



“बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ”

## JAYOTI VIDYAPEETH WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY, JAIPUR

### Faculty of Law & Management

<b>Faculty Name</b>	-	JV'n Dr. Rameshwar Raikwar
<b>Program</b>	-	M.A. Sociology First Sem.
<b>Course Name</b>	-	Sociological Perspective
<b>Session No. &amp; Name</b>	-	Semester III Source of Law, 2022-23

### Academic Day starts with – August 2023

- Greeting with saying ‘**Namaste**’ by joining Hands together following by 2-3 Minutes Happy session, Celebrating birthday of any student of respective class and **National Anthem**.

### Sociological Pererspective

<b>Theoretical perspective</b>	<b>Major assumptions</b>
Functionalism	Social stability is necessary to have a strong society, and adequate socialization and social integration are necessary to achieve social stability. Society's social institutions perform important functions to help ensure social stability. Slow social change is desirable, but rapid social change threatens social order. Functionalism is a macro theory.

Conflict theory	Society is characterized by pervasive inequality based on social class, gender, and other factors. Far-reaching social change is needed to reduce or eliminate social inequality and to create an egalitarian society. Conflict theory is a macro theory.
Symbolic interactionism	<p>People construct their roles as they interact; they do not merely learn the roles that society has set out for them. As this interaction occurs, individuals negotiate their definitions of the situations in which they find themselves and socially construct the reality of these situations. In so doing, they rely heavily on symbols such as words and gestures to reach a shared understanding of their interaction. Symbolic interactionism is a micro theory.</p> <p>Functionalism arose out of two great revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries. The first was the French Revolution of 1789, whose intense violence and bloody terror shook Europe to its core. The aristocracy throughout Europe feared that revolution would spread to their own lands, and intellectuals feared that social order was crumbling. The Industrial Revolution of the 19th century reinforced these concerns. Starting first in Europe and then in the United States, the Industrial Revolution led to many changes, including the rise and growth of cities as people left their farms to live near factories. As the cities grew, people lived in increasingly poor, crowded, and decrepit conditions. One result of these conditions was mass violence, as mobs of the poor roamed the streets of European and American cities. They attacked</p>

bystanders, destroyed property, and generally wreaked havoc. Here was additional evidence, if European intellectuals needed it, of the breakdown of social order.

**Auguste Comte (1798-1857)**



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The term sociology was first coined in 1780 by the French essayist Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès (1748–1836) in an unpublished manuscript (Fauré et al., 1999). In 1838, the term was reinvented by Auguste Comte (1798–1857). Comte thought that society could be studied using the same scientific methods utilized in the natural sciences. Comte also believed in the potential of social scientists to work toward the betterment of society and coined the slogan “order and progress” to reconcile the opposing progressive and conservative factions that had divided the crisis-ridden, post-revolutionary French society. Through science, each social strata would be reconciled with their place in a hierarchical social order. It is a testament to his influence in the 19th

century that the phrase “order and progress” adorns the Brazilian coat of arms (Collins and Makowsky, 1989).

Comte named the scientific study of social patterns positivism. He described his philosophy in a well-attended and popular series of lectures, which he published as *The Course in Positive Philosophy* (1830–1842) and *A General View of Positivism* (1848/1977). He believed that using scientific methods to reveal the laws by which societies and individuals interact would usher in a new “positivist” age of history. In principle, positivism, or what Comte called “social physics,” proposed that the study of society could be conducted in the same way that the natural sciences approach the natural world. While Comte never in fact conducted any social research, his notion of sociology as a positivist science that might effectively socially engineer a better society was deeply influential and helped give rise to the functionalist perspective in sociology.

### **Émile Durkheim (1858–1917)**

In response to the violence and social disruption of the revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, the intellectuals began to write that a strong society, as exemplified by strong social bonds and rules and effective socialization, was needed to prevent social order from disintegrating (Collins, 1994). Without a strong society and effective socialization, they warned, social order breaks down, and violence and other signs of social disorder result. This general framework reached fruition in the writings of Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), a French scholar largely responsible for the sociological

perspective as we now know it. Adopting the conservative intellectuals' view of the need for a strong society, Durkheim felt that human beings have desires that result in chaos unless society limits them. He wrote, "To achieve any other result, the passions first must be limited....But since the individual has no way of limiting them, this must be done by some force exterior to him" (Durkheim, 1897/1952, p. 274). This force, Durkheim continued, is the moral authority of society.



*Émile Durkheim was a founder of sociology and largely responsible for the sociological perspective as we now know it.*

<https://www.marxists.org/glossary/people/d/pics/durkheim.jpg>  
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How does society limit individual aspirations? Durkheim emphasized two related social mechanisms: socialization and social integration. Socialization helps us learn society's rules and the need to cooperate, as people end up generally agreeing on important norms and values, while social integration, or our

ties to other people and to social institutions such as religion and the family, helps socialize us and integrate us into society and reinforce our respect for its rules. In general, Durkheim added, society comprises many types of social facts, or forces external to the individual, that affect and constrain individual attitudes and behavior. The result is that socialization and social integration help establish a strong set of social rules—or, as Durkheim called it, a strong collective conscience—that is needed for a stable society. By so doing, society “creates a kind of cocoon around the individual, making him or her less individualistic, more a member of the group” (Collins, 1994, p. 181). Weak rules or social ties weaken this “moral cocoon” and lead to social disorder. In all of these respects, says Randall Collins (1994, p. 181), Durkheim’s view represents the “core tradition” of sociology that lies at the heart of the sociological perspective.

