

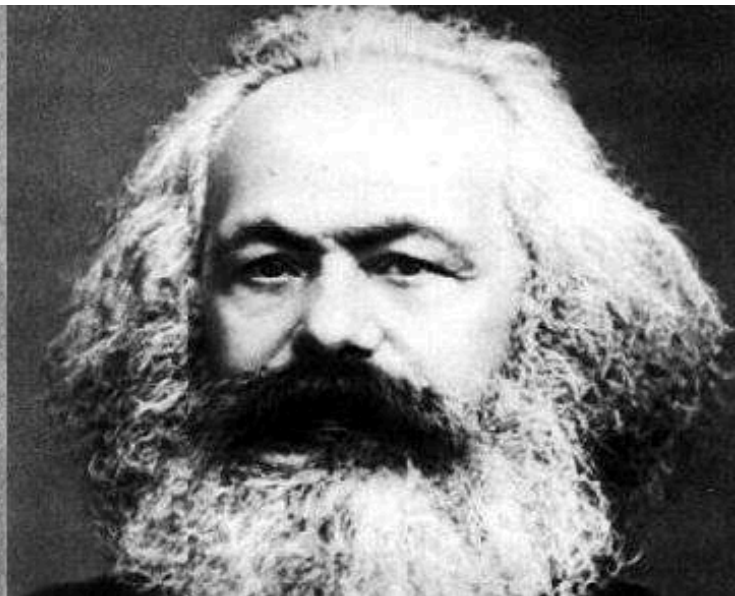
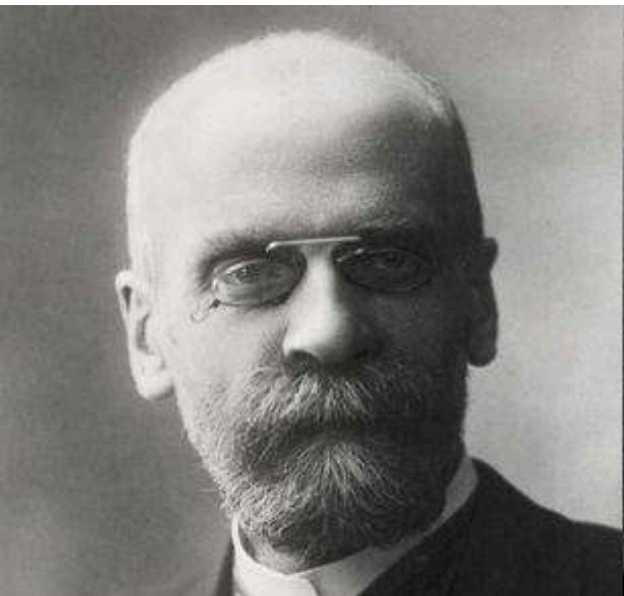
Theoretical anchors

1. Administrative
2. Durkheim, Weber, and Marx
3. Social theory
4. *Theoretical tradition 1:*
Structural functionalism
5. Discussion

Readings

⋮ Chapter 1 from Conerly, Holmes, and Tamang (2021) is *optional*, but it is still a good idea to take a look at it

Other questions or issues?



