

## The Origins of Sociology:

Who were some of the most influential persons in the development of sociology?

Comte            Durkheim  
 Spencer        Weber  
                     Marx

The 1700s are sometimes referred to as the **Enlightenment**.  
 Why is this?

Hint: Possible answers

Reason and Science?  
 Religion?  
 French and American Revolution?

August Comte  
 (1798-1857)

Presented a system of "positivism" where knowledge on a subject moves from theology to philosophical speculation to scientific explanation (a "positive" view).

Can you think of a subject that has moved through these stages?

Provided the basis for a major sociological theory:  
 "structure-functionalism"

- Society is like a biological organism. All the parts (family, church, state) work together to make a functioning whole
- All the parts are Interdependent

If society is a lot of interrelated parts, what holds the parts together?

Faith or morale sentiments through family, church, community  
 (Comte)

Economics  
 (Marx)

Collective Conscience  
 (Durkheim)

Karl Marx 1818-1883



What do you know about Marx?

## Karl Marx

- **Economics** is THE source of social change.

What is an example of social Change?

Do you believe there are other factors or motivators, other than economics, that cause social change? If so, what are they?

## Karl Marx

- "the engine of human history is **class conflict** (resulting from economic difference)."
- Eventually **socialism** would emerge and then **communism**.
- Didn't anticipate the large **middle class**.

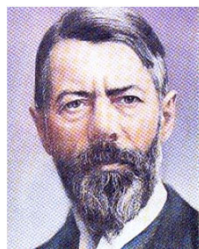
**Marx** was the first sociologist to highlight the **conflicts within society** rather than focusing on how and why all of the parts are "working together"

What would be examples of conflicts, where the parts may NOT be working together?

## Herbert Spencer "Social Darwinism"

- Spencer coined the phrase, "survival of the fittest" and supported Social Darwinism
- Spencer believed no one should intervene in the evolution of society.
- Do you agree with Spencer that we should not intervene (such as offering Medicaid to persons who cannot afford health care) and let society develop naturally? Why or why not?

## Max Weber 1864-1920



## Max Weber

- Weber believed that **religion** was a major force of social change not just economics.
- Religious beliefs and practices allowed for **capitalism** to emerge.
  - Protestants believed that working hard, saving, and investing would bring **financial success**—a sign that one was favored by God.

Weber recognized the importance of the growing use of bureaucracy.

What is Bureaucracy?

How is bureaucracy different from earlier forms of organization?

Less nepotism  
(hired for skill)

Based on efficiency

"Position" held the authority  
not the individual

## Emile Durkheim

Introduced the idea of the "collective conscience" or shared social thought.

Durkheim believed collective conscience was the people's God.

As society advances the collective conscience becomes weaker and so "God" becomes more distant.

## Emile Durkheim

Demonstrated how science could be used to study society. Prior to his work, many people did not see the value/point in studying society.

Durkheim's major work, that demonstrated the value of studying society, was the study of suicide.

- Example: study of suicide showed that it was not necessarily caused by individual problems but rather social factors such as a lack of social integration within the society

- Altruistic suicide—excessive social cohesion
- Anomic suicide—breakdown on morals

Applied Sociology  
(including social reform)  
vs  
Theoretical Sociology

## Racism and Sexism in Early Sociology

### W. E. B. Du Bois 1868-1963



### W. E. B. Du Bois

- Studied race relations—highlighted **economic prejudice** in southern U.S.
- Founded the **NAACP**—an organization with the goal of battling racism
- Argued for **racial pluralism** (rather than melting pot)

### Jane Addams 1860-1935



### Jane Adams

- **Social activist/reformer** to change or create laws, such as child labor laws
- Created "**Hull House**" in Chicago to address social problems in low-income areas
- Assisted women in their professional pursuits

### Small Group Discussion

In small groups you will be assigned (1) a particular topic such as gang violence, homelessness, suicide, or teenage pregnancy and (2) a functionalist, a conflict, or a symbolic interactionist perspective. Explain the selected topic from that perspective. Be prepared to explain why your perspective is better than the others.

Thank you  
very much.

**The wisdom of sociology:**

Sam Richards at  
TEDxLacador  
(14 minutes)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWD6g9CV\\_sc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWD6g9CV_sc)

**What is Sociology:**

William Davies  
(5 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LK5J0-cM-HE>

**What is Sociology**

(2 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFdUICAXAUM>

Mead and Blumer's Symbolic  
Interaction

(3:33 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFQIIM8IRZU>

Mead's "I" and "me" and his stages of  
development

(5:26 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7A26Tct0UnQ>

Symbolic Interaction: playing chess  
and assess the opposite sex

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jwOTkj4cnU>

**In Sum:**

- Structure-Function approach looks at how social structures are working together.
- Conflict theory approach looks for the underlying conflicts among structures and within society
- Symbolic Interaction approach looks for shared meanings through symbols being used during interactions