

**Unit Essay Revisions**

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SOCL 401: Sociological Theory

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### Unit Essay 1

After reviewing the feedback and grading rubric for this assignment these are the following revisions I have made to my original essay. I made grammar and spelling corrections to my essay. Also, I made changes to my paragraph structures, when I introduced a new idea into my writing I started a new paragraph. My original essay was not in complete APA format, so I added a running head of my title on every page of my document. Additionally, I was missing additional course material to support my argument, so I added a quote from the article, “The dead white guys of theory?” I reorganized my thoughts and writing for the three questions as it gave off the impression that sociology does not offer scientific theories which was not the intended impact as that is untrue,

Auguste Comte developed the term sociology believing that the new discipline would uncover the laws of the social world. Comte established functions of social systems, historical and comparative methods, and established generalizations. Comte's main contributions were structuring the discipline of sociology by understanding “human behavior is the core of sociology” through Positivism. (Allan & Daynes, Chapter 1, 2017). Positivism is a foundational way of thinking about human knowledge, empirical ways of society, and science as a way to improve human life.

Herbert Spencer believed that individuals were rational in their social connections and should be free of government control to think freely. He argued that evolution was necessary for positive progress. Spencer’s contribution to sociology was functionalism that is created on five principles: integration, system equilibrium, specialization, requisite needs, and structural differentiation. The core of functionalism is the belief that society is constantly changing, similar to an organism.

Harriet Martineau is most known for translating Comte's book on Positive Philosophy, was the first sociologist to write about methodology, the study of things using discourse of persons, and the differentiation between morals and manners. She believed that sociology should be used to improve the human condition because every citizen "ought to make informed, scientific observations of society" (Allan & Daynes, Chapter 7, 2017). She described morals as stated beliefs and manners as observable practices. Also, Martineau was a feminist arguing that education must be provided for all, critiquing marriages as they were mostly transactional due to economics, and the lack of work opportunities for women. Comte, Spencer, and Martineau were all foundational figures in developing sociology as a distinguishable discipline.

Sociological explanations regarding society, human behavior, and societal events. Sociological theory seeks to explain critical issues in society such as poverty, racism, discrimination, gender oppression, etc. Allows for deeper knowledge as an individual can develop explanations about a special "aspect of society that we are interested in learning about" (Sternheimer, 2020). Sociological theory offers an explanation of the past and predictions for the future of society using observations and understanding individuals' experiences. Sociology theory is rooted in understanding the human condition. It provides a framework for a way of thinking and making sense of the world, "understanding sociology's past certainly informs how we understand its present (Wynn, 2016). Sociology theory is not used in isolation but used as a broad way of interpreting an ever changing society. Also, provides a world view of why the social world has developed in a certain way. Sociology theory challenges individuals' thinking for the better because the ultimate goal of this theory is to evaluate society.

Theory is always changing and evolving which results in more individuals being able to join the conversation and either acknowledge or refute existing theories. Furthermore

sociological theory allows individuals to understand how a person might react in a given circumstance, an explanation of why something has happened, and a way to incite social change. Overall, sociological theory is the why and how questions of human behavior and society. There to provide explanations whether in a historical or present moment of popularity regarding individuals or events. Sociological theories are all around individuals through the evolution of society, people, and social phenomenon.

Sociological theory is unique from other scientific theories because sociological theory helps “make sense of social life because it holds assorted observations and facts together” (Edles & Appth, 2010). Sociology is a social science that uses the interactions of people and groups whereas scientific theories focus on thoughts and behaviors of individual people. Sociology explores broad perspectives that look beyond the individual to see how social institutions and groups can influence how individuals think and perceive society. Sociological theory fosters an environment of innovation, problem solving skills, communication, creativity, and analytical skills. Sociologists are more critical and evaluative than theories in the natural sciences. Sociological theory is deeply linked to implicit moral assumptions. Sociologists seek to make positive change in the world through their work which is why the discipline is more than just understanding society but also forming solutions to make society more equitable for all. This is also unique because sociological theory reaches sociologists to explain their findings while also providing accountable documentation of the discipline. This documentation is unique because it provides motivation for sociologists to continue their learning of how to understand society. Also, documentation of theory results in directing sociologists to relevant topics regarding the human condition and social phenomenon. Sociological theory is unique because of the knowledge needed in public policy to analyze social behavior related to age, race, gender, class,

religion, ethnicity, or sexuality. Overall, sociological theory is unique from other scientific theories due core of explaining broad social phenomena.

