

INTRODUCTORY SOCIOLOGY

Emily Restivo, Ph.D.
New York Institute of Technology





I. Sociological Perspective

1.1 Background

1.2 Sociological Theory

1.3 Methods

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I. I Background

Origins of Sociology

Comte (1798-1857):

- **Scientific method to social world**
— **positivism**
- **Founder of Sociology**

Origins of Sociology

Marx & Class Conflict **(1818-1883)**

- **People should change society**
- **Class conflict/
revolution**

Origins of Sociology

Durkheim (1858-1917)

- **Study of suicide**
- **Social integration**
- **Women, Protestants,
Married**



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1.2 Sociological Theory

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1.2.1 What is Theory?

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- **How facts are related to one another**
- **Makes assumptions about different aspects of society; what we see and how we behave**



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1.2.2 Functionalist Perspective

**Society - system of
interrelated parts (family,
education, religion)**

**Durkheim - how parts of
social system contribute to
continuation of system**

**Need clear-cut norms to
govern moral conduct or
—anomie**

**Balance & order when
parts work together
properly.**

Functionalist Perspective

**Merton distinguishes
between:**

**Manifest Functions: obvious
functions**

**Latent Functions important,
but not recognized.**

**Dysfunctions: negative
consequence - disrupt
system**

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1.2.3 Conflict Perspective

**Society- conflict & power
struggles.**

**People compete -
achieving will at
expense of others**

Basic inequalities

**Marx - struggle b/w
social classes — cause of
change**

Tension, hostility and competition create change.

People want things in short supply

Social institutions serve interests of powerful.

Designed to keep other groups in society in their place

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1.2.4 Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Symbols- or things that we attach meaning to are the key to understanding how we view society

Cooley (1902) — looking glass self

- an image of self from perspective of others**
- self-fulfilling prophecy**

**Mead (1934) -importance
of symbols
gestures and language**

**Self- not present at birth,
develops over time social
experiences &
sophistication**

**Learn to assume role of
others- see self the way
you think others see you**

Theories & Divorce Rates

The divorce rate in US is much higher than it was 100 years ago.

Why?



Functionalism & U.S. Divorce Rate

Past:

**couples worked
together on farms, a
husband and wife
depended on each other
for survival.**

Functionalism & U.S. Divorce Rate

Present:

**husbands/wives earn
individual paychecks
fewer ties that bind
them together.**

Conflict Theory & U.S. Divorce Rate

Past:

**women more
dependent on
husband's income
could not leave a
marriage**

Conflict Theory & U.S. Divorce Rate

Present:

**women attain
education/earnings
now leave an
unsatisfactory
marriage**

*** women making
headway in society**

Symbolic Interactionism & U.S. Divorce Rate

**Meaning attached to each
word has changed:**

Marriage

**Past: lifelong
commitment.**

**Present: Duty or
obligation.**

Symbolic Interactionism & U.S. Divorce Rate

Divorce

Past: failure

- **stigma attached to it.**

Present: “Freedom,”

- **“new beginnings”**

Symbolic Interactionism & U.S. Divorce Rate

Parenthood

**Past: little responsibility
for children**

**Present: Children
supported, burdens on
marriages.**

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1.3 Methods

RESEARCH

General Research Model:

1. **Select topic**
2. **Define problem**
3. **Literature review**
4. **Form hypothesis**
5. **Choose research method**
6. **Collect data**
7. **Analyzing results and**
8. **Sharing results.**



Main Research Methods

I. Surveys:

- **Random sample asked questions**
- **Neutral open or closed ended questions**

2. Participant observation:

- **Participate in research setting**
- **Field work to gain rapport**

3. Case studies: focus on a single event, person, private information

4. Secondary analysis: previously collected Censuses, surveys & data

5. Content Analysis: summarizing by counting various aspects of the content

6. Experiments - to determine cause and effect.

**Independent variable (IV)
causes a change in
Dependent variable (DV)**

- **experimental & control groups**



Ethics

- **Research requires:
honesty, truth and
openness**

- **Subjects:**
 - 1. Must be informed that
they are being studied**
 - 2. Can't be harmed by the
research**
 - 3. Should remain
anonymous**

Ethics

**** Weber:**

**Sociology should
remain value**

- objectivity, or
neutrality**
- use replication, or
repeat study**