

# What is sociology

[Science](#), [Anthropology](#)



Sociology is the scientific study of human society and its origins, development, culture, organizations, and institutions. Sociology is an exciting and interesting field of study that analyzes and explains important matters in our personal lives, our communities, and the world. Sociology investigates the social causes and consequences of love, racial and gender identity, family conflict to even religious faith. Theories in sociology provide us with different perspectives with which to see our social world. Sociology includes three major theoretical perspectives: the Functionalist perspective, the Conflict perspective, and the Symbolic interactionist perspective.

**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. Each of the social institutions contributes important functions for society like 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. 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. Manifest functions are consequences that are intended and commonly recognized. Latent functions are consequences that are unintended and often hidden. 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 partners. The babysitting and mate selection functions are not the intended or commonly recognized functions of education, but are latent functions. The functionalist perspective views society as composed of different parts working together. 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. 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 and the proletariat, the workers who earn wages. Symbolic Interactionist Perspective is the same in face when 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.