Chapter 1

The Sociological Perspective
Seeing the Broader Social Context

• How Groups Influence People
• How People are Influenced by Their Society
  – People Who Share a Culture
  – People Who Share a Territory
Social Location - Corners in Life

- Jobs
- Income
- Education
- Gender
- Age
- Race/Ethnicity
Origins of Sociology

• Tradition vs. Science
  – The Industrial Revolution
    • Masses of people moved to cities in search of work
  – Grew Out of Social Upheaval
  – Imperialism of the Time
  – Rise of the Scientific Method
Auguste Comte and Positivism

• Applying the Scientific Method to Social World
• Comte began to wonder what holds society together
• Coined the Term “Sociology”
• “Armchair Philosophy”
Herbert Spencer - Social Darwinism

- Second Founder of Sociology
- Disagreed sharply with Comte’s idea that sociologists should guide social reform
- Lower and Higher Forms of Society
- Coined Phrase “Survival of the Fittest”
- Spencer’s idea that it was wrong to help the poor offended many
Karl Marx and Class Conflict

• Engine of Human History is Class Conflict
• The Bourgeoisie vs. The Proletariat
• Marxism Not the Same as Communism
• Marx thought that people should try to change society
• Marx did not think of himself as a sociologist
Durkheim and Social Integration

- Got Sociology Recognized as Separate Discipline
- Studied How Social Forces Affect Behavior
- Identified “Social Integration” - Degree to Which People are Tied to Social Group
- Applying Durkheim
Max Weber and the Protestant Ethic

• Religion and the Origin of Capitalism
  – Disagreed with Marx’s claim that economics is the central force in social change
  – Said that role belongs to religion
• Religion is Central Force in Social Change
• Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism
How Americans Commit Suicide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>African Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guns</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poison</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drowning</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sexism in Early Sociology

• Attitudes of the Time
  – 1800s Sex Roles Rigidly Defined
  – Few People Educated Beyond Basics

• Harriet Martineau
  – Published Society in America Before
    Durkheim and Weber Were Born
  – Her work was Ignored
The Forgotten Sociologists

Early North American sociologists combined the roles of social analysis and social reform. As sociology became a respected academic subject and sociology departments developed across the United States, academic sociologists began to emphasize social research and theory. From this orientation, the academic sociologists wrote the history of sociology. They designated non-academic activists as social workers, not sociologists, effectively writing them out of the history of sociology. The women shown here, among the forgotten sociologists of this period, are gradually regaining a place in the history of sociology.
Racism at the Time: W.E.B Du Bois

• B.A. from Fisk University
• First Harvard Ph.D. for African American
• It is difficult to grasp how racist society was at this time
• Published a Book Each Year from 1896-1914
• Neglected by Sociologist Until Recently
Jane Addams: Sociologist and Social Reformer

- Member of American Sociological Society from Start
- Came from Background of Wealth and Privilege
- Co-Founded Hull House
- Co-Founded American Civil Liberties Union
Talcott Parsons and C. Wright Mills

• Many early North American sociologists saw society as corrupt & in need of reform
• Parsons Developed Objective Analysis and Models of Society
• Mills Deplored Theoretical Abstractions in Favor of Social Reform
• Continuing Tension in Sociology
Theoretical Perspectives

- **Basic Sociology**
  - Analyzing an aspect of society and publishing their findings in books and sociology journals

- **Applied Sociology**
  - Using sociology to solve problems

- **Public Sociology**
  - A middle ground between research & reform
Comparing Basic and Applied Sociology

**BASIC SOCIOLOGY**
- Audience: Fellow sociologists and anyone interested
- Product: Knowledge

1. Constructing theory and testing hypotheses
2. Research on basic social life, on how groups affect people
3. The middle ground: criticisms of society and social policy

**APPLIED SOCIOLOGY**
- Audience: Clients
- Product: Change

4. Analyzing problems, evaluating programs, and suggesting solutions
5. Implementing solutions (clinical sociology)

**PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY**
Call-Back Rates by Race-Ethnicity and Criminal Record

- **Whites**
  - Without criminal record: 34%
  - With criminal record: 17%

- **African Americans**
  - Without criminal record: 14%
  - With criminal record: 5%
Symbolic Interactionism

• Symbols in Everyday Life
• Applying Symbolic Interactionism
  – The Meaning of Marriage
  – The Meaning of Divorce
  – The Meaning of Parenthood
  – The Meaning of Love
Functional Analysis

- Society is a Whole Unit Made Up of Interrelated Parts that Work Together
- Functionalism, Structural Functionalism
- Robert Merton and Functionalism
  - Functions
    - Manifest
    - Latent
Functional Analysis

– Dysfunctions

• Applying Functional Analysis
  – Economic Teams
  – Education of Children
  – Teaching of Religion
Functional Analysis

– Care of the Sick and Elderly
– A Glimpse of the Past - 1800s
– Changes in the Functions of…
  • Family
  • Friends
Conflict Theory

• Karl Marx and Conflict Theory
• Conflict Theory Today
• Feminists and Conflict Theory
• Applying Conflict Theory
• In Sum
  – The dominance of men over women was once considered natural and right
Levels of Analysis: Macro and Micro

