Summary

I went back and spoke about why Comte is considered the father of sociology and what he did within the discipline that earned me said title. I edited this because Comte, being the founder of sociology, is central to is important to the field as it was his work that established it. I forgot to mention the work Comte did within Positivism and went back to add in his methods of inquiry and what they were. I went back and added this because the Positivist theory is the biggest theory of Comte. You cannot understand his work without understanding the Positivist theory. I revised Martineau morals and manners, going back in and adding what her concept of morals and manners was and how she applied it using the example of her time in America. I went back to revise this because her work with morals and manners and how it applied effects marginalized groups is the foundation of her life's work within sociology. I continued mt revisions with Herbet spencer adding in his work with social Darwinism. I revised this because his work within social Darwinism was central to his overall sociological contribution as he was its creator.

UE 1

Sociology can be defined as the study of social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior (Case Western Reserve, 2025). What it means to be a sociologist is to investigate the structure of groups, organizations, societies, and how people interact within that context (Case Western Reserve, 2025). Sociology has had many notable figures from its founder Auguste Comte to more contemporary contributors such as

Pierre Bourdieu and Craig Calhoun. Some of the most notable early sociologists were Auguste Comte, Harriet Martineau, and Herbert Spencer.

When talking about sociology and its theorist it's important to understand what sociological theory is and why it is important. Sociological theory can be defined as explanations about an aspect of society that we are interested in learning more about (Sternheimer, 2020). Sociological theory is important because it helps make sense of life by holding assorted facts and observations together (Edles & Appelrouth, 2010). It's developed from multiple studies by many scholars who add to the development of the theory (Sternheimer, 2020). Sociological theory is different from scientific theory because of how they are approached. Scientific theories use what is called a hypothesis, a hypothesis is an educated guess about how two or more things are related (Sternheimer, 2020). Sociological theory is different because all research needs theory but not a hypothesis.

Auguste Comte is credited with being the father of sociology. Comte was the first to systematically study society and coin the term sociology creating it as a distinct scientific discipline. He focused on the use of empirical observation and the scientific method to analyze social order and change. Comte spent much of his life dedicated to creating and establishing the field. While Comte offered many contributions to the foundation of the field one of the things he was most notable for was his aim to create a naturalistic society away from the standard route of religion during that time period (TheSchoolOfLife, 2020). He created his theory with the purpose of both explaining the past development of mankind as well as predicting its future course. Comte broke his theory down into what he would come to call The Law of Three Stages. The first stage Comte categorized is the theological phase. This was pre-1300 BCE when power was held mainly by those in religious positions of power and military men. He defines the purpose of this era as

seeking answers for origins and reason for being, belief and reliance on supernatural, divine forces being the cause of all observable phenomena, and that this was a natural and necessary starting place for human evolution (Grether, 2025). Next, Comte moved into what he called the metaphysical, this was the Middle Ages to the Renaissance when churchmen still had power but now there is a shift from military men to men of governmental power (Grether, 2025). This era served as a transitory stage, supernatural was replaced by "abstract forces", and the human mind began to understand the world around them not explained by divine forces. The final stage of Comte's theory was the scientific or positive stage (Grether, 2025). Comte considered this the time period in which industrial leaders and scientists were the guides of the future.

In order to move to this stage Comte believed society would need to abandon belief in supernatural and abstract forces, the reason for all observable phenomena was governed by natural law, that science, rational thought, and data defined and discovered laws, and finally that there was no absolute truth (Grether, 2025). Comte's methods of inquiry were centered in positivism which focused on the use of observation, experimentation, and comparison to study society. He believed that society should be analyzed using the same methods used in natural sciences.

Women in the field of sociology have long been an underrepresented and minoritized group within the profession. Harriet Martineau was the first female sociologist, Martineau is largely known for her work of observing societies and their morals versus their manners, especially in the context of how they treated women. Martineau's concept of morals and manners was about the distinction between a society's declared values and the everyday behaviors that showed how those values were actually lived out. She argued that while a society like when she studied America might claim to uphold ideals like equality or liberty, by observing its treatment of women, enslaved peoples, and the poor it reveals contradictions between its morals and manners. Her work heavily

centered around the idea of feminism and domination within society and the verbal and nonverbal cues that further reinforce this behavior. The focus of her life's work revolved around natural law and happiness, morals, and manners, preparing the observer, observational safeguards, things, gender, marriage, religion, and education (Allan & Daynes, 2017). She wrote about what it was to be a There were three key concepts Martineau used when making her observations, impartiality, critique, and sympathy (Grether, 2025). She is credited with conducting the first research methods for the study of sociology. Martineau's approach to observing society was to make a distinction between morals or stated beliefs compared to the manners or observable practices (Allan & Daynes, 2017). Although it would be many years after her death that she would be given the notoriety she deserved her contribution to the field of society and what it meant to be a woman within the field is undeniable and left a lasting effect on the study as a whole.

