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SOCIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

SECOND EDITION

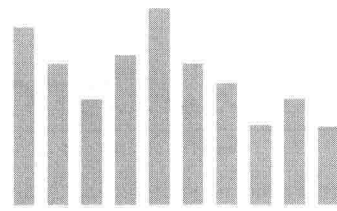


J. DAN COVER

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SECOND EDITION



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PREFACE

In one sense, this book is primarily a reader. The articles that are reprinted here focus upon themes that are central to the study of sociology: values, social roles, primary groups, deviance, social stratification, class ideology, minorities, religion, politics, authoritarianism, and alienation. In a different sense, this book is an innovative and practical workbook. The 11 investigations in this book involve students in the process of conducting research using real-life data. The research they conduct emulates that of the original research articles; the data they use are their own. Before beginning their sociological investigations, students are asked to complete an Investigation Survey, which is found in the back of the book. The results are collected by the instructor and entered onto the software provided to instructors. The software tallies and analyzes the student responses, compiling the results in a raw data format to be used by students in testing hypotheses.

To help keep sight of the larger theoretical issues that may well get lost in research details, an introduction to each investigation presents a historical perspective of the topic, using the conflict and functional theories. (The symbolic interaction theory, a third widely used orientation, is not included because it focuses on the individual or small-group level.) This book begins, therefore, with an article by Randall Stokes that introduces the functional and conflict perspectives.

The investigations themselves are organized into five sections:

1. Introduction: Discusses the background of the research and provides key definitions and information.
2. Background: Introduces the specific research to be undertaken and describes the findings of the original research article.
3. Replication: Takes students step-by-step through the process of interpreting their Investigation Survey results and comparing them to the original article's findings.
4. Topics for Further Investigation: Expands on the students' findings and explores new hypotheses and ideas not necessarily addressed in the reading.
5. References and Recommended Readings: Suggests a wealth of additional reading material that students will find interesting and relevant to the topic.

No investigation requires more statistical knowledge than that covered in the Investigation Tools section near the end of the book. This section covers the basics of reading and understanding percent tables, and the correlation and comparison of variables. Also provided in this section are four exercises that may be assigned by the instructor to test the students' understanding of these concepts.

I do not expect that these investigations will make students qualified sociologists, any more than a one-semester course can make them fluent in a foreign language. But I hope that they will find the investigations meaningful and enlightening, and that they will increase their powers of social discovery and insight.

Sociological Investigations, Second Edition, has three parts: the book itself, an instructor's manual, and the *Sociological Investigations* software. The software is a Windows-based program new to this edition that uses a simple point-and-click interface to present graphical interpretations of class survey results, as well as printing out statistical analyses of these results. Instructors may choose to provide this software to students in one of three forms: they may set it up and display it in operation within the classroom; they may distribute this software to students on disk; or they may arrange to have it installed on a college or university network accessible to students. The use and features of the software, which requires Win-

dows 3.1 or later, are discussed in more detail in the Instructor's Guide and in the Introduction to Software on pages 223–231 of the text. Students working with the software should read the Introduction to Software before beginning the first investigation.

The new *Sociological Investigations* World Wide Web site may be accessed from the Brown & Benchmark home page at <http://www.bbp.com> or may be reached directly at <http://www.bbp.com/cover>. Instructors and students may download the software directly from this Web site; updated versions of the software including the most recent comparative survey data will be posted periodically. (Students running the software on college networks should not download their own copies of the software onto their network.) In addition, the Web site includes a tutorial for the *Sociological Investigations* software that may be downloaded. The Web site also provides details on other special features of *Sociological Investigations*, Second Edition, with links to additional supplementary material.

Acknowledgments

Inevitably a textbook contains the contributions of many people. This is especially the case with the development of a textbook with interactive software that relies upon the expertise of a large number of contributors. My thanks begin with John Holland and his colleagues at the Dushkin Publishing Group, who were not put off by the novelty of the project, and with Tom Romaniak, who was excited by its potential. Throughout the revision I have worked with Joshua Safran, who has played a central role as editor in realizing the vision of what both the text and software could become. At the same time he was attentive to the smallest details of the software. The cumulative result of his numerous contributions has been to make a dramatic improvement in the comprehensibility and quality of the project.

