

Unit Essay Revisions

Longwood University

Dr. Grether

Timothy Crowley

December 4th, 2023

Revisions:

For Unit Essay 1, I went through and re-read the entire paper and made several grammatical and spelling changes. I also changed some wording and added some wording to create a better flow and more clarity to the paper. In addition, I added more transitional words to help with organization and structure to help the reader follow along better and less chances for the reader to get lost. Overall, I made several minor changes to the paper to deliver stronger points and make my writing easier to follow and understand.

Unit Essay 1

Sociology makes up a huge discipline. Due to it being a large discipline, there are many key people who helped establish Sociology. Some of the figures that helped establish Sociology were Auguste Comte, Harriet Martineau, and Herbert Spencer. From 1798 through 1857, Auguste Comte, a French sociologist raised by Catholics and supporters of the French Monarchy. To gain an of understanding Comte's work, it is important to have a knowledge of the time period in which he did his work. Comte's work was done during the Enlightenment, American Revolutionary War, Napoleon Wars, the French Revolution, and industrialization. Comte's work was aimed at creating a more naturalistic approach to science, explaining the past development of nature, and predicting its future course (Coser., 2003). Comte believed that eventually there will be a small number of laws that will account for most of the human behavior that we observe, and these laws will help predict, explain, and control the natural and social world (Allan & Daynes., 2017). Some key concepts that Comte developed was the idea of social physics, which eventually became sociology. Social physics is the idea of emphasizing laws pertaining to human behavior and the environment. Through social physics, Comte became the founder of Sociology when he combed the Latin word "socius" and the Greek word "logos" and

came up with the word Sociology. His work focused on two major concepts, social dynamics, and social statics. Social dynamics is used to explain the changing forces in society, in other words, how society evolves and changes over time. On the other hand, social statics is the idea of the constants of a society, pertaining to social order creating a foundation and stability over a society. He also used the idea of methods of inquiry, being observation, experimentation, comparison, and historical method. In addition, he had a large focus upon the Law of Three Stages. The Law of Three Stages is the idea of how just like an individual's mind evolved and changes, so does society. The three stages are theological, metaphysical, and scientific or positive. The theological stage focuses on belief and relief, with an emphasis on divine forces being the cause and creation of phenomena. The next stage, the metaphysical, is the transitory stage, the idea that supernatural forces are being replaced by more abstract forces. This stage also highlights that humans notice facts and social phenomena is not explained by divine forces. The final stage is the scientific or positive stage, emphasizing the abandoning of divine or supernatural forces and highlighting abstract forces. This stage uses rational thought and data to discover and define laws. Comte's last major part of his work was positivism, stemming from the Law of Three Stages, explaining that we use the basis of data and observation to explain and understand the world around us.

Another early figure that helped establish Sociology as a scientific discipline was Harriet Martineau. She was a British Sociologist, raised in a middle-class family. She worked to create a science of society that would enable people to make more informed personal and political decisions guided by scientific principles governing social life (Lengermann & Niebrugge., 2007). To gain a better understanding of her work, it is important to know about the time in which she did her work. She did her work during the time of some major wars with America, including the

Revolution. In addition, during her time, there was some turmoil across Europe. Furthermore, the Industrial Revolution also took place during her time, as well as the rise of capitalism, abolishment of slavery, and some reform acts like the 1832 Reform Act. Some of her key concepts included morals and manners, things, and discourse of persons. In addition, her work also consisted of concepts like impartiality, critique, sympathy, domination, and feminism. Morals are the ideals created by society to incorporate appropriate behaviors, like stated principles. Manners are the observations that people look at in society to act certain ways in certain circumstances, this revolves around how we treat one another. She studied morals and manners through her concepts of impartiality, critique, and sympathy. 'Things' are the actual objects that are in society that encompass the 'common mind'. Another concept from Martineau is the discourse of persons, meaning the interactions between people. Domination is her idea of people enforcing some type of submission onto one another. A common example of this would be slavery, how someone has control over another person. Lastly, she worked with the idea of feminism through 4 difference key aspects being a gendered standpoint, how women live, difference amongst females, and societal changes.