Another early contributor to the profession was Hebert Spencer. Spencer like Martineau came from a dissenter upbringing but was nonconformist. Spencer's most notable contribution to sociology was in the form of his idea about the evolution of human society as stated by Coser, "evolution was to Spencer that universal process which explains alike both the earliest changes which the universe at large is supposed to have undergone…and those latest changes which we trace in society and products of social life" (Grether, 2025). Spencer saw society as a system. To begin thinking about society, Spencer used the organism analogy, which eventually became the cornerstone of functionalism (Allan & Daynes, 2017). The organism analogy was a way of looking at society that understands the form of society and the way society changes as if it were an organism (Allan & Daynes, 2017). Spencer's views of society like the two before him fell into three categories, growth, structure, and differentiation. In the Growth stage societies start small, population increases and is caused by either an increase in population or unrelated groups combine

to form a new society (Grether, 2025). Next is structure where Spencer believed societal structure must change in order to grow and stay viable, and that its laws, organizations, and structures have to adapt to grow. Finally, was differentiation, societies with homogeneity become heterogeneous and a combination of growth and structure equated to differences within societies (Grether, 2025). His work in the differentiation category is what laid the foundation for functionalism. Furthermore, he believed that the evolutionary view created 2 types of societies, militant and industrial. In militaristic societies, the state is dominant and controls the other sectors of society (Allan & Daynes, 2017). In militaristic societies, religion plays a key role in legitimating state activities. The religious structure itself is rather homogeneous, as religion needs to create a singular focus for society (Allan & Daynes, 2017). Industrial societies are less controlled by the state and are oriented toward economic freedom and innovation (Allan & Daynes, 2017). Religion is more diverse, and there is a greater emphasis on individualistic reasons for practicing religion than on collective ones. Individual happiness and peace are associated with salvation and religiosity (Allan & Daynes, 2017). Spencer also played a key role in introducing the concept of social Darwinism, which applied the natural science concept of Darwinism to societies. What he suggested by doing this was that social progress results from struggle and competition between individuals and groups.

The three sociologists mentioned in this paper are just the beginning of the many ideas and theorists to contribute to the knowledge of sociology. They helped lay many of the foundations of sociology that are still used today. Without their dedication to the field, the profession would not be what it is today. It is because of their passion for understanding the world and society around them that those who came after we able to continue and build upon their ideas to give us the profession we know today.

Marianne Weber was a foundational figure in feminist sociology, deeply concerned with gender inequality, marriage laws, and the broader social structures shaping women's roles. She dedicated her life's work to understanding the complexities of being a woman in a male-dominated society, where women were often not seen as autonomous figures but rather as accessories and extensions of the patriarchy. Using information from Lengermann and Niebrugge (2007) analysis of Weber as well as other scholarly sources, and course material, this paper analyzes Weber's work within its historical context and its lasting impact on sociological thought.

Marianne Weber's work was largely influenced by her lived experiences and the sociopolitical climate of her time in Germany. As a sociologist and supporter of the feminist movement, her primary focus was on the intersection of social structure, law, and gender. One of her core concerns was the legal and economic subjugation of women within marriage. Weber explored how marriage upheld the patriarchy and male dominance, severely limiting women's autonomy and forcing them into economic dependency on their husbands (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2007, p. 201). Her analysis was not just theoretical but deeply personal, influenced by her own marriage to renowned sociologist Max Weber, the intellectual circles she was part of, and her macro-observations of women's lived experiences. Weber continued her critique of traditional gender roles by challenging the notion that a woman's primary function within society was strictly domestic. She was particularly interested in how societal expectations restricted women to the private sphere, limiting their participation outside of domestic life. Her work brought attention to the systemic barriers that suppressed women from seeking and obtaining educational and economic independence. To Weber, these were not natural frameworks of society but socially

constructed ones, maintained through patriarchal legal and cultural norms (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2007, p. 202).