Durkheim used suicide to illustrate how social disorder can result from a weakening of society’s moral cocoon. Focusing on group rates of suicide, he felt they could not be explained simply in terms of individual unhappiness and instead resulted from external forces. One such force is anomie, or normlessness, which results from situations, such as periods of rapid social change, when social norms are weak and unclear or social ties are weak. When anomie sets in, people become more unclear about how to deal with problems in their life. Their aspirations are no longer limited by society’s constraints and thus cannot be fulfilled. The frustration stemming from anomie leads some people to commit suicide (Durkheim,

1897/1952).

To test his theory, Durkheim gathered suicide rate data and found that Protestants had higher suicide rates than Catholics. To explain this difference, he rejected the idea that Protestants were less happy than Catholics and instead hypothesized that Catholic doctrine provides many more rules for behavior and thinking than does Protestant doctrine. Protestants' aspirations were thus less constrained than Catholics' desires. In times of trouble, Protestants also have fewer norms on which to rely for comfort and support than do Catholics. He also thought that Protestants' ties to each other were weaker than those among Catholics, providing Protestants fewer social support networks to turn to when troubled. In addition, Protestant belief is ambivalent about suicide, while Catholic doctrine condemns it. All of these properties of religious group membership combine to produce higher suicide rates among Protestants than among Catholics.

Today's functionalist perspective arises out of Durkheim's work and that of other conservative intellectuals of the 19th century. It uses the human body as a metaphor for understanding society. In the human body, our various organs and other body parts serve important functions for the ongoing health and stability of our body. Our eyes help us see, our ears help us hear, our heart circulates our blood, and so forth. Just as we can understand the body by describing and understanding the functions that its parts serve for its health and stability, so can we understand society by describing and

understanding the functions that its “parts”—or, more accurately, its social institutions—serve for the ongoing health and stability of society. Thus functionalism emphasizes the importance of social institutions such as the family, religion, and education for producing a stable society. We look at these institutions in later chapters.

Similar to the view of the conservative intellectuals from which it grew, functionalism is skeptical of rapid social change and other major social upheaval. The analogy to the human body helps us understand this skepticism. In our bodies, any sudden, rapid change is a sign of danger to our health. If we break a bone in one of our legs, we have trouble walking; if we lose sight in both our eyes, we can no longer see. Slow changes, such as the growth of our hair and our nails, are fine and even normal, but sudden changes like those just described are obviously troublesome. By analogy, sudden and rapid changes in society and its social institutions are troublesome according to the functionalist perspective. If the human body evolved to its present form and functions because these made sense from an evolutionary perspective, so did society evolve to its present form and functions because these made sense. Any sudden change in society thus threatens its stability and future. By taking a skeptical approach to social change, functionalism supports the status quo and is thus often regarded as a conservative perspective.

### **Conflict Theory**

In many ways, conflict theory is the opposite of functionalism but ironically also grew out of the Industrial Revolution,

