

SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

THE FOUNDATION OF
SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH
AND ITS PRODUCT

EVOLUTION OF THEORY

- RATIONALALITY AND REASON EMERGE IN RESPONSE TO UNRESOLVED SOCIAL PROBLEMS
 - GROUNDED IN FAILURE OF EXISTING INSTITUTIONAL FORCES TO MITIGATE SOCIAL PROBLEMS
- NEED FOR EMPIRICAL STRUCTURE IN THINKING

THE BASICS OF THEORY

- DEFINITION OF THEORY:
 - Statement(s) based on repeated, systematic observation or experimentation, which can be duplicated by disassociated parties, that explains facets of the observable world so well that it becomes accepted as fact.

**CLASSICAL THEORY
(aka PERSPECTIVE)**

1. CONFLICT THEORY
2. FUNCTIONAL THEORY
(FUNCTIONALISM)
3. SYMBOLIC INTERACTION THEORY
(SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM)

CONFLICT THEORY

Emerges/Evolves During Industrial Revolution

- KARL MARKS AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS

– BOTH GERMAN; DIVERSE
BACKGROUNDS, BUT COMMON
INTEREST IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL
STRUCTURE AND PROBLEMS

KARL MARX

- FATHER WITH ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL ASPIRATIONS
 - PROFESSOR
 - LAWYER
 - JEWISH (PROBLEM)
- CYNICISM OVER FATHER'S INABILITY TO SUCCEED; PERCEIVED TO BE THE RESULT OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY GROUNDED IN ECONOMY AND RELIGION

FRIEDRICH ENGELS

- MEMBER OF ELITE INDUSTRIALIST FAMILY
- WEALTHY
- HIGHLY EDUCATED
- CRITIC OF GOVERNMENT AND ELITE FAMILYS' EXPLOITATION OF MASSES

MARX/ENGELS COLLABORATION

- MET IN FRANCE
- DISSIMILAR PERSONAL BACKGROUNDS BUT IMMEDIATE CONNECTION BASED ON SHARED IDEOLOGY
- RESOLUTION TO DEVOTE LIVES TO RESOLUTION OF ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION GROUNDED IN NEW, INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY

ESSENTIALS OF CONFLICT THEORY

1. SOCIAL INEQUALITY GROUNDED IN EMERGENCE OF ECONOMICALLY BASED CLASS SYSTEM
2. SOCIAL INEQUALITY PERPETUATED THROUGH LACK OF WORKER UNITY
3. RESOLUTION OF EXPLOITATIVE DIVISION OF SOCIETY RESULT OF CONFLICT AT TWO LEVELS

TWO LEVELS OF CONFLICT

1. LEVEL ONE IS OBVIOUS CONFLICT BETWEEN OWNERS (BOURGEOISIE) AND WORKERS (PROLETARIAT). VISIBLE AND UNDERSTANDABLE
2. LEVEL TWO IS HIDDEN CONFLICT CREATED, ENCOURAGED AND PERPETUATED BY BOURGEOISIE WITHIN THE PROLETARIAT. HIDDEN AND COMPLEX

FUNCTIONAL THEORY

Emerges/Evolves During Rise of Modern Science

- EMERGES IN RESPONSE TO AUGUSTE COMTE'S ORIGINAL CALL FOR EMPIRICAL STUDY OF PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE
- EARLY MANIFESTATION IN SOCIAL DARWINISM; LATER REJECTED

ASSOCIATED NAMES

(AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUNCTIONALISM)

- AUGUSTE COMTE (1798-1857)
 - SOUGHT SYSTEM FOR EMPIRICAL/POSITIVIST STUDY
- CHARLES DARWIN (1809-1882) & HERBERT SPENCER (1820-1903)
 - EMPIRICAL STUDY LEADING TO POSITIVIST DATA
- WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER (1840-1910)
 - ORGANIZATION BASED ON SOCIAL DARWINISM
- EMILE DURKHEIM (1858-1917)
 - FATHER OF FIRST POSITIVIST STUDY – SUICIDE STUDY
- TALCOTT PARSONS (1902-1979)
 - MATHEMATICAL FRAMEWORKS
- ROBERT MERTON (1910-2003)
 - EMPIRICAL STUDY OF 20TH CENTURY ECONOMIC PROCESSES, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

FUNDAMENTALS OF FUNCTIONAL THEORY

- IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL VARIABLES FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES
- TESTING OF VARIABLES THROUGH CROSS REFERENCE OF SOURCES AND MATHEMATICAL ANALYSIS
- EMERGENCE OF "SOCIAL FACTS"