Another early figure that helped with the establishment of sociology was Herbert Spencer. Herbert Spencer, a British sociological, whose work was from 1820 until 1903, happened around the same time as Martineau. Since his work was done around the same time as Martineau, they observed and experienced very similar, if not the same societal changes. His work also happened throughout the time frame of the British Colonialism in the 19th century. As much as he denied it, his work was heavily influenced by Comte. Spencer's work was aimed at changes in social structures and institutions, rather than an individuals' mental state (Coser., 2003). Some key concepts that were associated with Spencer were growth, structure, and

differentiation. Growth refers to how societies start small and grow in size, new groups created new societies, as well as population of people. Structure refers to how structures must change as society changes, so laws organizations and institutions change in order to adapt to the new societal changes. Differentiation refers to how growth and structure create changes from how a society starts out mostly the same, but then different groups start forming and creating a basis for divisions. In addition, he also has a focus on militant and industrial societies. Militant societies focus on a centralized society and a fixed system of hierarchy. It also focuses on how individuals exist to benefit the state. On the other hand, industrial societies are basically the opposite with a decentralized society, flexibility of rank and order, as well as states existing to benefit individuals. He also had a focus upon functionalism, Social Darwinism, and 'survival of the fittest'. Coining the term 'survival of the fittest', Spencer had the idea of Social Darwinism to explain class and order through evolution and this idea of 'survival of the fittest'.

As talked about above, the scientific discipline of Sociology was established by some key figures. The establishment of Sociology as a discipline introduced the idea of sociological theory. Sociological theory is used to make sense of society and human behavior. Sociological theory is a way to establish how and why people do what they do through behavior. We make sense of that behavior with conceptual schemes from personal experiences and factual observations that happen every day. Ideas and concepts develop through those observations and personal experiences can't be formed if you aren't participating in society and stay isolated from others. Observing certain human behaviors creates a basis for how we understand human interaction in our society through this idea of sociological theory. A sociological theory is often created when taking into consideration assumptions, interrelated ideas and concepts, and relationships that we observe. Personal experiences help create theories by discovering why

people do what they do and how it makes a difference in our society. In addition, the era in which one is living may help create theories to explain human behavior and ways people interact with each other, simply because of the setting and era they are in. Furthermore, previous theories work done by other scholars often allow us to add our ideas and assumptions to build stronger connections to figuring out human behavior throughout society (Sternheimer, 2018). Often, our assumptions, experiences, and observations tend to add ideas to prior theories, modify ones with more current data, and refute prior theories with current data (Sternheimer, 2018). Overall, there is no way to prove that a theory is correct, as it is just a set of ideas that are evaluative of what was observed or experienced. Societies are constantly evolving and changing, which causes changes in social and human behavior creating more conceptual schemes to help us further explain a specific human behavior in a given society. Sociological theories often help us explain what might happen under certain conditions, may describe why people behave the way they do in those certain conditions, and even help us create social change through those observations and experiences of human behavior.

Sociological theory is unique from other scientific theories as it tends to be more evaluative and critical than natural sciences. In fact, sociological theories are not intended to be predictive, unlike most theories created by natural sciences. Sociological theories focus upon human behavior and how society influences what people do and why people do it. Moreover, these theories are used to understand and explain possibilities of why people act like they do, they aren't definitive. As stated above, you cannot prove a sociological theory to be correct, they stem from conceptual schemes or set of ideas framed around personal experiences and observations by people in a society. In addition, sociological theories are used to make sense of society and the world around us, creating a worldview for society. Unlike natural sciences,

sociological theories stem from ideas that are formed by assumptions, natural sciences are definitive and have definitive answers. Sociological theories are meant to be added to, or refuted. Natural sciences are more about natural and environmental practices, while sociological theories are more about human behavior and society. Natural sciences are rooted from the physical world and nature, while sociological theories are rooted from behaviors and the social world. Another way that sociological theories are unique from other scientific theories is because sociological theories are focused upon societal issues rooted from human behavior and interaction. Whereas other scientific theories are focused upon the natural world and more scientific matters pertaining to the environment and organisms. These are just some of the ways that sociological theories are unique than other scientific theories.

