.

Lastly, a third option, taken by many modern social theorists (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990), is to attempt to find a point of balance between the two previous positions. They see structure and agency as complementary forces   structure influences human behavior, and humans are capable of changing the social structures they inhabit. Structuration is one prominent example of this view.

The first approach (emphasizing the importance of societal structure) was dominant in classical sociology. Theorists saw unique aspects of the social world that could not be explained simply by the sum of the individuals present. Émile Durkheim strongly believed that the collective had emergent properties of its own and that there was a need for a science which would deal with this emergence. The second approach (methodological individualism, etc.), however, also has a well established position in social science. Many theorists still follow this course (e.g., economists are very prone to disregarding any kind of holism).

The central debate, therefore, is between theorists committed to the notions of methodological holism and those committed to methodological individualism. The first notion, methodological holism, is the idea that actors are socialised and embedded into social structures and institutions that constrain, or enable, and generally shape the individuals' dispositions towards, and capacities for, action, and that this social structure should be taken as primary and most significant. The second notion, methodological individualism, is the idea

that actors are the central theoretical and ontological elements in social systems, and social structure is an epiphenomenon, a result and consequence of the actions and activities of interacting individuals.

Major theorists

Georg Simmel

Georg Simmel (March 1, 1858 – September 28, 1918, Berlin, Germany) was one of the first generation of German non positivist sociologists. His studies pioneered the concepts of social structure and agency. His most famous works today include The Metropolis and Mental Life and The Philosophy of Money.

Norbert Elias

Norbert Elias (June 22, 1897 — August 1, 1990) was a German sociologist whose work focused on the relationship between power, behavior, emotion, and knowledge over time. He significantly shaped what is called "process sociology" or "figuration sociology."

Talcott Parsons

Talcott Parsons (December 13, 1902 – May 8, 1979) was an American sociologist and the main theorist of action theory (misleadingly called "structural functionalism") in sociology from the 1930s in the United States. His works analyze social structure but in terms of voluntary action and through patterns of normative institutionalisation by codifying its theoretical gestalt into a system theoretical framework based on the idea of living systems and cybernetic hierarchy. For Parsons there is no "structure" "agency" problem. It is a pseudo problem.

Pierre Bourdieu

Pierre Bourdieu (1 August 1930 – 23 January 2002) was a French theorist who presented his theory of practice on the dichotomical understanding of the relation between agency and structure in a great number of published articles, beginning with An Outline of the Theory of Practice in 1972, where he presented the concept of habitus. His

book Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (1979), was named as one of the 20th century's 10 most important works of sociology by the International Sociological Association.

The key concepts in Bourdieu's work are habitus, field, and capital. The agent is socialized in a "field", an evolving set of roles and relationships in a social domain, where various forms of "capital" such as prestige or financial resources are at stake. As the agent accommodates to his or her roles and relationships in the context of his or her position in the field, the agent internalises relationships and expectations for operating in that domain. These internalised relationships and habitual expectations and relationships form, over time, the habitus.

Bourdieu's work attempts to reconcile structure and agency, as external structures are internalised into the habitus while the actions of the agent externalise interactions between actors into the social relationships in the field. Bourdieu's theory, therefore, is a dialectic between "externalising the internal", and "internalising the external."

Berger and Luckmann

Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in their Social Construction of Reality (1966) saw the relationships between structure and agency as a dialectical one. Society forms the individuals who create society forming a continuous loop.

James Coleman

James Samuel Coleman's Coleman boat provides a link between macro sociological phenomena and individual behavior. A macro level phenomenon is described as instigating particular actions by individuals, which results in a subsequent macro level phenomenon. In this way, individual action is taken in reference to a macro sociological structure, and that action (by many individuals) results in change to that macro structure.

Anthony Giddens

Contemporary sociology has generally aimed toward a reconciliation of structure and agency as concepts. Anthony Giddens's developed "Structuration Theory" in such works as The Constitution of Society (1984). He presents a developed attempt to move beyond the dualism of structure and agency and argues for the "duality of structure" where social structure is both the medium and the outcome of social action. For Giddens, an agent's common interaction with structure, as a system of norms, is described as "structuration". The term "reflexivity" is used to refer to the ability of an agent to consciously alter his or her place in the social structure; thus globalization and the emergence of the 'post traditional' society might be said to allow for "greater social reflexivity". Social and political sciences are therefore important because social knowledge, as self knowledge, is potentially emancipator.

Roberto Unger

Social theorist and legal philosopher Roberto Mangabeira Unger developed the thesis of negative capability to address this problem of agency in relation to structure. In his work on false necessity or anti necessitation social theory Unger recognizes the constraints of structure and its molding influence upon the individual, but at the same time finds the individual able to resist, deny, and transcend their context. The varieties of this resistance are negative capability. Unlike other theories of structure and agency, negative capability does not reduce the individual to a simple actor possessing only the dual capacity of compliance or rebellion, but rather sees him as able to partake in a variety of activities of self empowerment.

Recent developments

The critical realist structure/agency perspective embodied in the Transformational Model of Social Action (TMSA) has been further

advocated and applied in other social science fields by additional authors, for example in economics by Tony Lawson and in sociology by Margaret Archer. In 2005, the Journal of Management Studies debated the merits of critical realism.

Kenneth Wilkinson in the Community in Rural America took an interactional/field theoretical perspective focusing on the role of community agency in contributing to the emergence of community.

With Critical Psychology as a framework, the Danish psychologist Ole Dreier, proposes in his book Psychotherapy in Everyday Life that we may best conceptualize persons as participants in social practices (that constitute social structures) who can either reproduce or change these social practices. This indicates that neither participants, nor social practices can be understood when looked at in isolation (in fact, this undermines the very idea of trying to do so), since practice and structure is co created by participants and since the participants can only be called so, if they participate in a social practice.

The structure/agency debate continues to evolve, with contributions such as Nicos Mouzelis's Sociological Theory: What Went Wrong? and Margaret Archer's Realist Social Theory: The Morphogenetic Approach continuing to push the ongoing development of structure/agency theory. Work in information systems by Mutch (2010) has emphasized Archer's Realist Social Theory. In entrepreneurship a discussion between Sarason et al. and Mole and Mole (2010) used Archer's theory to critique structuration by arguing that starting a new business organization needs to be understood in the context of social structure and agency. However, this depends upon one's view of structure, which differs between Giddens and Archer. Hence if strata in social reality have different ontologies, then they must be viewed as a dualism. Moreover, agents have causal power, and ultimate concerns which they try to fallibly put into practice. Mole and Mole propose entrepreneurship as the study of the interplay between the structures of a society and the agents within it.

A European problem?

While the structure/agency debate has been a central issue in social theory, and recent theoretical reconciliation attempts have been made, structure/agency theory has tended to develop more in European countries by European theorists, while social theorists from the United States have tended to focus instead on the issue of integration between macrosociological and microsociological perspectives. George Ritzer examines these issues (and surveys the structure agency debate) in greater detail in his book Modern Sociological Theory (2000).

How is society like the human body? Find out in this lesson as you read about Herbert Spencer and Robert Merton, thinkers who contributed to the theory of structural functionalism. Read about key elements of the theory and test your knowledge with a quiz.
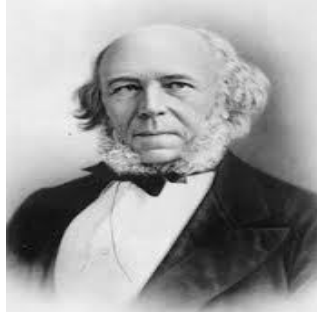
Definition

Structural functionalism, or simply functionalism, is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. Two theorists, Herbert Spencer and Robert Merton, were major contributors to this perspective. Important concepts in functionalism include social structure, social functions, manifest functions and latent functions. Let's examine this perspective deeper and take a look at a few examples.

Social Structure and Social Functions

The structural functional approach is a perspective in sociology that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. It asserts that our lives are guided by social structures, which are relatively stable patterns of social behavior. Social structures give shape to our lives   in families, the community, and through religious organizations. Certain rituals, such as a handshake or complex religious ceremonies, give structure to our everyday lives. Each social structure has social functions, or

consequences, for the operation of society as a whole. Education, for example, has several important functions in a society, such as socialization, learning, and social placement.

Herbert Spencer (1820 1903) was an English philosopher. Spencer compared society to a human body. In the same way each part of the body works in harmony with other parts, each part of society works in harmony with all other parts. If we want to understand the importance of the heart for helping the body function properly, we need to understand how it relates to other parts of the body. Similarly, if we analyze the functions of some aspect of society, such as education, we can learn how it impacts the other parts of the system. Functionalists emphasize that order and balance are the normal state of society   and a disruption in one part of the system will certainly disrupt other parts. What would happen to other social institutions if the entire educational system became dismantled?

Robert Merton

Robert King Merton (1910   2003) was an American sociologist. Merton distinguished between manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions are those intended consequences of a social activity. Latent functions are the unintended consequences of a social activity. The obvious and intended consequence of education is learning. What about those consequences that is not so obvious? How many parents look forward to school starting in the fall because it provides free daycare? While learning is a manifest function, free daycare would be a latent, or unintended, function of education.

Summary

Structural functionalism is a macro level orientation, concerned with broad patterns that shape society as a whole. Functionalists view society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. Key theorists include Herbert Spencer and Robert Merton. Key elements are social structures and social functions. Social structure refers to any relatively stable pattern of social behavior found in social institutions, while social functions refer to the consequences for the operation of society as a whole. Sociologists also distinguish between manifest, or intended, functions and latent, or unintended, functions.

Systems theory

Although sociological institutionalism can resemble interpretive theories, it often exhibits a distinctive debt to organizational theory. At times its exponents conceive of cognitive and symbolic schemes not as intersubjective understandings but as properties of organizations. Instead of reducing such schemes to the relevant actors, they conceive of them as a kind of system based on its own...

Systems analysis

...abstractions of little explanatory or predictive power. (In international politics, however, systems approaches remained important.) On closer examination, the "conversion process" of systems theory—i.e., the transformation of inputs into outputs—struck many as simply plain old "politics." Another problem was that much of systems theory took as its norm and...

There are many differences between macro and micro level theories. Micro level focuses on individuals and their interactions. For example the relationship between adult children and their parents, or the effect of negative attitudes on older people. Some criticize on micro level theories because they focus on what older people do rather than on social conditions and policies that causes them to act the way they do.

Macro level focuses more upon social structure, social processes and problems, and their interrelationships. For example the effects of industrialization on older people's status, or how gender and income affect older people's well being. This approach tends to minimize people's ability to act and overcome the limits of social structures. Both micro and macro level theories can take one of three perspectives which include: interpretive perspective, normative, and conflict.

Normative perspective says rules and status exist in society to provide social control or social order. Social order is necessary for survival. This perspective focuses upon macro level. For example structural functionalism, role theory, modernization theory, and age stratification.

Interpretive perspective says that the social world is created in an ongoing manner, via social interaction. How do we relate to each other on a day to day basis? It focuses upon micro level.

Conflict perspective deals with macro and some micro levels. Causes of poverty, health disparities, distribution of life chances via, social class, and gender.

Micro level perspectives is the study of small scale structures and processes in society. It says explanations of social life and social structures are to be found at the individual level or in social interaction. George Mead said that objects and events have no meaning in themselves. Rather, people give them meaning through daily interaction. For example gray hair is a sign of wisdom in one. People give meanings to objects then base their actions on these meanings like some people will refuse to wear a hearing aid because it symbolizes decrepitude and weakness. Some examples of micro level theories include symbolic interactions, social phenomenology, and exchange theory. Micro level theories are role theories. For example understanding adjustment to getting older. Elderly people are more likely to lose roles than acquire new ones. Macro level theories include

age stratification theory. It focuses upon flow of age cohorts through the life cycle.

Structural strain theory posits that social movements arise as a result of six factors, namely structural conduciveness, structural strain, growth and spread of a solution, precipating factors, lack of social control, and, finally, mobilization.

✓ Some of the better known approaches include deprivation theory, mass society theory, structural strain theory, resource mobilization theory, political process theory and culture theory

✓ Deprivation theory and resource mobilization have been discussed in detail in this chapter's section entitled "Social Movements." This particular section will thus pay attention to structural strain theory and culture theory, while mass society theory and political process theory will be discussed in greater detail later in "International Sources of Social Change" and "External Sources of Social Change," respectively

✓ This kind of circular reasoning is also evident in deprivation theory (people form movements because they lack a certain good or resource), whichstructural strain theory partially incorporates and relies upon

What is Sociological Theory?

Creating Sociological Theory

- Everyone creates theories to help them make sense of what they experience.

  - o Common sense theories

  - o Tend to be less systematic

- Sociological theories: specifically and systematically developed

  - o Typically built on the theories and ideas of previous sociologists.

- Built on scientific research (desire to share publish ongoing dialogue)
- Focused on structural relationships (individual **in** society, human being **as** social being), rather than "personal experiences."
- Personal concerns directed toward understanding social issues.

Defining Sociological Theory

"Sociological theory is defined...as a set of interrelated ideas that allow for the systematization of knowledge of the social world. This knowledge is then used to explain the social world and make predictions about the future of the social world."

