

Chapter 1: What Is Sociology?

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Section 3 at a Glance


Modern Perspectives

- Sociology employs three major theoretical perspectives—functionalism, conflict, and interactionism.
- The functionalist perspective focuses on order and stability, the conflict perspective focuses on power relations, and the interactionist perspective focuses on how individuals interact with one another in everyday life.
- Sociologists employ two levels of analysis: macrosociology, which focuses on large-scale systems or society as a whole, and microsociology, which focuses on small-group settings.

Modern Perspectives

Main Idea

Sociology employs three major theoretical perspectives—functionalism, which focuses on order and stability; conflict, which focuses on power relations; and interactionism, which focuses on how individuals interact with one another in everyday life.

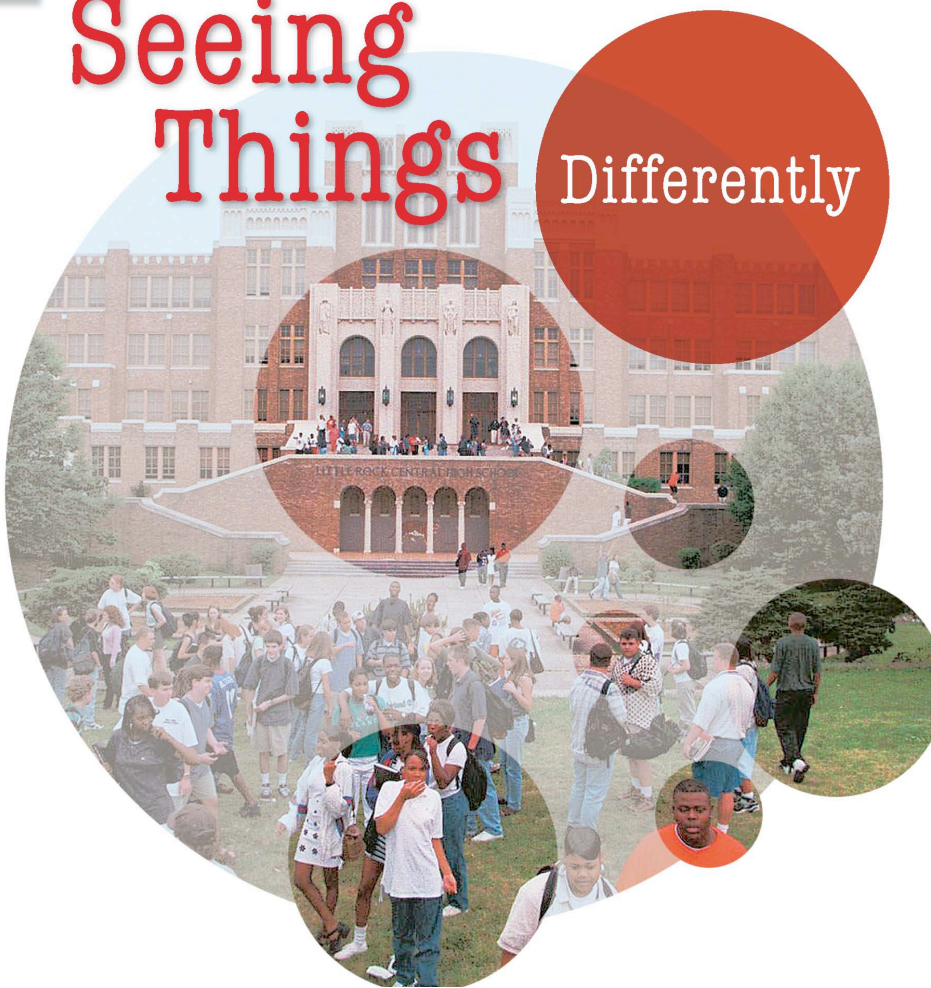


Reading Focus

- In what ways do the three major theoretical perspectives in sociology differ in their focus?
- How do the three theoretical perspectives differ in terms of their levels of analysis?

**SOCIOLOGY
CLOSE UP**

Seeing Things Differently



**How do sociologists
view what goes on in
your school?**

Major Theoretical Perspectives


Sociologists use **theories** to describe the relationships among different elements of society. A **theoretical perspective** is a group of such theories. Three major theoretical perspectives form the basis of modern sociology.

