

# Sociological Theory

SOC100

Module 1

# Major theories in sociology

- Structural functionalist theory
- Conflict theory
- Symbolic interactionist theory
- Feminist theory
- Postmodern theory

# Structural Functionalism

- Society: a complex system of parts working together to promote **social solidarity** and **stability**

# Structural Functionalism

- **Social solidarity:** “The degree of a group’s cohesion based on shared values, beliefs, and interactions.”
- **Anomie:** “A negative individual state produced by absent or poorly-defined norms in society.”

# Structural Functionalism

- **FUNCTIONS**

- Manifest: “Visible and intended purposes of social structures.”
- Latent: “Invisible and unintended purposes of social structures”
- Dysfunctions: “Elements of social structures that create instability in a social system.”

# Structural Functionalism

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**What are the functions of social media?**

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# Conflict Theory

- Karl Marx
- Contradictions, conflict, and change

# Conflict Theory

- Important: how people earn their livelihood
- Means of production
- Two key groups:
  - Bourgeoisie
    - “Owners” and profits
  - Proletariat
    - “Workers” and wages



# Conflict theory

- What about now?
  - Industrial capitalism versus market capitalism
  - Ideology and the “status quo”
    - More on this when we talk about Mass Media
      - For now: see the chapter on “the hustle” – what remains invisible when we focus on working hard to get ahead?
- Where’s the revolution?

# Symbolic Interactionism

- Max Weber, George Herbert Mead
- Weber critiqued the focus of Marx's work
- Microsociology
- Society is created, recreated, and modified continuously by human activity.

# Symbolic Interactionism: What's in a name?

- **Symbol:** “Objects and gestures that carry meaning to those within a shared culture.” (from Chapter 4)

# Goffman's "Dramaturgical Model"

- The self and the scene
- The front stage and the back stage

What are the differences between a structural functionalist and symbolic interactionist approach to the study of our social world?

# Feminist Theory

- Newer theory relative to structural functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism
- Macrostructures and microstructures

What about women?

# Feminist Theory

- Patriarchy: “The system of male domination over women.”
  - Patriarchy as important as class
  - Patriarchy as a central force in women’s lives

# Feminist Theory

- Lack of autonomy



# Feminist Theory

- Women's standpoint
- Intersectionality: "The interconnection of factors like race, gender, and social class that simultaneously affect our lives."

# Postmodern Theory

- **Simulacra:** “Images or other representations of items that replaces reality.”
- **Hyperreality:** “A social reality where images and simulations are so pervasive that they become reality, independent of any real existence or origins.”

# Postmodern Theory

- Society as complex, unpredictable, and with no overarching mechanism of control

# Postmodern Theory

- **Poststructuralism**

