

# [Behaviour changes of astronauts on return to earth](https://assignbuster.com/behaviour-changes-of-astronauts-on-return-to-earth/)

1. You have been hired as a scientist for NASA and for your first assignment you have to develop research on how the behavior of Astronauts changes from the period before they launch into space to the period following their return to Earth. Use the Methods of Research to describe how you came to your hypothesis.

Astronauts are some of the bravest humans to walk the earth. They are subjected to environmental pressures within their control and others not within their control. Astronauts on long-duration missions are subjected to many factors that may affect their health, well-being, and performance of mission-related duties. Some of these factors are unique to the space environment (e. g., prolonged periods of microgravity), whereas others are also present in other environments (e. g., confinement, isolation, exposure to physical hazards, altered work or rest schedules) (Basner et. al., 2014). Massimino was the First person to  use social media from space and tweet about the experience during his mission. He stated, “ having a dream of going to space and what it meant was something important to him. Getting scared is not beneficial to the situation and as such the thought/feelings disappear (2019).” The psychological thought process of an individual is tested beyond its ability to comprehend what took place until they return to Earth and put into context the experience.

Social scientists have been studying the behavior of humans in what have become to be called “ extreme environments” even before space programs began. Extreme environments are those that are characterized by such features as isolation, risk, confinement, crowding, restricted privacy, and the inability to leave (Vakoch, 2011). As such, studying these individuals during their mission is important as it has the potential for sociologists to understand the role of humans in complex systems, and the development of environments.  The difficulty in observing astronauts in an unnatural state is that the collection of data is more subjective vs objective. The reason for this is that attitudes are not measurable on a specific scale like measuring blood pressure which gives a specific value.

Field experimentation via indirect unobtrusive observation would be the method in which these groups of individuals are observed. The reasoning is that researchers will not necessarily be present on the mission, however, will be able to view social interactions between crew members from the space station.  Monitoring nonverbal cues is beneficial as we know that body language is a major key in understanding how one feels in a situation. The study would show that crewmembers will withdraw from one another, get into conflicts with each other, or get into disputes as a result of confined spaces and limited communication with society. Adaptation is social concept and the structure of the group directly impacts everyone’s well-being. It is possible for crews with clique structures report significantly more depression, anxiety, anger, fatigue, and confusion than crews with core-periphery structures (Vakoch, 2011). This is why it is important for personality selection. It is necessary to select crew members that are capable communicating effectively and deescalating situations.

We must remember that how people experience an environment is more important than the objective characteristics of the environment. Even more important from a scientific perspective, it is likely that significant advances in our basic knowledge of human interaction and processes will emerge from the social research needed to ensure effective performance and adjustment in space.

1. Describe the sociological imagination of a current event. How does it play into your personal life?

Our perception of life is determined by our past and present experiences as well as the factors that affect us daily.  It is shaped by micro- and macro sociological stimulants that aide in decision-making and our view of the world. The social interaction between groups, communities and institutes provides a collection of standards by which we live, breathe, and organize our personal lives. As individuals we strive to understand what part we play in a bigger picture. To understand one’s self, you must understand the structural arrangement of society and the role it plays in forming our thoughts, habits, and behaviors and how the two link is known as sociological imagination.

Sociological imagination refers to the ability to see our private experiences, personal difficulties, and achievements as, in part, a reflection of the structural arrangements of society and the times in which we live (Hughes & Kroehler, 2013). Furthermore, Mills, an influential sociologist created the concept of sociological imagination. Mills understanding of the social interaction involved, the history and biography of the individual and how the two can form the future and research of social societies. He believed that having an understanding and awareness of personal troubles and/or experiences and that of the world can shape self-development. Public issues, like the bioengineering and the management of the human species, are those related to the larger structures of social existence, like economic and political institutions. It requires the sociological imagination to show how personal troubles are public issues, how and by whom the latter are formulated, and how they affect individual lives.

In other words, the sociologist is then able to see the overlapping and interpenetration of Mill’s theory, and how structural transformations (like the coming of the aged society) affect individual biographies (Ossewaarde, 2014). Moreover, like the saying goes, “ put yourself in someone else’s shoes” is the basis for sociological imagination.

