

✧ **KEY FEATURES OF THE THREE PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIOLOGY** ✧

PERSPECTIVE	SUBJECT UNDER FOCUS	NATURE OF SOCIETY	HOW SOCIAL ORDER IS MAINTAINED
FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE	SOCIAL ORDER OR STABILITY	CONSISTS OF INTERDEPENDENT GROUPS PURSUING COMMON GOALS	THROUGH SOCIAL CONSENSUS, WHEREBY PEOPLE AGREE TO COOPERATE IN ORDER TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL ORDER
CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE	SOCIAL CONFLICT OR CHANGE	MADE UP OF CONFLICTING GROUPS, EACH PURSUING ITS OWN INTEREST	THROUGH COERCION, SOCIAL ORDER IS IMPOSED BY THE POWERFUL ON THE WEAK
SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONIST PERSPECTIVE	INTERACTION BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS	COMPOSED OF INDIVIDUALS WHOSE ACTIONS DEPEND ON INTERPRETING EACH OTHER'S BEHAVIOR	THROUGH CONSTANT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS TRYING TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE	CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE	SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONIST PERSPECTIVE

-MULTIPLE VIEW: A COMBINATION OF THE THREE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES. THIS CAN OFFER A LARGER, MORE BALANCED VIEW OF THE SUBJECT.

Applying the 3 Major Perspectives of Sociology

	Functionalist Perspective (Structural-Functional Approach)	Conflict Perspective (Social-Conflict Approach)	Symbolic Interactionist Perspective (Symbolic Interaction Approach)
What is the level of analysis?	Macro-level	Macro-level	Micro-level
What image of society does the perspective have?	<p>Society is a system of interrelated parts that is relatively stable.</p> <p>Each part works to keep society operating in an orderly way.</p> <p>Members generally agree about what is morally right and morally wrong.</p>	<p>Society is a system of social inequalities based on class (Marx), gender (feminism and gender-conflict approach) and race (race-conflict approach).</p> <p>Society operates to benefit some categories of people and harm others.</p> <p>Society inequality causes conflict that leads to social change.</p>	<p>Society is an ongoing process.</p> <p>People interact in countless settings using symbolic communications.</p> <p>The reality people experience is variable and changing.</p>
What core questions does the perspective ask?	<p>How is society held together?</p> <p>What are the major parts of society?</p> <p>How are these parts linked?</p> <p>What does each part do to help society work?</p>	<p>How does society divide a population?</p> <p>How do advantaged people protect their privileges?</p> <p>How do disadvantaged people challenge the system seeking change?</p>	<p>How do people experience society?</p> <p>How do people shape the reality they experience?</p> <p>How do behavior and meaning change from person to person and from one situation to another?</p>

Three Research Orientations in Sociology

	Positivist Sociology	Critical Sociology	Interpretive Sociology
	[the study of society based on scientific observation of social behavior]	[the study of society that focuses on the need for social change]	[the study of society that focuses on discovering the meanings people attach to their social world]
What is reality?	Society is an orderly system. There is an objective reality “out there”.	Society is patterns of inequality. Reality is that some categories of people dominate others.	Society is an ongoing interaction. People construct reality as they attach meanings to their behavior.
How do we conduct research?	Using a scientific orientation, the researcher carefully observes behavior, gathering empirical, ideally quantitative, data.	Seeking to go beyond positivism’s focus on studying the world as it is, the researcher is guided by politics and uses research as a strategy to bring about desired social change. Researcher is an activist.	Seeking to look “deeper” than outward behavior, the researcher focuses on subjective meaning. The researcher gathers qualitative data, discovering the subjective sense people make of their world.
Corresponding theoretical approach	Functionalist Perspective	Conflict Perspective	Symbolic Interactionist Perspective