- Not all theories necessarily conform to this definition.
- Knowledge versus prediction
- Not only sociologists create sociological (social) theory.
- Test of time and applicability

Origins of Sociology

- Enlightenment: Individualism and Rationality
  - Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire (natural rights, progress)
  - Anti Enlightenment: de Bonald, de Maistre stability and longevity of the "old order" ordained by God. Relevance of the irrational: tradition, religion, emotion.
- Rise of Science: Empiricism, Prediction Power and Control (yet anti scientific currents).
- Industrial Revolution (visit Wikipedia). Rise of the bureaucracy.
- Political change revolutions and socialism (pro and con).
- Religious Change (see also: Wikipedia). Reform, religious backgrounds, and morality.
- Urbanization and the question of Community: emergence of social (urban) problems.
- Evolutionary theories and the idea of Progress

Basic Questions

- The question of "social order." (patterns and predictability) (Domain Assumptions)
    - What is "society?" An organic whole or the sum of individual parts.
    - What is the individual and how does the group affect behavior (belief, attitudes, and values).
    - What is the relationship between the individual and the group? How is social life possible?
- The question of "action." (source of motivation)
    - Rational: self interest. Maximize rewards and minimize cost. Calculation.
    - Non Rational: values, morals, tradition and norms. Meaning. Unconscious desires and/or emotions.

The Sociological Tradition: Sociological Theory

- Claude Henri Saint Simon (see also)1760 1825: positivism and socialism
- Alexis de Tocqueville 1805 1859: freedom versus equality (individualism). Critique of democracy and centralization. "Democracy in America" (1835)
- Auguste Comte 1798 1857 (On the Positivistic Approach to Society). Idealism, evolutionary theory, reform, empiricism, and positivism: discover universal laws of society.
- Harriet Martineau 1802 1876 (see also and "The Dead Sociologists' Index")
- Herbert Spencer 1820 1903 (The Nature of Society) (The Scope of Sociology) (Survival of the Fittest)

Two Theoretical Orientations: Grand Theories and Theories of Everyday Life

Grand theories (for example: the work of Karl Marx and Max Weber) are attempts to deal with society as a whole to explain the structure of the system and the processes of change that produce what we call, human history.

Theories of everyday life focus on, sometimes mundane, human behavior in an attempt to explain individual action and interaction between individuals; as well as beliefs, attitudes, and values within the context of groups and the broader social system.

Towards a More Realistic Sociological Theory

- Many contemporary (and not so contemporary) sociologists critique the "classic" sociological theories of old (and often dead) while males.

- There is a concern with the political factors that influence and the emergence, development, and hegemony of particular theoretical orientations.

- For example: the politically conservative structural functionalist theory has dominated sociology (as compared to critical or Marxist theory).

- Who decides what type or style of theory is appropriate or acceptable?

Multicultural Social Theory

- A focus on diversity: feminism, queer theory, Afrocentric theory, and Native American theory.

- A historical example, W.E.B. DuBois (1868 1963) (see below).

- Multicultural social theory rejects universalism, supports the struggle of impoverished and disenfranchised populations. It is also self critical and appreciates the importance of context: temporal, spatial, and social.

Post structuralism, post modernism, and critical theory (chart).

Annotated Web-links from the text/instructor's manual **(see below)**

WWW Virtual Library: Sociological Theory: http://www.mcmaster.ca/socscidocs/w3virtsoclib/theories.htm (This virtual library contains links to introductory articles and other resources on sociological theory from classical to postmodern)

SocioSite: Sociological Theories and Perspectives:

http://www.pscw.uva.nl/sociosite/TOPICS/theory.html (Thissite provides many links to resources on every imaginable theoretical perspective in sociology.)

A Biographical Sketch of W.E.B. Du Bois:

http://www.duboislc.org/dp/DuBois.html (This is a somewhat lengthy biographical sketch of Du Bois. It provides insight into his life and intellectual work, as well as a bibliography of primary and secondary sources.) See also: DuBois, The Dead Sociologist Index, and the online version of: The Souls of Black Folks, 1903.

Read the biographical sketch of W.E.B. Du Bois and answer the following questions.

1) Where and when was Du Bois born?
2) What is the title of Du Bois's doctoral thesis?
3) Why did Du Bois oppose Booker T. Washington?
4) Where did Du Bois die?

The Feminist Theory Website:

http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/enin.html (The Feminist Theory Website provides research materials and information for students, activists, and scholars interested in women's conditions and struggles around the world. It contains information on different fields of feminist theory, different ethnic/national feminisms, and many individual feminists).

Credits, references, and bibliography

1. Much of this page comes from the "Instructor's Manual" to accompany Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots: The Basics, Second Edition, George Ritzer, Mcgraw Hill, 2007. The Instructor's Manual was prepared by James Murphy, University of Maryland, College Park and Todd Stillman, Fayetteville State University.
2. Ritzer, George. 2007/2010/2013. Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots: The Basics. 2nd/3rd/4th editions. St. Louis: McGraw Hill Page 5.

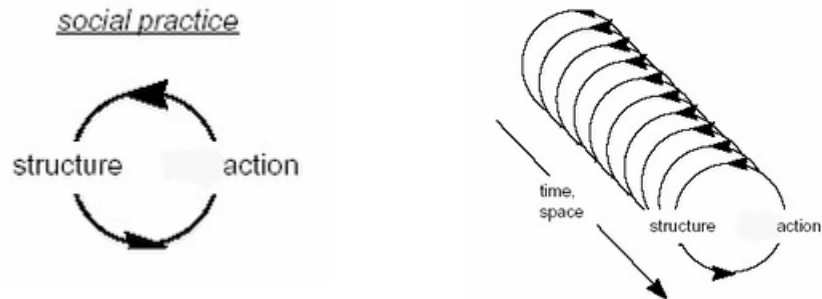**Core Assumptions and Statements**

Behavior and structure are intertwined; people go through a socialization process and become dependent of the existing social structures, but at the same time social structures are being altered by their activities. Put in different words, this means that social structures are the medium of human activities as well as the result of those activities. Social structures not only restrict behavior but also create possibilities for human behavior. The point is, it is not all about the restrictions people encounter in unrolling their behavior in space and time, but people also contribute to the creation of a certain time space structure.

Structuration theory is based on the premise that the classic actor/structure dualism has to be conceptualized as a duality the duality of structure. The structural properties of social systems exist

only in so far as forms of social conduct are reproduced chronically across time and space. The structuration of institutions can be understood in terms of how it comes about that social activities become 'stretched' across wide spans of time space. Incorporating time space in the heart of social theory means thinking again about some of the disciplinary divisions, which separate sociology from history, and from geography. In structuration theory 'structure' is regarded as rules and resources recursively implicated in social reproduction; institutionalized features of social systems have structural properties in the sense that relationships are stabilized across time and space. 'Structure' can be conceptualized abstractly as two aspects of rules   normative elements and codes of signification. Resources are also of two kinds: authoritative resources, which derive from the co ordination of the activity of human agents, and allocative resources, which stem from control of material products or of aspects of the material world (Giddens, 1984).

Giddens' main claim for his theory is that it draws together the two principal strands of social thinking. In the structure list tradition the emphasis is on structure (constraint), whereas in the phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions the human agent is the primary focus. Structuration theory attempts to recast structure and agency as a mutually dependent duality (Rose, 1999). Some structuration theory concepts are time space distanciation, routinization, and system integration.

Conceptual Model :

Scope and Application

The structural theory is not intended to use in empirical research. It can be used in approach to (micro and macro) social phenomena, mostly in organizations. Besides that, the adaptive structurational theory is being used to do research on (IC) technologies in organizations.

Fairbairn's Structural Theory

Beginning in the early 1940's, W. Ronald D. Fairbairn developed a unique psychoanalytic theory that anticipated and laid the groundwork for some of the most important current theoretical advancements in psychoanalysis. At the heart of Fairbairn's theory was a notion of endo psychic structure based directly on the vicissitudes of human object relatedness in a way so radically different from other theories of his time that it is only now, a half century later, that his ideas are finally having their appropriately profound influence on the general spectrum of psychoanalytic thinking.

In an earlier paper (Rubens, 1984), I advanced the position that Fairbairn had not been studied as widely and thoroughly as might be expected due to the extent to which his ideas depart from classical analytic theory. While increasingly many psychoanalysts had been drawn to Fairbairn's insights into the nature of human interactions and their implications for clinical practice, surprisingly few allowed themselves even to realize the extent to which these insights were based on a radically novel understanding of the human psyche and

fewer still could recognize and acknowledge the full implications of his departures.

It was my contention that it was Fairbairn's complete rejection of Freud's structural theory (and the drive model it embodied) that explained this almost phobic avoidance of the deeper implications of Fairbairn's ideas. The theory of structure is the key issue in defining psychoanalysis in general, and in distinguishing between psychoanalytic theories in particular. Thus, to accept Fairbairn's theory in the fullness of its structural divergence from Freud was to abandon Freud in too radical a way for many psychoanalysts. Also, most psychoanalysts had been so habitually attached to speaking in terms of Freud's tripartite division of the psyche into id, ego, and superego that they failed to notice that this structural theory was based on meta psychological assumptions that they themselves no longer in fact adhered to.

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the viability   and even necessity   of alternatives to the meta psychological assumptions embodied in Freud's structural theory. This change is expressed in the perspective developed by Greenberg and Mitchell (1983) that there are two, very different basic models on which psychoanalytic theories are based:

The most significant tension in the history of psychoanalytic ideas has been the dialectic between the original Freudian model, which takes as its starting point the instinctual drives, and a comprehensive model initiated in the works of Fairbairn and Sullivan, which evolve structure solely from the individual's relations with other people. Accordingly, we designate the original model the *drive/structure model* and the alternative perspective the *relational/structure model*. (*p.* 20)

Although a very large percentage of modern psychoanalysts actually have underlying assumptions far more consistent with those of the relational/structure model, there remains a tremendous inertia

toward preserving a connection to the drive/structure model   or, at least, utilizing the terminology of that model.

The typical use which has previously been made of Fairbairn's ideas has been to note their relevance to early development and to those conditions most directly deriving from these stages (i.e., schizoid, narcissistic, and borderline states), while maintaining that the later developments can still be satisfactorily described employing the traditional drive/structure model. Even British object relations theorists such as Winnicott (1965) have attempted to retain their connection to classical theory through just this sort of adherence to the importance of the drive/structure model in later development. Mitchell (1988) provides a brilliant discussion of the shortcomings of this man oeuvre, which he terms "developmental tilt."

Fairbairn himself, while radically departing from Freud's meta psychological assumptions, was nevertheless guilty of employing terms taken too directly from the language of drive theory. He repeatedly utilized terms like "ego" and "libidinal" in crucial positions in his theories, although they bear virtually no similarity to their original meanings in Freud. Even his use of the term "object" is misleading, since it does not begin to convey how extensively it departs from the drive/structure model's concept of object. Although careful to redefine his use of such terms, Fairbairn's use of the language of drive theory did introduce a great deal of confusion into the understanding of his work and a considerable opportunity for avoiding the full impact of its novelty.

Nevertheless, Fairbairn did succeed in completely abandoning Freud's structural model. Moreover, in a still more radical way, he developed a new structural theory based on a very different notion of the psyche and of the underlying meaning and role of structure within it. It is only in recent years that psychoanalysis has finally begun to incorporate directly the full implications and novelty of Fairbairn's theoretical innovations.

This paper will attempt to explore the actual extent of Fairbairn's departure from traditional notions of psychic structure by a detailed explication of his own theory of endopsychic structure in light of the assumptions out of which it was developed and the clinical implications which derive from it.

The Basic Nature of the Self

Fairbairn viewed people as being object related by their very nature. For him, the fundamental unit of consideration was that of a self in relation to another   and the nature of the relationship in between. Personhood, in the external world, essentially and definitionally involves relationship with other people. Internally considered, the self therefore is to be understood as always existing in and defined in terms of the relationships it has, remembers, desires, or creates. In the relational/structure model of Fairbairn, the shape of the self grows and changes from its experience in relationships, while at the same time the nature of the relationships it has are being shaped and changed by that self.

Fairbairn's theory gives appropriately great weight to the significance of intrapsychic functioning. Unlike some interpersonal theories, it is no way guilty of naively reducing the study of the human psyche to a mere examination of external relationships. His relational/structure model provides room for the most extensive and rich of notions of inner world. Furthemore, as will be discussed below, Fairbairn viewed the self not simply as the result of experience, but rather as the precondition for it. In an irreducible way, the self is the pre existent starting point for all experience and provides continuity in all that develops later   coloring and shaping all subsequent experience. On the other hand, Fairbairn firmly maintained that it was in relationship to others that the self expresses its selfhood and is shaped in the course of its development. Fairbairn's theory of self is, therefore, "relational" in precisely the way described by Mitchell (1988), in which the

interpersonal and the intrapsychic realms create, interpenetrate, and transform each other in a subtle and complex manner. (*p.* 9)

It is the self in its relationship to the other that constitutes the only meaningful unit of consideration for Fairbairn. This unit of self, other, and the relationship in between becomes the pattern for Fairbairn's understanding of the form of all subsystems within the self.

