

Selected Topics in Sociology 2019

I - 1. Introduction

Contents 2019

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Selected Topics in Sociology 2019

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桜井 洋 2017『社会秩序の起源「なる」ことの論理』新曜社

Grading

Examination 25%

Attendance 25%

Essay 50%

In 2018, the average score was 60.2 out of 100.

The best score was 97, the next was 96.

The average score of essay was 28.9 out of 50.

The best score of essay was 50 (perfect score). 10 students out of 52 students gained perfect score.

23 students obtained more than 40 points out of 50. Nearly half of students gained more than 80 %.

(1) About the Course

a. What is Sociology?

Anthony Giddens and Philip W. Sutton 2017, *Sociology*, 8th ed., Polity Press

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22. Nations, War and Terrorism

b. Two Fields of Sociology

Though contemporary sociology has a large variety of fields of research, there are two fundamental ways of studying modern sociology. One is the ***empirical study***, and the other is the ***theoretical study***. The main topics for the former include such topics as family, gender, city, media, which seem to be familiar to students.

On the other hand, the theoretical research of sociology studies the relation between individuals and society in an abstract way. Why is there social order instead of chaos? How are individuals motivated to social actions? How is social integration possible? Those are some of major topics studied in theoretical sociology.

In this course, we will study THEORETICAL topics, not empirical topics. Society is composed of individuals, and so the question of ‘mind’ or ‘self’ will be the central focus of the discussion of this course. Therefore, the question ‘What is the mind’ or ‘the self?’ will be the main topics of this course. Because this course is about theoretical sociology, the contents are rather abstract. Students are expected to get accustomed to the abstract and logical way of reasoning.

c. Sociological Theories

Contents of Chapter 3 Theories and Perspectives

Towards sociology

Positivism and social evolution

Karl Marx: the capitalist revolution

Establishing sociology

Emile Durkheim: the social level of reality

Twentieth-century structural functionalism

Max Weber: capitalism and religion

Symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and ethnomethodology

Enduring theoretical dilemmas

Social structure and human agency

Consensus versus conflict

The transformation, of societies - and sociology

Feminism and mainstream sociology

Postcolonial sociology?

Poststructuralism and postmodernity

Reflexivity, risk and cosmopolitanism

Conclusion.: sociological theory in development

Pip Jones, et al., 2018, *Introducing Social Theory*, 3rd edition, Polity Press

1. An Introduction to Sociological Theory
2. Marx and Marxism
3. Emile Durkheim
4. Max Weber
5. Interpretive Sociology: Action Theories
6. Language, Discourse and Power in Modernity: Jurgen Habermas and Michel Foucault
7. Social Structures and Social Action
8. Feminist and Gender Theories
9. Sociology and Its Publics

d. Various Ideas 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) Chemical Reaction and Magnetic Field as the Metaphor (Image) of This Course

a. From Substances to Processes

“Sociologists today are faced with a fundamental dilemma: whether to conceive of the social world as consisting primarily in **substances** or in **processes**, in static “things” or in dynamic, unfolding relations. Large segments of the sociological community continue implicitly or explicitly to prefer the former point of view. Rational-actor and norm-based models, diverse holisms and structuralisms, and statistical “variable” analyses—all of them beholden to the idea that it is **entities** that come first and **relations** among them only subsequently—hold sway throughout much of the discipline. But increasingly, researchers are searching for viable analytic alternatives, approaches that reverse these basic assumptions and depict social reality instead in dynamic, continuous, and processual terms”. (Emirbayer 1997 “Manifesto for a Relational Sociology” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.103, No.2: 281)

b. Complexity Theory in Sociology

There are several different methods in theoretical sociology. The theory used in the explanation in this course is complexity theory in sociology. This theory is based on complexity science, which has developed in modern physics as *non-linear dynamics*. The main focus of this theory is to explain such macro dynamics as life. Now the idea of non-linear dynamics, or self-organizing dynamics, is expected to be introduced in the field of the study of the mind, the self, communication, and society. In this lecture, we will explain mind, communication, and society from the point of view of complexity theory.

c. Chemical Reaction and Magnetic Field

“Life is always lived in common, whatever rugged individualists may think, but in the Sixties it seemed especially true that History with a capital H had come down to earth, either interfering with life or making it possible; and that within History, or threaded through it, people were more than themselves, they were supercharged: lives were bound up with one another, making claims on one another, drawing one another into the common project.”

