

Introduction to Sociology

Introduction to Sociology

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Grading

Examination 50% + 50%

Schedule 2018

4/11 Orientation

4/18 Introduction: The Discipline of Sociology

Part One Action, Identity and Understanding in Everyday Life

4/25 1. Oneself with Others

5/09 2. Viewing and Sustaining our Lives

5/16 3. The Bonds that Unite: Speaking of 'We'

Part Two Living our Lives: Challenges, Choices and Constraints

5/23 4. Decisions and Actions: Power, Choice and Moral Duty

5/30 5. Making it Happen: Gifts, Exchange and Intimacy in Relationships

6/06 Examination (Introduction, Chapter 1-5)

6/13 6. Care of our Selves: The Body, Health and Sexuality

6/20 7. Time, Space and (Dis)Order

6/27 8. Drawing Boundaries: Culture, Nature, State and Territory

7/04 9. The Business in Everyday Life: Consumption, Technology and Lifestyles

7/11 10. Thinking Sociologically

7/18 Examination (Chapter 6-10)

The exam is not an open-book system. You cannot read the textbook during the exam.

7/25

(1) What does Sociology Study?

Contents of Various Textbooks

Anthony Giddens and Philip W. Sutton 2013, *Sociology*, 7th ed., Polity Press

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2. Asking and Answering Sociological Questions
3. Theories and Perspectives
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8. Social Interaction and Everyday Life
9. The Life-Course

10. Families and Intimate Relationships
11. Health, Illness and Disability
12. Stratification and Social Class
13. Poverty, Social Exclusion and Welfare
14. Global Inequality
15. Gender and Sexuality
16. Race, Ethnicity and Migration.
17. Religion
18. The Media
19. Organizations and Networks
20. Education
21. Crime and Deviance
22. Politics, Government and Social Movements
23. Nations, War and Terrorism

Anthony Giddens and Philip Sutton, 2017, *Essential Concepts in Sociology*, 2nd ed., Polity Press

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Power p. 209

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Sociological Theories

Pip Jones, Liz Bradbury and Shaun Le Boutillier,
Introducing Social Theory, 2nd edition, 2011, Polity Press

1. An Introduction to Sociological Theories
2. Marx and Marxism
3. Emile Durkheim
4. Max Weber
5. Interpretive Sociology: Action Theories
6. Michel Foucault: Language, Discourse Theory and the Body-Centredness of Modernity
7. Social Structures and Social Action
8. Post-Modernity, Postmodernism and its Critics
9. Re-thinking Modernity
10. Feminist and Gender Theories

Metaphors in Sociological Thought

Sociological theories and metaphor

Rigney, Daniel 2001 *The Metaphorical Society An Invitation to Social Theory*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Society as (1) Living system, (2) Machine, (3) War, (4) Legal Order, (5) Marketplace, (6) Game, (7) Theater, (8) Discourse

Society as Living System

“In general, biological metaphors call our attention to the **relational and organically interconnected** nature of social life, in contrast to more recent atomistic images, which tend to portray society as a loose collection of autonomous individuals.”

Society as Machine

“mechanical images of society, which emerged to prominence with the rise of **modern science and the industrial revolution**. In the nineteenth century, scientifically inclined philosophers known as "**positivists**" began to imagine the possibility of a rigorous science of society worthy of the name "social physics." With this positivist dream of a social physics came the corollary vision of a "**social engineering**." While the metaphor of social physics portrayed societies as natural mechanisms governed by immutable scientific laws, the social engineering metaphor offered a rather different view of societies as artificial machines capable of being designed and redesigned to solve human problems more efficiently.”

Society as War

“Warmer than the image of society as machine is the fierce image of society as a battleground whereon adversaries wage a relentless struggle for scarce and valued **resources**. Metaphors of social warfare have been developed in widely varying ways by Machiavelli, Hobbes, Karl Marx, and many others in the diverse tradition of **conflict theory**.”

Society as Legal Order

“a tamer image of society as an intricate system of rules, regulations, or codes of conduct. **Order and social control** are central themes in this legalistic model of social life, which suggests that we are by nature the makers, followers, breakers, adjudicators, and enforcers of social norms, both formal and informal.”