Revisions:

For this Unit Essay, I went through and re-read the instructions, as well as the work that I did. In doing so, I fix multiple grammatical and spelling errors. In addition, I spend time adding transitional words to make my writing flow better and easier for the reader to follow. Moreover, I spent time adding and deleting phrases that benefited the clarity of the idea that was trying to be portrayed. I also deleted information that was not needed or that didn't belong, meaning I took away wording or phrases that did not make sense to allow for the idea of the paper to be more clear and to come across stronger.

Unit Essay 2

Weber focuses on social actions derived from social behaviors of individuals in society. Weber "conceived of sociology as a comprehensive science of social action" (Cosser, 2003). It is interesting to note that his wife Marianne Weber noted in a source that Harvard graduate students came up to her and said that Max Weber's theories are very famous in America, something that

made her very happy (Lengermann & Niebrugge., 2006). This is important to note because they are what is known as the “power couple of sociology”. Furthermore, Weber focuses on what compels or what motivates people to do what they do. To help Weber understand social action, he divided social action into 4 groups which include, purposeful/rational, value-orientated, emotional/affective, and traditional social action. He aims to focus on social action because rationalization is a major problem within modern Western societies. He defines rationalization as a process in which an increasing number of social actions and interactions are based upon efficiency, calculability, demystification, and dehumanization. Moreover, his focus is upon social action because rationalization is creating more social actions and interactions, rather than custom, traditional, or emotional motivators. He explains that rationalization makes it difficult for individuals to pursue values that may be important to them. Another motivation of his work is upon subjective meanings, which is the different ways in which people understand and justify their behaviors differently than another may justify and understand their behavior. This idea of subjective meanings is a huge part of his push for his idea of interpretive sociology, rather than a positivist approach. Interpretive sociology is more of how people construct ideas of reality, rather than the positivist approach, being an objective reality. Furthermore, his theoretical motivation is inspired by how people interact and behave the way that they seem fit, rather than follow someone that does not have the same values that they may have. His approach is to see how different people see the world differently and understand their individual behaviors and social actions because of their values or personal desires.

Some of Weber’s key theoretical contributions relate to how he believes sociologists should study society. He developed the idea of Value Neutrality, which in simple terms is knowing what your own values and desires are as a researcher and overcoming the personal

biases that you may have as a researcher when conducting research. With Value Neutrality, Weber insists that emotional distance is key, the ability of being able to acknowledge and understand where another person is coming from and helping researchers enable themselves to take a position in what someone is saying. He coined the term Verstehen for Sociology to develop an understanding of why people do what they do and why the behaviors of people in a society are important to understand. A big part of Verstehen is empathy and understanding social action through another individual's viewpoint. Weber believes that sociologists should study society through a "first person perspective" rather than their own perspective. This helps sociologists understand why people do the actions they do. Another major concept that Weber developed is the idea of Ideal Types. Ideal Types operates as a mental shortcut, it helps researchers through their research process by providing analytical aid. When applying the Ideal Type to different social phenomena allows researchers to gain a further understanding of the reality. It allows researchers to see how reality fits in to the Ideal Types or if reality strains away from the Ideal Types. Another contribution of Weber's is Ideal Capital, which consists of private ownership of all activities that could gain profit, the pursuit of profit, companies competing with each other, Laissez Faire according to the idea of the Ideal Types, is the idea that the government doesn't touch the economy. He also developed an idea of Types of Authority, traditional, charismatic, and rational/legal. Traditional is the idea of doing something like we have always done it. Charismatic authority is the idea of authority stemmed from their leader, trusting that they will do the correct thing. Rational or legal authority is authority stemming from rules like laws and procedures. Bureaucracy was also one of his major concepts and in the article Applying Weber's Concept of Bureaucracy to the Pandemic by Jessica Poling, she talked about how members in a bureaucracy must follow the conduct and rules that govern them, and she related it

to the COVID-19 pandemic and how we had to follow specific rules throughout the pandemic governed by the government (Poling, 2021).

