It is possible to define social science paradigms as specific models and frames which can be used and followed by researchers when they make conclusions regarding the world around them. From this point, social science paradigms are usually applied to research when it is necessary to support researchers’ conclusions related to their observation and sociological studies (1). It is important to note that social science paradigms provide researchers with opportunities to discuss questions from several theoretical perspectives (2). In their practice, sociologists are inclined to refer to such paradigms as the conflict paradigm, symbolic interactionism, and structural functionalism (3, 4). The purpose of this paper is to discuss the conflict paradigm, symbolic interactionism, and structural functionalism in detail with the focus on their similarities and differences.

The conflict paradigm was developed by Karl Marx. In his works, Marx (5) has claimed that people’s behaviors and interactions with the public in different environments are usually determined by their intentions to dominate or, on the contrary, to follow other people. When some people prefer to dominate, and other people are ready to follow them, it is almost impossible to speak about a social conflict. However, any inequality in positions can lead to the development of a conflict. According to Marx (5), the social conflict is usually associated with the inequality that is observed with reference to social and economic statuses and classes. Relations of people within families, organizations, and even countries can depend on such conflicts.