If the software seems to be straightforward and simple, it is testimony to the skills of those who wrote the mountain of invisible lines of code upon which it is based. The magnitude of this achievement is suggested by the fact that the listing of the source code contains more pages than the manuscript for the text. Credit for the success of the software belongs to Elta Cover, who wrote the first version in ApplesoftBASIC. David Western converted this program into QuickBASIC for use in the MS-DOS environment. In the current revision of the software David has converted the program using VisualBASIC for Windows environments. I also wish to express my thanks to all those instructors who have been willing to share the results of their surveys. This information has been incorporated into the software and has made the investigations more interesting and informative. Finally, I want to acknowledge the steadfast and unwavering support and encouragement that Alan Hill has provided throughout the entire project.

This book is dedicated to my wife, Elta Cover, who is the most important person behind the project and who is, of course, even more important to me.

J. Dan Cover

TO THE STUDENT

The purpose of *Sociological Investigations* is to help you develop your ability to use sociological insights by reading and interpreting research results. The evidence from this research is the foundation of all sociological analysis. Science is based on observation (what we call empirical data)—not faith. Yet, most students taking introductory sociology do not have the chance to do any actual data-gathering themselves. Paradoxically, you seem to be asked to accept our conclusions on faith. You may wonder if the data really do support the sociological generalizations. You may become skeptical of all statements made in your textbook.

Some kinds of skepticism are healthy. In fact, Robert K. Merton suggests that “organized skepticism” is a “norm of science.” The key word here is “organized.” If being skeptical leads to checking the facts for yourself in a systematic way, then it is fruitful. This book is designed to allow you to do just that—check the facts for yourself. Of course, it would not be possible to repeat all of the studies mentioned in your textbook. But, with the aid of this book, you can replicate some of them.

The purpose of this reader/workbook, then, is to allow you to get the feel of sociological research with real data about areas of interest to sociologists. The results will not be known until you and your fellow students do the research. *Nothing is made-up or pre-cooked.* It is altogether possible that the results will not support your hypotheses. However, you may also find that human social behavior is much more predictable than you ever thought. Whatever the results, they will not be based on faith or the authority of your instructor or the author of your textbook. They will be based on your own interpretation of the data gathered by you and your fellow students.

The text will guide you, but your results will be unique to your class. Throughout, you will want to ask three things: First, do you understand how we gather data and draw conclusions in sociology? Second, do the data support our hypotheses? And, finally, what have you learned about human behavior?

Your instructor may make software available to you that will help you to interpret the data that you have gathered. If you have a PC running Windows 3.1 or later, you may also download a copy of the software from the *Sociological Investigations* Web site at <http://www.bbp.com/cover> and install it on your PC; in order to carry out the investigations in the text using the downloaded software, you will also need the survey data file that your instructor will compile. Reading the Introduction to Software (pp. 223–231) will help you to use the software to display graphs and answer questions in Investigations 1–11. Screenshots from the software are included throughout the text for illustration purposes.

Science can be as exciting as a detective story, with you playing the role of Sherlock Holmes, the great fictional detective. But science is not fictional, and what we discover affects each of us because social science is about us. When you come to the end of the course, I hope you will have gained a new appreciation of the scientific approach and a deeper understanding of the social forces shaping our lives.

J. Dan Cover

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SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY AND PERSPECTIVES

Randall Stokes

Philosophers who specialize in the study of the methods and procedures of science impose rigorous standards on definitions of a theory. **Theories** typically are described as sets of interrelated propositions, or “laws,” from which may be derived testable hypotheses. This definition implies a very high degree of precision in underlying generalizations and concepts, and also a degree of “closure” (completeness), which sociology has yet to achieve. While certain specialized areas of study within sociology have theories that approach the standards of the philosophy of science, the major theories in sociology do not.

The major sociological theories might best be regarded as **perspectives**, or as conceptual guides. Each of these major perspectives has a limited number of central concepts and an even more limited number of broad generalizations about the way society works. A perspective, in other words, consists of a set of concepts. The concepts highlight important social processes, while the perspective is the overall viewpoint to which the concepts are related. In the words of Herbert Blumer (1931), the major sociological perspectives should be characterized as **sensitizing devices**: They sensitize us to important elements and processes in social behavior and organization. Their greatest value is not that they can provide testable hypotheses but that they provide researchers with a “map” of the social world, which guides investigation. They provide a way of thinking about what is important and of seeing what is important amid the seeming turmoil of human behavior.