The Inseparability of Energy and Structure

Central to Freud's conception of the organization of the psyche is the primary existence of an energic, chaotic entity, the id, the fundamental principle of which being the immediate and indiscriminate discharge of its stimulus related and endogenous excitation, and the subsequent evolution of a highly structured ego, adaptively derived to mediate contact between the psyche's energic underpinnings in the id and the realities of the external world (Freud, 1900, 1923, 1933). In this way, Freud separated the structure for achieving self expression from that energy within the self which strives to be expressed.

Fairbairn adopted as his most fundamental postulate the notion that structure and energy were inseparable: "both structure divorced from energy and energy divorced from structure are meaningless concepts" (Fairbairn, 1952, *p.*149). The structure *is* that which gives form to the energy, and the energy does not exist without a particular form. For him, "impulses" (a term he characteristically set off in quotation marks to indicate his discomfort with this notion of energy treated as through it possessed some independent and separate existence)cannot be considered apart from the endopsychic structures which they energize and the object relationships which they enable these structures to establish; and, equally, "instincts" cannot profitably be considered as anything more than forms of energy which constitute the dynamic of such endopsychic structures (*p.* 85).

In Fairbairn's system, the structure for achieving self expression is inextricably interrelated with that which strives for expression. The

self is simultaneously structure and energy, inseparable and mutually inter defining.

The Object Related Nature of the Self

Even in Freud's late description of the id (1933), the reservoir of energy within the psyche was seen as seeking at all times the reduction of tension through the immediate and indiscriminate discharge of its energy. This pattern was termed by Freud the pleasure principle. In it, there is virtually no consideration of the object towards which this discharge takes place. The pleasure principle was seen by Freud as being developmentally prior to operation in accordance with the reality principle   a mode more co ordinated with the specific nature of the world of external objects and involving delay of gratification, planning, and purposive awareness of cause and effect and of future consequence.

Fairbairn (1952, *pp.* 149*f.*) understood Freud's position to be a direct consequence of his divorcing of energy from structure, for what goal could there be for structure less, directionless energy other than indiscriminate discharge for the purpose of homeostasis. For Fairbairn, having initially postulated the inseparability of energy and structure, it followed that the goal (or aim) of self expression could no longer be viewed as mere tension reduction (the discharge of energy, ending the "un pleasure" of excitation and thereby definitionally resulting in pleasure) with little or no reference to the object by means of which this discharge is accomplished. Rather he completely inverted Freud's position, maintaining that relationship with the object was itself the goal, and that the pleasure involved was a secondary consequence. Thus he wrote that, "The function of libidinal pleasure is essentially to provide a signpost to the object" (1952), and that "The real libidinal aim is the establishment of satisfactory relationship with objects" (*p.* 138).

To Fairbairn, the pleasure principle, rather than being the universal first principle of self expression, "represents a deterioration of

behaviour" (1952). The rightful mode of libidinal expression, at *all* developmental levels, is more closely related to that described by Freud as the reality principle, at least in so far as this expression is seen as always purposively intending towards relationship with objects in some realistic way, rather than towards pleasure itself:

Explicit pleasure seeking has as its essential aim the relieving of the tension of libidinal need for the mere sake of relieving this tension. Such a process does, of course, occur commonly enough; but, since libidinal need is object need, simple tension relieving implies some failure of object relationships.

Central to this theory is the concept that human beings do not naturally operate with the goal of reducing tensions, but rather with the goal of self expression in relationships with other human beings. This view of fundamental human motivation is one of Fairbairn's most important contributions to contemporary relational theory.

Unitary and Dynamic Origin of the Psyche

Fairbairn maintained that the genesis of the human psyche lay in "an original and single dynamic ego structure present at the beginning" (1952); or, as he wrote elsewhere, "The pristine personality of the child consists of a unitary dynamic ego" (1954). The individual elements of these statements are important enough to the theory to merit expansion and explication.

It is first necessary to note again that Fairbairn's use of the term "ego" is in no way equivalent to Freud's structural use of the term. Rather, it refers to the entirety of the psychic self. In adopting this connotation of "ego," Fairbairn is closely paralleling Freud's use of the term prior to his writing *The Ego and the Id*. As Strachey (1961) points out, Freud in this period used the term to apply to the whole of a person's self. Nevertheless, it would be better if Fairbairn had substituted "self" for "ego" to distinguish his usage from Freud's. To minimize any possibility for confusion, and to emphasize the differences

inherent in Fairbairn's conception, I have utilized "self" rather than "ego" wherever practical.

That Fairbairn refers to this primitive state as a "dynamic ego structure" or "dynamic ego" follows directly from his postulate of the inseparability of energy and structure. He could not posit, as had Freud, an unstructured supply of energy out of which an adaptive structure would subsequently develop. Rather he insisted on the innate structural integrity of the self: the self was a "singular" and "unitary" whole. Further, this self was the *a priori* condition of life experience: "original" and "pristine", it existed from the very outset and was not in any way dependent upon experience for its existence.

Combining these notions with Fairbairn's idea that psychic energy is object seeking, the resulting conception of the psyche is that of a self generated, unitary center of definition and energy, with the potential for, and the drive toward, self expression outward into the object world, and the potential for experiencing that world, its own self expression, and the resulting interaction between the two.

The Nature of Endopsychic Structure

The self as it has been described above requires no further structural development. It begins in a condition of wholeness, already capable of and actively involved in the self defining processes of self expression and of experience. While this assertion naturally does not imply that the capacities of this primitive self are fully matured, it does insist that they are all present at least in seminal form.

Fairbairn acknowledged that structural differentiation in fact does occur within the psyche   and even that it is unavoidable and universal (1954, *p.* 107). The substructures resulting from such differentiations he saw as modelled after the self as a whole: each is comprised of an element of self in energic, affective relationship with an element of the object world. He termed these resultant substructures of the self "endopsychic structures."

Fairbairn noted (1952, Chapter 4) that certain unavoidable features of early human experience lead universally to the establishment of two such endopsychic structures: the first formed around the experience of the self in intolerably exciting relationship, and the second formed around intolerably rejecting relationship.

He understood that each of these subsystems of the self represents a particular crystallization of what originally was the growing and continually self defining process of the self as a whole. Whereas the original self is in ongoing and essentially unbounded relationship with the outside world as a whole, such an endopsychic structure is a particularized aspect of that self, in specific relationship with a particular aspect of the object world. Fairbairn eventually came to realize (1952, *p.* 158) that it was the entirety of such a subsystem which constituted the endopsychic structure set up within the self. The first of the two such endopsychic structures referred to in the preceding paragraph will here be termed the Libidinal Self, as Fairbairn never developed an explicit terminology to refer to the entirety of the subsystem composed of what he termed the Libidinal Ego in specific relationship to what he called the Exciting Object. Similarly, the second subsystem will be termed the Antilibidinal Self (following Fairbairn's later terminology for the Internal Saboteur and its Rejecting Object).

The third element in Fairbairn's picture of the structurally differentiated psyche will here be termed the Central Self, consisting of Fairbairn's Central Ego in relationship with the Idealized Object. This entity is what remains of the original self after the other two parts have been separated off. Because of this unique aspect of its origin, as well as for other differences discussed below, the Central Self is not an "endopsychic structure" in the same sense as the other two entities.

The fact that Fairbairn's model of endopsychic structure is tripartite naturally invites comparisons to Freud's structural model and, of course, certain congruence is to be expected, since both meta psychological models attempt to describe the same clinical phenomena.

Nevertheless, Fairbairn repeatedly rejected such comparisons (1952, *pp.* 106 *f.*, 148, etc.).

Freud's ego rather closely corresponds to the "ego" component of Fairbairn's Central Self, in that the ego is the organization of purposive self expression and experience in relationship with the external world. It was viewed by Freud as a derivative structure, however, and not as the original structure Fairbairn viewed as the source of all other endo psychic structures. It must be agreed, that, as Kernberg (1980, *p.* 81) maintains, the ego psychologists' notion of an undifferentiated ego id matrix existing prior to the emergence of either individual structure furthers the Freudian model in a direction more consonant with that of Fairbairn. Nevertheless, the ego psychological viewpoint still posits the eventual developmental necessity of the progressive structural differentiation of the ego from the id. In so doing, it clearly differs from Fairbairn's understanding of structure. Furthermore, the meta psychological foundations of the ego psychological view still rest on a drive/structure model   albeit one that recognizes the central importance of relationship in achieving this end   whereas Fairbairn's meta psychology is founded on the need for self expression in relationship.

The differences become more striking in comparisons drawn with the other two endopsychic structures. The Libidinal Ego, while certainly id like in many aspects of its functioning, is consistently viewed by Fairbairn as existing in dynamic relationship with the Exciting Object; and the Libidinal Self which is constituted by this relationship is a proper subsystem of the Self, in that it is specifically object related in a manner foreign to the concept of the id. The Libidinal Self represents a particularized relation of a specific aspect of the self in relationship with a specific aspect of the object world, and not the more generalized, freely displaceable and mutable energic center which the id is conceived as being. The superego is somewhat related to the Rejecting Object of the Antilibidinal Self, although not coterminous with it.

The Rejecting Object does contain the more archaic elements of the superego, although the moral aspects of superego functioning are related more to the relationship with the Idealized Object which occurs in the Central Self and to what Fairbairn discussed as the mechanism of the moral defense. Moreover, the superego concept emphasizes the *object* component of the Antilibidinal Self, and not the Antilibidinal Ego component   it therefore being necessary to include the ego's relationship with the superego to make a more appropriate comparison.

The ego psychological branch of object relations theory (most ably represented by Jacobson and Kernberg) has attempted, with considerable success, to transform Freud's meta psychology in a direction more consonant with the insights of Fairbairn. Yet it is not possible fully to incorporate Fairbairn's insights without abandoning central tenets of Freud's metapsychology, contrary to the claim to this effect made by Kernberg (1980).

Freud's structural model simply is not the same as Fairbairn's system of Central, Libidinal, and Antilibidinal Selves. Nor do the modifications introduced by Ego Psychology suffice to make Fairbairn's system subsumable under their revised drive/structure model. In the first place, the "self component" of endopsychic structures is not the equivalent of "what we would now call a self representation", as Kernberg claims (1980, *p.* 81). One of the most brilliant of Fairbairn's insights lies precisely in his recognition that the self   and not some ideational representation (for who, in that case, would be the one doing the representing?)   has as its primary, innate function active expression in the form of relationship with the object world   and not, until the intervention of some pathological process, with some ideational representation thereof! To alter this conception is to eschew the most essential thrust of Fairbairn's theory.

It is precisely Kernberg's refusal to acknowledge this difference which leads him to cite the criticism put forth by Winnicott & Khan (1953) of Fairbairn's concept of primary identification (which he

described as a relationship between the self and object which has not been differentiated from it):

If the object is not differentiated it cannot operate as an object. What Fairbairn is referring to then is an infant with needs, but with no "mechanism" by which to implement them, an infant not "seeking" an object, but seeking de tension, libido seeking satisfaction, instinct tension seeking a return to a state of rest or un excitement; which brings us back to Freud(*p.* 332).

The self in Fairbairn's theory is a living, growing, self defining center which he viewed as the point of origin of human psychic process; and, it follows directly from this most basic of principles that it is possible for such a self to have relationships with other human beings, even though they have not yet representational differentiated as objects separate from the self. Initially this self relates to the world with little basis in experience for self object differentiation. Nevertheless, it does express itself and experience the world in a manner that is precisely the prototype for all later activities of the self. To assert that this brings Fairbairn's theory back to the pleasure principle of Freud is totally to miss his point.

It is an actual fragment of the self, and not a representation of it, which comprises the essence of an endopsychic structure in Fairbairn's theory. As a subsystem of the self, such a structure is a purposive entity with its own energy. It is not reducible, as Kernberg (1980) suggests it is, to self and object representations energized by "an activation of affects reflecting...drives in the context of internal object relations" (*p.* 80). Such a view *is* quite closely related to Freud's drive/structure model, modified to include the notion of the expression of drive derivatives in object relational constellations but is *not* at all the same as Fairbairn's relational/structure model.

The Libidinal and Antilibidinal Selves differ from the original self in only two ways. The first difference is that each is a crystallization of

what in the original self was a more freely developing potentiality. Whereas the original self (and later the Central Self, in a more limited way) was free to experience the world and express itself in relationships to that world, the subsidiary selves carry within them a pre existing template (based on the experiences out of which they were formed) for particularized relationships with specific aspects of the world. As in the case of the Central Self, the Libidinal and Antilibidinal Selves continue to seek experience and self expression through relationship. In the case of the Libidinal and Antilibidinal Selves, however, this process is sharply restricted by the fact that the particularized crystallization involved in the formation of each structure tends to permit only that experience and expression which is fundamentally consonant with the specific template involved. Thus, while there is a certain amount of growth within these subsidiary self systems, it is minimal. This limitation on the growth and change of the Libidinal and Antilibidinal Selves is more potently enforced by the factor which is the second way in which they differ from the original self, and later from the Central Self; they were created in an act of repression and at all times continue under the pressure of this repression.