(Gitlin, Todd, 1993 *The Sixties: Years of Hope Days of Rage*, New York, Bantam Book, p.7)

d. Codependence: 'Heal the Child Within'

“In therapeutic discussions of codependent or fixated relationships, almost without exception, individuals who wish to develop close personal ties with others are advised to 'heal the child within'. The relations between parents and young children here reappear in a fundamental way as relevant to the pure relationship and the model of confluent love. Why is a 'release from the past' so important for the attainment of intimacy? Since so many forms of therapy, beginning with psychoanalysis, are oriented to childhood experience, answering this question might very well provide further clues to the significance of therapy and counselling in modern culture in general.

We can again start out with a therapeutic guide, in this instance Susan Forward, as she gives advice about how to 'heal the past'. Her discussion concentrates upon the case of Nicki, a young woman who was experiencing difficulties in her marriage. She was unable to stand up for herself in the relationship, and when her husband was angry with her she felt humiliated and defenceless. The therapist asked her to recall incidents in her childhood that had made her feel a similar way, and came up with a particular example – one of those incidents that sticks permanently in the mind. Her father always wanted her to learn to play the piano well, and although she herself wasn't very interested, she tried hard in order to please him. When she played in front of other people, she became anxious and the level of her performance deteriorated. At one recital she was so nervous that she left out a whole section of the piece she was asked to play. On the way home from the recital her father told her that, after her debacle, he didn't know how he would ever be able to look any of the audience in the face again. She had disgraced him in front of everyone, was thoughtless, careless and too lazy to practise.

She had felt utterly crushed, having wanted so much to please him. In her words, 'I just felt like dying.' The therapist perceived that in her marriage she was re-enacting scenes from her childhood and 'losing her adult self'. She asked Nicki to bring in a picture of herself as a little girl, and when they looked at the photo together Nicki remembered many other circumstances in which her father had shamed her in a similar way. Forward then suggested that she go down to the local school and spot a girl who reminded her of herself at the same age. The idea was that she should imagine that girl being humiliated in the same manner as she felt she had been; in such a way she could realise how small and defenceless she was at the time when the original event happened. It was this 'child within' who became so fearful and timid when her husband criticised her. Nicki was later asked by the therapist to imagine that her father was sitting in an empty chair in front of her, and to say to him the things she'd always wanted to say, but was never able to do. Trembling with anger, she shouted:

How dare you treat me like that! How dare you humiliate me the way you did! Who the hell did you think you were? I always looked up to you. I worshipped you. Couldn't you tell how much you were hurting me? Nothing I ever did was good enough for you. You made me feel like a total failure, you bastard. I would have done anything for you, just to get you to love me a little.

Unfair to fathers, the reader - or at least the male reader - might be tempted to say. For perhaps, after all, he was doing his best. Yet this is not the point, for whatever he intended, she felt an enduring shame. According to Forward, this and other therapeutic exercises were of great value in siphoning off the accumulated rage Nicki harboured against her father.

She was asked to make an inventory of all the negative things her father, in her eyes, had felt about her. She came up with a long list:

I am inconsiderate

I am selfish

I am thoughtless

I am talentless

I am inadequate

I am an embarrassment to my family

I am disappointing

I am ungrateful

I am a bad person

I am a failure

I am shiftless

I am lazy and will never amount to anything.

She immediately saw that she had taken over many of these opinions about herself; and she went back to the list she had written out and wrote in a bold hand, 'It wasn't true then and it isn't true now!' In contrast to her views of her father, she felt that her mother had always been loving and supportive. This is a list of what she saw as her mother's positive opinions of her:

I am intelligent

I am sweet

I am charming

I am generous

I am talented

I am a hard worker

I am good-natured

I am full of energy

I am lovable

I am a joy to have around.

