

■ Sociology

- The systematic study of social behavior in human groups.
- Examines the influence of social relationships on people's attitudes and behavior.
- Studies how societies are established and change.

■ The Sociological Imagination

- **Definition:** An awareness of the relationship between an individual and the wider society.
- It is the ability to view our own society as an outsider might, rather than from the perspective of our limited experiences and cultural biases.

■ Sociology and the Social Sciences

- In contrast to other *social sciences*, sociology emphasizes the influence that groups can have on people's behavior and attitudes and the ways in which people shape society.

■ Sociology is the study of "Common Sense"

- Knowledge that relies on "common sense" is not always reliable.
- Sociologists must test and analyze each piece of information that they use.
- **Theory:** An attempt to explain events, forces, materials, ideas or behavior in a comprehensive manner.
- **Sociological Theories:** Seek to explain problems, actions, or behavior.
 - *Effective theories should explain and predict.*
 - *Examine the relationships between observations or data that may seem completely unrelated.*
 - *(religion / suicide study)*

Impact of the Industrial Age on society

- *Move to urban areas*
- *Changes in the workplace*
- *Pace of society / stress*
- *Role of government*
- *Barter to cash*

The Development of Sociology

■ Early Thinkers

- Auguste Comte 1798–1857
 - --Coined the term *sociology* as the science of human behavior; "Father of Sociology"
- Herbert Spencer 1820–1903
 - --Studied "evolutionary" change in society
 - "Social Darwinism"
- Émile Durkheim 1858–1917
 - --Pioneered work on suicide
- Max Weber 1864–1920
 - --"Interactionist"
- Karl Marx 1818–1883
 - --Emphasized the importance of the economy and of conflict in society
- **Modern Developments**
 - **Charles Horton Cooley 1864–1929**
 - --Pioneered work on small groups within society
 - **Jane Addams 1860–1935**
 - --Combined sociological study with activism
 - **Robert Merton 1910–2003**
 - --Works on deviant behavior and crime
 - **Merton's Micro and Macro Approaches to the Study of Society**

- **Macrosociology:** Concentrates on large-scale phenomena or entire civilizations.
 - **Microsociology:** Stresses the study of small groups and often uses experimental study in laboratories.
- **Functionalist Perspective**
 - Emphasizes the way that parts of a society are structured to maintain its stability.
 - Views society as a vast network of connected parts, each of which helps to maintain the system as a whole. (body)
 - Each part must contribute or it will not be passed on from one generation to the next.
- **Functionalism Perspective**
 - **Manifest Functions** of institutions are open, stated, conscious functions. They involve the intended, recognized, consequences of an aspect of society.
 - **Latent Functions** are unconscious or unintended functions and may reflect hidden purposes of an institution.
 - A **dysfunction** is an element or a process of society that may actually disrupt a social system or lead to a decrease in stability.
 - **Conflict Perspective**
 - Assumes that social behavior is best understood in terms of conflict or tension between competing groups.
 - Conflict is not necessarily violent.
 - Conflict can be over economics or over competing values.
- **Conflict Perspective**
 - **The Marxist View:** Conflict is seen not merely as a class phenomenon but as a part of everyday life in all societies.
 - This view emphasizes social change and redistribution of resources, making conflict theorists more radical than functionalists.
- **Conflict Perspective**
 - **A Racial View: W. E. B DuBois:**
 - Sociology, contended DuBois, had to draw on scientific principles to study social problems such as those experienced by Blacks in the United States.
- **Interactionist Perspective**
 - Generalizes about everyday forms of social interaction in order to understand society as a whole.
 - Interactionism is a sociological framework for viewing human beings as living in a world of meaningful objects. These “objects” may include material things, actions, other people, relationships, and even symbols.

Feminist Perspective

- **Definition:** Views inequity in gender as central to all behavior and organization.

The Sociological Approach

- Sociologists make use of all four perspectives.
- Each perspective offers unique insights into the same issue.

Careers in Sociology

Teaching	Law	Police / FBI / Detective work	Medical fields
Social work		Business management / marketing	