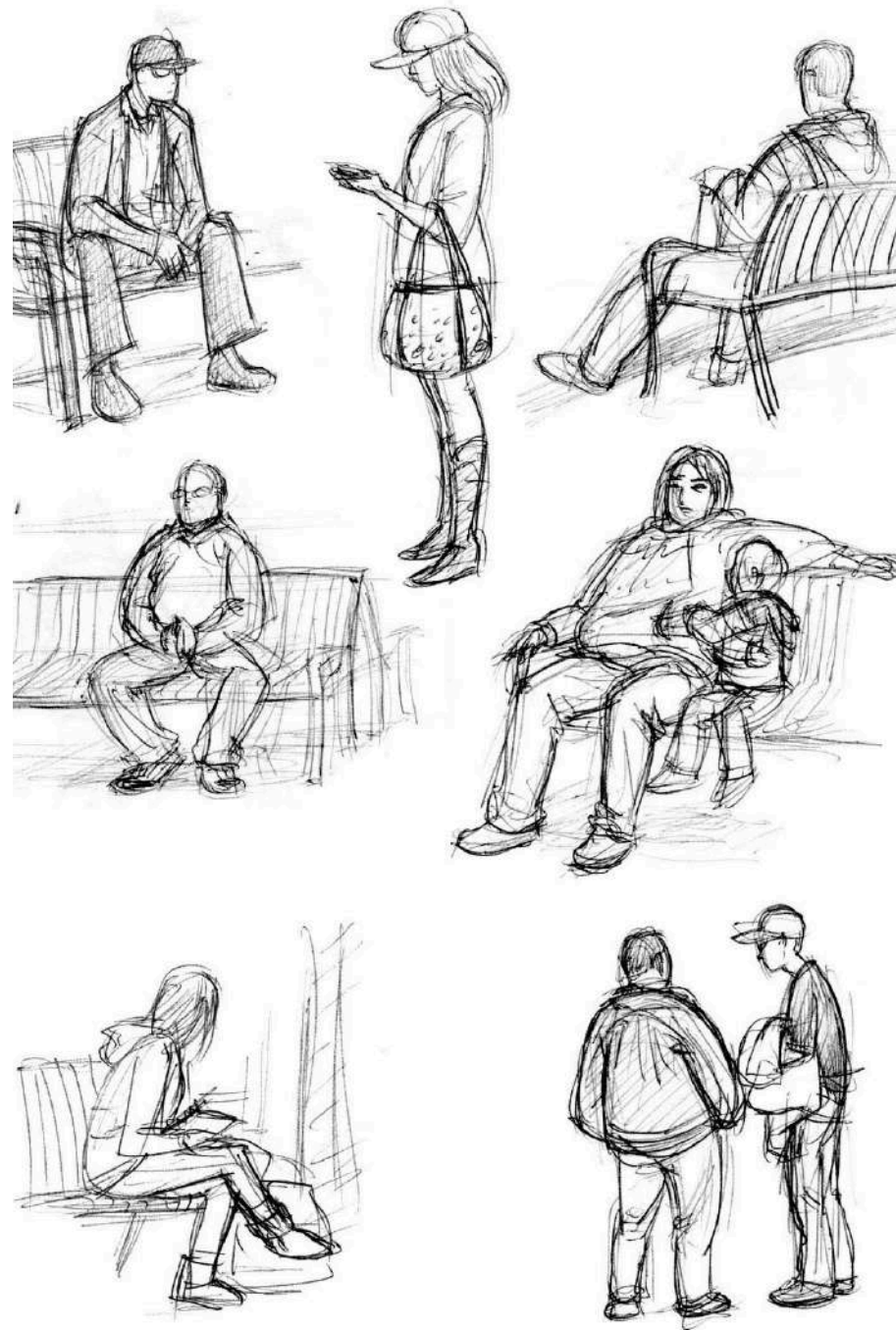
European tradition

- ∴ Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber often credited as 'founders' of sociology
- ∴ Erikson emphasizes the emergence of sociology as a *discipline* (as opposed to the study of society in general) in the European context
- ∴ Contemporary sociology is global, but retains a bias toward Western topics and ideals

Theory is contextual

- ∴ Marx, Durkheim, and Weber were developing theory to explain particularities of European society at the time
- ∴ They were responding to the political and historical moment
- ∴ Theory, though it often aims to be *general* in scope, should be understood in context

Social theory



WHAT IS SOCIAL THEORY?

5

A soci(ologic)al *theory* is a framework used to *explain* the things we see in the social world

Generate

- ∴ Theory can help to *generate hypotheses* about *why* or *how* something happens

Generalize

- ∴ Theory can lend weight to a specific empirical case by framing it as an illustration of a *broader social reality*

New situations

- ∴ Theory gives us tools to think about *novel situations and events* (e.g. prediction)

Perspspective

- ∴ Theory can offer *new perspectives* on topics we can already explain



Scope

- ∴ **General** theory aims to explain society as a whole
- ∴ **Narrow** theory limits itself to explaining a tightly bounded domain of social reality
 - Theory of organizational influence
 - Theory of occupational mobility
- ∴ Narrow theories often fit within the framework of a particular general theory