After she had written this list, Nicki scrawled across it: 'This is true and it always has been.' She later came to accept that her parents' views of her had not been as polarised as she had always assumed. Her father, for example, had quite often complimented her on her intelligence, looks and athletic abilities. She gradually learned to 'reparent the little child within her' and dispel the internal image of the critical father. Whether Nicki was able effectively to improve her relationship with her father, whom she saw infrequently. Forward does not say. She came eventually to abandon her fantasy that her father would ever be 'the father I always wanted'. There was 'grief and mourning' in so doing, but 'also a great deal of freedom. All the energy she had spent in a fruitless search for her father's love could now be used in the pursuit of activities that were positive and meaningful to her.'

I am not concerned with how far these particular techniques of therapy are effective compared with, say, classical psychoanalysis or other therapies which focus in a more subtle way on the unconscious. Fostering the 'child within' means retrieving the past - a process of going back, and recapturing half-remembered or repressed childhood experiences - but only in order to release it. The emphasis is upon the present and the future, and the severity of the break with the past is indicated by the fact that a mourning process is required to give it up. Are we talking here of yet another addiction which needs to be broken? In a looser sense of the term than that discussed previously, I think we are. The therapist is encouraging Nicki to 'let go' of traits which, destructive as they were, had something of a compulsive grip upon her attitudes and actions."

(Anthony Giddens, 1992, *The Transformation of Intimacy Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*, Polity Press: 99-102)

e. Actors do no control processes, but are involved in them.

“A process of mutual response and mutual adaptation **shifts the ‘ground’ that actors stand upon**, sometimes making the previously inconceivable not only conceivable but obvious, necessary and even automatic. Immersion in an interaction context which acquires an unusual dynamic and trajectory draws the actors involved into ways of behaving that they would not previously have countenanced.

It is only a small step to recognize that, were such unusual patterns ever to become usual, so too would the individual patterns of behaviour involved.

Actors are shaped by the interactions in which they are involved.

Trajectories of interaction can transform the way in which they act, feel and think.....actors do not simply ‘do’ interaction. They are affected by it. And what they do in it is shaped by how they are affected by it.” (Nick Crossley 2011 *Towards Relational Sociology*, London, Routledge: 30)

“In the experience of dialogue, there is constituted between the other person and myself **a common ground**; my thought and his are inter-woven into a single fabric, my words and those of my interlocutor are called forth by the state of the discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator. We have here a dual being, where the other is for me no longer a mere bit of behaviour in my transcendental field, nor I in his; we are collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity. Our perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world. In the present dialogue, I am freed from myself, for the other person's thoughts are certainly his; they are not of my making, though I do grasp them the moment they come into being, or even anticipate them. And indeed, the objection which my interlocutor raises to what I say draws from me thoughts which I had no idea I possessed, so that at the same time that I lend him thoughts, he reciprocates by making me think too”. (Merleau-Ponty , Maurice 1962 *Phenomenology of Perception*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul:413)

(3) Doing and Becoming

a. “Homo Clausus”

“As Elias notes, Westerners are accustomed to thinking of themselves as their own little self-enclosed world – *homo clausus*, as he terms it. But – and as I suggested above – this process involves the suppression of an alternative perception, one which understands **the person in terms of their relations with others**, and hence understands **identity as formed *between*, rather than *within* persons.**

This view, to quote Elias again, conceptualizes the person as being “Fundamentally oriented toward and dependent on other people throughout his life. The network of interdependencies between human beings is what binds them together. Such interdependencies are the nexus of what is here called the figuration, a structure of mutually oriented and dependent people...**[People] exist, one might venture to say, only as pluralities, only as figurations** (Elias, N., *The Civilizing Process*:213-14)”

‘Without you I’m nothing’: without a nexus of others, none of us could be ‘who we are’. The Western notion of the individual, however, rests on a massive suppression of this complex interdependency and suggests a model of identity which is, at its heart, outside the social world. As Elias suggests, sociological analysis has to challenge this notion, rather than incorporating it.”