His theoretical contributions are still relevant in studying and understanding society today for many reasons. With one of his major concepts being social action and how different people behave differently based off their morals, values, and traditions that they may follow. I think a huge example of this could be holidays. For example, people who celebrate Christmas have many different traditions and behaviors based on their principles and their given values. Furthermore, a big part of Weber is being empathetic and looking at studies from a first-person perspective, and that could be seen in today's society in many ways. For example, there are many illusions in society, like the duck versus rabbit picture, that have been an example of how someone may perceive something in a different way. I have seen many illusions like this in many of my classes here at Longwood. Furthermore, different school traditions could support his claims of looking at something from someone else's perspective. If someone from a different school that may not have the Chi secret society may be confused when they go to a Chi walk. Moreover, in college, we have been taught to take a non-biased approach when looking at research, which brings in his concept of Value Neutrality. When conducting research, we as researchers learn from looking at something in someone else's perspective to gain a standpoint for ourselves of the topic at hand. In addition, we use his concept of Types of Authority in society, an example being, for the most part we as a society conform to the norms and laws and procedures, which falls under his rational or legal authority concept. Furthermore, in the article Marriage, Max Weber, and Verstehen by Sally Raskhoff, she talks about how Verstehen can relate to the concept of marriage, as it helps us "understand the meaning of marriage from the perspective of those involved" (Raskhoff, 2011).

Revisions:

For this assignment, I made ample changes. First and foremost, I went through and changed the first paragraph. In doing so, I added information and deleted a lot of information. I added information from the slides we had in class and added citations to show where I got my information from. I also enhanced my writing by taking out the writing that was flagged in this particular assignment and putting new information in. With this Unit Essay, I also made multiple grammatical and spelling changes. Furthermore, I added transitional words to help my writing flow better, make my ideas stronger, and allow the readers to follow along easier.

Unit Essay 3

In the discipline of Sociology, there are many different theorists and theories that play a crucial role in contributing to the discipline including Erving Goffman. Erving Goffman, a sociologist who did his work from 1922 through 1982, contributed major concepts to Sociology to understand society as a whole. In doing so, Goffman spent a lot of his interests discovering how people interact with each other based on different situations. Furthermore, he spent time understanding how individuals interpret meanings of symbols and use those interpretations to respond to each other (Grether, n.d.). Moreover, due to the fact that he spent a lot of time studying individuals, his work towards symbolic interactionism and dramaturgy were on a very micro-level individualistic approach, instead of society as a whole (Grether, n.d.). He worked to understand how a setting changes the way individuals behave and interact with each other, as well as understand how individuals communicate with different forms of communication, both non-verbal and verbal. His work was derived from how individuals' communication is based on values and symbols that are understood in the same way to everyone in a given society. Furthermore, he works to understand how different places and settings influence how the

individuals in that setting may act and interact with each other. In a video, the narrator explains how the reality of our social world is like a large life-long play (YouTube, 2017). Moreover, one of his main motivations was to study why individuals portray themselves in different characters or roles in different settings.

Some of Goffman's major theoretical contributions included symbolic interactionism and dramaturgy. Symbolic interactionism is the idea that interactions by individuals in society are structured by agreed upon symbols. These symbols have different meanings that are understood by everyone in society to assist with nonverbal communication by humans. The meanings of these symbols can be altered to allow for humans to interpret different situations in a different way (Grether, n.d.). Furthermore, there are many parts of the symbolic interactionism theory. The theory is built upon meaning, language, thought, social interaction, symbol, and definition of the situation (Grether, n.d.). Meaning is when information is given by individuals through nonverbal and/or verbal communication methods (Grether, n.d.). Furthermore, language is the means of humans using negotiation to convey meanings through symbols (Grether, n.d.). Thought is when information is passed through symbols that are interpreted by individuals to understand what is being conveyed or even thinking about different points of view (Grether, n.d.). In addition, social interaction is when individuals attach meaning to a situation to make sense of what is happening, and to respond appropriately (Grether, n.d.). A symbol is used to represent something by association or resemble an item of meaning (Grether, n.d.). The definition of the situation is when an individual takes social meaning into account to interpret the information in their situation, to make sense of what is happening in that given situation (Grether, n.d.). Furthermore, it is when individuals know what is expected of themselves and others in the given situation (Grether, n.d.). Dramaturgy is when social life is viewed as a