Both of the two major sociological perspectives—structural-functionalism and conflict theory—attempt to provide a more or less complete image of society, and each differs from the other in several important ways.

Structural-Functionalism

Like all the major perspectives, **structural-functionalism** (more commonly referred to as functionalism) has its roots in the nineteenth century, particularly in the work of Herbert Spencer (1820–1903). Spencer’s great insight (1898) was that human society could be likened to a physical organism (that is, the body of a living creature). Like a physical organism, society is composed of parts, each of which is related to other parts by its **function** (what it does). Just as the brain, heart, and stomach are dependent on each other if the organism is to survive, so are the various segments of society dependent on each other.

Spencer's writings about the nature of society were also influenced by *social Darwinism*. According to the social Darwinist view, societies, like physical organisms, are continually under survival pressures. Those organisms and societies that manage to develop attributes capable of coping with the environment survive and prosper, while those that do not perish. Thus, according to Spencer, all aspects of any living society could be explained by looking for the function they performed for the larger society. Specific forms of government, the family, and religion were seen by Spencer as existing because they had stood the test of survival; they existed because evolutionary pressures had created them.

As might be expected, Spencer's ideas gained great popularity among nineteenth-century businesspeople, particularly in the United States. Robber barons could (and did), for example, defend their great wealth as the natural evolutionary result of "survival of the fittest." Spencer provided the ideal counter to the radical notions of Karl Marx, who saw the great success of modern business as resting on worker exploitation.

Among the major influences on the development of modern functionalism have been Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), and the contemporary sociologists, Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton. In its modern form, functionalism is considerably more sophisticated than the simple organic theory proposed by Spencer. Modern functionalists see society as a system made up of related parts, and the nature and organization of the system receive the greatest attention. This perception is evident in the major functionalist concepts of consensus, system integration, and equilibrium.

Consensus

A fundamental assumption of functionalism is that societies are based on widely shared agreement, or **consensus**, about basic values. Values are beliefs about what is right or wrong, legitimate or illegitimate, justified or unjustified, desirable or undesirable, and similar moral and esthetic issues.

According to functionalists, shared values are the central organizing principles of all societies. Parsons (1961, 1966) argues that values serve much the same purpose in human societies as the genetic pool serves in animal species. The genes of an animal, drawn from the genetic pool of the species, determine the physical characteristics of particular animals. In an analogous fashion, the basic values of a society shape the organization of particular segments of society and the behavior of persons in those segments. Thus, according to Parsons, the same fundamental values determine the character of such diverse segments of society as business enterprises, universities, the military, and government. While the activities and organization of each of these segments differ, all have roots in the same values.

System integration

The second major assumption of functionalism is that, just as Spencer argued, societies experience **system integration**; that is, societies are systems that are bound together by the interdependent functions of their parts. From this point of view, any given aspect of society is connected to other aspects of society by exchanges among them. Schools, to take a simple example, exchange trained workers for resources and financial support from the economy.

An important offshoot of this assumption is that particular segments of society are determined by the *needs* of other segments. Over long periods of time, every aspect of society is shaped by the needs of other aspects so that the entire system exists in a state of harmonious integration.

Equilibrium

The third and final major functionalist assumption is that societies have mechanisms for maintaining their state of integration. System **equilibrium**, or balance,

conveys the image of society as a tightrope walker, leaning this way and that to maintain balance on the rope. Functionalists believe that society corrects for events and trends that might upset the harmonious balance between its various parts. Thus, for example, the entire law enforcement and legal system are society's way of preserving itself from the threat of persons who do not abide by the rules. Deviance, as such rule breaking is known in sociology, is dealt with by legal punishment in serious cases and by informal means (for example, ridicule, rejection) in less serious cases.

A different kind of threat to the system may result from the failure of one segment of society to carry out its proper function. Some readjustment of the system must then take place if integration is to be restored.

In any case, the functionalist view is of a society that is essentially in balance, or moving toward a balance.

To summarize, functionalists view society as a system made up of many diverse parts, ranging from organizations and groups to particular ways of acting and believing. The overall system is bound together by consensus, with all of the system's diverse parts stemming from the same widely shared values, and by functional integration. The system is also equipped with mechanisms to maintain itself in the face of deviance and disorganization.