### **Unit Essay 2**

After reviewing the feedback and grading rubric for this assignment these are the following revisions I have made to my original essay. My original essay was not in complete APA format, so I added a running head of my title on every page of my document. Additionally, I have a section that discussed the Du Bois concept of the talented tenth that needed a citation because I am discussing key concepts and definitions of Du Bois works that need to be cited, as follows (Edles & Appelrouth, 2010). As I re-read through my paper, I made some grammar and spelling correct to make my paper more coherent. Also, I added more to my answer in question one regarding key theoretical contributions of Du Bois, this discussion centered around the concept, the Color line. These statements were added to the beginning of my discussion regarding the color. Du Bois defined the color line as a social divide structuring social inequality between races. The color line is defined as an organizational force within society operating essentially in terms of structural racism. This is due to a system of oppression in forms of social institutions that have established racist and discriminatory practices through laws, policies, and regulations that have been embedded in society.

Du Bois' major concern as a theorist was “the intertwined structural and subjective causes and consequences of class, race, and racism” (Edles & Appelrouth, 2010). Du Bois theoretical interests were motivated due to his interest to liberate the oppressed black race. He wanted more talented black people to emerge in society, as educated individuals that could be free of racism so that they could accomplish more goals. He sought to debunk traditional norms of the time that labeled black people as inferior. He debunk the stereotypes of black people being inferior

through his constructionist view of race. The Talented tenth was a concept of Du Bois that showed that black people were not second class citizens, but that there were also classes within the black community. An educated elite group of black people that were capable of assisting black people to overthrow a racist society (Edles & Appelrouth, 2010). Du Bois used the foundation of sociology being rooted in human action to motivate his work of progressive action for black citizens. This further motivated Du Bois theoretical interests because his writings and research would bring a series of realizations to civilization that would end oppression for black people. Du Bois dedicated himself to studying all facets concerning the black community through research and comparison that could lead to valid generalizations in his work that could help the social conditions of black people. Overall, Du Bois research linked sociology to race in which racial hierarchy had factors of power, discrimination, and oppression. Du Bois' focus on the problem of race showed the greater social issues in the United States.

Du Bois defined the color line as a social divide structuring social inequality between races. The color line is defined as an organizational force within society operating essentially in terms of structural racism. This is due to a system of oppression in forms of social institutions that have established racist and discriminatory practices through laws, policies, and regulations that have been embedded in society. The color line alienated and oppressed people of color. Also, the color line shows institutional racism in society because of how social institutions are founded on racist principles. The color line further shows how white individuals hold the power in society which they can continue to use to disenfranchise those without power such as black people. The veil shows how people see the world differently due to their race. For instance, black people can feel invisible in society because the government and those yielding power do not represent them physically nor personally because they can not understand the daily experience of a black person

in a racist society. This can also prohibit white people from seeing black people as true americans because all they see is there blackness, “Identity as a black person caused him to realize that his membership in the Negro race locked him outside white privilege” (Morris, 2015). This can prevent a black person from acknowledging their true authenticity because they are battling notions of conforming to what white Americans describe a black person to be.

Double consciousness was an issue in how black people viewed themselves because due to the discrimination and stereotypes placed on the black community it was almost impossible for black people in the United States to formulate their own self-evaluations independent of white views. These views often led black people to question their identity of where they fit in society or if they were black or americans? White people question black people's identity because they see the world through a lens that does not acknowledge how their privilege affects others. This privilege is founded in, “a world in which on the basis of race, class, and gender denies people a sense of freedom” (Lengermann & Niebrugge, 2007).

