



# **Sociology #2**

Jeniffer Mohammed

# Week 1: Becoming Teacher

## The Sociological Perspectives

### MACRO- SOCIOLOGY

Functionalism

Conflict Theory/ Marxism

### MICRO-SOCIOLOGY

Interactionist / Interpretive

# MACRO-SOCIOLOGY

# FUNCTIONALISM

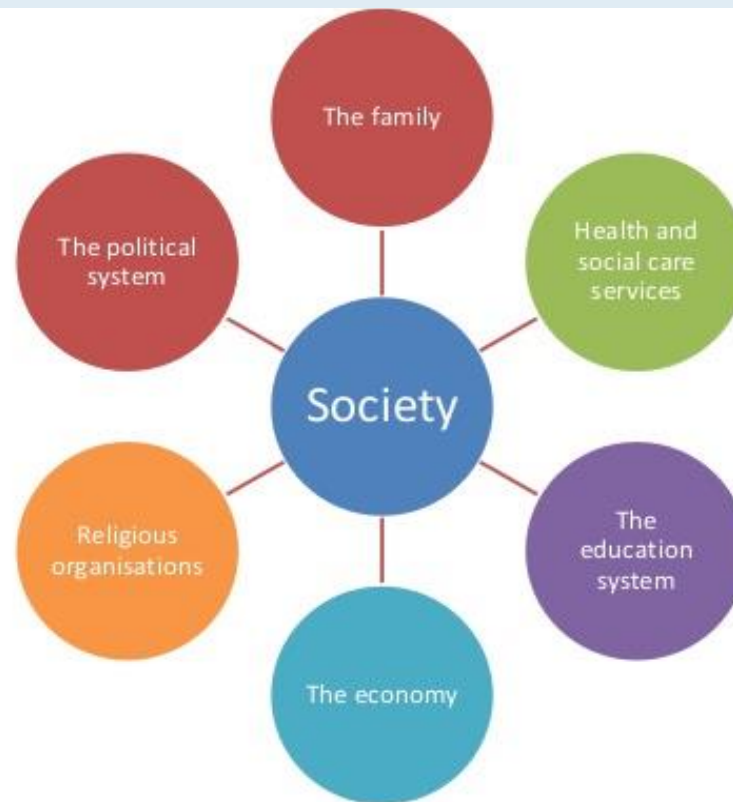
Oldest perspective in Sociology. Focus on **order** and **stability** in society.

Views society as a **system** (the social system) with parts (e.g. **social institutions**) and each part has a role to play to keep **balance** or **equilibrium**.

The society is held together by **consensus**

The relationships between the 'parts' of the system explain social life, social structure – e.g. roles, the distribution of power, wealth, prestige, education, etc.