Structure as Pathology

Virtually all psychoanalytic theories have accepted a metaphor for psychic growth which has been borrowed from biology: growth is defined as movement through progressive levels of structural differentiation and complexity. This metaphor is manifest in Freud's notion that psychic growth (and health) involves the differentiation of an ego, structurally separate from the id, and later a superego, precipitated out from the ego. It also stands at the root of the generally accepted belief that the self object differentiation implies structural differentiation within the psyche   and the unspoken underlying assumption that the process of self and object representation is a structural one.

491

In what is his most radical departure from the mainstream of psychoanalytic thought, Fairbairn maintained that, far from being the necessary condition for psychic growth, structural differentiation was a defensive and pathological process in human development.

Fairbairn discussed at great length the process by which the psyche of the infant, due to some intolerable inability to cope with the unsatisfying aspects of experience, internalized this experience in such a way ultimately as to eventuate in the establishment of certain endopsychic structures. The creation of such structures involves the splitting of the self and the repression of that part of the self which has been thus split off.

Repression is the key element in the creation of endopsychic structure, because it is the mechanism by which the self becomes split. Experience which is integrable into the self results simply in memory or in the gradual alteration of the nature of the self as a whole. It is only when such experience is unintegrable   when it is so intolerable as not to permit of consciousness (which after all, is that which is "knowable together", i.e. integrable)   that it must be subjected to repression. When that which is thus in need of repressing is importantly a part of the self, which is to say, when it is relationally so intrinsic to the life of that self that it is part of the definition of that self, then the act of repression must be understood as a splitting of the self. Repression and splitting in this structural sense are merely different perspectives on the identical operation. A particular aspect of the self, defined by its particular affective and purposive relationship with a particularized object, and reflecting a fundamental aspect of self definition within the psyche, too intrinsic and powerful to be abandoned and too intolerable and unacceptable to be integrated into the whole   this fully functional, albeit crystallized, subsystem of the self is what becomes an endopsychic structure by virtue of the act of its repression. If it were not repressed, it would continue to exist within the conscious, integrable

matrix of the self and there would be no splitting of that self and consequently no formation of endopsychic structure.

Fairbairn came to this understanding in stages. At first, differing from what he viewed as Freud's mistaken notion that what was subject to repression was either intolerably unpleasant memories or intolerably guilty impulses, Fairbairn (1952) developed the idea that it was intolerably "bad" objects that were subject to repression. He later altered this view:

It becomes necessary to adopt the view that repression is exercised not only against internalized objects (which incidentally are only meaningful when regarded in the light of endopsychic structures) but also against ego structures which seek relationships with these internal objects. This view implies that there must be a splitting of the ego to account for repression (1952).

Although he repeatedly referred separately to the repression of objects and the splitting of the self, it is clear from the above citation that he understood the two to be inextricably bound together in a manner that clearly justifies the use of the notion employed in this paper that it is the entire subsystem of the self (including both the object and what he termed the "ego" or self element) that is repressed in the very act which creates its existence as endopsychic structure.

Thus it was that Fairbairn arrived at the notion that existence as a structure within the self means existence as a split off subsystem of the self, created and maintained by repression, and owing its existence to the self's inability to deal with some important aspect of its experience which it found to be intolerable. He termed the process of establishing such structures "schizoid" because the splitting and repression by which it is constituted invariably diminish the self's capacity for growth and expression, and are, therefore, pathological.

The Libidinal and Antilibidinal Selves, by their very existence, limit the range and depth of the conscious functioning open to the Central Self. Both of these endopsychic structures press continuously for the recreation of experience of the sort which occasioned their creation, which experience always has two determining characteristics: it is equally experienced as intolerably "bad" (which, in Fairbairn's terminology, means unsatisfying), and it is equally experienced as being needed by the self absolutely for survival.

It is in this way that Fairbairn accounted for the clinically ubiquitous phenomenon of the repetition compulsion. There exists, at the very structural foundation of these subsidiary selves, an attachment to some negative aspect of experience which is felt as vital to the definition of the self (at least in the specific particularization thereof involved in each subsystem). The *raison d'etre* of these endopsychic structures is to continue living out these "bad" relationships. Much as the original self sought to express psychic existence of the whole person, such a subsystem seeks at all times to express itself and have experience in accordance with the template based on the formative intolerable experience which defines its existence. Thus the existence of such an endopsychic structure leads to the seeking of relationships that will be consonant with the specific neurotic paradigms of early experience, to the distortion of current relationships so that they can be experienced in accordance with such paradigms, and to the patterning of activity in the world so as to be expressive of such a relationship and, in so doing, restricting the freer, more situationally appropriate expression of the self and experience of the world. It is important to note that this theory is not only more parsimonious than Freud's appeals to explanations based on mastery, masochism, and, finally, a death instinct, but that it also provides a direct explanation for the clinically observed sense of loss that is involved when patients, as the result of a successful psychoanalytic process, begin to relinquish their tenacious adherence to such patterns. The loss is twofold: most

obviously, it involves the loss of the object component, which is felt as having made possible the particular internal relationship; and, perhaps more importantly, albeit less obviously, it involves a sense of loss of self, in so far as part of the self had been defined in the crystallization around the particular paradigm.

The fact that the Libidinal and Antilibidinal Selves always exist under repression further contributes to their pathological nature. Although in Fairbairn's view these structures are at least minimally able to grow and evolve through progressive accretion and overlay of later experience (in so far as the experience is fundamentally consonant with the defining paradigm), the isolating effort of the repression results in an inertia that is not readily overcome. Central to the nature of this repression   and the resistance it subsequently offers to growth and change   is the attachment which has just been described. The self chooses to encapsulate and crystallize these aspects of itself and of its relationships rather than to be at risk for their loss. This maintenance of the internal world as a closed system is what Fairbairn (1958) ultimately described as "the greatest of all sources of resistance" (*p.* 380). Furthermore,

A real relationship with an external object is a relationship in an open system; but, in so far as the inner world assumes the form of a closed system, a relationship with an external object is only possible in terms of transference, viz., on condition that the external object is treated as an object within the closed system of inner reality.

The splits which create endopsychic structures are, of course, variable in their extent and depth, depending on the nature of the relationships out of which they developed (which involve the specific strengths and weaknesses   constitutional and developmental   of the child, as well as those of the parent, and of the vicissitudes of their interactions). The more profound the splits, the more extensive and the more deeply repressed the subsidiary selves they engender, the greater will be the pathological effect on the Central Self. Just as this Central

Self is what remains after the splitting off of the Libidinal and Antilibidinal Selves, so too will the Central Self's ongoing experience and expression be diminished by the tendency of the subsidiary selves to limit and to transform subsequent experience and expression according to the closed systems of their defining paradigms. The more extensive the portion of the self which has been repressed, the less that will be available for open, ongoing interaction with the world.

Not only the quantity of the Central Self's experience and expression is diminished by the extent of the subsidiary selves, but also the quality of its relating to the world is similarly diminished. The more severe the tendency to experience the external world in accordance with the subsidiary selves, the more impoverished and idealized becomes the nature of the objects with which the Central Self relates. It is in this light that the objects of the Central Self become the Idealized Object, rather than the actual objects of external reality   which is to say that all of the complexity and imperfection must be abstracted out and subsumed into the experience of the subsidiary selves. This position is fully in harmony with the clinical observation that all idealizations invariably are based on the denial of some experienced imperfection, inadequacy, or "badness'.

The upshot of Fairbairn's theory is that healthy development is not dependent upon the establishment of endopsychic structures, but rather that such internal structural differentiation is a clearly pathological, albeit unavoidable, schizoid phenomenon which, to varying extents, diminishes the functioning of all human beings. As Fairbairn (1952) concluded,

Psychology may be said to resolve itself into a study of the relationships of the individual to his objects, whilst, in similar terms, psychopathology may be said to resolve itself more specifically into a study of the relationships of the ego to its internalized objects.

On the other hand,

The chief aim of psychoanalytical treatment is to promote a maximum "synthesis" of the structures into which the original ego has been split (Fairbairn, 1958, *p.* 380).

Non Structuring Internalization

Perhaps the most confused issue in Fairbairn's writings is the question of internalization. This confusion results from the fact that he used that concept of internalization in two distinctly different ways, while never acknowledging the difference existed.

The first sense of internalization is the one which Fairbairn clearly delineated in his theory and which has been discussed in detail in the preceding two sections of this paper. It is that form of internalization which eventuates in the formation of repressed endopsychic structures. For the purpose of clarifying the distinction which Fairbairn did not make explicit, this process will here be called *structuring internalization*.

As noted above, it is only intolerably "bad" experience that gives rise to structuring internalization. It is to just such structuring internalization that Fairbairn is referring in his major theoretical disagreement with Melanie Klein: whereas she had posited the internalization of both good and bad objects. Fairbairn (1952, repeatedly disagreed, insisting that it was only *bad* objects that were internalized. "It is difficult to find any adequate motive for the internalization of objects which are satisfying and "good" (Fairbairn). Fairbairn's assertion here is that good objects are never *structurally internalized*, which follows directly from the fact that there would be no explanation for the *repression* (which is the essential ingredient of the formation of endo psychic structure) were it not for the intolerable "badness" of the experience with an object.

In apparent contradiction to this strongly propounded position, Fairbairn elsewhere (1952) writes of the internalization of "good" objects. He made it clear, however, that the internalized "good" object

is the Idealized Object of the Central Self, which is a system in which none of the components is under structural repression. The apparent contradiction thus is easily resolved by the recognition that "good" objects, while they are internalized are never subjected to structure generating repression. This process, in which there occurs no repression, and therefore no self-splitting and no formation of endo psychic structure, will here be termed *nonstructuring internalization*. Thus, it can be true that only "bad" objects are involved in structuring internalization, while it also can be true that "good" objects are internalized, but only in the non-structuring sense.

It is obvious that a human being needs to be able to internalize aspects of his experience in the world in order to grow and thrive. There must be learning that takes place as the result of both positive and negative interactions, and this learning must be integrated into the self in some meaningful way. While Fairbairn did not explicitly write about the nature of growth process, implicitly it is contained in the notion of non-structuring internalization. To understand Fairbairn's position on the nature of the process of non structuring internalization, it is necessary to extrapolate from certain other of his previously discussed positions.

The most central principle, deriving from the definition of non structuring internalization, is that such a process cannot lead to repression. Clearly, there is no need for the self to repress segments of its experience which are "good", or even which are "bad" in a tolerable way. Rather, such experience must be integrable into the self in a manner which remains conscious and openly available.

Secondly, it should be clear that such a process cannot lead to the formation of endopsychic structure. Rather, non structuring internalization must be viewed as resulting in memory, or in the conscious organization of experience. The progressive development of a personal *Weltansicht* viewed from any of what is an unlimited range of possible perspectives, be it that of Kant's categories of experience,

Kohlberg's moral schema of development, or any other dimension of developmental progression   implies learning, memory, organization, and synthesis, but *not* structural differentiation. Even the all important development of self object differentiation does not, of necessity, imply the structural differentiation *of* the self, but rather the progressive recognition of the separateness of that self *from* the external world with which it interacts, and a progressive organization of the self's awareness of its own nature and potential. In addition, it must be remembered that, for Fairbairn, any fragmentation of the self cannot be viewed as a developmental arrest, but rather must be seen as some pathological miscarriage of development.

A further extrapolation can be made from another disagreement between Fairbairn and Klein. Fairbairn (1952) wrote,

As it seems to me, Melanie Klein has never satisfactorily explained how phantasies of incorporating objects orally can give rise to the establishment of internal objects as endopsychic structures   and, unless they are such structures, they cannot be properly spoken of as internal objects at all, since otherwise they will remain mere figments of phantasy.

It is clear from this position that non structuring internalization does not result in the establishment of any "entity" within the self, but rather results in an alteration of the integration of the self, or in the production of a thought, memory or fantasy within the self.

Kernberg (1976) presented a schema for the nature of internalization which is relevant to the present discussion. He wrote:

All processes of internalization of object relations refer to the internalization of units of affective state, object representation, and self representation. Following Erikson...I considered introjection, identification, and ego identity as a progressive sequence of such internalization processes. In the case of introjection, object and self representations are not yet fully differentiated from each other, and

their affect is primitive, intense and diffuse. In the case of identification, not only is there a well established separation between self and object representations, but there is an internalization of a role aspect of the relationship, that is, of a socially recognized function that is being actualized in the self object interaction. The affective state is less intense, less diffuse, and...the spectrum of affect dispositions is broadened and deepened...Ego identity may be thought of as the supraordinate integration of identifications into a dynamic, unified structure (*pp.* 75 *f.*).

Although in Fairbairn's theory the notion of structure is radically different and a relational/structure model is employed rather than a drive/structure model, what is being described phenomenologically in both theories is closely related. There is a high degree of correspondence between Fairbairn's non structuring internalization and Kernberg's concept of ego identity. Both theories recognize that there is a continuity of self experience and expression which is involved in such internalization which results in progressively higher levels of synthesis and integration. The opposite is true with respect to structuring internalization, which like Kernberg's introjection, refers to a level of functioning in which discontinuity and unintegrability result in a pathological form of internalization involving the splitting of the self and the radical formation of structure. Kernberg wrote of this process of introjection and the structures resulting from it that,

The persistence of "nonmetabolized" early introjections is the outcome of a pathological fixation of severely disturbed, early object relations, a fixation which is intimately related to the pathological development of splitting.