Micro- vs macro-level

- ∴ **Micro-level** theories start from the behavior and interactions of individuals, explaining larger structures in terms of these small-scale subjects
- ∴ **Macro-level** theories start from a view of society as a whole, explaining individual experiences through the broad, society-wide forces

Good sociological analysis needs to incorporate appropriate *social theory* and *methods of inquiry*

Theory:

∴ Means of *explaining* and *predicting* the social world

Methods:

∴ Means of *collecting data* and *making observations* about the social world



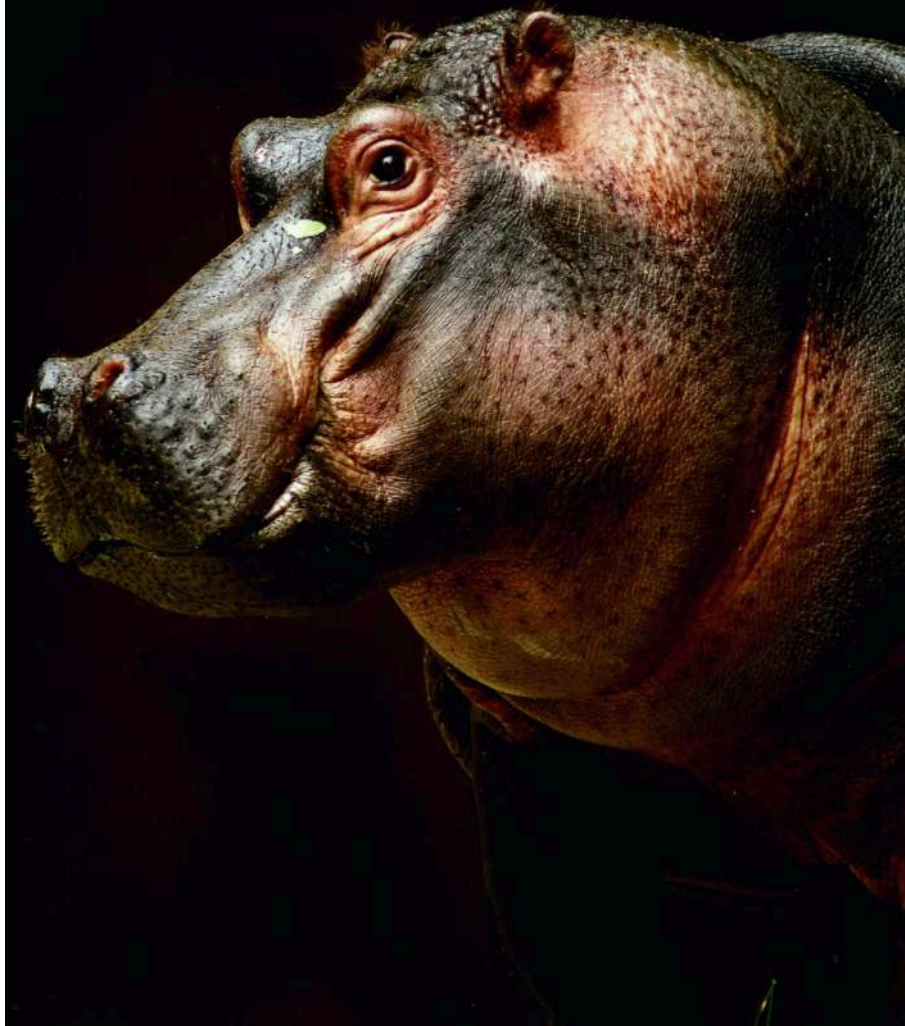
Throughout the semester, we will be using *three broad theoretical lenses* to make sense of social phenomena:

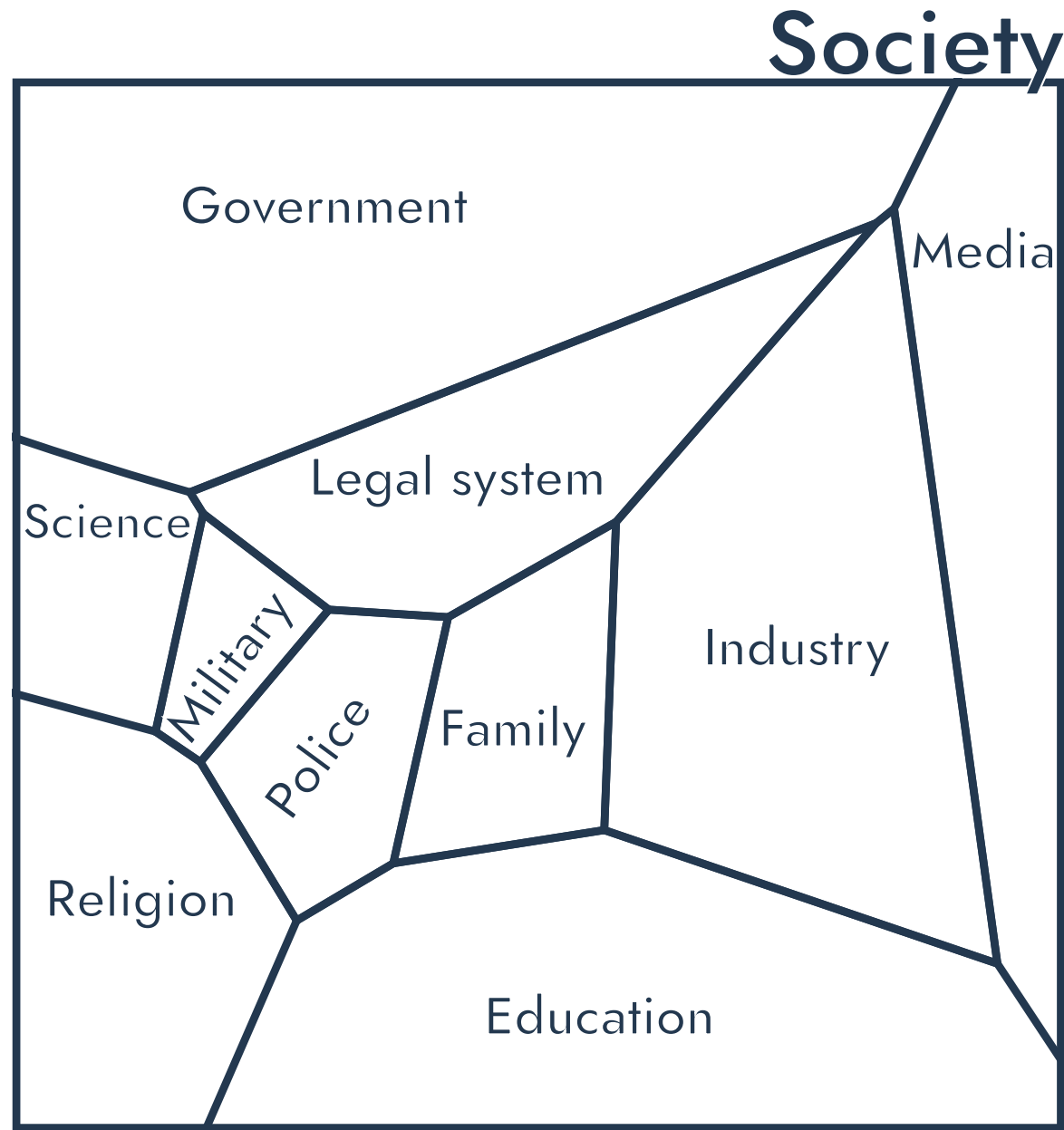
Today ➤ **1. Structural functionalism**

2. Conflict theory

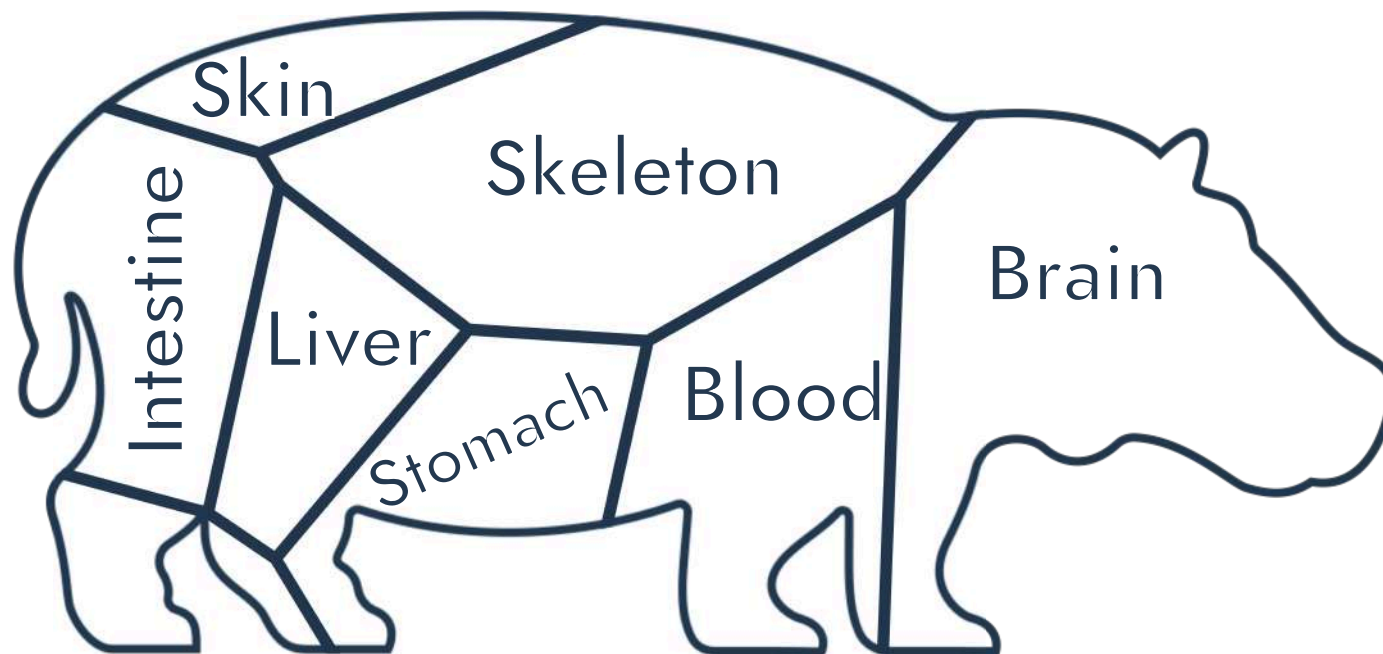
3. Symbolic interactionism

Structural function- alism





Society



Some major themes from structural functionalism:



Social cohesion

- ∴ Mutually dependent components of society foster a sense of unity that holds society together
- ∴ *Émile Durkheim* theorized a historical shift from *mechanical* (pre-modern) to *organic* (modern) forms of *solidarity*



Social roles

- ∴ The roles that people occupy (mother, banker, leader) are built socially
- ∴ *Talcott Parsons* theorized that roles are necessary for society to function, and become *institutionalized* over time



Function and dysfunction

- ∴ If an institution exists, it exists to fulfill a purpose for society
- ∴ *Robert Merton*: *manifest* vs *implicit* function

Discussion



1. *How does Canada's pro-union culture shape/influence the Canada Post Strike in comparison to other countries?*
2. *How does SES impact individuals reactions to the strike? Further, how do these varying reactions impact the behaviours that follow (ex. joining in protests, complaining, simply doing nothing, etc.)*
3. *How do strikes in crucial industries influence the possibility of strikes in other industries?*

1. In pairs:

- ∴ Discuss one of the three student questions on the left from last week

2. Consider:

- ∴ **Structure:** what other institutions is McGill athletics linked to? What institutions depend on it? For what?
- ∴ **Function:** what does institutionalized athletics provide to McGill? To Montreal? To Society?
- ∴ Consider the elements of social *cohesion, roles, and function* related to McGill athletics
- ∴ It might help to *take some notes*

3. Everyone

- ∴ Share and discuss your ideas with the class

Image credit



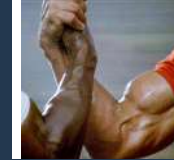
Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx, via [Lo Sé y Me Importa](#)



Artist unknown, from [Pinterest](#)



Still from [Ted Lasso \(2020\)](#)



Still from [Predator \(1987\)](#)



Photo by [Petra Bouchalova](#) on [Unsplash](#)

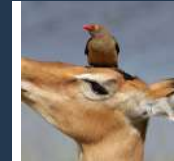


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