(Steph Lawler, *Identity Sociological Perspective*, 2008, Polity Press, pp.7-8)

b. Do-Language and Become-Language

A linguist Yoshihiko Ikegami points out, there are two kinds of languages in the world, and accordingly two contrasting orientations in the way in which an extralinguistic event is linguistically represented (Ikegami, Yoshihiko (ed.) 1991 *The Empire of Signs: Semiotic Essays on Japanese Culture*, Amsterdam, J. Benjamins Pub. Co.:289). One type, such as English, singling out individuals, places the focus on them. In this language, ‘somebody – **does** – something’ is a representative form of expression. The other type of language, such as Japanese, focuses the event as a whole rather than individual elements inside the whole, the individuals involved in it being submerged in the whole. In this language, ‘the whole **becomes**’ is the representative format. Ikegami calls former **Do-language**, latter **Become-language**.

c. The Logic of Becoming and Complexity Science

Prigogine, Ilya 1980 *From Being to Becoming Time and Complexity in the Physical Sciences*, San Francisco, W.H.Freeman and Company

d. Example: How Do You Write a Novel?

一つの作品が誕生するプロセスは、作家自身にもそうはっきりとは自覚できないものだ。主題や、登場人物などについて、あれこれ考えたり感じたりしているだけではまだ駄目なのである。そうした意識的努力を重ねるうち、やがて自分の思考が濃縮され、過飽和溶液の状態になる。次に思いがけない飛躍の瞬間がやってくる。ちょっとした印象の破片がその溶液の中に落ちて核になり、結晶作用がはじまるのだ。

Even an author will find it difficult to form a clear idea about the processes in creating a literary work. He will consider and feel the theme and characters in various ways, but this is not sufficient. After such conscious efforts, his thoughts will be condensed and become a supersaturated solution. Then, in an instant, an unexpected breakthrough will come to him. A tiny fragment of an impression falls in a solution to form a kernel, and the process of crystallization will begin.

たとえば『方舟さくら丸』の場合だと、その核の役割をしてくれたのは、単に水洗便所に落ちて片足を吸い込まれてしまったナンセンスな夢だった。それまで準備したメモやノートが、とつぜんその夢の周囲に結晶し、構造を持ちはじめたのである。そこから先の展開は急激で、しかし論理的なものではなかった。はやりの言いまわしを使えば、きわめてアナログ的なのだ。創作は『まつ』ことだというのは嘘ではない。あとは計算を越えた直感が自由気ままに自己増殖してくれる。」

(安部公房『死に急ぐ鯨たち』)

For example, in the case of “Hakobune Sakura-Maru,” it was a nonsense dream about falling into a toilet bowl and having one leg drawn in that played the role of the kernel. Suddenly, the notes I had prepared crystallized around the dream and began to take structure.

The development thereafter was rapid, but it was not logical. If I use an expression that is in vogue, it will be very analogous. It is not wrong to say that creation is “to wait.” After that, intuitions will propagate spontaneously beyond calculation.

(Abe Kobo)

e. How Do You Create Music?

Q: Did you approach 'Invincible' with a single theme in mind?

Michael Jackson: ***I never think about themes. I let the music create itself.***
I like it to be a potpourri of all kinds of sounds, all kinds of colors, something for everybody.

Q: Has it become easier to write songs over time?

MJ: It's the most effortless thing in the world because ***you don't do anything.*** I hate to say it like that, but it's the truth. The heavens drop it right into your lap, ***in its totality. The real gems come that way.***

You can sit at the piano and say, “OK, I’m going to write the greatest song ever written,” and nothing. But you can be walking down the street or showering or playing and, boom, it hits you in the head. I’ve written so many like that. I’m playing a pinball machine, and I have to run upstairs and get my little tape recorder and start dictating. ***I hear everything in its totality, what the strings are going to do, what the bass is going to do, the harpsichord, everything.***

(Jel D. Lewis Jones, *Michael Jackson: The King of Pop*)

“People ask me how I make music. I tell them I just ***step into it***. It’s like ***stepping into a river and joining the flow***. Every moment in the river has its song. So I stay in the moment and ***listen***.” (Michael Jackson 1992 'Dancing the Dream,' p.70)

f. It Comes Through Us

"I think we were definitely a bit ahead of our time though, in that we were ***synergising something that was going to happen anyway***. It wasn't that these things were so influenced by us, just that ***that energy was being born anyway***, and ***we were one of the first puppies out***. I don't know if it came from us, but ***it came through us***. But ***it was trying to get out anyway***. Like a leak..."