theatrical performance with actors, props, settings, costumes and most importantly acting in a certain situation (Alan, 2006). In this, there are three premises, one of which is where we only know a person's self by what they show us, the second is where people slant their appearance to satisfy their audience, and the last being the longer you interact in a similar situation, the more we act the same in those similar situations. With dramaturgy, front stage and backstage are key elements being that front stage is where the individual is putting up an act to their audience in character, and backstage being that the individual is out of character and no longer in front of their audience (Joshi, 2022).

Goffman's work can be seen in many different areas to help us understand society today. One of the biggest examples could be religion or going to church. For example, in Catholicism, when members of that religion go to church, they know when to sit, stand, sing, pray because of watching individuals, symbols, and meanings around them over time in the same setting. Furthermore, in Catholicism, the members of that religion typically engage in an act called communion, where no matter what Catholic Church you attend, they do that act the same. For that act, you get in a line and wait to receive the body and blood of Christ. Those symbols, being wine as the blood and bread as the body of Christ, can be interpreted differently to different people, but those symbols are agreed upon in the Catholic Church as the body and blood of Christ. Another symbol could be how members of the Catholic Church and practicing Catholicism have agreed upon a meaning of the cross, which could be and is looked at differently or has a different meaning to other people or other religions. Furthermore, dramaturgy can also relate to this example, as individuals attending catholic church will act differently in church than outside of church because of the different setting and the different expectations set. In addition, when you are in church, it is frowned upon to go on your phone or sit down when it is

time to stand. Individuals in that religion and church know that because they have done it over and over, so they are acting the same in that setting. The actors in church may act differently depending on their role. For example, the priest would act differently than their audience because that audience is looking up to the priest for worship and their mentor. The priest acts differently than their audience in order to satisfy their audience.

References

- Allan, K. (2006). *Contemporary Social and Sociological Theory: Visualizing Social Worlds*. Sage.
- Allan, K., & Daynes, S. (2017). *Explorations in classical sociological theory: Seeing the Social World*. Sage.
- Coser, L. A. (2003). *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context, 2nd edition*. Waveland Press, Inc: Illinois.
- Grether, S. (n.d.) Goffman [PowerPoint slides].
https://1drv.ms/p/s!Att4KbeeKSM6gaBDxYthYLu_DT-RA?e=V16xiA
- Joshi, M. (2022). *Erving Goffman's Dramaturgical Approach*. Doing Sociology.
<https://doingsociology.org/2022/05/11/erving-goffmans-dramaturgical-approach-madhura-joshi/>
- Lengermann, P. M., & Niebrugge, G. (2006). *The women founders: Sociology and social theory 1830–1930, a Text/Reader*. Waveland Press.
- Poling, J. (2021). Applying Weber's concept of bureaucracy to the pandemic.
<https://www.everydaysociologyblog.com/2021/03/applying-webers-concept-of-bureaucracy-to-the-pandemic.html>
- Raskhoff, S. (2011). Everyday sociology blog: Marriage, Max Weber, and verstehen.
<https://nortonbooks.typepad.com/everydaysociology/2011/07/marriage-max-weber-and-verstehen.html>
- Sternheimer, K. (2018). *Joining the conversation: Why study theory?*. Everyday Sociology Blog.
<https://www.everydaysociologyblog.com/2018/01/joining-the-conversation-why-study-theory.html>

YouTube. (2017). *YouTube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUukBV82P9A>.