• Macro - Broad Matters
  – Functionalists and conflict theorists

• Micro - Individualistic Matters
  – Symbolic interactionists
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Perspective</th>
<th>Usual Level of Analysis</th>
<th>Focus of Analysis</th>
<th>Key Terms</th>
<th>Applying the Perspective to the U.S. Divorce Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic Interactionism</td>
<td>Microsociological: examines small-scale patterns of social interaction</td>
<td>Face-to-face interaction, how people use symbols to create social life</td>
<td>Symbols Interaction Meanings Definitions</td>
<td>Industrialization and urbanization changed marital roles and led to a redefinition of love, marriage, children, and divorce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Analysis (also called functionalism and structural functionalism)</td>
<td>Macrosociological: examines large-scale patterns of society</td>
<td>Relationships among the parts of society; how these parts are functional (have beneficial consequences) or dysfunctional (have negative consequences)</td>
<td>Structure Functions (manifest and latent) Dysfunctions Equilibrium</td>
<td>As social change erodes the traditional functions of the family, family ties weaken, and the divorce rate increases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Theory</td>
<td>Macrosociological: examines large-scale patterns of society</td>
<td>The struggle for scarce resources by groups in a society; how the elites use their power to control the weaker groups</td>
<td>Inequality Power Conflict Competition Exploitation</td>
<td>When men control economic life, the divorce rate is low because women find few alternatives to a bad marriage. The high divorce rate reflects a shift in the balance of power between men and women.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**FIGURE 1.6** The Research Model

1. Select a topic.
2. Define the problem.
3. Review the literature.
4. Formulate a hypothesis.
5. Choose a research method.
   - Documents
   - Experiments
   - Unobtrusive measures
   - Surveys
   - Participant observation
   - Case studies
   - Secondary analysis
6. Collect the data.
7. Analyze the results.
8. Share the results.

Generates hypotheses

Stimulates more ideas for research

Source: Adapted from Figure 2.2 of Schaafer 1989.
# TABLE 1.2

## How to Read a Table

Tables summarize information. Because sociological findings are often presented in tables, it is important to understand how to read them. Tables contain six elements: title, headnote, headings, columns, rows, and source. When you understand how these elements fit together, you know how to read a table.

1. **The title** states the topic. It is located at the top of the table. What is the title of this table? Please determine your answer before looking at the correct answer at the bottom of this page.

2. **The headnote** is not always included in a table. When it is present, it is located just below the title. Its purpose is to give more detailed information about how the data were collected or how data are presented in the table. What are the first eight words of the headnote for this table?

3. **The headings** tell what kind of information is contained in the table. There are three headings in this table. What are they? In the second heading, what does \( n = 25 \) mean?

4. **The columns** present information arranged vertically. What is the fourth number in the second column and the second number in the third column?

5. **The rows** present information arranged horizontally. In the fourth row, which husbands are more likely to have less education than their wives?

6. **The source of a table**, usually listed at the bottom, provides information on where the data in the table originated. Often, as in this instance, the information is specific enough for you to consult the original source. What is the source for this table?

---

### Comparing Violent and Nonviolent Husbands

Based on interviews with 150 husbands and wives in a Midwestern city who were getting a divorce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Husband’s Achievement and Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Violent Husbands ( n = 25 )</th>
<th>Nonviolent Husbands ( n = 125 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He started but failed to complete high school or college.</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is very dissatisfied with his job.</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His income is a source of constant conflict.</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has less education than his wife.</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His job has less prestige than his father-in-law’s.</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Modification of Table 1 in O’Brien 1975.

---

Some tables are much more complicated than this one, but all follow the same basic pattern. To apply these concepts to a table with more information, see page 261.
### TABLE 1.3  Three Ways to Measure “Average”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Mean</th>
<th>The Median</th>
<th>The Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The term average seems clear enough. As you learned in grade school, to find the average you add a group of numbers and then divide the total by the number of cases that you added. Assume that the following numbers represent men convicted of battering their wives.</td>
<td>To compute the second average, the median, first arrange the cases in order—either from the highest to the lowest or the lowest to the highest. That arrangement will produce the following distribution.</td>
<td>The third measure of average, the mode, is simply the cases that occur the most often. In this instance the mode is 57, which is way off the mark.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### EXAMPLE
- 321
- 229
- 57
- 289
- 136
- 57
- 1,795

The total is 2,884. Divided by 7 (the number of cases), the average is 412. Sociologists call this form of average the mean.

The mean can be deceptive because it is strongly influenced by extreme scores, either low or high. Note that six of the seven cases are less than the mean.

Two other ways to compute averages are the median and the mode.

#### EXAMPLE
- 57
- 57
- 136
- 289
- 229
- 1,795

Then look for the middle case, the one that falls halfway between the top and the bottom. That number is 229, for three numbers are lower and three numbers are higher. When there is an even number of cases, the median is the halfway mark between the two middle cases.

#### EXAMPLE
- 57
- 57
- 136
- 229
- 289
- 321
- 1,795

Because the mode is often deceptive, and only by chance comes close to either of the other two averages, sociologists seldom use it. In addition, not every distribution of cases has a mode. And if two or more numbers appear with the same frequency, you can have more than one mode.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Closed-Ended Question</th>
<th>B. Open-Ended Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which of the following best fits your idea of what should be done to someone who has been convicted of spouse abuse?</td>
<td>What do you think should be done to someone who has been convicted of spouse abuse?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Probation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Jail time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Community service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Divorce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Nothing—It’s a family matter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**FIGURE 1.7** The Experiment

- Human subjects
  - Random Assignment
  - The First Measure of the Dependent Variable
    - Experimental Group
    - Control Group
  - Exposure to the independent variable
  - No exposure to the independent variable
  - The Second Measure of the Dependent Variable
    - Experimental Group
    - Control Group

Source: By the author.
FIGURE 1.8 The Debate over Values in Sociological Research

The Purposes of Social Research

- To understand human behavior
- To investigate harmful social arrangements

The Uses of Social Research

- Can be used by anyone for any purpose
- Should be used to reform society

Source: By the author.