Kernberg's intermediate mode of internalization, the important issue of identification, is less obviously but just as certainly related to Fairbairn's non structuring internalization. Kernberg described normal identification as follows:

(1) a partial modification of the total self concept under the influence of a new self representation, (2) some degree of integration of both self and object representations into autonomous ego functioning in the form of neutralized character traits, and (3) some degree of reorganization of the individual's behavior patterns under the influence of the newly introduced identificatory structure.

Once again it is crucial to note the emphasis on continuity and integration within the larger unity of the self, as opposed to any sense of structural isolation within that whole. Even in what Kernberg termed pathological identification, it is clear that the correspondence is to non structuring internalization, although in this case the process takes place largely in relation to either the Libidinal or Antilibidinal Self rather than to the Central Self. This fact accounts for the rigidity and crystallization Kernberg observed to be characteristic of such internalizations.

The final outcome of pathological identification processes is character pathology. The more rigid and neurotic the character traits are, the more they reveal that a past pathogenic internalized object relation (representing a particular conflict) has become "frozen" into a character pattern (1976, *p.* 79).

While such identifications take place under the influence of pathological endopsychic structures and can slowly alter the nature of these structures, they do not eventuate in any further formation of such structures.

Kernberg (1976, 1980) was one of the first important theorists who explored and acknowledged the importance of Fairbairn's theories, and it is clear that he integrated into his theory many valuable aspects of Fairbairn's thought. Most centrally, Kernberg accepted the notion that internalizations, on all levels, have the basic form which Fairbairn suggested   an element of self, an element of object, and the affective, purposive relationship between them. It is also clear that Kernberg agrees that higher forms of internalization involve less disjunction in the

self and more integration and continuity. It remains as a fundamental difference, however, that Kernberg integrates these insights into a drive/structure model, whereas Fairbairn was intentionally departing from such a model. Moreover, Kernberg, as virtually every other psychoanalytic theorist, maintains that the progressively higher levels of internalization involve *increasing* levels of internal structure. In contradistinction, Fairbairn demonstrated how it is not necessary to view the higher levels of internalization as creating structure *at all*. Rather, he showed that there was a conceptual advantage to differentiating structuring internalization, which is invariably pathological, from non structuring internalization, which is defined by its continuity with, and potential for, integration into the self as a whole. While Kernberg obviously agrees with Fairbairn's observations concerning the phenomenological differences involved in these different levels of internalization, he does not adopt Fairbairn's conclusions about the nature of structure itself. Thus, despite the similarities, there are profound differences between them when it comes to crucial issues like the internalization of good experience and the metapsychological understanding of the self in which these questions occur.

The vicissitudes of these forms of internalization and their interrelationships are at the heart of Fairbairn's developmental notion of the movement from infantile to mature dependence, the central issue in which being the move away from primary identification (which, it is interesting to note, is the same issue of self object differentiation which is central to Kernberg's hierarchy of forms of internalization).

The Growth of the Self

Fairbairn chose to discuss the development of the self in terms of levels of dependency. In so doing, he was emphasizing his contention that all meaningful human activity   from its most primitive to its very highest expression   is at all times involved with relationship, be it with actual people in the external world or with the memory or fantasy of

502

people in the inner world; and that the primary and ultimate goal of this activity, even in the neonate, is self expression in relationship.

Views of healthy, adult development almost invariably include a positive notion of interdependence with significant others, and particularly the intense closeness and inter relatedness with loved ones. In such love relationships, it is clearly acknowledged that it is a virtue to be the sort of person who can both 'be depended on' and be able to 'depend on' one's partner. Fairbairn, in labelling the highest level of development mature dependence, was choosing to emphasize the importance of human inter relatedness and interdependence.

Dependency, in its pejorative sense, was associated by Fairbairn with the concept of infantile dependence. In doing so he was assigning the pathology not to the dependency itself, but rather to its infantile character.

Central to Fairbairn's notion of infantile dependence, and almost synonymous with it, is his concept of primary identification. In primary identification, the infant relates to another whom he does not experience as separate or different from himself. It is clear that what is taking place *does* represent a form of relating   complete with a sense of intentionality and expression of the subject involved. Nevertheless, it is equally apparent that the subject is not aware in any differentiated way of the other person as being separate and apart from him. Fairbairn's contention was that the reality of both sides of this situation needs to be accepted: there is a relationship occurring, and self object differentiation is not present (to a greater or lesser extent).

Although Fairbairn was completely insistent that the infant was object related from birth, he acknowledged that the infantile dependent relatedness of the earliest stages had specifically primitive characteristics: 1) it is unconditional; 2) the quality of need is absolute if the infant's needs are not met, it will die; 3) the infant is not aware of any sense of option or choice of object   there is no experience of

alternative, and the failure of the relationship to meet needs is tantamount to death.

The process of psychological maturation, in Fairbairn's scheme of the movement from infantile to mature dependence, consists of the gradual "abandonment of relationships based on primary identification in favor of relationships with differentiated objects." The key element in this change is the progressive differentiation of the object from the self: "The more mature a relationship is, the less it is characterized by primary identification."

Fairbairn was clear that this process is a continuous one, ranging through various levels of self object differentiation. At its most infantile level, there is no sense of separation between self and other and thus there can be no awareness of any concept of self or other. As the infant has experience in the world, it gradually begins to organize and awareness of self and a concomitant awareness of other.

Although Fairbairn did not speak to the point, his system has obvious implications for the understanding of the highest levels of self other differentiation. This process does not cease with the establishment of the notion that there is a discontinuity between one's self and others (physically as well as psychologically), but rather involves progressive levels of organization of the meaning of this differentiation and of the nature of the objects being differentiated. Ultimately, it is possible to utilize this schema to explore differences in the most mature levels of emotional development. For example, it is possible to see even moral development as an issue of learning to understand others as differentiated to the point of being ends in themselves (*cf*. Kant, 1785) and having an equally valid claim on shaping and defining their own experience and meaning.

The state of mature dependence implies recognition of the separateness of individuals, even while they are involved in the most intimate and interdependent of relationships. Separateness thus in no

way implies isolation, or even disconnection. Rather, separateness hinges on the recognition of the existence of the selfhood of the other, ultimately conceived of in a form that is not subsumable by one's own selfhood. It is the recognition that the other is a center of experience and intentionality, feeling and will, thought and purposiveness. In other words, it involves the acknowledgment of the unique individuality of the other in a way that is in no way diminished by the existence of the relationship between the self and that other. It should be clear that perhaps the most salient practical touchstone for this sort of separateness will be the recognition and acceptance of individual responsibility.

Between the stages of infantile dependence and mature dependence, Fairbairn envisioned a stage which he termed quasi independence. It should be clear, from what has been noted above, that this term is designed, in part, as a negative comment on the traditional emphasis placed on independence in most developmental theories. Nevertheless, it also is designed to convey a sense of the struggle at this level to move out of the state of infantile dependence in a way that is still very much attached to that very state. (For this reason, Fairbairn also referred to this stage as "transitional.") The state of quasi independence is ultimately doomed to failure, because it consists of an attempt to change an earlier state without relinquishing the essential tenets of that state. It is that state out of which neuroses, as classically conceived, arise; and thus it is fitting that it be predicated on a situation of conflict between the preservation and abandonment, the expression and inhibition, of an infantile state of affairs.

It is essential to realize that Fairbairn's entire conception of how the self grows is in no way predicated upon the process of structural differentiation. The self's growing awareness of individuation and separateness is based on integrated development of the whole of that self. As the individual achieves progressively higher levels of organization and interpretation of his experience, he functions with an

505

increasing level of self object differentiation, and moves from operation in an infantile dependent mode towards a progressively more adult mode of mature dependence. This movement represents the growth of the self as a whole, proceeding through the process of non structuring internalization, and not through the establishment of divisions or structures within the self. This latter process of structuring internalization has been shown to be essential to the development of psychopathology, but not to the healthy development of the self.

Conclusion

It has been shown that Fairbairn's structural model of the psyche is in no way the same as Freud's drive/structure model. Fairbairn's theory is achetypally a relational/structure model. Based on the assumption that the fundamental human motivation is for self expression in relationship, it is a theory that takes as the fundamental structural building block the constellation of self, other, and relationship between. Substructures of the self naturally are seen as conforming to this same pattern. Furthermore, the theory is predicated on a radically different notion of the nature of structure itself.

Fairbairn's insistence that structure implies pathology and that wholeness and integration imply health is unique among psychoanalytic theories. It presupposes a notion of the self that is in itself a radical departure. For Fairbairn, the self is not reducible to a self concept, or a self representation, or a system of reflected appraisals. It is a self generating center of origin which, while it is shaped and changed in relation to its objects (or, more accurately, its "others") and does in part define itself in terms of those relationships, has an expressive, experiencing existence separate from, and prior to, these relationships.

There is room in Fairbairn's theory to accommodate identifications and representations of self and objects, as there is room to accommodate systems of reflected appraisals. These can be viewed as aspects of the self's experience of itself and its world. The major

innovative insight of Fairbairn was that these phenomena do not in any way require structural differentiation of the self. Rather, he made a clear and crucially useful distinction between these non structuring internalizations, which are far more related to memory and the progressive organization of experience (and which do involve representations of self and object), and the internalizations which involve actual segments of the self (not representations thereof) and that therefore create real structures within the self crystallized subsystems which function within the self with a dissociated life of their own.

READINGS : SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

1) Atal, Yogesh (2003): Sociology: From where to where, Jaipur: Rawat Publication.
2) Barnes, H.E. (1959): Introduction to the history of Sociology, Chicago Uni. Press.
3) Bose, N.K.: Structure of Hindu Society, New Delhi.
4) Coser, Lewis, A. (1979): Master of Sociological Thought, Harcourt Brake, Jovanovich.
5) Dube, S.C.(1990): Society in India, New Delhi: National Book Trust.
6) Dumont, Luis (1970): Homohierarchichus: The caste System and its Implications,
7) New Delhi: Vikas Publication.
8) Fletcher, Ronald (1994): The Making of Sociology (Two Volumes), Jaipur: Rawat
9) Publication
10) Ghurye, G.S.(1969): Caste and Races in India, Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
11) Johnson, H.M.(1995) : Sociology: A Systematic Introduction, New Delhi: Allied
12) Publishers.
13) Prabhu, P.H. (1963): Hindu Social Organistion, Bombay: Popular Parkashan.
14) Singh, Yogendra (1986): Indian Sociology: Social conditioning and emerging trends,
15) New Delhi: Vistaar Publication.
    a. MacIver & Page, Society, Introductory Analysis, MacMillan, Delhi, 2001
16) Giddens. A, Sociology: A Textbook for the Nineties, Polity press, 1990.
17) Davis, Kingsley, Human society, Surjit Pub., Delhi, 2004

18) Madan & Majumdar, An Introduction to Social anthropology, Mayur, 1999

19) Bottomore, T.B.: Sociology: A Guide to Problems and Literature, Blackie and Sons, Bombay, 1986.

20) Berger, P, Invitation to Sociology

21) Mills, C.W, Sociological Imagination.

22) Worsley, P, Introducing Sociology, Penguin, 1987..

23) Burger & Burger, Sociology: An introduction.

24) Inkeles, Alex,What is Sociology ? New Delhi, Prentice Hall, 1987.

25) Schaeffer, R.T.& R.P.Lamm, Sociology, New Delhi, Tata McGraw Hill, 1999.

26) Johnson, Harry M, Sociology: A Systematic Introduction, Allied publication, 1995.

27) Abrahim Francis, Contemporary Sociology, Oxford University Press, 2006.

Glossary

- accounting -The process by which people offer accounts in order to make sense of the world. (ethno methodology)
- accounting practices -The ways in which one person offers an account and another person accepts or rejects that account. (ethno methodology)
- accounts-The ways in which actors explain (describe, criticize, and idealize) specific situations. (ethno methodology)
- act-The basic concept in Mead's theory, involving an impulse, perception of stimuli, taking action involving the object perceived, and using the object to satisfy the initial impulse. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)
- action- Things that people do that are the result of conscious processes.
- actor-networks theory   An approach to studying social phenomena that focuses on the meaning-shaping relations between

entities and discounts any essential or intrinsic characteristics of the entities.

- Adaptation-One of Parsons' four functional imperatives. A system must adjust to its environment and adjust the environment to its needs. More specifically, a system must cope with external situational dangers and contingencies. (Parsons; Structural Functionalism)

- affectivity- affective neutrality   The pattern variable involving the issue of how much emotion (or affect) to invest in a social phenomenon. (Parsons; Structural Functionalism)

- affectual action Nonrational action that is the result of emotion. (Weber)

- agents -Actors who have the ability to make a difference in the social world; what occurs would not have occurred in that way were it not for the fact that the actor intervened and took the action in question.