Society as Marketplace

“depicts society as an elaborate network of exchange relationships among individuals and groups. Inspired by Adam Smith's classical economics and developed by social exchange and rational choice theorists, this metaphor reflects the assumptions of the prevailing culture of capitalism, urging us to view **social relations as transactions based on self-interested calculations of reward and cost.**”

Society as Game

“The popular image of society as game, like the image of society as marketplace, portrays social life as **a spirited and intensely competitive quest for prizes and payoffs.** Like the war metaphor (although usually less grim), the game metaphor highlights the importance of **strategy and tactics, deception, and team loyalty in social relations.**”

Society as Theater

“All the world's a stage,” wrote Shakespeare, “and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts.” We call upon the language of theater when we describe people as social actors playing their prescribed roles in accordance with received cultural scripts or, alternatively, as improvisational actors making up their performances as they go along.”

Society as Discourse

“If any one metaphor has come to dominate cultural analysis in recent decades, it is the image of **human societies as linguistic creations—artificial realities constructed socially through the medium of symbols**. The image of society as language or discourse, presented in chapter 9, has its roots in European philosophy and linguistics. It has inspired a wide range of intellectual movements in twentieth-century social thought, including symbolic interactionism, social phenomenology, ethnomethodology, hermeneutics, structuralism and semiotics, deconstruction, postmodernism, and postmodern forms of feminism.”

(2) Foundation

a. Various Sociological Theories

“as in the natural sciences, sociologists need to devise abstract interpretations -- **theories** -- to **explain** the variety of evidence they collect in their research studies. They also need to adopt a theoretical approach at the outset of their studies if they are to formulate appropriate questions that focus their research.”(Anthony Giddens and Philip W. Sutton 2013, *Sociology*, 7th ed., Polity Press: 70)

“It would be much easier if sociology had one central theory around which all sociologists could work, and for a time in the 1950s and 1960s **the structural functionalist approach of Talcott Parsons** did come close to being just that. However, the present period is marked by a diversity of theoretical approaches and perspectives, and, of course, with this comes more competition and disagreement. This makes the task of evaluating competing theories more difficult than once it was. However, theoretical pluralism also brings vitality to sociological theory, arguably deepening our overall understanding of social life.” (ibid.)

b. Positivism

More than 150 years after Comte's death, anyone who has watched NASA's space shuttle taking off has witnessed the predictive power of science in action. ---- why the natural sciences are still held in high regard today.

But could such reliable, predictive knowledge ever be achieved in relation to human behaviour? Most sociologists today think it cannot, and even fewer would use the term 'positivist' to describe their work. Probably the main reason why so many sociologists reject Comtean positivism is because they see the idea of shaping and controlling people and societies as either impossible or potentially dangerous or, indeed, both. Self-conscious human beings cannot be studied in the same way as, say, frogs, because they are capable of acting in ways that confound our predictions about them. (ibid.:73)

c. The Origin of Contemporary Sociology

The contemporary sociology started after modern societies emerged.

The biggest topic of the emerging sociology was **modernity and modernization**.

There are three founders of sociology, and they emphasized different aspects of modernization.

d. Three Founders of Contemporary Sociology and Different Aspects of Modernization

Karl Marx: **capitalism**

Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844

The German Ideology

Max Weber: **rationalization**

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

Emile Durkheim: **industrialization**

Suicide

Rules of Sociological Method

(3) Karl Marx

a. Historical Materialism

Marx's theoretical perspective is sometimes referred to as **historical materialism**; more accurately, perhaps, it is a materialist conception of history. This means that Marx is opposed to **idealism**, a philosophical doctrine which says that the historical development of societies is driven by abstract ideas or ideals, such as freedom and democracy. Instead, Marx argues that the dominant ideas and ideals of an age are reflections of the dominant way of life, specifically of a society's **mode of production**....

Marx argues that the dominant ideas (= ideology) of an age are those of the ruling groups. His 'historical materialism' is interested primarily in how people collectively produce a life together. How do they produce food, shelter and other material goods and what kind of division of labour exists which enables them to do so? (74)

b. Successive Modes of Production: a Successful Grand Theory?