(Kevin Shields of My Bloody Valentine)

Bob Dylan

We sat on the patio outside his room and talked for two hours. I was really nervous, because he was one of my heroes. And I was also afraid that he wouldn't be really smart anymore, that he'd be a caricature of himself, like happens to a lot of people. But I was delighted. He was as sharp as a tack. He was everything I'd hoped. He was really open and honest. He was just telling me about his life and about writing his songs. He said, **“They just came through me, it wasn't like I was having to compose them. That doesn't happen anymore, I just can't write them that way anymore.”** Then he paused and said to me with his raspy voice and little smile, “But I still can sing them.”

(Walter Isaacson, 2011, *Steve Jobs*, Simon & Schuster, pp.415-16)

(4) Natural and Social Sciences

a. Influences of Natural Sciences

This lecture is an attempt to introduce two essential ideas of *contemporary physics*:

Field, and self-organization.

Why physics?

Each discipline must have its own methodology. In the long history of natural and social sciences, the latter has referred to the former concerning methodology. In other words, social sciences have developed under various influences from natural sciences, especially physics.

b. Determinism

Three Stages of the Influence of Physics on the Social Sciences

(1) Determinism

In the 17th century, Newton and other physicists succeeded in establishing the foundation of modern physics and its methodology.

It is called *deterministic* because, in classical dynamics of Newton, the behavior of nature is expressed in mathematically formulated equations. If you determine the value of the necessary variables, then you can determine the value of the remaining variables.

For instance, $F = ma$. Each stands for force, mass, acceleration

c. Mechanism

This deterministic view of nature has brought about the mechanistic view of nature, or *mechanism*, as it is called. In this view, nature is assumed as a *machine* which is driven by the natural law.

This deterministic view of the world has become a *paradigm* through 17, 18, and 19th centuries.

Under this mechanistic paradigm, many social sciences have tried to formulate theories like *classical dynamics*.

Only economics seemed to have succeeded in the attempt. In the theory of neo-classics, the market is assumed to be a deterministic machine driven by the law of general equilibrium.

Sociologists hoped to follow economics, but in vain. Because, compared with the market, the whole society is far more complex, and it was very difficult to be expressed in mathematical equations.

d. Cybernetics and System

In the middle of the 20th century, a new theory called ***cybernetics*** was introduced in physics, especially in its applying aspect, or engineering. Cybernetics has proposed the idea of '***system***'. Under this influence, the idea of '***social system***' was created in the middle of the 20th century. Then, the ***social system theory*** was created.

e. Complexity Science, or Non-linear Dynamics

At the end of the 20th century, another new wave came again from the edge of modern physics. That is the idea of complexity science. This innovation happened in the field of ***non-linear dynamics*** in modern physics. Non-linear dynamics deals with ***complex physical phenomena*** that deterministic functions or equations cannot deal. The most important example of such complex dynamical system is ***life***.

f. Western and Eastern Ideas

Since the 16th century, the Western world has dominated the whole world, not only economically and politically, but also culturally.

Then, the Western ideas were considered to be universal and true.

As the result, many non-Western people tried to learn the Western ideas: the Westernization.

However, as will be explained later, the Western philosophers began to criticize the Western ideas.

These philosophers, called postmodernists or poststructuralists, summarized the Western ideas into 'subject and truth', and declared both of them were false.

Now, pluralism and diversity are accepted as the global standard of value.

From this notion, the Western ideas are not universal, but are one of possible perspectives.

In this age of globalization, non-Western people need to develop their own perspective in such a way as all people in the world can be benefited.

However, often the Eastern ideas are expressed in a vague way.

Example: Buddhism

A theory based on an eastern idea must be described in a logical and clear way. Otherwise, people in other regions of the world cannot understand it.

