

# I - 2. Sociological Theories

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## **I - 2. Sociological Theories**

### **(1) Outline**

#### **a. Selected References**

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**Anthony Giddens and Philip W. Sutton 2013, *Sociology*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., Polity Press**  
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## b. “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)

### c. Becoming and Doing

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**.

#### **d. 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

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)

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

MJ: ***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)

## It Came 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)

## They Came through Me

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)

“Each individual possesses a conscience which to a greater or lesser degree serves to restrain the unimpeded flow of impulses destructive to others. But when he merges his person into an organizational structure, a new creature replaces autonomous man, unhindered by the limitations of individual morality, freed of humane inhibition, mindful only of the sanctions of authority.” (Milgram, Stanley 1974 *Obedience to Authority*, Harper and Row: 188)

“In telling this tale I attempt no compliment to my own sagacity. I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me. Now, at the end of three years struggle the nation's condition is not what either party, or any man devised, or expected. God alone can claim it.” (Basler 1953:282)

“One main problem for socially skilled actors is to find a way to link actors or groups with widely different preferences and help reorder those preferences. This aggregation process, once it gets going, can take on a life of its own. Once a number of actors come on board, others will likely follow.” (Fligstein, Neil and Doug McAdam 2012 *A Theory of Fields*, Oxford, Oxford University Press: 52)

## (2) Foundation of Sociology

### a. 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*, 7<sup>th</sup> 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?

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## 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)

## 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

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.

## 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

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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 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.

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.

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.

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.

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 and Sutton, *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 administering ***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.