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Emerges/Evolves During Period of Social Diversification

- EMERGES FROM NEED FOR PERSPECTIVE BASED IN HUMAN HISTORY AND SOCIAL EXCHANGE
 - MAX WEBER AND GERMAN HISTORICISM BECOME LOOSE INSPIRATION FOR PERSPECTIVE
- EVOLVES AS PERSPECTIVE BASED ON "MICRO" WORLD OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE

ASSOCIATED NAMES

(AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM)

- GEORGE HERBERT MEAD (1863-1931)
 - PRAGMATIC UNDERSTANDING OF LIFE AS SOCIAL PRODUCT AND OF SELF AS PURPOSEFUL AND CREATIVE
- CHARLES HORTON COOLEY (1864-1929)
 - SELF-REFLECTION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL BEHAVIOR
- HERBERT BLUMER (1900-1987)
 - DREW ON WORK OF MEAD (WAS MEAD'S STUDENT) AS WELL AS OF W.I. THOMAS (THEORUM) AND JOHN DEWEY (HUMAN SOCIETY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE NATURAL WORLD)

- ERVING GOFFMAN (1922-1982)
 - DRAMATURGY
 - "THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE"
 - "ASYLUMS"
 - "STIGMA: NOTES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SPOILED IDENTITY"
 - "FRAMES OF TALK"

– FAVORITE QUOTE: "SOCIETY IS AN INSANE ASYLUM RUN BY THE INMATES"

FUNDAMENTALS OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

1. HUMAN BEINGS ACT TOWARD THINGS ON THE BASIS OF THE MEANINGS THEY ASCRIBE TO THOSE THINGS
2. THE MEANING OF SUCH THINGS IS DERIVED FROM, OR ARISED OUT OF, THE SOCIAL INTERACTION THAT ONE HAS WITH OTHERS AND THE SOCIETY
3. THESE MEANINGS ARE HANDLED IN, AND MODIFIED THROUGH, AN INTERPRETIVE PROCESS USED BY THE PERSON IN DEALING WITH THE THINGS HE/SHE ENCOUNTERS

Theory:	FUNCTIONALISM	CONFLICT THEORY	SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM
View of Society	Objective, stable, cohesive	Objective, hierarchical, fragmented	Subjective, perceived in the minds of people
Basic Question	Individuals occupy fixed social roles	Individuals microcosms to society	Individual and society are interdependent
View of Inequality	Inevitable, functional for society	Result of struggle over scarce resources	Inequality determined through meaning of status symbols
Basis of Social Order	Consensus Among public on common values	Power, coercion	Collective meaning system; society created through social interaction
Source of Social Change	Social disorganization and adjustment to achieve equilibrium; change is gradual	Struggle, competition	Ever-changing web of interpersonal relationships and changing meaning of things
Major Criticism	A conservative view of society that underplays power differences among and between groups	Understates the degree of cohesion and stability in society	Has a weak analysis of inequality and tends to ignore racial/ethnic differences between groups in society; overstates the subjective basis of society

**APPLICATION OF THEORY TO
SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY**

1. QUANTITATIVE STUDY

all behavior can be reduced to scientific data
subject to statistical analysis

2. QUALITATIVE STUDY

natural sciences can't tell the whole story of
man and his society, deeper interpretive
study and understanding is needed

**ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS
GUIDING RESEARCH**

- **REQUIRE MULTIPLE SOURCES OF DATA**
- **QUESTION ALL SOURCES OF DATA**
- **TEST DATA THROUGH REPEATED
OBSERVATION AND EXPERIMENTATION**
- **REQUIRE MULTIPLE PARTY EXAMINATION
AND VERIFICATION OF DATA AND
EMERGENT RESULTS**
- **NO OBSERVATION ACCEPTED AT FACE
VALUE**

PRIMARY METHODS OF STUDY

1. HISTORICAL/SECONDARY
2. SURVEY RESEARCH
3. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION
4. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

SUMMARY

1. SOCIOLOGY IS A SCIENTIFICALY ORGANIZED DISCIPLINE WITH MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO UNDERSTANDING; THEORY IS FOUNDATION FOR STUDY
2. OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE PROCESSES ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE
3. NURTURE DOMINATES OVER NATURE
4. NEED FOR SOCIOLOGICAL CRAFTSMANSHIP EMERGES