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Chapter 3 Theories and Perspectives in Sociology

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Emile Durkheim: the social level of reality

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(2) Foundation of Sociology

a. Sociological Theories and the Paradigm

“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

e. Karl Marx

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 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? (ibid.:74)

Class Society and Property

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)

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)

f. Emile Durkheim

On Suicide, Penguin Classics, 2007

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

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)

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)

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)

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.

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)

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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 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)

g. Max Weber and Interpretive Sociology

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 the understanding of the actors' motivations.

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

Capitalism has its origin in Western society.

Only in Western society, capitalism emerged.

What is the condition of the creation of capitalism?

“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.

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.

(3) Micro and Macro Sociology

a. Action and Structure: Two Major Perspectives

How can society be described? There are two major perspectives. One is to understand society based on such micro phenomena as action and individual motivation. The other is to understand society based on such macro phenomena as structure, system, norm, institution, etc.

The former is microscopic sociology, and the latter is macroscopic sociology.

example: Waseda University

Micro

Macro

process ↔ structure, system

concrete ↔ abstract

changeable ↔ (relatively) stable

action theory social system theory

phenomenology functionalism

description ↔ explanation

b. Symbolic Interactionism

George Herbert Mead

1934. *Mind, Self, and Society*, 1934, University of Chicago Press

The significance of language in the social interaction.

Symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and ethnomethodology

In this section we briefly outline some important perspectives which place human actors and social interactions at the centre of their analysis: symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and ethnomethodology. Although there are some key differences between them, as a group they stand in contrast to structural theories in sociology. George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) is credited with laying the foundations for an approach to sociology called symbolic interactionism. This is a general label covering all those approaches that investigate social interactions, **with a focus on language and symbols** that lie at their core. Interactionists often reject the very idea that **social structures exist objectively**, and in their work they do not focus on them at all. Herbert Blumer (who coined the term symbolic interactionism) argued that all talk of social structures or social systems is unjustified, as only individuals and their interactions can really be said to exist at all.

Symbolic interactionism (SI) focuses on **micro-level interactions** and the ways in which **meanings** are constructed and transmitted. Mead (1934) argued that the individual self is in fact a social self, produced during interaction processes rather than being biologically given. His theory traces the emergence and development of the self through a series of stages in childhood, and his ideas of the social self underpin much interactionist research (see chapter 1 for a detailed discussion of Mead's ideas).

Recognizing that humans use symbols in communication is a basic premise of the approach. A symbol is something that refers to or stands for something else, so words, gestures or objects can all be used to convey meaning during interactions. However, the same symbol can convey different meanings, even in the same setting. A wedding ring, for instance, may be interpreted by one person as a sign of love and commitment, but by their spouse as signifying a loss of freedom. The symbolic character of human communication marks it out as different from most animal behaviour, which involves responses to objective stimuli. Human interactions are not simply automatic behavioural responses but involve symbols in the creation of meaning. This is why sociologists reject biologically based theories of social life.

The centre of symbolic interactionism for some thirty years until 1950 was the University of Chicago's Department of Sociology (known as the **Chicago School**), though by no means all Chicago sociologists were interactionists. The department was also home to the 'ecological' approach of Louis Wirth, Robert E. Park and Ernest Burgess (see chapter 6, 'Cities and Urban Life', for a discussion of this approach). Nonetheless, having an institutional base was an important factor in popularizing the approach. Arguably, the most successful symbolic interactionist is **Erving Goffman** (1922-82). Goffman's studies of mental 'asylums', processes of stigmatization and the ways in which people present their selves in social encounters have become sociological classics, as much for their methodology and observational style as for their findings. In developing his '**dramaturgical analysis**', which works with the metaphor of the theatre, Goffman has had a wide influence on sociology students across the world.