- Alienation-The breakdown of the natural interconnection between the following: people and their productive activities, the products they produce, the fellow workers with whom they produce those things, and with what they are potentially capable of becoming. (Marx)

- analytical Marxism-An attempt to focus on the questions posed by Marx--such as class, exploitation and historical materialism--but using conventional sociological methods, such as empirical studies, that focus on functions and rational actors. (Neo-Marxian)

- anomie-For Durkheim, the social condition where individuals lack sufficient moral restraint so that they do not know what is expected of them. For Merton, a situation in which there is a serious disconnection between social structure and culture; between structurally created abilities of people to act in accord with cultural norms and goals and the norms and goals themselves. (Durkheim, structural functionalism)

- appearance-The way the actor looks to the audience; especially those items that indicate the performer's social status. (Goffman)
- archaeology of knowledge-The analysis of those rules that explain the conditions of possibility for all that can be said in a given discourse at any given time. (Foucault)
- asceticism-A religious or other belief system in which followers deny themselves worldly pleasures. Weber divides asceticism into two types: otherworldly, which focuses on the rejection of the secular world, and innerwordly, which focuses on inner purity and allows members to engage in the secular world. (Weber)
- ascription-achievement The pattern variable where the issue is whether we judge a social phenomenon by with what it is endowed or by what it achieves. (Parsons; Structural Functionalism)
- association The relationships or interactions among people. (Simmel)
- autopoietic systems -Systems that produce their own basic elements, establish their own boundaries and structures, are self-referential, and are closed. (Systems Theory)
- back stage That area where facts or informal actions suppressed in the front stage are allowed. A back stage is usually adjacent to the front stage, but access to it is controlled. Performers can reliably expect no members of their front audience to appear in the back. (Goffman)
- base That part of society which conditions, if not determines, the nature of everything else in society. For Marx, this was the economy. (Marx)
- because motives Retrospective glances backward, after an action has occurred, at the factors (e.g., personal background, individual psyche, environment) that caused individuals to behave as they did. (Schutz)
- behavior Things that people do that require little or no thought. (Weber, Exchange Theory)

- **behavioral organism** One of Parsons's action systems, responsible for handling the adaptation function by adjusting to and transforming the external world.
- **behaviorism** The study, largely associated with psychology, of behavior. Behaviorism ignores consciousness and focuses on conditioning to explain individual actions.
- **bifurcated consciousness** A type of consciousness characteristic of women that reflects the fact that, for them, everyday life is divided into two realities: the reality of their actual, lived, reflected-on experience and the reality of social typifications. (Feminism)
- **breaching experiments** Experiments in which background social rules are violated in order to shed light on the methods by which people construct social reality. (ethnomethodology)
- **bureaucracy** A modern type of organization in which the behavior of officers is rule-bound; each office has a specified sphere of competence and has obligations to perform specific functions, the authority to carry them out, and the means of compulsion to get the job done; the offices are organized into a hierarchical system; technical training is needed for each office; those things needed to do the job belong to the office and not the officer; the position is part of the organization and cannot be appropriated by an officer; and much of what goes on in the bureaucracy (acts, decisions, rules) is in writing. (Weber)
- **business** A pecuniary approach to economic processes in which the dominant interests are acquisition, money, and profitability, rather than production and the interests of the larger community. (Veblen)
- **calculability** The emphasis on quantity, often to the detriment of quality. (Ritzer)
- **capitalism** An economic system composed mainly of capitalists and the proletariat, in which one class (capitalists) exploits the other (proletariat). (Marx)

- **capitalist patriarchy** A term that indicates that the oppression of women is traceable to a combination of capitalism and patriarchy. (Feminism)
- **capitalists** Those who own the means of production under capitalism and are therefore in a position to exploit workers. (Marx)
- **carceral archipelago** An image of society that results from the idea that discipline is swarming through society. This means that the process affects some parts of society and not others, or it may affect some parts at one time and other parts at another time. Thus, it creates a patchwork of centers of discipline amidst a world in which other settings are less affected or unaffected by the spread of the disciplinary society. (Foucault)
- **charismatic authority** Authority legitimated by the followers' belief in the exceptional sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character of the charismatic leader. The leader need not actually have such qualities. (Weber)
- **civilizing process** The long-term change in the West in manners as they relate to daily behavior. Everyday behaviors that were at one time acceptable have, over time, become increasingly unacceptable. We are more likely to observe the everyday behaviors of others, to be sensitive to them, to understand them better and, perhaps most importantly, to find an increasing number of them embarrassing. What we once found quite acceptable now embarrasses us enormously. As a result, what was once quite open is now hidden from view. (Elias)
- **class consciousness** The ability of a class, in particular the proletariat, to overcome false consciousness and attain an accurate understanding of the capitalist system. (Marx)
- **code** A way of distinguishing elements of a system from elements that do not belong to the system; the basic language of a functional system. (Systems Theory)

- **collective conscience** The totality of beliefs and feelings common to the average member of a society that forms a system with its own properties. (Durkheim)
- **collective representation** The collective concepts and images through which society reflects on itself. For Durkheim, these representations also constitute a social force that motivates or constrains us. (Durkheim)
- **colonization of the lifeworld** As the system and its structures grow increasingly differentiated, complex, and self-sufficient, their power grows and with it their ability to direct and control what transpires in the lifeworld. (Habermas)
- **communism** The social system that permits, for the first time, the expression of full human potential. It would involve collective decision making that would allow the needs of the many to be taken into account. (Marx)
- **compounded societies** Societies that are formed by the combination of heterogeneous and semi-autonomous units. This is in distinction to simple societies, which are relatively homogenous and constituted by one society-wide unit. There can be different degrees of compounding (doubly, trebly) where compounded societies are further compounded. (Spencer)
- **conflict group** A group that actually engages in group conflict. (Dahrendorf)
- **conspicuous consumption** The consumption of a variety of goods, not for subsistence but for the attainment of higher status of those who consume them, thereby creating the basis for invidious distinctions between people. (Veblen)
- **conspicuous leisure** The nonproductive use of time as a way of creating an invidious distinction between people and elevating the social status of those able to use their time in this way. (Veblen)
- **constructivist perspective** The view that schemes of perception, thought, and interactions create structures. (Bourdieu)

- consummation   Final stage of the act involving the taking of action that satisfies the original impulse. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)
- contingency   The idea that social structures, events or people could be different than they are and that at the heart of even the most enduring institution there is an element of chance and accident. (Systems Theory)
- core   The geographical area that dominates the capitalist world-economy and exploits the rest of the system. (Neo-Marxian)
- cost   Rewards lost in adopting a specific action and, as a result, in forgoing alternative lines of action. (Exchange Theory)
- critical theory   In general, this refers to a theory of society developed with the intent to fundamentally change society. In particular, critical theory is often used to refer to the group of scholars associated with the Frankfurt school. (Neo-Marxian)
- cultural capital   The various kinds of legitimate knowledge possessed by an actor where that knowledge can "bear interest" in the same way that monetary capital does. (Bourdieu)
- cultural feminism   A feminist theory of difference that extols the positive aspects of women. (Feminism)
- cultural system   The Parsonsian action system that performs the latency function by providing actors with the norms and values that motivate them for action.
- culture industry   To the critical theorists, industries such a movies and radio that serve to make culture a more important factor in society than the economy.
- definition of the situation   The idea that if people define situations as real, then those definitions are real in their consequences. (Chicago School)
- dependence   The potential cost that an actor will be willing to tolerate within a relationship. (Exchange Theory)

- dependency chains   The chain of relationships involving those people a person is dependent on as well as those peoples' dependency on the person. (Elias)
- dialectic   For Marx, this meant concrete contradictions in society that can only be resolved through social change. (Marx)
- dialectical approach   A way of studying society that focuses on contradictions and reciprocal relations between actors and structures. (Marx)
- differentiation   An increase in complexity within the system created by the system copying within itself the difference between it and the environment. (Systems Theory)
- disciplinary society   A society in which control over people is pervasive. (Foucault)
- discreditable stigma   A potentially discrediting characteristic of a person that is not known by audience members. (Goffman)
- discursive consciousness   The ability to describe our actions in words. (Giddens; Agency-Structure)
- distanciation   The tendency for various components of the modern social world to grow quite distant in space and time. (Giddens; Theories of Modernity)
- division of labor   The form that work takes in modern society in which different individuals perform different specialized tasks instead of having everyone do essentially the same sort of task. (Durkheim)
- double consciousness   The feelings of those who perceive themselves to be both outside and inside a society, especially where the feeling of being outside is forced on African Americans by a white majority. (Du Bois)
- double contingency   The element of chance and accident that is at the heart of every social interaction due to the fact that in order to understand the interaction, the speaker must make risky

assumptions about the listener, while the listener must make risky assumptions about the speaker. (Systems Theory)

- double hermeneutic The social scientist's understanding of the social world may have an impact on the understandings of the actors being studied, with the result that social researchers can alter the world they are studying and thus lead to distorted findings and conclusions. (Giddens; Agency-Structure)

- dramaturgy A view of social life as a series of dramatic performances akin to those that take place in the theater. (Goffman)

- dromology The study of social phenomena with a focus upon speed. (Virilio)

- dualism The idea that structure (and culture) and agency can be distinguished for analytic purposes, although they are intertwined in social life. (Agency-Structure)

- duality All social action involves structure, and all structure involves social action. Agency and structure are inextricably interwoven in ongoing human activity or practice. (Agency-Structure)

- dyad A two-person group. (Simmel)

- dynamic density The number of people and their frequency of interaction. An increase in dynamic density leads to the transformation from mechanical to organic solidarity. (Durkheim)

- dysfunction Observable consequences that have an adverse effect on the ability of a particular system to adapt or adjust. (Merton)

- economic determinism The idea that the economy determines all sectors of society. Usually used as a criticism of orthodox Marxist approaches. (Marx; Neo-Marxian)

- economy To Parsons, the subsystem of society that performs the function of adapting to the environment.

- endocolonization Technology being used to colonize the human body. (Virilio)

- Enlightenment   A   mainly   philosophical   and   humanistic movement beginning in 17th century England and flowering in 18th century France and Scotland. Enlightenment thinkers rejected religious dogma and attempted to model human thought and society on scientific thinking. The Enlightenment led to sociology both in the Enlightenment's belief that scientific principles could be applied to the study of society and also in the conservative reaction to the Enlightenment that stressed the value of norms and traditions. (Sociological Theory: Early Years)
- ethnomethodology The study of members of society in the everyday situations in which they find themselves with a focus on the ways in which they use extraordinary methods to produce ordinary social reality. (ethnomethodology)
- evolutionary theory   A theory of society that sees social change as predictable and progressive. It should be noted that Spencer's evolutionary theory predates Darwin's use of the word and does not incorporate biology's idea that evolution is based on random variation. (Spencer)
- examination   A way of observing subordinates and assessing what they are doing and have done. It is employed in a given setting by those in authority who make normalizing judgments about what is and is not an adequate score. (Foucault)
- exchange network   A web of social relationships involving a number of either individual or collective actors and in which the various actors, who have a variety of valued resources, exchange opportunities and relations with one another. A number of these exchange relations exist and interrelate with one another to form a single network structure. (Emerson)
- feminist theory   A generalized, wide-ranging system of ideas about social life and human experience developed from a woman-centered perspective. (Feminism)

- fetishism of commodities   The tendency in capitalism for commodities to take on an independent, almost mystical external reality. (Marx)
- fiduciary system   To Parsons, the subsystem of society that handles the pattern maintenance and latency function by transmitting culture (norms and values) to actors and seeing to it that it is internalized by them. (Parsons)
- field   A network of relations among the objective positions in a social situation. (Bourdieu)
- fieldwork   A methodology used by symbolic interactionists and other sociologists that involves venturing into the field (the day-to-day social world) to observe and collect relevant data.
- figurations Social processes involving the interweaving of people who are seen as open and interdependent. Power is central to social figurations; they are constantly in flux. Figurations emerge and develop, but in largely unseen and unplanned ways. (Elias)
- Fordism The ideas, principles, and systems spawned by Henry Ford in the early 20thcentury and embodied in the creation of the automobile assembly line and the resulting mass production of automobiles. The success of Ford's innovations led many other industries to adapt the assembly line to their production needs and to the mass production of their products.
- formal rationality   A type of rationality in which the general form of rationality--such as efficiency, calculability and predictability--become the ultimate goal, replacing any substantive goal that the rationality was originally intended to achieve. Weber believed that this form of rationality is distinctive to the modern West. (Weber)
- forms   Patterns imposed on the bewildering array of events, actions, and interactions in the social world, both by people in their everyday lives and by social theorists. (Simmel)
- Frankfurt school   The group of neo-Marxists that formed around the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany. They

rejected Marx's economic determinism, criticized Stalinism, integrated Freud's theories and focused on culture. (Neo-Marxian)

- **front stage** That part of a dramaturgical performance that generally functions in rather fixed and general ways to define the situation for those who observe the performance. (Goffman)

- **functional differentiation** The most complex form of differentiation and the form that dominates modern society. Every function within a system is ascribed to a particular unit. (Systems Theory)

- **functions** Consequences that help a particular system adapt or adjust. (Structural Functionalism)

- **game stage** The second stage in the genesis of the self: Instead of taking the role of discrete others, the child is able to consider others' specific roles in terms of the overall game. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)

- **gender** Socially constructed male and female roles, relations, and identities. (Feminism)

- **genealogy of power** An analysis of the evolution of ideas that focuses on contingency and domination. (Foucault)

- **generalized other** The viewpoint that individuals are able to adopt in which they are able to see their self and their roles in terms of the entire community. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)

- **genetic structuralism** Bourdieu's approach, which involves the study of objective structures that cannot be separated from mental structures that, themselves, involve the internalization of objective structures. (Agency-Structure)

- **gestures** Movements by one party (person or animal) that serve as stimuli to another party. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)

- **globalization** Processes that affect a multitude of nations throughout the world, but which are independent of any specific nation-state.