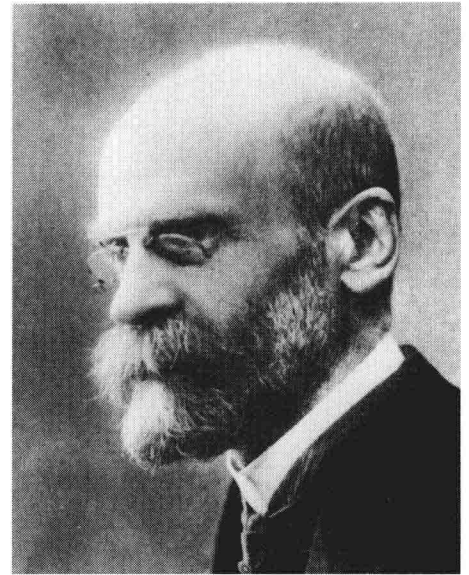
Strengths, limits, and illustrative analyses of structural-functionalism

A strong point of the functionalist perspective is that it provides a relatively clear guide for analysis. As noted previously, one of the major assumptions of functionalist theory is that all parts of society perform some function for other parts and for the survival of the system. If this assumption is valid, then it would seem possible to explain any particular aspect of society by looking for its function for the larger society. Two brief illustrations should clarify this point.

Functionalists argue that the nature of the modern nuclear family can be explained by its functional relationship to other sectors of society. In a modern industrial society, workers must be free to move about to find jobs as first one and then another sector of the economy undergoes growth. The nuclear family is mobile and is thus functional in an industrial society. The extended family, however, with its larger number of persons working, is **dysfunctional** (that is, detrimental or not beneficial) in an industrial economy because it impedes mobility. The functionalist explanation of the nuclear family would thus cite the functional compatibility of the nuclear family with an industrial economy as the reason for the nuclear family's existence.

A second example concerns the nature of romantic love in Western industrial societies. The expectation in such societies is that people marry for love and that husband and wife remain in love with each other. Many observers have noted that for many of the world's societies, it is entirely irrelevant whether or not husbands and wives love each other, and, indeed, the idea seems faintly improper and silly in some. Functionalists would, following the logic of their perspective, assume that romantic love serves some function in Western industrial societies and that this function explains its existence. One functionalist analysis concludes that romantic love is needed because so few other forces bind the nuclear family together (Davis, 1947). In contrast to the extended agricultural family, the nuclear family is not an economically productive unit, marriage does not represent an alliance between extended families, and other family members are not present on the scene to support the marriage. Under these circumstances, functionalists argue that romantic love solves the problem of how to induce people to marry and to stay married.

The same logic of analysis can be applied to virtually any aspect of society, including those that may appear to have no function or even a dysfunction for the larger society. Thus, for example, Kingsley Davis (1932) notes that the persistence of prostitution can be explained by the fact that it serves *latent* (hidden) functions



Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) One of the leading contributors to sociology and the founder of the French school of sociological thought. Born in Epinal in eastern France and educated in France and Germany, Durkheim quickly established a reputation as a brilliant scholar of social science, philosophy, and law. He was appointed as the first professor of sociology at the University of Bordeaux, where he taught before moving to the Sorbonne in 1902. Durkheim's reputation is based largely on four books: *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893), *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1894), *Suicide* (1897), and *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1917).

Durkheim combined rigorous empirical research with penetrating theoretical insights. He saw social order as arising from a commonly held system of values and norms. Durkheim believed that in modern societies this system plays a smaller role in regulating individual behavior than in more primitive societies, and the resulting state of normlessness may lead to social disorder and other sociological phenomena.

for the preservation of the system. Among other things, prostitution provides an outlet for certain sexual desires that might threaten marital stability and also moderates the frustration of men otherwise unable to find sexual partners. Unfortunately, Davis fails to consider possible functions of prostitution for women in the society.

There are two main criticisms of functionalism. The first has to do with the difficulty the functionalist perspective has in accounting for social change. Functionalism's emphasis on accounting for the existence and maintenance of particular features of society has hindered adequate investigation of how societies change.