Phenomenological Sociology

Phenomenology is an actor-centred perspective which deals with the ways in which social life is actually **experienced**. Literally, phenomenology is the systematic study of phenomena - things as they appear in our experience. Its roots in sociology lie in the philosophical work of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl, though in sociological research the Austrian-born philosopher and sociologist **Alfred Schutz** (1899-1959) has been more important. Schutz concentrated on people's experience of everyday life and the ways in which everyday experience come to be '**taken for granted**' as part of the **lifeworld** --- the world as it is routinely experienced and lived as natural. Schutz refers to the process in which social life is made to appear familiar as adopting a 'natural attitude'. For Schutz, the task of **phenomenological sociology** is to understand better how this happens and what its consequences are.

Schutz was particularly interested in **typifications** - the way that experienced phenomena are classified according to previous experience. Typification is commonplace. When we meet someone we perhaps think 'Oh she's that kind of person', or 'He seems an honest type'. Typification helps to order our world and make it more predictable and therefore 'safe'. But if this becomes **stereotypification** it can also be dangerous - the illegitimate generalization about people based simply on their membership of a certain social group. Examples of stereotyping are racism, sexism and negative attitudes towards all disabled people. Individuals also tend to make the assumption that everyone thinks in much the same way as they do and they can safely forget about problems of interpersonal communication. Once assumptions of this kind become internalized, they are sedimented below the surface of conscious existence, forming the **basis of the natural attitude**. In this way, people experience important aspects of the social world, such as language and culture, as objective and external to themselves, and 'society' is taken as a thing-like entity separate from the individual. Phenomenology has not had the same impact on sociology as some of the other perspectives, though it did give rise to ethnomethodology.

Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology --- the systematic study of the methods used by 'natives' (members of a particular society) to construct their social worlds --- is a third interactionist perspective. Its roots can be traced back to phenomenological philosophy, but it rose to prominence only in the 1960s with the research studies of Harold Garfinkel (1917-2011) and Aaron Cicourel.

Ethnomethodologists were highly critical of mainstream sociology, particularly Parsonian structural functionalism, which Garfinkel thought treated people as if they were 'cultural dopes' - passive recipients of society's socializing agents - rather than creative actors in their own right. Garfinkel took issue with Durkheim's famous statement that sociologists should 'treat social facts as things'. For Garfinkel, this should only be the starting point for enquiry, not assumed in advance of it. Ethnomethodology seeks to uncover just how social facts are created by society's members and come to have their thing-like character.

(4) Talcott Parsons and Social System Theory

a. Action System

Durkheim started the macro tradition in sociology, and it led to the social system theory.

Talcott Parsons (*The Social System*, 1971, Free Press) constructed a social system theory, and called it **structural functional theory**.

In the middle of the 20th century, the structural functional theory was the most influential theory in sociology.

b. Action System and its Sub-Systems

Parsons considers the concrete action system is too complicated to be analyzed by a single discipline. He divided the action system (the whole) into four sub-systems.

1. **Organism:** to be studied by physiology
2. **Personality system:** to be studied by psychology
3. **Social system** (norms): to be studied by sociology
4. **Cultural system:** to be studied by cultural anthropology

c. The Social System

According to Parsons, the object of sociology is the social system. It has following characteristics.

1. The social system exists in an environment.
2. The social system has its own boundary.
3. The social system has structures.
4. The **structures** perform **functions** to maintain the system.

d. Structural Functionalism

The social system needs **functions** of **structures**.

Structural functionalism proposed by Parsons is based on an **organic model**: like the biological body, each part or structure of society **contributes to** the maintenance of the whole.

The principle of the social system: self-preservation and maintenance of the social system.

e. Four Major Functions (AGIL Scheme)

Adaptation

Goal Attainment

Integration

Latent-pattern Maintenance

f. Socialization

In the social system theory, the basic relation between individuals and the social system is ***socialization***.

Individuals are socialized (educated) into ***status and roles*** (norms, institutions) of the system.

Individuals are expected to perform function for the system (an organic metaphor).

g. Criticism

In the middle of the 20th century, functionalism was the paradigm of sociology.

In the 1960s, it was criticized as

- 1) ignoring human **agency**, because the parts of the social system are evaluated only in terms of their contribution (function) to the **whole**.
- 2) being too **conservative**, because functionalists considered **maintenance** (= self-preservation) of the system as the principle of sociology.