# View of Society from a Functionalist Perspective



## FUNCTIONALISM cont'd

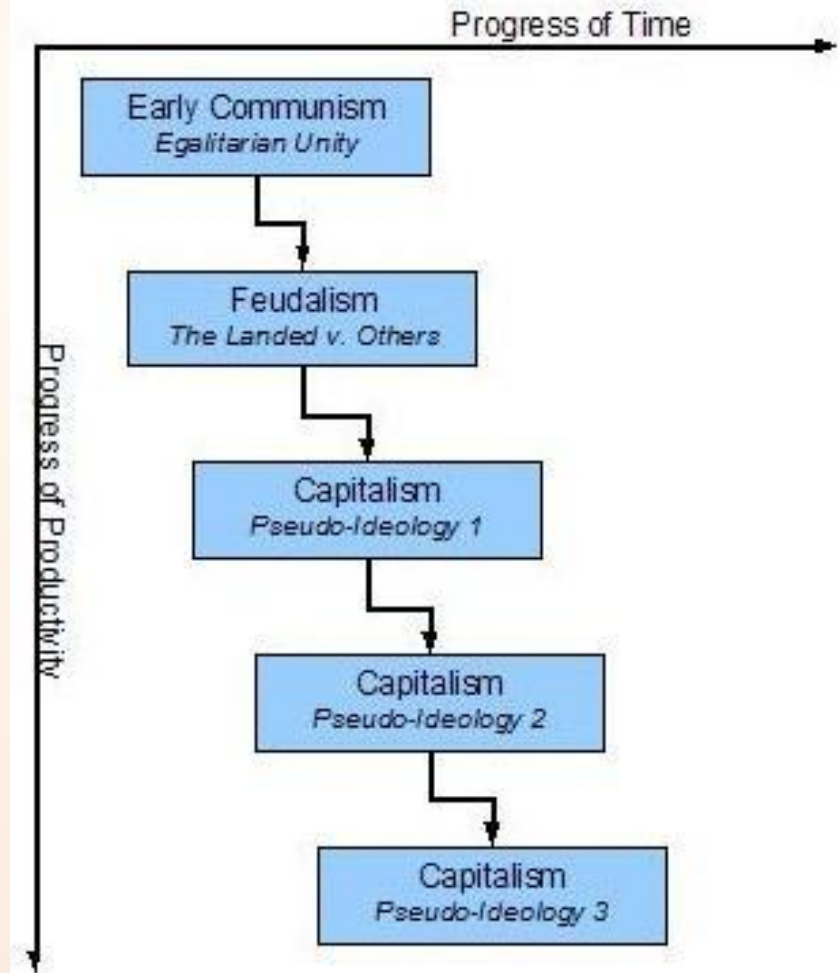
Philosophy: **Positivism**. Reality is 'out there' and can be measured and empirically verified; objective, neutral, orderly, systematic

Paradigm – the scientific method, quantitative research methods, surveys, and quasi-experimental designs

# Conflict Theory /Marxism

The society is shaped by **Conflict** and **Contradiction** which emanate from the **substructure** (economy) in **capitalist** society.

A **materialist** view of social relations, of society.