- glocalization The complex interplay of the global and the local in any given setting.
- goal attainment The second of Parsons's functional imperatives, involving the need for a system to define and achieve its primary goals.
- governmentality The practices and techniques by which control is exercised over people, primarily by inducing people to aim for "self-improvement," which seems voluntary. (Foucault)
- grand theory A vast, highly ambitious effort to tell the story of a great stretch of human history.
- habitus The mental or cognitive structures, derived from objective social structures, through which people deal with the social world. (Bourdieu)
- hegemony A Marxist concept given its usually accepted definition by Antonio Gramsci that focuses on cultural leadership rather than the coercive effect of state domination.
- hierarchical observation The ability of officials at or near the top of an organization to oversee all that they control with a single gaze. (Foucault)
- historical materialism The idea that the way in which people provide for their material needs determines or, in general, conditions the relations that people have with each other, their social institutions and prevalent ideas. Furthermore, that the material conditions change over time because of dynamics immanent within them, and that history is a record of the changes in the material conditions of a group's life and of the correlative changes in social relations, institutions and prevalent ideas. (Marx)
- hyperconsumption An extraordinary level of consumption associated with the contemporary world. (Ritzer)
- hyperreal Entirely simulated and, as a result, more real than real, more beautiful than beautiful, truer than true, and so on. (Baudrillard)

- hysteresis   The condition that results from having a habitus that is not appropriate for the situation in which one lives. (Bourdieu)
- The immediate response of the self to others; the incalculable, unpredictable, and creative aspect of the self. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)
- ideal type   A one-sided, exaggerated concept, usually an exaggeration of the congruity of a given phenomenon, used to analyze the social world in all its historical and contemporary variation. The ideal type is a measuring rod to be used in comparing various specific examples of a social phenomenon either cross-culturally or over time. (Weber)
- ideology   An intricate web of beliefs about reality and social life that is institutionalized as public knowledge and disseminated throughout society so effectively that it becomes taken-for-granted knowledge for all social groups. For Marx, ideology always served the interests of the ruling class. For Mannheim, ideology refers to those ideas that emerge from specific sectors of the social world and are therefore inherently limited, one-sided, and distorted. (Marx; Mannheim)
- imperatively coordinated associations   Associations of people controlled by a hierarchy of authority positions. (Dahrendorf)
- implosion   The decline of boundaries and the collapse of various things into each other; dedifferentiation as opposed to differentiation. (Baudrillard)
- impression management   The techniques actors use to maintain certain impressions in the face of problems they are likely to encounter. (Goffman)
- impulse   First stage of the act in which the actor reacts to some external stimulus and feels the need to do something about it. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)
- individual culture   The capacity of the individual to produce, absorb, and control the elements of objective culture. (Simmel)

- industrial societies Societies that are characterized by decentralized control and individuality. Spencer sees an evolutionary trend from militant to industrial societies. (Spencer)
- industry The understanding and productive use, primarily by the working classes, of a wide variety of mechanized processes on a large scale. (Veblen)
- in-order-to motives The subjective reasons that actors undertake actions. (Schutz)
- integration The third of Parsons's functional imperatives, requiring that a system seek to regulate the interrelationship of its component parts. Integration also involves the management of the relationship among the other three functional imperatives (AGL). (Parsons; Structural Functionalism)
- interest group Group of people possessing not only common interests but also a structure, a goal, and personnel. Interest groups have the capacity to engage in group conflict. (Dahrendorf)
- intersectionality theory The view that women experience oppression in varying configurations and in varying degrees of intensity. (Feminism)
- intersubjectivity That characteristic of the everyday world that depends on the consciousness of one actor visualizing what is at the same time taking place in the consciousness of another. (Schutz)
- irrationality of rationality Various unreasonable things associated with rationality (and McDonaldization), especially dehumanization, in which employees are forced to work in dehumanizing jobs and customers are forced to eat in dehumanizing settings and circumstances. (Ritzer)
- juggernaut Giddens's metaphor for the modern world as a massive force that moves forward inexorably, riding roughshod over everything in its path. People steer the juggernaut, but it always has the possibility of careening out of control. (Theories of Modernity)

- **labor theory of value** Marx's theory that the value of a commodity should come from the labor that creates it instead of being determined by what can be obtained in an exchange. (Marx)
- **landscapes** Appadurai's metaphor for the fluid, irregular and variably shaped forces affecting globalization. (Theories of Modernity)
- **latency** One aspect of Parsons's fourth functional imperative, involving the need for a system to furnish, maintain, and renew the motivation of individuals. (Structural Functionalism)
- **latent functions** Unintended positive consequences. (Merton)
- **latent interests** Unconscious interests that translate, for Dahrendorf, into objective role expectations. (Conflict Theory)
- **law of three stages** Comte's idea that all societies pass through three successive stages: the theological, the metaphysical and the positivist. (Comte)
- **levels of functional analysis** Functional analysis can be performed on any standardized repetitive social phenomenon, ranging from society as a whole to organizations, institutions and groups. (Merton)
- **liberal feminism** A feminist theory of inequality that argues that women may claim equality with men on the basis of an essential human capacity for reasoned moral agency, that gender inequality is the result of a patriarchal and sexist patterning of the division of labor, and that gender equality can be produced by transforming the division of labor through the repatterning of key institutions, such as law, work, family, education, and media. (Feminism)
- **lifeworld** To Schutz, the commonsense world, the world of everyday life, the mundane world; that world in which intersubjectivity takes place. For Habermas it is the place where communicative action generally occurs. (Schutz; Neo-Marxian)

- **looking-glass self**   The idea that we form our sense of ourselves by using others, and their reactions to us, as mirrors to assess who we are and how we are doing. (Cooley)
- **macro**   Approaches in sociology that focus on larger, enduring structures--such as institutions, culture and systems--and tends to ignore individuals and their interactions.
- **manifest functions**   Positive consequences that are brought about consciously and purposely. (Merton)
- **manifest interests**   Latent interests of which people have become conscious. (Dahrendorf)
- **manipulation**   Third stage of the act, in which the object is manipulated, once it has been perceived. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)
- **manner**   The way an actor conducts himself; it tells the audience what sort of role the actor expects to play in the situation. (Goffman)
- **mass culture**   The culture that had been commodified and made available to, and popular among, the masses. (Critical Theory)
- **material social facts**   Social facts that are not reducible to the intention of any individual and that take a material form in the external social world (e.g., architecture). (Durkheim)
- **McDonaldization**   The process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society, as well as the rest of the world. Its five basic dimensions are efficiency, calculability, predictability, control through the substitution of technology for people, and, paradoxically, the irrationality of rationality. (Ritzer)
- **me** The individual's adoption and perception of the generalized other; the conformist aspect of the self.
- **means of production**   Those things that are needed for production to take place, including tools, machinery, raw materials and factories. (Marx)

- mechanical solidarity   The type of social order that is encountered in a primitive society. Durkheim believed that such a society is held together by the fact that there is little division of labor and, as a result, virtually everyone does essentially the same things. (Durkheim)
- metatheory A systematic study of the underlying structure of sociological theory. (Metatheory)
- methodological holists   Those social scientists who focus on the macro-level and view it as determining the individual interactions.
- methodological individualists   Those social scientists who focus on individual interactions and see the macro-level as only an accumulation of such interactions.
- methodological relationists   Those social scientists who focus on the relationship between macro- and micro-level phenomena.
- micro   Approaches in sociology that tend to stay at the level of interactions between individuals and that tend to ignore institutions, culture and systems.
- microphysics of power   The idea that power exists at the micro-level and involves both efforts to exercise it and efforts to contest its exercise. (Foucault)
- middle-range theories   Theories that seek a middle ground between trying to explain the entirety of the social world and a very minute portion of that world. (Structural Functionalism)
- militant societies   Societies that are characterized by highly structured organizations for offensive and defensive warfare. Spencer defines military in distinction to industrial societies, although the two are often intermingled. (Spencer)
- mind   To Mead, the mind is constituted by the conversations that people have with themselves using language.
- mystification   An effort by actors to confound their audience by restricting the contact between themselves and the audience,

concealing the mundane things that go into their performance. (Goffman)

- **natural attitude** The attitude we adopt in the lifeworld: We take phenomena for granted, we don't reflect much on them, and we don't doubt their reality or existence. (Schutz)
- **need-dispositions** To Parsons, drives that are shaped by the social setting.
- **neotribalism** A postmodern development characterized by the emergence of a wide array of communities that are refuges for strangers seeking community, especially ethnic, religious, and political community.
- **net balance** The relative weight of functions and dysfunctions. (Merton)
- **new means of consumption** The set of consumption sites that came into existence largely after 1950 in the United States and that served to revolutionize consumption. (Ritzer)
- **nonfunctions** Consequences that are irrelevant to the system under consideration. (Merton)
- **nonmaterial social facts** Social facts that are external and coercive, but which do not take a material form; they are nonmaterial (e.g., language, norms and values). (Durkheim)
- **normalizing judgments** The ability by those in power to decide what is normal and what is abnormal on a variety of dimensions. Those who are judged abnormal can be either punished or rehabilitated, although the two terms tend to become interchangeable. (Foucault)
- **objectification** The process through which we create external objects out of our internal thoughts. Also referred to as objectivation. (Marx)
- **objective culture** The objects that people produce--art, science, philosophy, and so on--that become part of culture. (Simmel)

- one-dimensional society   To Herbert Marcuse, the breakdown in the dialectical relationship between people and the larger structures so that people are largely controlled by such structures. Lost is the ability of people to create and to be actively involved in those structures. Gradually, individual freedom and creativity dwindle away into nothingness, and people lose the capacity to think critically and negatively about the structures that control and oppress them. (Neo-Marxian)
- operant conditioning   The learning process by which the consequences of behavior serve to modify that behavior. (Exchange Theory)
- opportunity costs   The costs of forgoing the next-most-attractive action when an actor chooses an action aimed at achieving a given end. (Rational Choice)
- organic solidarity   The type of social order that is encountered in a modern society. Durkheim believed that such societies are held together by the substantial division of labor in modern society, because people need the contributions of an increasing number of people in order to function and even to survive. (Durkheim)
- outside   Neither frontstage nor backstage; literally outside the realm of the performance where one does not expect to meet a particular audience. (Goffman)
- outsider within, the   The frequent experience of group members when they move from the home group into the larger society.
- panopticon A structure that allows someone in power (e.g., a prison officer) the possibility of complete observation of a group of people (e.g., prisoners).
- paradigm   A fundamental image of a science's subject matter used to distinguish one scientific community from another or to distinguish different historical periods of a single scientific discipline. (Metatheory)

- patriarchy A system in which gender differences are essential to the subjugation of women. It is pervasive in its social organization, and durable over time and space. (Feminism)
- pattern maintenance The second aspect of Parsons's fourth functional imperative, involving the need to furnish, maintain, and renew the cultural patterns that create and sustain individual motivation. (Structural Functionalism)
- pattern variables In Parsons' theory, five dichotomous choices that actors must make in every situation. (Structural Functionalism)
- perception Second stage of the act, in which the actor consciously searches for and reacts to stimuli that relate to the impulse and the ways of dealing with it. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)
- periphery Those areas of the capitalist world-economy that provide raw materials to the core and are heavily exploited by it. (Neo-Marxian)
- personal front Those items of expressive equipment that the audience identifies with the performers and expects them to carry with them into the setting. (Goffman)
- personality To Parsons, the individual actor's organized system of orientation to, and motivation for, action. (Structural Functionalism)
- personality system The Parsonsian action system responsible for performing the goal-attainment function by defining system goals and mobilizing resources to attain them. (Structural Functionalism)
- phantasmagoria The fantastic immaterial effects produced by physical structures, such as arcades, as well as the newer means of consumption. (Neo-Marxian)
- phenomenology A school of philosophy concerned with the study of the mind. (Schutz)
- play stage The first stage in the genesis of the self, in which the child plays at being someone else. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)
- polity To Parsons, the subsystem of society that performs the function of goal attainment by pursuing societal objectives and

mobilizing actors and resources to that end. (Structural Functionalism)

- positivism   The term is used in widely various ways in sociology. For Comte, it mainly meant a search for society's invariant laws, although he also often associated the term with political progress and order. (Comte)

- post-Fordism   In contrast to Fordism, a system for the production of heterogeneous, even customized, products that requires more flexible technologies and more flexible and skilled workers, and that leads to greater heterogeneity of consumption. (Theories of Modernity)

- postindustrial society   A society characterized by the provision of services rather than goods; professional and technical work rather than blue-collar, manual work; theoretical knowledge rather than practical know-how; the creation and monitoring of new technologies; and new intellectual technologies to handle such assessment and control. (Theories of Modernity)

- postmodern sociology   A type of sociology that sees a qualitative change in society from the modern period, although the precise nature of the change differs.