Marianne Weber analyzed how social transformations affected women's roles, particularly the effects of industrialization and legal frameworks on women's rights and family structures. Her most consequential sociological contributions were in her analysis of marriage as a social institution. She argued that for women, marriage was not just an intimate relationship between a wife and her husband but rather a legal and economic contract that often placed women at a disadvantage. In her work, she provided examples of how marriage laws upheld patriarchy and male-centered authority, stripping women of legal and financial autonomy (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2007, p. 203). Another major contribution of Weber was her attention to the economic value of domestic labor. Many years before feminist economists popularized this concept, Weber highlighted how women's unpaid household labor was essential to economic production yet systematically undervalued. This critique laid the foundation for future feminist arguments about the importance of recognizing and compensating domestic work equitably. Furthermore, Weber is credited with creating the concept of "the middle ground of immediate daily life," which referred to the everyday experiences of women within patriarchal structures (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2007, p. 205). She argued that women were often perceived as passive individuals when, in reality, they actively navigated and resisted gendered constraints in their daily lives (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2007, p. 205). Her focus on women's lived experiences was crucial in shifting sociological analysis away from abstract theories to concrete realities.

Weber continued her analysis of women in society by categorizing academic women into three different "types," bringing attention to the various different ways in which women engaged with intellectual and academic life. The first of these typologies was referred to as the first

generation or the heroic type. These women were pioneers in academia, breaking into male-dominated spaces and often adopting more masculine behaviors and dress to assimilate (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2007, p. 205). The second generation, benefiting from the first, felt less pressure to suppress their femininity but often found themselves relegated to menial academic work and isolated from intellectual projects (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2007, p. 207). The third and final typology was the current generation, which Weber worried about. She feared that since women were now admitted into academia under the same terms as their male counterparts, they would no longer feel a special sense of achievement in simply attending (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2007, p. 205). Additionally, their attention would be divided between academic pursuits and maintaining traditional expectations of femininity (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2007, p. 207). This typology acknowledged that women's participation in academia was not uniform but shaped by class, marital status, and institutional barriers.

Marianne Weber's work remains vital in contemporary sociology. Her research on women's economic dependency continues to inform discussions on the gender pay gap, the glass ceiling, labor market discrimination, and the undervaluation of domestic labor. Her critique of marriage as an institution of economic dependency is still relevant in discussions about financial inequalities within households. Weber's work continues to be important when analyzing legal structures and examining issues such as reproductive rights and workplace discrimination. Additionally, her attention to the cultural complexities of gender oppression remains relevant in discussions about media representation and gender socialization.

Like Harriet Martineau, Marianne Weber was a leading woman within the field of sociology. Her work helped lay the foundation for feminism within sociology and the study of women and gender within social structures. Her investigation of marriage, legal inequality, and

economic dependency continues to be important to the conversation of modern sociological discourse. By understanding the continued importance of her theories, scholars and activists can continue to address and challenge the systemic gender inequalities that persist today. Weber's contributions to the field of sociology have not only provided an essential scrutinization of patriarchy and male dominance but also offered a vision for a more equitable society.

Summary

What I decided to change was making use I had correct APA formatting for me intext citations from both the book and class lecture. That was my biggest issue this paper not using the right formatting. Next, I changed my language. One of the feedback comments I received was to revise a particular sentence, so I went back and corrected the language I used so that it better fit with the paper. I revised these two things to help with the overall structure of my paper

UE3

Symbolic interactionism is a consequential perspective within the sociological field that analyzes how people develop, maintain, and change society through their interaction. Symbolic interactionism focuses on the symbolic meanings that individuals give to objects, behaviors, and others in society. Instead of approaching society as a set of set structures or deterministic systems, symbolic interactionism's central focus is on the interpretive processes of everyday life. This paper analyzes the foundational concerns of symbolic interactionism, establishes the key theorists credited with its creation, and assesses how their work shows symbolic interactionism as both a theory and a practice.

One of the main questions this concept sought to make sense of is how people understand their own paradigm of the social world and where they fit within it. Instead of seeing meaning as concrete in objects or behaviors, symbolic interactionism suggests that the meaning of things is created through our communication with the world around us, most notably through the use of language and symbols. Explained by In the Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World, Allan and Daynes Explained in chapter 6 by Allan and Daynes (2017) in the Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World symbolic interaction moves away from structuralist ideals by highlighting that meaning comes out of the context of specific interactions. Society is not a unchangeable foundation forced on people but instead a product of the interpretive actions people makes when negotiating the reality of daily life.