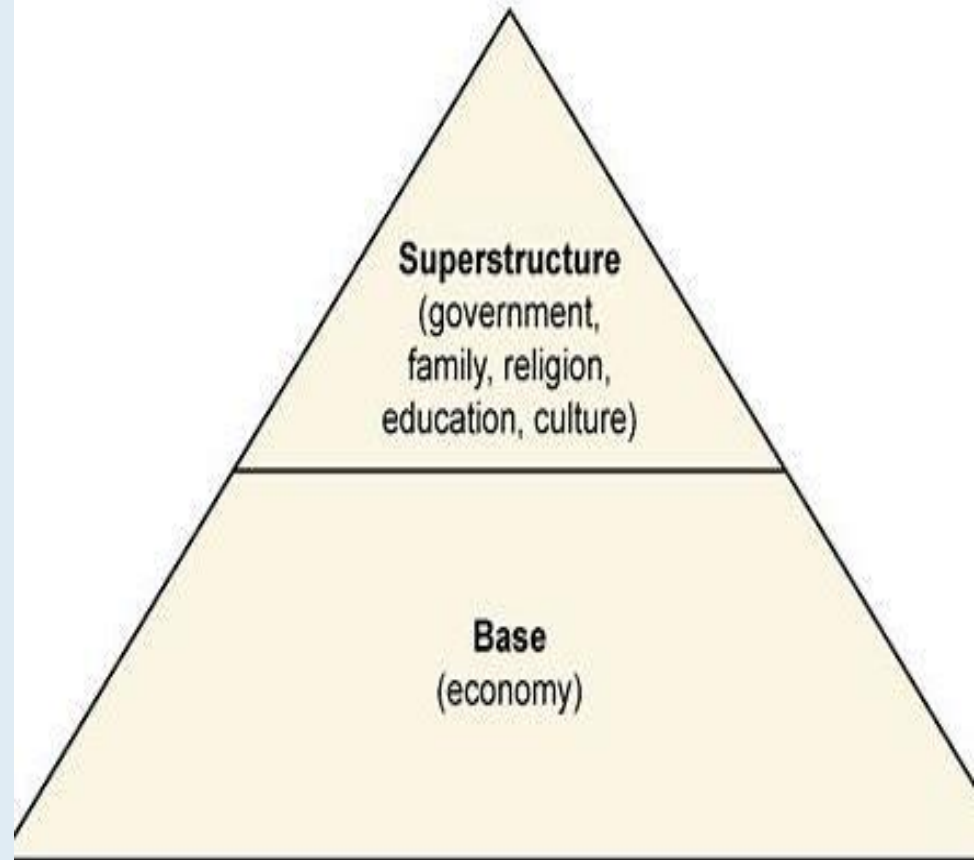


# Conflict Theory /Marxism

The social relationships arising from the base (**substructure**) are legitimised and strengthened by the **superstructure**.

The **superstructure** (other social institutions) reflect the ideas and status of the wealthy – the elites.

**This sets the scene for social class oppression and domination.**





# Conflict Theory /Marxism cont'd

Philosophy – **Dialectical Materialism** (Reality is about **change** – dominant ideas in every age struggle with new ideas which are gradually supplanted transforming the **economic base**). Reality is organized according to the **social relations of production**; it is not neutral. The order is one of social control.

Paradigm – analysis of historical documents, surveys, both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Any problem or issue is examined in relation to **power, oppression, inequality**, etc. It is not neutral in what it seeks to investigate.

# **MICRO-SOCIOLOGY**

# INTERPRETIVE/ INTERACTIONIST PERSPECTIVE –

Social life can best be understood through the **relationships of small groups**; the **agency** of individuals is more important in explaining social action than **structures**; there is no 'objective' reality but a '**subjective**' understanding of social life that needs to be understood.

Philosophy – **Hermeneutics**: how people **make meaning** and how they communicate shows how they **interpret** the world. We cannot tell what something means just by the thing itself but by the thing in **context**. This makes 'meaning' not a fixed or predictable entity. Reality then is **socially constructed** through **interaction**.

Paradigm – ethnography, participant-observation, conversational interviews, narratives, life histories, biography, case studies, phenomenology

# The Sociological Perspectives



## Functionalism

Society is essentially orderly and stable through norms, roles and, shared values.

Any dysfunctions can be fixed and the system adjusted.

Social institutions interact in ways to bring about the greatest good for all.

**Socialization is key in bringing about consensus.**

## Conflict Theory/ Marxism

Social groups are in conflict because of the dominance of the sub-structure and how it influences the superstructure.

The wealthy/elites seek to preserve their status through oppressive measures (labour).

