

Sociological Theories

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(1) What does Sociology Study?

a. Introduction to Sociology

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

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b. Various Sociological Theories

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

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c. 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.”

American Sociological Association

<http://www.asanet.org/>

American Journal of Sociology

<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/toc/ajs/current>

The Japan Sociological Society

<https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/jsr/-char/ja/>

British Sociological Association

<https://www.britsoc.co.uk/>

The British Journal of Sociology

[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1468-4446](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1468-4446)

The Waseda Sociological Society

<http://www.waseda.jp/assoc-wss/>

Waseda University Library

<https://www.waseda.jp/library/en/>