The second criticism of functionalism is that it produces a conservative view of societies. The functionalist rule that particular features of society should be explained by looking at their function for the larger society tends to result in unthinking approval of the larger society. The system is treated as a given, and there is thus no clear way for functionalists to be critical of the existing order. Social problems, such as crime, breakdown of the family, or loss of commitment to important values, for example, tend to be seen by functionalists as situations that threaten integration. From a different point of view, however, these may not be problems at all. Some crimes could be seen as a justified reaction to inequalities created by the social system. A breakdown of families (that is, increasing number of couples not marrying and high rates of divorce and desertion) could be interpreted as a needed move away from the outmoded institution of marriage. A decline in mass commitment to certain values could be positive. In other words, functionalists tend to see social problems as threatening to the system, rather than as problems with the system itself.

Another often-noted reflection of the conservatism of functionalism is its tendency to overlook conflict. Critics charge that functionalism presents an unrealistically optimistic view of the relations between different groups within the society. The oppression and coercion of some groups by other more powerful groups tend either to be ignored or to be seen as minor flaws in the social system. The overwhelming emphasis of functionalism on integration and consensus, it is argued, conceals the equally wide prevalence of coercion, inequality, fraud, and conflict. This criticism is made with particular vigor by sociologists who identify with conflict theory.

Conflict Theory

The dominant voice in the development of **conflict theory** was Karl Marx (1818–1883). Marx's central insight was that all societies could best be understood as arenas of conflict between groups whose interests were fundamentally opposed. These groups, which Marx called *classes*, are determined by economic factors. Marx believed that all societies are divided into the classes that own the currently most important means of production and the classes that do not. **Means of production** refers to the commodity or material that is most important to the kind of economic activity in which a particular society is engaged. In preindustrial (feudal) times, Marx believed that the central means of production was land and that society was split by the distinction between landowners and nonlandowners. In industrial societies, the essential means of production is *capital*—assets that can be used to finance industrial production. Marx thus saw industrial societies as divided into a dominant group of capitalists—the *bourgeoisie*—and workers without capital—the *proletariat*.

From Marx's point of view, all other aspects are secondary to and determined by the opposition between economic classes. Politics is simply another way in which the bourgeoisie enforces its will on society. Religion is a means by which the bourgeoisie distracts the proletariat from realizing its dismal state. Marx called government "a committee to manage the affairs of the bourgeoisie" and referred to religion as "the opiate of the people."

Marx believed it was inevitable that the steadily increasing exploitation of the workers would eventually result in violent revolution that would destroy the capitalist system. Workers would be reduced to little more than appendages of the machines they operated, and human skill would be replaced by automation. As workers became less uniquely useful and more interchangeable, wages would fall until they lived in the direst poverty. Furthermore, the successful growth of capitalism would gradually increase the size of the proletariat, as unsuccessful capitalists fell to the level of workers and as all sectors of the society were brought into the capitalist system. Ultimately, Marx believed that the proletariat would become conscious of itself as a group with a common interest in destroying the system that enslaved them. Once such **class consciousness** was achieved, it would only be a matter of time before the capitalist system would be replaced by socialism and the private ownership of the means of production would be abolished. The socialist state, as envisioned by Marx, would be a classless state, and the ceaseless conflict between classes that had shaped the course of all history would thus be at an end.

Among the more widely known modern conflict theorists is Ralf Dahrendorf. Dahrendorf's major contribution has been to generalize the sources of conflict in society. As noted previously, Marx saw economic factors as the single source of conflict. Once the private ownership of property was abolished, therefore, he believed conflict would cease. Dahrendorf feels that this view is too narrow and argues that conflict stemming from economic sources is really only one variety of the more pervasive conflict that results from differences in authority. Dahrendorf feels that all social organization inevitably produces inequality of power and authority. If organizations are to function, certain people must make decisions and others must be bound by those decisions. Thus, regardless of whether the society is socialist or capitalist, Dahrendorf believes that there is always conflict between those with power and those without power. Dahrendorf sees conflict as an inescapable element in human affairs, and not something that can be eliminated simply by socializing the means of production.