Mills wanted to prove that our personal troubles and public issues overlap to form the larger structure of social and historical life (Hughes & Kroehler, 2013). An example of sociological imagination of both personal and societal structure problems is unemployment. Unemployment is not always the fault of the individual but rather a larger structure that governs society. Unemployment affects everyone at some level and some worse than others, however, the cause is not directly linked to personal behaviors and character  of one person. Therefore, we do not just look at the individual but should focus on the economic and political institutions for determining the cause and possible solutions (Hughes & Kroehler, 2013). The frustrations of the person because of job loss can be put into context of the structural factors operating in the larger society and the workplace. The sociological imagination allows the individual to see the situation from the perspective of others and links their personal thoughts and views to larger social forces. It is at this point; our micro world has intersected with the macro world.

Our past and present experiences help to shape our perception of ourselves and the larger societal structure. It is important to note, perspective is not always reality and varies from person to person, situation to situation.

When we learn to distinguish between personal and social levels in our own lives, we have the power to make better decisions that not only affect us but affect those around us. Being socially aware helps us to see the world in a larger lens that drives us to be sympathetic and empathetic, among other adjectives.

Sociological imagination helps us to cope with the social world by giving us the ability to remove ourselves from our personal, self-centered view of the world and forces us to perceive events and social structures from an objective lens as these structures influence behaviors, attitudes, and culture. Mills work has evolved overtime and as the world and people age new theories for understanding social imagination must evolve as well.

1. Describe three situations: one using the Functionalist Perspective, another other using the Conflict Perspective, and the last using the Interactionist Perspective. Describe how each relates to the six influential sociologists (listed in the overview) and Macrosociology or Microsociology.

All of life and interactions between human beings are governed by order. We use the study of sociology to observe behaviors and draw scientific conclusions of how and why interactions occur as they do that gives insight to a larger picture of social organization. The goal of sociology is not just to understand society and human behavior but also to improve the human condition (Hughes & Kroehler, 2013). Sociology can further be broken down into two categories, micro- and macrosociology. Micro sociology studies how individuals’ function within the parameters of their daily lives and what influences those interactions such as family members, coworkers, churches, etc. While Macrosociology focuses on large-scale interactions and long-term processes shaped by, organizations, institutions, and socioeconomic structures. Although the two categories are defined differently, they are not independent of one another as macrostructures are composed of smaller collective interactions (micro) that eventually shape attitudes of communities, institutions and thus society as a whole (macro). Sociology uses theoretical perspectives to help us further understand the concept of micro- & macrosociology.

Theoretical perspective provides a set of assumptions, interrelated concepts, and statements about how various social phenomena are related to one another and provides a different lens with which to view our social world. Theoretical perspectives answer the why and what that causes such phenomena and can be broken down into three categories: the functionalist, the conflict, and the interactionist perspective. Each perspective provides a variety of explanations about the social world and behavior correlate. The functionalist draws from ideas of Comte, Herbert Spencer, and Emile Durkheim and focuses on the macro aspects of social life (Hughes & Kroehler, 2013).

Functionalist believe that society is a system composed of many units that work together like the human body (Benton, 2018) and for the system to thrive; order, strong social bonds and rules and effective socialization, must maintain equilibrium. These structures and functions include politics, religion, education, family, and economics and like a democracy rely on consensus of them all (Benton, 2018). Functionalists go on to look at the functions and dysfunctions of the system. Parts of society are functional if they prove beneficial to a society’s stability and dysfunctional if they disrupt the social system. An example would be poverty. Poverty is beneficial function as those living at or below the poverty do the work that others are not willing to perform; dangerous, physical, dirty and or dead-end jobs, thus doing the nation’s dirty work. However, it is dysfunctional because it leads to social problems, especially those associated with health, education, crime, and drug addiction (Hughes & Kroehler, 2013). While functionalistic theories are beneficial, they do not explain how to bring about social change. As a result, conflict arise, and this is where we see the disparities between upper, middle, and lower class.

The new generation of sociologists embraced modern conflict theory to address the inequalities in American society. Conflict perspectives, focused on coercion rather than consensus, the social forces of stratification and inequality that fueled the emergence of modern conflict theory. After the 1960’s, modern conflict theory emerged as the perspective of choice for studying minorities and social movements. Power, inequality and exploitation of the less by the more powerful emerged as the mantra of the new left both politically and sociologically (Bates, 2015).   The Conflict theory focuses on the process of change that continually transform social life but still focused on society just like functionalists (Hughes & Kroehler, 2013). While functionalists focused on stability conflict theorist focus on instability and competition for resources. Marx theory of class conflict and Darwin’s theory of survival of the fittest theory plays a major role in society. Marx believed that society is governed by class. With Marx’s theory, society can never maintain stability due to constant battles and struggles in society and how one group is at the mercy of another and results in an inequality of the system (Benton, 2018). An example of social stratification was and still is the treatment of people of color in America. Stratification of classes is what we now see in the world with competing arguments of how best to solve the problem. Competitions for power, wealth, and social status that affect the individual on a micro level and the race of colored people on a macro level.