Functionalist Perspective

View of society as a set of interrelated parts that work together to produce a stable social system

- **Dysfunction**
 - A negative consequence of an element of society
- **Manifest function**
 - The intended and recognized consequence of an element of society
- **Latent function**
 - Unintended and unrecognized consequence of an element of society

Conflict Perspective

- **Conflict perspective**
 - Focuses on elements that create competition and change
 - **Feminist perspective**
 - A version of the conflict perspective that describes inequalities based on gender
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Interactionist Perspective

- **Interactionist perspective**
 - Focuses on the interaction of individuals with each other
- **Symbol**
 - Anything that represents something else
- **Symbolic interaction**
 - Using symbols while interacting with others

Click on the image to play the Interactive.

INTERACTIVE 

Sociological Perspectives on School

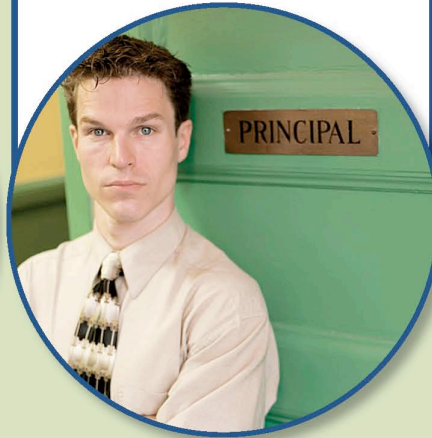
Functionalist Perspective

School integrates individuals into society by transmitting culture and values and promoting acceptable behavior.



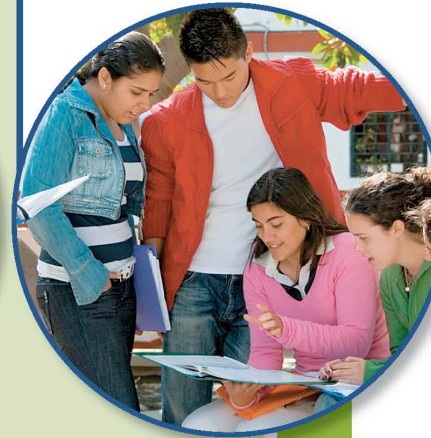
Conflict Perspective

School has established patterns of authority that reflect and underscore power relationships and conflict in society.



Interactionist Perspective

Social interaction among groups in school influences the way groups and individuals behave.



Interactive Feature

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Reading Check


Summarize

What are the three sociological perspectives and on what does each perspective focus?


Answer: *functionalist—how the set of interrelated parts of society work together to produce a stable social system; conflict—the forces in society that promote competition and change; interactionist—the interactions of individuals in society*

Levels of Analysis

- **Macrosociology**

- The study of large-scale systems or societies as a whole
 - The study of long-term problems
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- **Microsociology**

- The study of small-group settings
 - The study of everyday interactions among group members
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- **Globalization**

- A process of creating a world-wide system of interactions, larger than any one society

Reading Check

Contrast

What is the difference between macrosociology and microsociology?

Answer: *Macrosociology looks at large-scale systems or society as a whole; microsociology looks at small-group settings and the everyday face-to-face interactions among group members*