Symbolic interactionism investigates how individual identity is molded through reflective processes, role-taking, and responses of others. Mead's work, summarized by Allan and Daynes (2017),

shows this well by explaining how the self develops as people learn to see oneself from the paradigms of others. Through stages like the "play stage," "game stage," and the incorporation of the "generalized other," people internalize perspectives that give them the ability to view their own actions objectively. Another issue within symbolic interactionism is the problem of social order. Instead of assuming social order exists naturally or that it is enforced only through power, symbolic interactionists belief is that societal norms and expectations are created through group understandings and routines. This standpoint questions deterministic theories. This brought into question deterministic theories, by believing that individuals actively shape society, even during the process of being shaped by it. Through the continuous interpretation, negotiation, and adjustment, people maintain the foundations that give structure to everyday life (Symbolic Interaction, n.d.) (Grether, 2025).

There are several foundational Theorist that have shaped symbolic interactionist as a theory and practice, amongst them is George Herbert Mead. Mead contributed the framework for how we understand that the self is a socially constructed idea. Mead fought that consciousness, and identity comes from social processes, specifically through language and interaction. His distinction between the "I" and the "Me" apprehends the duality of the self, the spontaneous, unpredictable element and the socially aware, reflective aspect (Allan & Daynes, 2017). Mead continues by arguing, the self is not biologically a part of an individual but comes from our interaction and engagement with others in society. This interaction requires people to take on the role of the other, to conceptualize how they present to other's perspective, and to adjust their behavior when needed.

A former student of Mead, Herbert Blumer, is another theorist who focused on and furthered the concept of symbolic interactionism. Blumer was outspoken that the meaning we give to things were not static but arises from engagement. He disagreed with the idea of objects or actions having ridged rigid meanings, instead arguing that meaning is molded and remolded through the process of communication (Symbolic Interaction, n.d.) (Grether, 2025). Blumer continued his critique focusing on the positivist approaches to sociology, arguing that research should focus on the meanings people attach to actions instead

of trying to force theoretical structures. His work helped contribute to the foundation for what we now understand to be qualitative sociology. Another important contributor was Charles Horton Cooley, who formulated the concept of the "looking-glass self." To Cooley, people form their self-image by envisioning how they appear to others, interpreting those responses, and formulating personal feelings from those interpretations (Symbolic Interaction, n.d.).

The application of symbolic interactionism is specifically useful in understanding current societal trends, one being understanding how people perform identity and respond to cultural expectations. One clear example of Mead's theory is the way individuals personify their identities on social media platforms. Users often think of how their audience will interpret and interact with a post before sharing it. This action reflects Mead's idea of the generalized other, where people are viewing themselves from the imagined viewpoints of their broader social group. As Allan and Daynes (2017) described the ability to understand one's behavior and adjust it based on others' potential reactions is a defining ability of the self. This process uncovers how one's identity is not a static entity but a flexible product of continuous and ongoing interactions and role-takings.

Blumer's work within symbolic interactionism is also seen in how societal meanings change based on context. An example of this is the label "essential worker" during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pre-pandemic many jobs in food service and transportation were not largely viewed as societally vital. However, as the public standpoint changed, so did the meaning and significance of those roles. Blumer's concept that meaning comes from social interaction helps to understand this shift. The label "essential" became meaningful through joined experience and reinterpretation during the time of a global crisis (Symbolic Interaction, n.d.). Moreover, Cooley's looking-glass self helps understand the psychological impact of online feedback. People often change their behavior based on the perceived judgments from others, reinforcing or going against their self-image. Both examples show that symbolic interactionism is not just a theoretical framework but a practical foundation for analyzing real-world dynamics of identity, meaning, and interpretation.

Symbolic interactionism gives a compelling insight into understanding how individuals create and interpret their social reality. Its focus on language, symbols, and interaction uplifts the present role people play in molding their identities and the world around them. By analyzing the works of Mead, Blumer, and Cooley, one can see how symbolic interactionism helps explain both the creation of the self and the laissez-faire nature of social meaning. In applying their knowledge to contemporary societal contexts like one's digital identity and shifting cultural labels, symbolic interactionism proves to be a useful and necessary framework for sociological analysis. It remains increasingly relevant in a society where meaning is constantly changing through communication and interpretation.