Marx argued that the historical development of human societies is structured, not purely random. In the ancient past, small-scale human groups existed with no developed system of property-ownership. Instead, all the resources acquired were communally owned and no class divisions were present. Marx called this a form of **primitive communism**. As the group produced more, this mode of production was effectively outgrown and a new one emerged, this time with some **private property-ownership** (including slavery), as in ancient Greece and Rome. From here, societies based on settled agriculture and feudal property relations developed. The European system of **feudalism** was based on a class division between landowners and landless peasants and tenant farmers, who were forced to work for landowners in order to survive. But the feudal mode of production also reached its productive limitations and gave way to the capitalist society with which we are now familiar.

Under **capitalism**, class antagonisms were greatly simplified as society 'split into two great camps' --- the property-owners (capitalists or the bourgeoisie) and the workers (or proletariat). (ibid.:74-75)

c. Communism

Marx expected capitalism itself, just like feudalism, to give way to another mode of production --- communism --- brought about by disaffected workers who develop class-consciousness --- an awareness of their exploited position. Under communism, private property would be abolished and genuinely communal social relations established. Unlike primitive communism, though, modern communism would retain all the benefits of the highly productive industrial system bequeathed by capitalism. This would produce an advanced, humane and sophisticated form of communal life, capable of delivering on the communist principle 'from each, according to his [sic] ability, to each, according to his need' (Marx 1938 [1875]: 10). (ibid.:75)

(4) Emile Durkheim

a. Works

Emile Durkheim, 1897, *Suicide*

On Suicide, Penguin Classics, 2007

Suicide: A Study in Sociology, Routledge Classics, 2002

Durkheim started **macro sociology**, preparing **social system theory** and **functionalism**.

b. Organicism

“In this respect, he found Herbert Spencer's earlier application of an organic analogy to societies a more satisfactory explanatory tool. The idea had become current in the work of many prominent German social thinkers. Organicism is based on the premise that the laws governing the functioning and evolution of animal organisms provide a model for a natural science of society.” (Calhoun et al. 2007 Classical Sociological Theory, 2nd ed.:134)

c. Social Facts

One project that he committed himself to was the establishment of sociology as a discipline. His goal was to provide a firm definition of the field and a scientific basis for its study. A second concern of Durkheim's was the issue of social integration in society. Durkheim wondered about the sources and nature of **moral authority as an integrating force in society**, as well as the rise of individualism. (ibid.:135)

Durkheim intended *The Rules* as a programmatic statement about the cause of sociology as a discipline, which must have its own distinctive subject matter and methodology. Substantively, the domain of sociology must necessarily be "**social facts**" that are "**external to individuals.**" Methodologically, sociologists must strive for objectivity by studying "**social facts as things,**" that is, through empirical investigation. In demarcating the explanatory method of sociology from that of psychology, Durkheim proposed that sociology must focus on **macro-level causal analysis**, relating social causes to social effects. In addition to a causal analysis, he suggested that sociology must undertake **a functional explanation of a social fact in terms of the needs of a social "organism."** (ibid.:136)

d. Suicide

Durkheim intended his book *Suicide* to be an example of his method. Durkheim took the **suicide rate** as an example of a social fact, and attempted to explain the variations in that rate scientifically. The suicide rate is an interesting example for several reasons. First, it is "**external to individuals.**" Durkheim did not attempt to explain the inner feelings of someone contemplating suicide, nor even the causes of individual suicides. Instead, he examined variations in **the suicide rate**. What caused these variations? He argued that under different social conditions, different causes produced patterns of suicides. In modern societies, the most important cause was a disconnection of people from social bonds --- resulting either from isolation or from disorienting changes in society at large. (ibid.:136)

Suicide Statistics (Japan)

2001: 31,042 24.4 (per 100,000 people)

2002: 32,143 25.2

2003: 34,427 27.0

2004: 32,325 25.3

2005: 32,552 25.5

2006: 32,155 25.2

2007: 33,093 25.9

2008: 32,249 25.3

2009: 32,845 25.8

Suicide Statistics (Japan)

2001: 31,042	24.4 (per 100,000 people)
2002: 32,143	25.2
2003: 34,427	27.0
2004: 32,325	25.3
2005: 32,552	25.5
2006: 32,155	25.2
2007: 33,093	25.9
2008: 32,249	25.3
2009: 32,845	25.8
2010: 31,690	24.9

The Catholic church is more authoritative and collectivistic than the Protestant church.