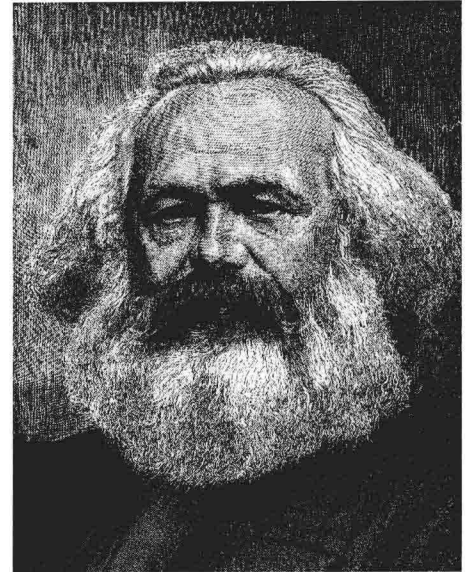
Dahrendorf also proposes that conflict need not be total to be important. Marx's real interest was the radical confrontation between capitalists and workers, out of which the entire nature of society would change. Dahrendorf argues that such radical conflict is the exception and that all societies are routinely shaped and molded by countless numbers of more limited conflicts. Unions and management, producers and consumers, racial groups, and special interests of all sorts constantly engage in conflict. Most such conflict, however, is controlled in a way that prevents widespread violence.

According to Dahrendorf, these numerous minor conflicts exert constant pressure on society for change. For example, the gradual improvement in the wages and working conditions of unionized workers could be interpreted as the result of controlled conflict between workers and management. Similarly, the legal and economic status of American blacks has been significantly improved by the controlled conflict of the civil rights movement. From this point of view, conflict can be seen as functional for the larger society, a view most clearly put forward by Lewis Coser (1956).

Overall, conflict theory directs our attention to the ever-present facts of coercion, inequality, and oppression. In sharp contrast to the functionalist view of society as a stable, integrated system in which conflict is abnormal and exceptional, advocates of the conflict perspective see stability as fleeting, soon to be replaced by conflict.

The contrasts between functionalism and conflict theory have been vividly summarized by Dahrendorf (1959). According to Dahrendorf, the key assumptions of the functionalist perspective are:

1. Every society is a relatively persistent, stable structure of elements.
2. Every society is a well-integrated structure of elements.



Karl Marx (1818–1883) Founder of the economic, political, and social school of thought known as Marxism, whose ideas provided the inspiration for modern communism. Born in Prussia, Marx studied at the Universities of Bonn and Berlin before receiving his doctorate from the University of Jena in 1841. His main areas of study were philosophy, law, and history, and he was greatly influenced by the works of the German philosophers G. W. F. Hegel and Ludwig Feuerbach. In 1847 and 1848 he collaborated with Friedrich Engels on *The Communist Manifesto*, and in 1867 published the first volume of *Capital (Das Kapital)*. He also wrote numerous pamphlets, articles, editorials, and essays. He edited or wrote for several newspapers and weeklies (including the *New York Tribune*, for which he acted as European correspondent from 1851 to 1862), and helped organize and write the constitutions for the International Working Men's Association and workers' parties in England, Germany, and France.

Marx's writings have had a profound influence on historical interpretation and theory as well as on history itself. He saw all history as the story of class conflict: According to him, the mode of production in any society determines not only the character of the economy, but the character of the society as well.

3. Every element in a society has a function, that is, renders a contribution to its maintenance as a system.
4. Every functioning social structure is based on a consensus of values among its members.

According to Dahrendorf, the basic tenets of the conflict view are:

1. Every society is at every point subject to processes of change; social change is ubiquitous.
2. Every society displays at every point dissensus and conflict; social conflict is ubiquitous.
3. Every element in a society renders a contribution to its disintegration and change.
4. Every society is based on the coercion of some of its members by others.

Another view of the basic principles of conflict analysis is presented by Randall Collins, in the box opposite.

Strengths, limits, and illustrative analyses of conflict theory

One of the major values of the conflict perspective is that it has provided a corrective, at least within American sociology, to the long dominance of the functionalist viewpoint. Perhaps because American society has itself experienced long periods of what appears to be freedom from internal strife, American sociology has tended to emphasize stability and integration. The emergence of modern conflict theory over the past several decades has opened the way to reevaluation of both American society and American sociology. Studies of stratification (inequality), racial relations, politics, and the law have received a valuable new source of stimulation.

