

## Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism is a micro-level sociological perspective that focuses on individual interactions and the meanings people assign to them. It highlights how society is built through human interpretation and communication, rather than being shaped solely by external structures.

George Herbert Mead proposed that the self develops through social interaction. He introduced the concepts of the "I" and the "me" to describe the active, personal side and the reflective, social side of the self. Mead also emphasized **role-taking**, where people adopt others' perspectives to understand expectations and adjust their behavior.

Charles Horton Cooley's idea of the "**looking-glass self**" explains how individuals form their self-concept by imagining how others see them, interpreting their reactions, and developing a sense of self based on these perceptions.

Erving Goffman added to this with his dramaturgical perspective, comparing social interactions to a **theatrical performance**. His concept of impression management describes how people present themselves differently in public ("**front stage**") and private ("**back stage**") settings to influence how others perceive them.

Symbolic Interactionism often uses qualitative methods like participant observation to study face-to-face interactions. While this approach offers deep insights, it is sometimes criticized for being subjective and prone to observer bias.

This perspective provides a detailed understanding of how individual interactions shape identity, communication, and cultural norms.