- poststructuralist   A theorist, like Bourdieu, who has been influenced by a structuralist perspective but who has moved beyond it to synthesize it with other theoretical ideas and perspectives.

- power   To Emerson, the potential cost that one actor can induce another to accept. (Exchange Theory)

- practical consciousness   Involves actions that the actors take for granted, without being able to express in words what they are doing. (Theories of Modernity)

- practical rationality   On a day-to-day basis, we deal with whatever difficulties exist and find the most expedient way of attaining our goal of getting from one point to another. (Weber)

- practice   To Bourdieu, actions that are the outcome of the dialectical relationship between structure and agency. Practices are not objectively determined, nor are they the product of free will. (Agency-Structure)
- praxis   Practical action that is always intertwined with a theory of society and aimed at revolutionary change. (Marx)
- primary group   An intimate face-to-face group that plays a crucial role in linking the individual to the larger society. Of special importance are the primary groups of the young, mainly the family and friendship groups. (Cooley)
- profit   The greater number of rewards gained over costs incurred in social exchange.
- proletariat Those who, because they do not own means of production, must sell their labor time to the capitalists in order to gain access to those means. (Marx)
- Protestant ethic   Generally, a belief that work is its own reward. Weber argues that this ethic developed primarily out of the Calvinists' belief in predestination. The Calvinists could not know whether they were going to heaven or hell or directly affect their fate. However, it was possible for them to discern "signs" that they were either saved or damned, and one of the major signs of salvation was success in business. (Weber)
- psychoanalytic feminism   An effort to explain patriarchy through the use of reformulated theories of Freud and his successors in psychoanalytic theory. (Feminism)
- quasi group   A number of individuals who occupy positions that have the same role interests. (Conflict Theory)
- radical feminism   A theory that holds that women are everywhere oppressed by violence or the threat of violence, and that argues for the necessity of fundamental social change. (Feminism)
- rationalization   The historical trend of increasing rationality in any given domain. (Weber)

- **rational-legal authority**   A type of authority in which the legitimacy of leaders is derived from the fact that there are a series of codified rules and regulations, and leaders hold their positions as a result of those rules. (Weber)
- **recipes**   Standardized ways of handling various situations. (Schutz)
- **reflexive sociology**   The use by sociologists of their own theoretical and empirical tools to better understand their own discipline. (Bourdieu)
- **reflexivity**   This includes self-consciousness, but also all of those aspects of modern life that are monitored. (Theories of Modernity)
- **reify**   The process of coming to believe that humanly created social forms are natural, universal, and absolute things. (Marx)
- **relations of production**   Those relations that people form with each other in order to fulfill their material needs. Marx believed that different forces of productions lead to different relations of production. (Marx)
- **relations of ruling**   The complex, nonmonolithic but intricately connected social activities that attempt to control human social production. (Feminism)
- **repressive law**   Characteristic of mechanical solidarity, this is a form of law in which offenders are likely to be severely punished for any action that is seen by the tightly integrated community as an offense against the powerful collective conscience. (Durkheim)
- **reserve army of the unemployed**   Those people that must be kept unemployed in capitalism so that those who have jobs can always be threatened with replacement. (Marx)
- **restitutive law**   Characteristic of organic solidarity and its weakened collective conscience. In this form of law, offenders are likely simply to be asked to comply with the law or to repay (make restitution to) those who have been harmed by their actions. (Durkheim)

- roleWhat an actor does in a status, seen in the context of its functional significance for the larger system. (Structural Functionalism)
- role distance   The degree to which individuals separate themselves from the roles they are in. (Goffman)
- routinization of charisma   Efforts by disciples to recast the extraordinary and revolutionary characteristics of the charismatic leader so that they are better able to handle mundane matters. This is also done in order to prepare for the day when the charismatic leader passes from the scene and to allow the disciples to remain in power. (Weber)
- secrecy   As defined by Simmel, the condition in which one person has the intention of hiding something, while the other is seeking to reveal what is being hidden. (Simmel)
- segmentary differentiation The division of parts of the system on the basis of the need to fulfill identical functions over and over. (Systems Theory)
- self To Goffman, a sense of who one is that is a dramatic effect emerging from the immediate dramaturgical scene that is being presented.
- self The ability to take oneself as an object. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)
- self-collectivity   The pattern variable involving the choice between pursuing our own self-interests or those shared with the collectivity. (Parsons; Structural Functionalism)
- semiperiphery   A residual category in the capitalist world-economy that encompasses a set of regions somewhere between the exploiting and the exploited. (Neo-Marxian)
- setting   The physical scene that ordinarily must be there if the actors are to engage in a dramaturgical performance. (Goffman)

- significant gestures Symbolic gestures that require thought before a response is made; only humans are capable of this. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)
- significant symbols Symbols that arouse in the person expressing them the same kind of response (it need not be identical) as they are designed to elicit from those to whom they are addressed. (Mead; Symbolic Interactionism)
- simulations Fakes; to Baudrillard, the contemporary world is becoming increasingly dominated by the inauthentic. (Baudrillard)
- social currents Social facts that are not yet crystallized into social organizations. (Durkheim)
- social dynamics A sociological approach that sees society as constantly changing and subject to an evolutionary process. (Comte)
- social facts To Durkheim, social facts are the subject matter of sociology. They are to be treated as things that are external to, and coercive over, individuals, and they are to be studied empirically. (Durkheim)
- social statics A sociological approach that neglects all issues of time and describes an ideal harmony between the parts of society. (Comte)
- social stratification A structure involving a hierarchy of positions that has the function of leading those people with the needed skills and abilities to do what is necessary to move into the high-ranking positions that are most important to society's functioning and survival. (Structural Functionalism)
- social system The Parsonsian action system responsible for coping with the integration function by controlling its component parts; a number of human actors who interact with one another in a situation with a physical or environmental context. (Structural Functionalism)

- social systems   To Giddens, reproduced social practices, or relations between actors or collectivities, that are reproduced, becoming regular social practices. (Agency-Structure)
- socialism A political and economic system that is based on cooperation and in which decisions about production and distribution are made collectively. The idea of socialism predates Marx, but socialists before Marx focused less on class conflict and more on descriptions of the ideal society. (Sociological Theory: Early Years)
- socialist feminism An effort to develop a unified theory that focuses on the role of capitalism and patriarchy in creating a large-scale structure that oppresses women. (Feminism)
- societal functionalism   A variety of structural functionalism that focuses on the large-scale social structures and institutions of society, their interrelationships, and their constraining effects on actors. (Structural Functionalism)
- society   To Parsons, a relatively self-sufficient collectivity. (Structural Functionalism)
- sociological theory A set of interrelated ideas that allow for the systematization of knowledge of the social world, the explanation of that world, predictions about the future, and/or the envisioning of alternative social arrangements.
- sociology of knowledge   The study, description and theoretical analysis of the ways in which social relations influence thought. (Mannheim)
- species being   The potential and powers that make us uniquely human and that distinguish us from other species. For Marx, our species being is historical and social. (Marx)
- specificity-diffuseness   The pattern variable in which the issue is whether to orient oneself to part or all of a social phenomenon. (Parsons; Structural Functionalism)

- spirit of capitalism   In the West, unlike any other area of the world, people were motivated to be economically successful, not by greed but by an ethical system that emphasized the ceaseless pursuit of economic success. The spirit of capitalism had a number of components, including the seeking of profits rationally and systematically, frugality, punctuality, fairness, and the earning of money as a legitimate end in itself. (Weber)
- standpoint The perspective of embodied actors within groups that are differentially located in social structure. (Feminism)
- status   A structural position within the social system. (Structural Functionalism)
- stigma   A gap between virtual and actual social identity. (Goffman)
- stranger   One of Simmel's social types defined by distance: one who is neither too close nor too far.
- stratificatory differentiation   Vertical differentiation according to rank or status in a system conceived as a hierarchy. (Systems Theory)
- structural functionalism   A sociological theory that focuses on the structures of society and their functional significance (positive or negative consequences) for other structures.
- structuralism   A theory that depends on the view that there are hidden or underlying structures that determine what transpires in the social world.
- structuration   An approach developed by Giddens that assumes that agents and structures are interrelated to such an extent that at the moment that they produce action, people also produce and reproduce the structures in which they exist. (Agency-Structure)
- structure   To Giddens, the structuring properties (specifically, rules and resources) that give similar social practices a systemic form. (Agency-Structure)

- structures Enduring, reproducible patterns of social interaction and persistent social relationships.

- subsistence wage The wage paid by the capitalist to the proletariat, which is just enough for the worker to survive and to have a family and children so that when the worker falters, he can be replaced by one of his children. (Marx)

- substantive rationality The choice of the most expedient action is guided by larger values rather than by daily experiences and practical thinking. (Weber)

- superstructure To Marx, secondary social phenomena (e.g., the state and culture) that are erected on an economic base that serves to define them. (Marx)

- symbolic capital For Bourdieu, socially legitimated cultural and social capital that is related to the amount of honor and prestige possessed by an actor. (Agency-Structure)

- symbolic exchange A reversible process of giving and receiving; a cyclical exchange of gifts and counter-gifts, associated with non-capitalist societies. (Baudrillard)

- symbolic interaction The distinctive human ability to relate to one another, not only through gestures but also through significant symbols. (Symbolic Interactionism)

- symbolic violence A socially legitimate form of violence, in which the agent against whom it is practiced is complicit in its practice. It is practiced indirectly, largely through cultural mechanisms. (Bourdieu)

- system To Habermas, the structures (such as the family, the legal system, the state, and the economy) that are anchored within the lifeworld, but which come to develop their own distinctive characteristics and to grow increasingly separated from the lifeworld. (Agency-Structure)

- team Any set of individuals who cooperate in staging a single performance. (Goffman)

- **technocratic thinking**   Concern with being efficient, with simply finding the best means to an end without reflecting on either the means or the end. (Neo-Marxian)
- **teleology**   Goal seeking; usually used as a criticism of a theory that assumes that societies have goals that are more than the goals of the individuals making up the society. (Structural Functionalism)
- **theoretical rationality**   An effort to master reality cognitively through the development of increasingly abstract concepts. The goal is to attain a rational understanding of the world, rather than to take rational action within it. (Weber)
- **they-relations**   The realm of people's lives in which they relate purely to types of people (or larger structures in which such types exist), rather than directly experiencing other humans. (Schutz)
- **traditional action**   Action taken on the basis of the ways things have been done habitually or customarily. (Weber)
- **traditional authority**   Authority based on the belief by followers that certain people (based on their family, tribe, or lineage) have exercised sovereignty since time immemorial. The leaders claim, and the followers believe in, the sanctity of age-old rules and powers. (Weber)
- **tragedy of culture**   The condition of modern society that stems from the fact that, over time, objective culture grows exponentially, while individual culture, and the ability to produce it, grows only marginally. Our meager individual capacities cannot keep pace with our cultural products. As a result, we are doomed to having increasingly less understanding of the world we have created and to being increasingly controlled by that world. (Simmel)
- **triad**   A three-person group. (Simmel)
- **types**   Patterns imposed on a wide range of actors by both laypeople and social scientists in order to combine a number of them into a limited number of categories. (Schutz)

- typifications   A limited number of categories that we use to try to pigeonhole people, at least initially and provisionally. (Schutz)
- unanticipated (unintended) consequences   Unexpected   positive, negative, and irrelevant consequences.
- unit act   The basic component of Parsons's action theory, involving an actor, an end, a situation, and norms and values. The actor chooses means to ends within a situation, and that choice is shaped by conditions in the situation, as well as by norms and values. (Parsons; Structural Functionalism)
- universalism-particularism   The pattern variable where the issue is whether you judge a social phenomenon by general standards that apply to all such phenomena or by more specific, emotional standards. (Parsons; Structural Functionalism)
- utilities   Actor's preferences, or values. (Rational Choice)
- value-rational action   Action that occurs when an actor's choice of the best means to an end is chosen on the basis of the actor's belief in some larger set of values. This may not be the optimal choice, but it is rational from the point of view of the value system in which the actor finds herself. (Weber)
- veil Du Bois's metaphor for the translucent, porous boundary separating the races in America. (Du Bois)
- verstehen A methodological technique involving an effort to understand the thought processes of the actor, the actor's meanings and motives, and how these factors led to the action (or interaction) under study. (Weber)
- virtual social identity   What a person ought to be. (Goffman)
- webbed accounts   Accounts woven together by reporting all the various actors' or standpoint groups' knowledge of an experience and describing the situations, including the dynamics of power out of which the actors or groups came to create these versions. (Feminism)

- **we-relations** The realm of our daily lives in which we are aware of others' presence, directly experience them on a face-to-face basis, and experience one another intersubjectively. (Schutz)
- **world-system** A broad economic entity with a division of labor that is not circumscribed by political or cultural boundaries. It is a social system, composed internally of a variety of social structures and member groups, that is largely self-contained, has a set of boundaries, and has a definable life span. (Neo-Marxian)