Conflict theory also has provided new leads for the study of social change. As noted previously, functionalism has had particular difficulty in accounting for social change within the confines of a system. The conflict conception of society as a tense arena of conflict between groups and classes with opposed interests has provided a clear approach to the study of social change. Social change, from the conflict view, is a by-product of the struggle for power between groups. Thus, for example, the major changes in the government's stance toward social welfare, which took place during the Great Depression of the 1930s, can be seen as a result of conflict between aroused and angry workers and the entrenched interests of the business community. It seems unlikely that Social Security, unemployment insurance, and the other reforms enacted during the Depression would have come to pass without conflict and the threat of even greater conflict.

A third major contribution of the conflict perspective is that it produces a critical stance toward society. As noted previously, the functionalist viewpoint tends to lead to an unquestioning acceptance of the existing order. Problems tend to be seen as those situations that threaten the system, and the possibility that the system itself may be a problem is overlooked. Proponents of the conflict perspective, however, look for inequality and inequalities that are built into the normal working of the society. Conflict theorists see what are normally regarded as social problems (for example, crime, pollution, poverty) as symptoms of more basic problems of the society itself, rather than as flaws in an otherwise integrated system.

Some illustrations of the way in which conflict-oriented sociologists have approached the study of particular issues may make the advantages of this view clearer. The first illustration concerns the giving of relief money.

Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward (1971) discovered certain inconsistencies in the historical timing of expansions and contractions of relief giving in the United States. Contrary to the notion that relief money is stimulated

Some Principles of Conflict Analysis

1. Think through abstract formulations to a sample of the typical real-life situations involved. Think of people as animals maneuvering for advantage, susceptible to emotional appeals, but steering a self-interested course toward satisfaction and away from dissatisfaction.
2. Look for the material arrangements that affect interaction: the physical places, the modes of communication, the supply of weapons, devices for staging one's public impression, tools, and goods. Assess the relative resources available to each individual: their potential for physical coercion, their access to other persons with whom to negotiate, their sexual attractiveness, their store of cultural devices for invoking emotional solidarity, as well as the physical arrangements just mentioned.
3. Apply the general hypothesis that inequalities in resources result in efforts by the dominant party to take advantage of the situation; this need not involve conscious calculation but a basic propensity of feeling one's way towards areas of greatest immediate reward, like flowers turning to the light. Social structures are to be explained in terms of the behavior following from various lineups of resources, social change from shifts in resources resulting from previous conflicts.
4. Ideals and beliefs likewise are to be explained in terms of the interests that have the resources to make their viewpoint prevail.
5. Compare empirical cases; test hypotheses by looking for the conditions under which certain things occur versus the conditions under which other things occur. Think causally; look for generalizations. Be awake to multiple causes—the resources for conflict are complex.

Note: From Conflict Sociology: Toward an Explanatory Science by Randall Collins, 1975, New York: Academic Press. Copyright 1975 by Academic Press. Adapted by permission.

by humanitarianism, Piven and Cloward found that the flow of relief money increased and decreased in a way that did not correspond to the degree of societal need. The expansion of relief programs during the later years of the Depression and also during the mid-1960s, for example, did not coincide with an increase in the numbers of people in need. Neither did the subsequent phasing out of these programs follow sharp declines in the level of need.

By investigating *whose* interests were being served by social policies and institutions (the central element of conflict analysis), Piven and Cloward came to some very interesting conclusions. They noted that the expansion of relief programs could be explained by the degree of threat that exists to civil order and to the continued control of the dominant groups. If deprivation produces widespread and dangerous discontent, as in the radical movements of the 1930s and the urban riots of the 1960s, relief programs are initiated or expanded. Deprivation alone, however, does not stimulate a flow of relief. Similarly, Piven and Cloward explain the phasing out of relief programs by the passing of the threat to dominant groups and not by any decline in the numbers of people experiencing deprivation. During periods when there is no political threat, relief giving once again becomes grudging and is limited by the dominant group's desire to keep people's work motivation high.

A second illustration of conflict analysis is found in the work of Richard Quinney (1974) and concerns the nature of the legal system. Laws and law enforcement have usually been seen by sociologists, particularly those with a functionalist orientation, as based on the values of the entire society. As mentioned earlier, functionalism sees agreement over basic values as an essential foundation of any society. Laws are regarded as the formal statement of these values and law enforcement as a means to preserve them. Quinney, on the contrary, argues that law reflects the interests of dominant classes and works to their advantage. People from the upper classes write the laws and determine how and against whom they will be enforced. Rather than being an expression of the beliefs of the entire society, Quinney regards the legal system as one of many ways the upper classes have of retaining control over the society. Like Piven and Cloward, Quinney seeks to explain the nature and existence of particular elements of society by asking who benefits.