The Protestant church is more individualistic, and lacks strong community.

---- Protestants are more vulnerable, because they are not protected by a community.

According to Durkheim, this is the social factor that caused the higher rate of suicide with the Protestants.

e. The Division of Labor and Solidarity

In *The Division of Labor*, Durkheim confronted the basic question of what holds modern society together. Using an evolutionary approach, his central thesis in the book was that the increasing division of labor in modern societies was taking the place of the *conscience collective* --- the moral consensus or collective conscience --- that marked traditional societies. Despite this, social cohesion still operates, but in a different way. Durkheim characterizes the social integration that results from the division of labor in modern societies as "**organic solidarity**," a solidarity born out of mutual need. This was quickly replacing the "**mechanical solidarity**" typical of simpler societies. The term "organic" referred to the **functional interconnectedness of elements** in society, similar to the way that the parts of an organism are functionally connected. In modern societies, we may not feel morally or culturally connected to those around us. But as the division of labor increases, we are more than ever functionally connected by our mutual needs. (ibid.:136)

f. Durkheim's Legacy

Ironically, in recent decades Durkheim's methodology has been far more influential in America and Britain than in France. The British anthropologist Alfred Radcliffe-Brown first introduced Durkheim's ideas to the English-speaking world. Radcliffe-Brown also helped stimulate interest in Durkheim's writings in the United States. However, this interest became more widespread in the United States through the work of **Talcott Parsons** and **Robert Merton**. Nevertheless, Durkheim's ideas influenced several major theoretical movements in the twentieth century. They were strongly present in the emergence of "**structuralism**" through the work of **Jean Piaget** and **Claude Lévi-Strauss**. Alexander (1988) points to the often-unacknowledged debt that the recent cultural revival in social theory owes to the ideas of Durkheim, for instance, in the work of **Ferdinand de Saussure**, **Michel Foucault** (see Part IV of *Contemporary Sociological Theory*) and Clifford Geertz, as well as Peter Berger, Robert Bellah, and others. (ibid.:137)

(5) Max Weber and Interpretive Sociology

a. Protestant Ethic

Max Weber emphasized the interpretations by actors in the interaction, and he developed a microscopic point of view. His view is called *interpretive sociology*, and it focuses on understanding of the actors' motivations.

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1904-05)

b. Why did Capitalism Emerge Only in the West?

“The third major founding figure in sociology is Max Weber, whose ideas stand behind many actor-centred approaches. Weber’s most famous work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1992 [1904-5]), tackled a fundamental problem: why did capitalism originate in the West? For around thirteen centuries after the fall of ancient Rome, other civilizations were much more prominent than those in the West. In fact, Europe was a rather insignificant part of the world, while China, India and the Ottoman Empire in the Near East were all major powers. China in particular was a long way ahead of the West in its level of technological and economic development. So how did Europe’s economies become so dynamic?

Weber reasoned that the key is to show what makes modern capitalism different from earlier types of economic activity. The desire to accumulate wealth can be found in many historical civilizations, and people have valued wealth for the comfort, security, power and enjoyment it can bring. Contrary to popular belief, then, capitalist economies are not simply a natural outgrowth of the desire for personal wealth. Something different must be at work.

c. Religion in the Heart of Capitalism?

Weber argued that, in the economic development of the West, the key difference is an attitude towards the accumulation of wealth that is found nowhere else in history. He called this attitude the '**spirit of capitalism**' --- a motivating set of beliefs and values held by the first capitalist merchants and industrialists. Yet, quite unlike wealthy people elsewhere, these people did not spend their accumulated riches on luxurious, materialistic lifestyles. On the contrary, many of them were self-denying and frugal, living soberly and quietly without the trappings of affluence that are common today. This very unusual combination of characteristics was vital to the rapid economic development of the West. The early capitalists reinvested their wealth to promote the further expansion of the enterprises they owned. This continual **reinvestment** of profits produced an expanding cycle of investment, production, profit and reinvestment that enabled businesses to **grow** and capitalism to **expand** quickly.