Current Research in Sociology

The Spread of Hip-Hop

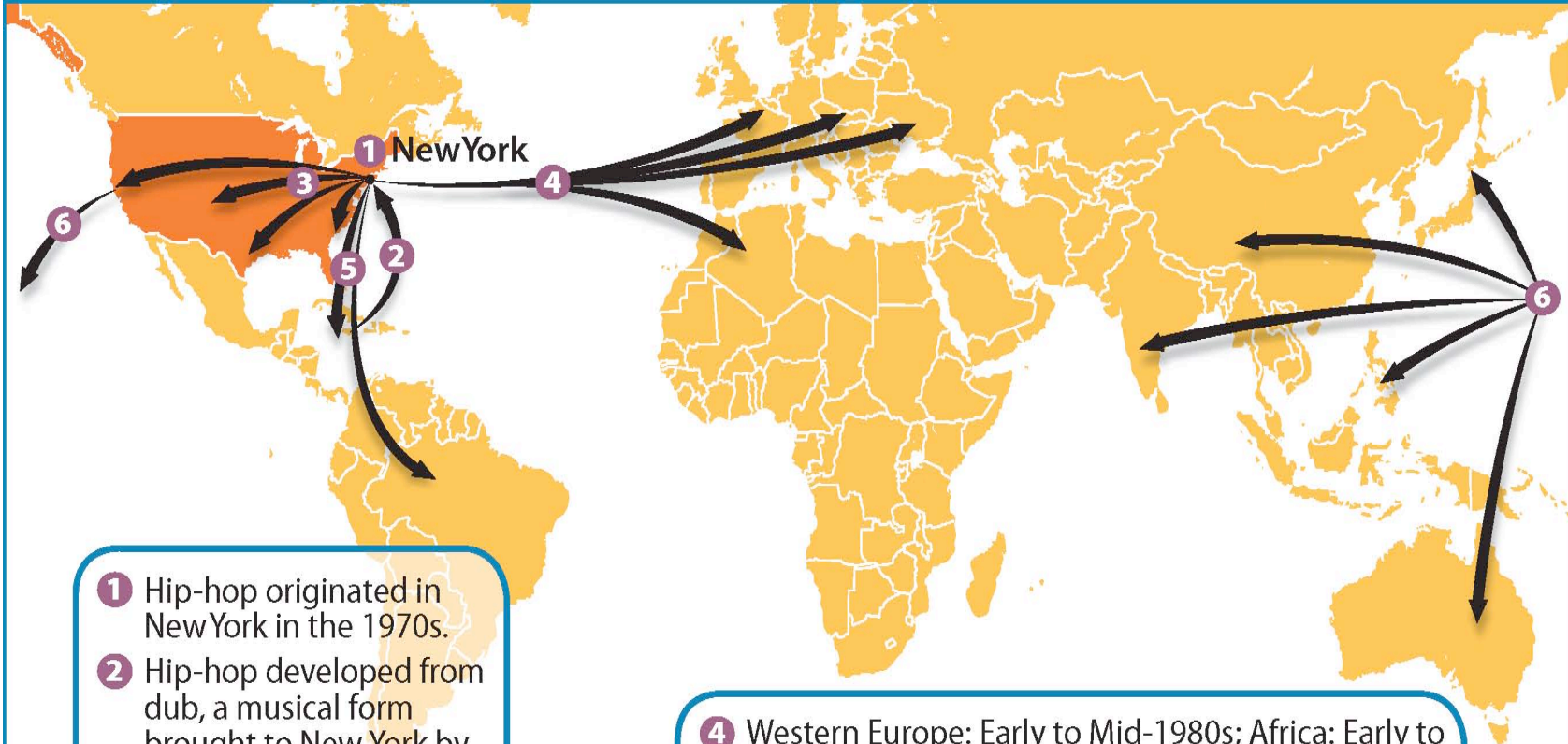
Global interactions are a new topic of study for sociologists. Studying the spread of hip-hop music reveals aspects of global interactions.

- Hip-hop began as a movement among American youth.
- Hip-hop has spread to all points of the globe along with movies, sports, and fashion.
- Big business has spread aspects of the hip-hop lifestyle, but adherents understand it as a method to question mainstream values.
- Local youths have put their own spin on the music.
- Some consider hip-hop to be the sound of the world's streets.



Chinese youth, like this teenager in Shanghai, began to adopt hip-hop fashions and attitudes in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

THE GLOBAL SPREAD OF HIP-HOP



- 1 Hip-hop originated in New York in the 1970s.
- 2 Hip-hop developed from dub, a musical form brought to New York by Jamaican immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s.
- 3 Other U.S. Cities: Late 1970s, Early 1980s.

- 4 Western Europe: Early to Mid-1980s; Africa: Early to Mid-1980s; Eastern Europe: Late 1980s, Early 1990s.
- 5 South America and Caribbean: Mid-1980s.
- 6 Southeast Asia and Australia: Early to Mid-1980s; South Asia: 1990s; China: 2000s.

Thinking Critically

- Why do some sociologists consider hip-hop a global youth movement?
- Many studies of cultural spread suggest that American culture often overpowers local culture. Why does the spread of hip-hop not fit this description?