Du Bois theoretical contributions are still relevant in studying and understanding society today in terms of analyzing institutional racism, intersectionality, and critical theory. He focused on how racial inequality was embedded into all aspects of society which is now defined as institutional racism such as economic exploitation, lack of political power, educational inequality, and workplace discrimination. Critical theory analyzes how social institutions have an imbalance of power which is what Du Bois discusses because laws and regulations are imbalanced because they were established on discriminatory practices. Also, white Americans hold onto their power due to white privilege and white supremacy that allows them to maintain control over society to continue marginalizing people of color, “elite groups could use governments for their own political ends” (Allan & Daynes, 2017). Intersectionally explain how

race, class, and gender are interconnected and overlap when addressing social phenomena in terms of discrimination. This is still relevant in studying and understanding society today because it's a multifaceted approach to analyzing oppression. This is connected to Du Bois work because these intersecting forms of inequality are linked to the veil and the double consciousness. Intersectionality and the veil concept are linked because it all shapes an individual's experiences and interactions with others. Intersectionality and the double consciousness concept are linked because the overlapping social demographics that oppress people such as race, class, or sexual orientation are what makes a person identity. This relates to how a person will see themselves through the eyes of others. Overall, Du Bois has had amazing theoretical contributions to the discipline and society as a whole.

### **Unit Essay 3**

After reviewing the feedback and grading rubric for this assignment these are the following revisions I have made to my original essay. In my essay I mentioned another theorist, W.E.B. Du Bois as his work related to Crenshaw's to better support my argument, I added a citation for his work. I also had a discussion on the misinformation and stereotypes regarding black women on welfare in which I list a fact that needs a citation to be added because I need to show that my claims have been justified by previous researchers. I then added both citations to the references page. I revised my language in certain places to make my argument easier to understand and flow better in my essay. I originally had this line in my essay, "White women offer pivotal womens in terms of women's rights due to their ability to make decisions regarding, "their failure to act, their failure to make decision, it itself an act that is often of greater consequence than the decisions that do make," (Mills, 1956). I revised this statement as follows; White women have a pivotal role in the women's rights movement. This role is mostly due to



their ability to make decisions regarding the women's rights movement because key activists at the time shaped the narrative of the movement since the beginning at the Seneca Falls convention. So, by white women having the narrative completely in their favor they have elevated their power due to the ability to make all decisions for all women whether that's, "their failure to act, their failure to make decisions, it itself an act that is often of greater consequence than the decisions that do make," (Mills, 1956). Additionally, I revised my original statement, "this gives individuals better understanding because while they may not experience that same level of inequality or discrimination it allows a person to step outside of their own daily lives to realize that their own personal experience is not the experience of everyone in the world." By using Crenshaw's approach of looking at social issues through a multifaceted approach this will allow people to better understand the difference black women face in terms of discrimination and inequality. Lastly, I revised this statement for easier understanding and flow of my writing, "Crenshaw's work in analyzing the feminist movement versus the black feminist movement due to the lack of intersectionality in the story lines has resulted in black women's history of the movement being erased and being viewed as a marginalized group for women's rights." Crenshaw's work challenges the traditional narrative of the feminist movement by examining the lack of intersectionality in the experiences of black women. As a result black women's involvement, experiences, and work ethic in the movement has led to erasure because they are a marginalized group in the traditional white women's narrative of the founding and development of the feminist movement.