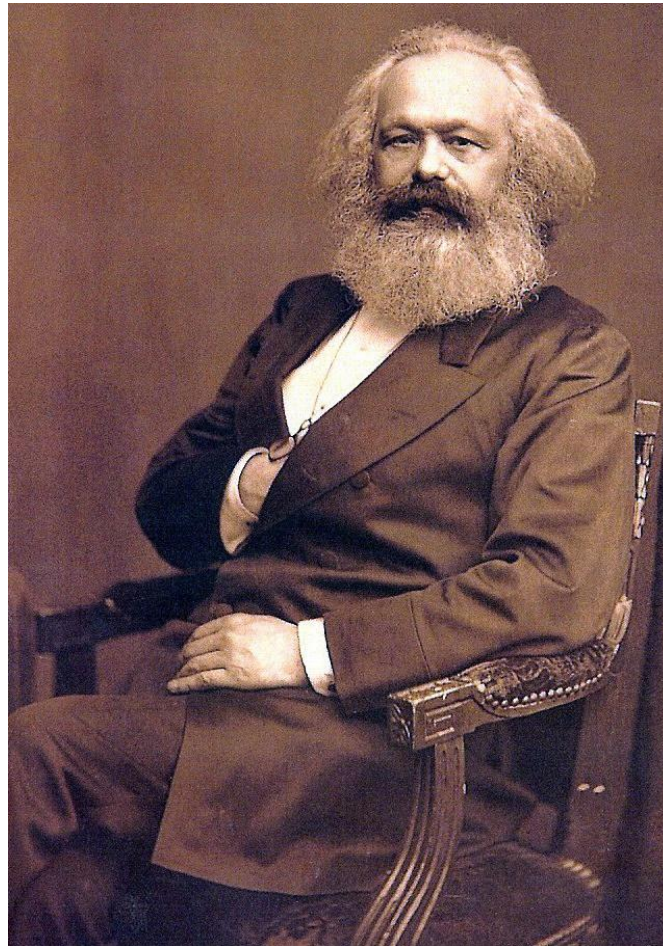


thanks largely to Karl Marx (1818–1883) and his collaborator, Friedrich Engels (1820–1895). Whereas conservative intellectuals feared the mass violence resulting from industrialization, Marx and Engels deplored the conditions they felt were responsible for the mass violence and the capitalist society they felt was responsible for these conditions. Instead of fearing the breakdown of social order that mass violence represented, they felt that revolutionary violence was needed to eliminate capitalism and the poverty and misery they saw as its inevitable result (Marx, 1867/1906; Marx & Engels, 1848/1962).

### **Karl Marx (1818–1883)**

The tradition of historical materialism that developed from Karl Marx’s work is one of the central frameworks of critical sociology. Historical materialism concentrates on the study of how our everyday lives are structured by the connection between relations of power and economic processes. The basis of this approach begins with the macro-level question of how specific relations of power and specific economic formations have developed historically. These form the context in which the institutions, practices, beliefs, and social rules (norms) of everyday life are situated. The elements that make up a culture — a society’s shared practices, values, beliefs, and artifacts — are structured by the society’s economic mode of production: the way human societies act upon their environment and its resources in order to use them to meet their needs. Hunter-gatherer, agrarian, feudal, and capitalist modes of production have been the economic basis for very different types of

society throughout world history.



Karl Marx and his collaborator Friedrich Engels were intense critics of capitalism. Their work inspired the later development of conflict theory in sociology.

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According to Marx and Engels, every society is divided into two classes based on the ownership of these means of production. In a capitalist society, the bourgeoisie, or capitalist class, owns the means of production, while the proletariat, or working class, who do not own the means of production, are oppressed and exploited by the bourgeoisie as paid wage laborers. This difference creates an automatic conflict of interests between the two groups. Because profit is the main

goal of capitalism, the bourgeoisie's interest lies in maximizing profit. To do so, capitalists try to keep wages as low as possible and to spend as little money as possible on working conditions. This central fact of capitalism, said Marx and Engels, is the basis of social conflict in capitalist societies. The rise among workers of class consciousness, or an awareness of the reasons for their oppression, leads them to revolt against the bourgeoisie to eliminate the oppression and exploitation they suffer. Simply put, the bourgeoisie is interested in maintaining its position at the top of society, while the proletariat's interest lies in rising up from the bottom and overthrowing the bourgeoisie to create an egalitarian society.

Over the years, Marx and Engels's views on the nature of capitalism and class relations have greatly influenced social, political, and economic theory and also inspired revolutionaries in nations around the world. However, history has not supported their prediction that capitalism will inevitably result in a revolution of the proletariat. For example, no such revolution has occurred in the United States, where workers never developed the degree of class consciousness envisioned by Marx and Engels. Because the United States is thought to be a free society where everyone has the opportunity to succeed, even poor Americans feel that the system is basically just. Thus various aspects of American society and ideology have helped minimize the development of class consciousness and prevent the revolution that Marx and Engels foresaw.

## **Utilitarianism**

Utilitarianism is a general view of human behavior that says people act to maximize their pleasure and to reduce their pain. It originated in the work of such 18th-century thinkers as the Italian economist Cesare Beccaria (1738–1794) and the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832). Both men thought that people act rationally and decide before they act whether their behavior will cause them more pleasure or pain. Applying their views to crime, they felt the criminal justice system in Europe at the time was far harsher than it needed to be to deter criminal behavior. Another 18th-century utilitarian thinker was Adam Smith, whose book *The Wealth of Nations* (1776/1910) laid the foundation for modern economic thought. Indeed, at the heart of economics is the view that sellers and buyers of goods and services act rationally to reduce their costs and in this and other ways to maximize their profits.

In sociology, utilitarianism is commonly called exchange theory or rational choice theory (Coleman, 1990; Homans, 1961). No matter what name it goes under, this view emphasizes that when people interact, they seek to maximize the benefits they gain from the interaction and to reduce the disadvantages. If they decide that the interaction's benefits outweigh its disadvantages, they will initiate the interaction or continue it if it is already under way. If they instead decide that the interaction's disadvantages outweigh its benefits, they will decline to begin interacting or stop the interaction if already begun. Social order is possible because people realize it will be

in their best interests to cooperate and to make compromises when necessary.

A familiar application of exchange theory would be a dating relationship. Each partner in a dating relationship gives up a bit of autonomy in return for love and other benefits of being close to someone. Yet every relationship has its good and bad moments, and both partners make frequent compromises to ensure the relationship will endure. As long as the couple feels the good moments outweigh the bad moments, the relationship will continue. But once one or both partners decide the reverse is true, the relationship will en