Lastly, sociologists focus on the micro aspects that shape our immediate social life known as the interactionist perspective. Interactionists view individuals lives as a group existence. They turn to the subjective experiences and understandings, and how those understandings of the world emerge from social interactions and for the basis of life (Hughes & Koehler, 2013). Interactionists believe that symbols are the mode of communication and visual aid for understanding individuals. Sociologists use the term symbolic interactionism to describe this perspective. Symbols and signs are used by all living things to communicate. Each culture or group of people and their variations of signs and symbols, spoken and unspoken shape social structures.  For example, weddings are a way for two individuals to express to the world their oneness. It is a symbol of becoming in adulthood and leaving their familial homes to begin their own family structure and the cycle continues. For the symbolic interactionists the world is ongoing play or story and we are merely characters (micro-society) that act in each chapter of the book of life (macro-society), but the downfall of interactionists, the theory does not explain the social structure from a holistic view.

The study of sociology and micro and macro interactions of groups of people that influence social structures is important to understanding the bigger picture of life and what sustains it. We are governed by order that is both dividing and unifying. Theoretical perspectives help to explain social phenomena and are grouped into three categories: functionalist, conflict, and symbolic interactionists perspective. Each takes on a unique view to understanding the micro and macro components that shape society.  There is still room for work, but we must understand that studying social interactions is a fluid process and should not assume that concepts from earlier years will necessarily work to explain modern say societal influences.

1. Imagine it is the Marx Era and your family is wealthy. Your father is a respected doctor. How would Karl Marx’s views on how societies develop and the factors on group domination affect your family? Explain your reasoning.

America is the country of freedom of speech, religion, right to bear arms…most importantly capitalism. Capitalism is at the heart of the foundation of the United States. The fundamental idea of capitalism is that there are those who own the means to produce through private ownership and those who purchase the goods for everyday use. The idea of capitalism has been around long before the study of sociology was discovered to understand economic and structural organizations that govern society.  Capitalism has led to class conflicts and as a result we now have upper, middle, and lower class. Karl Marx an influential political activists and sociologist argued this point of social class conflict. He went on to say that all history is composed of struggles between classes and the wealthy own goods and means to produce while others rely on capitalists to provide jobs and must sell their labor power to exist (Hughes & Kroehler, 2013). This view sounds demeaning but factual in all its ways. His basic teachings of economics are what we study today and what shapes society.

Many see fault in Marx’s viewpoint as too critical or not a true depiction of society today. However, it is not difficult to see that what he expressed is the exact phenomenon we are experiencing today in the U. S. and around the world. He believed that every economic order grows to its maximum efficiency while at the same developing internal contradictions or weaknesses that lead to its demise due to clash of opposing social forces known as dialectical materialism. The highest level of society according to Marx is communism  (Hughes & Kroehler, 2013). As we know communism destroys any aspect of social stratification and allows the production of goods to be shared among all. The issue many have with communism is who will direct and decide how goods are produced and how resources are distributed.

Communism does not have a hierarchy and hierarchies provide structure. Furthermore, critics argue that ranking society into social classes is that it cannot be conceptualized, measured, or intervened upon at the micro- or macro levels, being reduced to a personal attribute especially in healthcare (Muntaner et. al., 2013). Much of what is known today is that greed and power circumvent any idea of communism, so we continue to keep and adhere to the norms of capitalism.

Moreover, occupations such as physicians operate as capitalist investors. Most physicians can make decisions that shape the economy. They too have the power to direct goods and services by means of prescribing medications and performing the work they have been hired to do. It’s from doctors that the demand for technology comes, and the industry tries to produce what doctors want (Lehoux et. al., 2016). Marx would view this as an exploitation of the middle and lower class. Physician decisions that determine new technologies to be used and medication to introduce to society has financial and socioeconomic impacts on the end user.  While capital investors clearly enjoy nurturing technology-based ventures, their goal is to ensure an ‘ exit’ through which they recoup their investment and monetize returns. The exploitation of patients to generate revenue creates consequences for healthcare.

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