Crenshaw helped develop black feminist ideology because she believed that you had to view black women's experiences through a lens that examined both race and gender. A major concern of Crenshaw is the erasure of black women's experiences and the lack of

acknowledgement of their experience in racial discourse. Crenshaw argues for change of feminist theory, because without the inclusion of intersectionality in the narrative, social issues can not be fully addressed in the manner black women are discriminated against. The feminist movement is a concern because it historically and continues to be largely white movement, yet black women have worked effortlessly since the beginning of the movement with little recognition. Crenshaw emphasized the importance of listening to black women tell their own narratives instead of narratives placed upon them as defined by white women and black men. An example of how Crenshaw pointed out the issue of the single axis approach when examining all women issues was the method in which the court system framed and interpreted the stories of Black women. The court failed to acknowledge racial discrimination in hiring practices for black women, justified due to hiring practices of all women meaning no sex discrimination was taking place without acknowledging the racial discrimination happening. Overall, Black feminist theory is the, “juncture between movements for racial and sexual equality and contends that Afro-American women have been pushed by their marginalization in both arenas to create Black feminist, (Collins, 1986).

Kimberle Crenshaw's major theoretical contribution was intersectionality. Intersectionality is best described as a multifaceted approach of examining how class, race, and gender are interconnected and overlap when addressing social phenomena, such as inequality and discrimination. She argued against traditional feminist theory because of the rooted antiracist policies and single-axis analysis taken that only address women's issues as it related to gender and patriarchy. Additionally, this single-axis approach to feminist theory often, “erases black women in the conceptualization, identification, and remediation of race and sex discrimination,” (Crenshaw, 1989). Overall, black women's experiences differ from white women's experiences

because, even with gender discrimination white women are the more privileged group versus black women. Black women experience multiple forms of discrimination so a white woman's perspective or experience can not accurately account for all women's experience because in the feminist movement black women and all women of color are still a marginalized group that is often excluded from the discourse. Additionally, white women contribute to marginalizing black women because they reinforce the messaging of black women being overlooked by speaking for black women. White women have a pivotal role in the women's rights movement. This role is mostly due to their ability to make decisions regarding the women's rights movement because key activists at the time shaped the narrative of the movement since the beginning at the Seneca Falls convention. So, by white women having the narrative completely in their favor they have elevated their power due to the ability to make all decisions for all women whether that's, "their failure to act, their failure to make decisions, it itself an act that is often of greater consequence than the decisions that do make," (Mills, 1956). This is because black women will experience discrimination on the basis of race and gender, while other times they experience discrimination just for being a black woman. This is due to movement leaders only considering issues of sexuality and patriarchy influences while disregarding race.

Crenshaw's work helped individuals to better understand society today because it gives guidance on looking at social phenomena through a multifaceted lens. This is significant because people's experiences are not all black and white in nature. By using Crenshaw approach of looking at social issues through a multifaceted approach this will allow people to better understand the difference black women face in terms of discrimination and inequality. This messaging is also very similar to what W.E.B. Du Bois was referring to his concept of the veil, which states that black people see the world through a different lens than white people because

of how race and racism are integrated in their experiences and interactions with others (Edles & Appelrouth, 2010).

Crenshaw's work challenges the traditional narrative of the feminist movement by examining the lack of intersectionality in the experiences of black women. As a result black women's involvement, experiences, and work ethic in the movement has led to erasure because they are a marginalized group in the traditional white women's narrative of the founding and development of the feminist movement. Furthermore, when it comes to the issue of violence, police brutality, and racial disparities in all social institutions there is less national attention when it comes to black women. One way this is shown in society is the inequality and stereotypes placed on black women in regards to the welfare system. The term "Welfare Queen," is used to refer to women that misuse or collect excessive welfare payments. This term has mostly been used to refer to black women. Yet, white Americans are the biggest beneficiaries of governmental safety net programs (Chow, 2018). Further highlights how black women's lives and humanity are questioned because she is labeled as lazy and deemed inferior and incapable of functioning as social equals of whites," (Morris, 2017). This narrative has changed perceptions of black women in society by dehumanizing them without acknowledgment of historic decades of oppression and discrimination that have resulted in the number of black women needing financial assistance.

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