

Faculty of Human and Social Sciences

Department of Sociology

Level: 2nd year LMD Sociology

Instructor: Ms. Saci Meriem

Module: English Language

Lesson n°2: Modern Sociological Theories

I. Introduction

Sociology, as the study of society and social behavior, has evolved significantly over time. Modern sociological theories provide frameworks for understanding complex social phenomena in contemporary contexts. This study explores key modern sociological theories, their foundations, and their implications for understanding society today. Modern sociological theories offer diverse perspectives for analyzing contemporary social issues. Each theory provides unique insights into the complexities of social interactions, structures, and power dynamics.

II. Key Modern Sociological Theories

<i>Modern Sociological Theory</i>	<i>Overview</i>	<i>Key Concepts</i>
<i>Symbolic Interactionism</i>	Symbolic interactionism focuses on the meanings individuals attach to social symbols and interactions. It emphasizes the subjective nature of social reality and how it is constructed through social interactions.	<p>Symbols: Objects, gestures, or words that carry particular meanings.</p> <p>Interaction: The process through which individuals create and negotiate meanings.</p> <p>Self: The concept of self is developed through social interactions and reflections on those interactions.</p> <p>Implications: This theory helps explain how social identities are formed and how social order is maintained through daily interactions.</p>
	Structural functionalism views society as a complex	Functions: Contributions of various social elements to societal stability.

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<i>Structural Functionalism</i>	system with interdependent parts working together to promote stability and social order. Each part of society (e.g., institutions, norms) serves a specific function.	Equilibrium: A state of balance among social institutions and practices. Implications: This perspective is useful for understanding how societal structures contribute to the overall functioning of society, though it may overlook social change and conflict.
<i>Conflict Theory</i>	Conflict theory emphasizes the role of power struggles and social conflict in shaping society. It argues that social structures and institutions are created to maintain the interests of powerful groups.	Power and Inequality: The distribution of resources and power shapes social relations. Class Conflict: Tensions between different social classes drive social change. Implications: This theory highlights issues of inequality, exploitation, and social justice, making it relevant in discussions about race, gender, and economic disparities.
<i>Feminist Theory</i>	Feminist theory analyzes the ways in which gender shapes social structures and individual experiences. It seeks to understand and address the inequalities faced by women and marginalized genders.	Patriarchy: A social system where men hold primary power, affecting women's roles and opportunities. Intersectionality: The interconnected nature of social categorizations (e.g., race, class, gender) and their impact on experiences of oppression. Implications: Feminist theory has broadened sociological analysis to include gender dynamics and advocates for social change toward gender equality.

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<i>Postmodernism</i>	Postmodernism challenges the grand narratives and ideologies of modernity, emphasizing the fragmented, fluid, and constructed nature of social realities.	<p>Hyperreality: The blurring of boundaries between reality and representation, especially in media.</p> <p>Deconstruction: Analyzing texts and social phenomena to reveal assumptions and contradictions.</p> <p>Implications: Postmodernism encourages critical examination of societal norms and values, recognizing the diversity of experiences and perspectives.</p>
<i>Social Constructivism</i>	Social constructivism posits that knowledge and understanding of the world are constructed through social processes. Reality is seen as a product of human interaction.	<p>Social Reality: Understanding that societal norms and values are created and maintained through collective agreement.</p> <p>Negotiation of Meaning: The continuous process of interpreting and redefining meanings through interaction.</p> <p>Implications: This theory emphasizes the role of social context in shaping knowledge, making it valuable for understanding issues like identity and culture.</p>