

Sociological Theory

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When studying sociology it is important to understand theories to back up the sociological views of the world. Many contributors to sociological theories were some of the top sociologists during their lifetime. Only if they were considered sociologists at the time, and not just educated people. These people are known as the “founding fathers” of sociology since they are the ones who helped found the ideas of sociology(Bottomore,1960). They are considered “fathers of sociology,” but the scholars who helped found sociology and created sociological theories are mixed-gendered. Not just a male-dominated perspective, but a male and female-created social science. Since sociological theory falls under the founding fathers, these theories could be used in interdisciplinary settings. For example, some theories could be used in the sciences, political sciences, psychology, social work, and other curriculums that present sociological theories about almost everything.

During the time Karl Marx, Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and the other male scholars who helped create sociology were alive they tended to receive more credit than others. Other scholars like Harriet Martineau, Ida B. Wells, W.E.B Dubois, and others receive a different treatment than the other scholars mentioned. Why? Take care of their family, cater to the husband, and be a good mother. Not only did they believe this about women, but African Americans as well.

Some scholars did not want to listen to African American scholars because they believed they were less than their counterparts. Using both of these as an example it is important to see how scholars today have recognized the intersectionality of the sexist and racist acts of times before. According to Andersen, she states “It is imperative to make the sociology curriculum more inclusive to women of color...etc.”(Andersen, 1988). For scholars like Ida B. Wells, it took a

long time for her to get recognition and respect for what she has done that impacted the sociological world, as well as other disciplines' world.

First beginning with Comte, Comte was one of the creators of positivism which is a theory he created to help understand the world better. Martineau is someone who is not given the proper recognition in sociological theory classrooms. Alongside Comte, one of the people who created the framework is Martineau. Herbert Spencer was well known for functionalism and how he believed the world functions under his belief system. Most of the theoretical frameworks were based on the lives of whoever created it. Karl Marx is another creator of theories that are prominent in sociology. Theories known as conflict theory and capitalism to name a few.

Before we can understand the contributions of sociological theoretical scholars we first have to understand the meaning of sociology and theory. Sociology is the study of why things are and how society influences others' lives. What is theory? According to Allan and Daynes, a theory is described as a “logical explanation of how a given empirical phenomenon works”(Allan & Daynes, 2017,p.11). Theory can be seen and interpreted in many forms other than just your perspective but through other's views as well. That is why there are different interpretations of theories tested that other scholars like to understand better for themselves.

Many people who are not used to using the correct terminology usually mistake a hypothesis for a theory. A hypothesis is when you're assuming something without being tested yet. Compared to a theory being the result from tested data results to see why certain things happen the way they do. To do this we use methodology, to first test the data or subject, then after analyzing the data, you will be able to gather results and theories from it. Another way to view social theory would be by explaining how social ideas work (Allan & Daynes, 2017). For example, when you think about the theory of self by scholar Mead, you have to think about the different ideas that are

applied to this theory. Then you have to figure out how the social world is involved. Applying theory to a song was one of our assignments for the semester, and by learning the theory helped me understand the importance of having a set basis of why things happen the way they do helps to understand the theory better. For the assignment regarding applying a theory to a song, the perfect song Choosing Myself by Naomi Raine was applied to that theory. I understand that the social groups included are the self, society, including influences in their lives. This is a way to help break the definition of theory because of the context you receive things is the way you will understand them.

Sociology is considered the “queen of the social sciences,” because through all of the other disciplines sociology is always in the mix of it. For example in Psychology, although they are using their data and research, there is always a way that sociology will be present in their ideas. Sociology is the study of society, while psychology studies why humans do what they do. Whenever someone wants to understand why a person does something and how it affects the society. That is why there are many theories called the Psychosocial theories. These types of theories include both sociology and psychology ideas. “No theory can quite match the social world, and no one correct theoretical representation can rule others out.”(Fuhse, 2022,p.99). This statement states how the theories that are in other disciplines use information from other disciplines.

Sometimes instead of saying this theory is right and the other is wrong is redundant since the social world and life have different components that may be interdisciplinary. The unique thing about sociology is the fact that sociology studies the individual problem and the big problem. Sociological theory has theories that are beneficial to the self, as well as for institution-level problems. For example, the theory of self, speaks about the self and involves connections with

bigger-picture ideas. Compared to the macro level of institutions, that deal with handling things from a larger perspective. This is like when you are working with older adults. You could work for them at the micro level like being an RN, CNA, or Social worker. The macro way you can work for the elderly is by working on policies that could benefit them on a policy, government level. Another example of this could be within the education system. When you want reform done in the education system there are micro and macro things that you can do that could impact the education field. If someone wanted to see reform in the school system, they could become a faculty with the school system to start enhancing changes. They could also speak to the higher ups, like the school board to try to get changes made. A macro level would be advocating at the state level for your cause.

Sociology is a great discipline to learn how society works. The founding fathers and ladies of sociology would be proud of the improvement and the progress sociology has made over the past decades. Hopefully, one day, the women pioneers of sociology will get their full deserved credit and recognition for their contributions to sociology. Sociology is unique in the discipline simply because of the different aspects it covers when thinking about society. Sociological theory is a unique way that is tested to view the world and why things happen in the world.

References

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