d. Protestant Ethic

The controversial part of Weber's theory is that the 'spirit of capitalism' actually had its origins in religion. **Christianity** played a part in fostering this outlook, but the essential motivating force was provided by the impact of **Protestantism** and one variety in particular: **Puritanism**. The early capitalists were mostly Puritans, and many subscribed to **Calvinism**. One Calvinist belief was that human beings are God's instruments on Earth, required by the Almighty to work in a vocation – an occupation for the greater glory of God. A second was **predestination**, according to which only certain individuals are among the 'elect' and will enter heaven in the afterlife. In Calvin's original doctrine, nothing a person does on earth can alter whether they are one of the elect; this is predetermined by God. However, this belief was difficult to live with and produced much anxiety among followers, leading to a constant search for 'signs' of election to quell salvation anxiety.

e. Luxury is Evil

People's success when working in a vocation, indicated by their increasing prosperity, came to be seen as a sign that they were part of the elect few. Thus, a motivation towards profitability was generated as an unintended consequence of religious adherence, producing a paradoxical outcome. Puritans believed luxury to be evil, so their drive to accumulate wealth was combined with severe and unadorned personal lifestyles. This means the early capitalists were not self-conscious revolutionaries. They did not set out to produce a capitalist revolution, but were guided instead by religious motives. But, with today's stupendous quantities of material goods and materially rich lifestyles, the idea of working in a calling has faded. In a famous passage, Weber (1992 [1904-5]: 182) puts it this way.

f. Asceticism

The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so. For when **asceticism** was carried out of the monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order... . Since asceticism undertook to remodel the world and to work out its ideals in the world, material goods have gained an increasingly and finally an inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history... The idea of duty in one's calling prowls about in our lives like the ghost of dead religious beliefs.

g. Significance

Weber's theory also meets important criteria for theoretical thinking in sociology. First, it is counter-intuitive --- it suggests an interpretation that breaks with common sense and thereby develops a fresh perspective on an issue. Most scholars before Weber gave little thought to possible links between religious ideas and the origins of capitalism. Second, the theory makes sense of something that is otherwise puzzling: why would individuals want to live frugally while making great efforts to accumulate wealth? Third, the theory sheds light on circumstances beyond those it was created to explain. Weber tried to grasp the early origins of modern capitalism, but it seems reasonable to suppose that parallel values could be part of societies that came later to capitalism. Finally, a good theory is not just valid, but also fruitful in generating new ideas and stimulating further research. (Giddens, *ibid*, 83)

Weber pointed out that Protestants ***thought*** that

'human beings are under ***obligation to the fortune*** which they are ***entrusted*** and they must serve the fortune as the administrating ***servants***, or '***the profit making machine***'

Therefore Protestants were so ascetic and diligent that they accumulated money. But they could not spend this money for worldly pleasure. Then, there is no way for them but to ***invest the money to the work***.

The Eastern religions provided insuperable barriers to the development of industrial capitalism.

In Asia, religions were a major influence in inhibiting industrialization.

For instance, Hinduism stresses escape from the toils of the material world to a higher plane of spiritual existence.

--- It was indifferent about controlling and shaping material world. On the contrary, Hinduism sees material reality as a veil hiding the true concerns to which human kind should be oriented.

Allure Magazine Will No Longer Use the Term “Anti-Aging”

Letter From the Editor (www.allure.com)

By Michelle Lee, August 14, 2017

“This issue is the long-awaited, utterly necessary celebration of growing into your own skin — wrinkles and all. No one is suggesting giving up retinol. But changing the way we think about aging starts with changing the way we talk about aging.

With that in mind, and starting with this issue, we are making a resolution to stop using the term “anti-aging.” Whether we know it or not, we’re subtly reinforcing the message that aging is a condition we need to battle — think antianxiety meds, antivirus software, or antifungal spray.

If there's one inevitability in life, it's that we're getting older. Every minute. Every second. We produced a video recently that featured 64-year-old gray-haired Jo Johnson, who made the poignant observation that aging should be appreciated because "some of us don't get an opportunity to age." Repeat after me: Growing older is a wonderful thing because it means that we get a chance, every day, to live a full, happy life.

Language matters. When talking about a woman over, say, 40, people tend to add qualifiers: "She looks great...for her age" or "She's beautiful...for an older woman." Catch yourself next time and consider what would happen if you just said, "She looks great." Yes, Americans put youth on a pedestal. But let's agree that appreciating the dewy rosiness of youth doesn't mean we become suddenly hideous as years go by."