SOCIOLGICAL THEORY

THE FOUNDATION OF
SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH
AND ITS PRODUCT

EVOLUTION OF THEORY

• RATIONALITY 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; PERCEIVE TO BE THE
  RESULT OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY
  GROUNDED IN ECONOMY AND
  RELIGION
<table>
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<th>FRIEDRICH ENGELS</th>
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<tr>
<td>• MEMBER OF ELITE INDUSTRIALIST FAMILY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• WEALTHY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• HIGHLY EDUCATED</td>
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<tr>
<td>• CRITIC OF GOVERNMENT AND ELITE FAMILYS’ EXPLOITATION OF MASSES</td>
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<th>MARX/ENGELS COLLABORATION</th>
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<td>• MET IN FRANCE</td>
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<td>• DISSIMILAR PERSONAL BACKGROUNDS BUT IMMEDIATE CONNECTION BASED ON SHARED IDEOLOGY</td>
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<td>• RESOLUTION TO DEVOTE LIVES TO RESOLUTION OF ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION GROUNDED IN NEW, INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY</td>
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<th>ESSENTIALS OF CONFLICT THEORY</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. SOCIAL INEQUALITY GROUNDED IN EMERGENCE OF ECONOMICALLY BASED CLASS SYSTEM</td>
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<td>2. SOCIAL INEQUALITY PERPETUATED THROUGH LACK OF WORKER UNITY</td>
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<td>3. RESOLUTION OF EXPLOITATIVE DIVISION OF SOCIETY RESULT OF CONFLICT AT TWO LEVELS</td>
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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.L. 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
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 scientifically 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