From the conflict perspective, the legal system benefits the upper classes, as did the giving of relief money in Piven and Cloward's study.

One major limitation of the conflict perspective is that it does not adequately account for the fact of long periods of apparent stability in many societies. Just as functionalism is not able to explain social change, conflict theory does not provide an adequate understanding of stability. It does not seem feasible that all periods of stability in a society can be simply a result of the successful oppression of some groups by others. It is particularly difficult for conflict theory to account for the stability of customs and values. Even when major change occurs, as in the Russian and Chinese revolutions, there is much about the society that does not change. The daily life of the average Russian or Chinese undoubtedly has many features that were not changed by the revolutions the two countries experienced. Manners, preferences in food, relations between men and women, patterns of recreation, and a host of other details that make up daily life are likely to be persistent over time.

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VALUES

During the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war, as is of every man, against every man . . . and . . . worst of all [there will be] continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.

Thomas Hobbes
Leviathan

It is one o'clock in the morning and you're exhausted after a long day at work. You decide to take a shortcut to get home sooner. It takes you through a little-traveled part of the city that was burned out in riots some years ago. Driving through the dark, deserted streets, you savor the sensuous pleasure provided by the air conditioning which offers an escape from the steamy heat of the night. You are suddenly jolted out of your reverie as a spiked board flashes in front of the headlights and is immediately swept under the car. A loud crash is followed by tearing and the explosive decompression of the front tires. The car swerves uncontrollably. A shower of sparks erupts as steel rims grind across the concrete. The car slams into the curb and comes to a halt amid the smoke of smoldering rubber shards.

When you regain your composure, you turn off the headlights and are plunged into darkness. As your eyes adjust to the dark you see broken streetlights, piles of brick rubble, and boarded-up buildings. The place looks like a war zone. It is rarely patrolled by the police, so you have no choice but to leave your car and go for help. You trudge off into the darkness, hoping to find an all-night store. Almost immediately you feel you are being watched. You stop and peer anxiously into the darkness. In the dim outline of an abandoned building you catch the furtive movements of figures and a metallic reflection. Was that a knife or a gun? Who are they? What are they doing here? What do they want with you? Did they put the board in the street? Your mouth is dry and you shiver despite the heat. You sense movement behind you. You're trapped! Gripped by fear, your heart beats faster and faster until it pounds hard against your chest. You wish you were anywhere but here.

This scenario reminds us that danger and violence can be found at the frontiers of even the most civilized societies.

It also warms up our imagination for a difficult challenge—imagining what life would be like without the protective cloak of societal order. Let me give you your wish and let you escape from society to a time and place without society. Without police, family, friends, or neighbors, you will now be alone in the most primitive, primordial place imaginable. It might look like a postholocaust movie or like William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies* (1962). His description of what such a "state of nature" might be like is set on an uninhabited tropical island. The characters are all well-bred school-age children who have survived the crash of their airplane. There are no adult survivors. The children are on the island only a few days before their aristocratic English manners dissolve. Underneath the veneer of civility we find that unreconstructed savages are revealed. The children's descent into barbarism leads to paganism, blood sacrifice, and terror, and culminates with a child's death. If this is the natural condition of humanity, how is it possible to end the savagery? How is civilized society possible?

The conditions described by Golding introduce us to what many sociologists (e.g., Parsons, 1937; Ellis, 1978; Wrong, 1961, 1994) call the Hobbesian problem of order, or the "Hobbesian question." It is called this because the question was raised in its modern form by the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). He believed that all humans find happiness by avoiding pain and maximizing pleasure. Because many of the things that bring pleasure are in short supply, the struggle for pleasure and, therefore, happiness is virtually identical to the struggle for power. It is not morality or love, but power and self-interest that are the basic elements of human nature. Under natural conditions, like those described by Golding, unregulated individual interests create struggle and continuous human warfare. Life in the state of nature is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." Indeed, according to James Q. Wilson (1993), a "review of the archeological evidence suggests that in the state of nature, about one-quarter of all human males died in fights" (p. 166). How,

This investigation is based on "Generational Value Differences" by James A. Christenson, 1977, reprinted on pages 19–24.