**Socialization – learning the norms of your own social class**

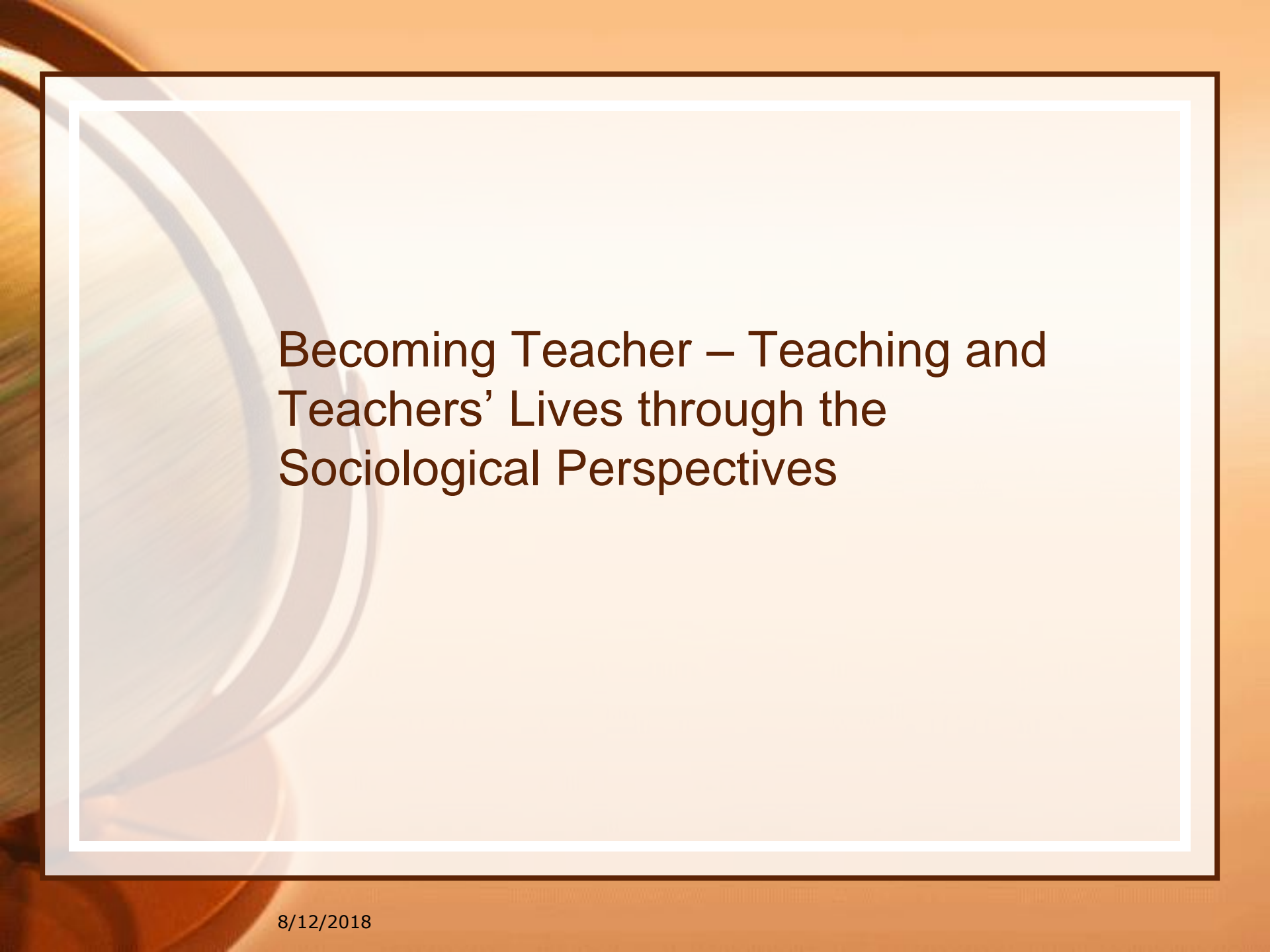
## Microsociology

### Interpretive or Interactionist

Macrosociology can only explain social life at the level of the system.

Social action by individuals and small groups cannot be fully explained by how social institutions interact.

**Agency**, how persons construct their reality and how they make meaning.  
**Socialization – actively co-constructed.**



# Becoming Teacher – Teaching and Teachers' Lives through the Sociological Perspectives

# Sociological Perspectives & Teaching/ Teachers' Lives

## Functionalism

Teachers play a well defined **role** in society  
There is **consensus** as to that role  
Teachers' **function** is to initiate new members of society into the behaviours, skills and knowledge that they need  
Teachers' role is therefore an extension of parents' role in the **socialization** of the young  
Obeying the **status quo** is an important **rule** for teachers  
Society **rewards** teachers with **respect** for their **dedication** and **altruism**  
If teachers go against these **beliefs/values** about teaching then there will be disorder in society and disruption of the system

**These tend to be dominant beliefs in the society about teachers and their work. As such, they constitute a body of **myths** and **metaphors** with which a person who is *becoming teacher* must struggle.**

## The Historical Context

### Primary System

**1838 - Negro Education Grant; Mico Charity**

**'Elementary' education – (not 'primary'). There were Denominational and State elementary schools**

**Who becomes an elementary school teacher?**  
***Functionalist Explanations:* Social order, teaching as 'rescuing' and 'civilizing' in itself; teaching as its own reward; for the good of children; a means of social mobility**

***Marxist Explanations:* Need to Anglicize the colony; the **'missionary' ideology** served the elites; **'false consciousness'****