

Social & Political Theory

2009/2010

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The content of the course.

- ▶ The history of the systematic reflection on 'the social': its emergence and deconstruction.
- ▶ Periods of crisis and the process of narrowing down the focus of social reflection:
 - Ancient Greece and the collapse of the homogeneous universe: socio-political reality emerges.
 - 17th Century: 'the social' separated from 'the political.'
 - 18th Century: the emergence of 'society'; theory of progress.
 - 19th Century: three continuations of the 'Enlightenment project':
 - ▶ Herbert Spencer: the history of the evolution of social institutions;
 - ▶ August Comte: what keeps people together;
 - ▶ Karl Marx: society as an ideological fiction.

The content of the course.

- ▶ 19th/20th Century: academic sociology in search of the analytic units of social theory.
 - Émile Durkheim: social facts.
 - Max Weber: social action.
 - Structural functionalism: how to integrate social action and social system?

What is 'theory' in sociology?

- ▶ Theory as 'perspective.' The way of seeing, that defines what we can see from a certain point of view and orders what we actually see. (Brown)
[William Skidmore in his (1975) Theoretical Thinking in Sociology, presents 'perspectives' as a certain type of theory, consisting of relatively loosely connected elements: statements, insights, categories.]

Theory as perspective.

- ▶ Richard Harvey Brown: theory as a certain way of looking at things which orders them so that we can understand the relations between them.

- ▶ The problem of 'looking at things': do 'things' exist independently of the way we look at them? 'Thing-in-itself'; 'thing-for-us.'

From 'looking' to talking.

- ▶ 'Things' in social life largely exist as things named, that is formulated in a language provided by a theory-perspective. In most cases, armed with a language of one theory we approach 'things' named in languages of other 'theories', including the popular discourses of people involved in their daily lives and perceiving their worlds through the categories of common sense.

Theory as an art of translation.

- ▶ The task of theory as 'translating statements, made within one...tradition, so that they can be understood within the system of knowledge based on another tradition.' (Zygmunt Bauman)
- ▶ 'Interpreters and legislators': the problem of a normative theory. 'I return to sociology...with a hope of finding a home where social analysis is valued because it is inspired by a will to make a better world.' (Steven Seidman)

The problem of 'order.'

- ▶ Without order – unknowable chaos; knowledge presupposes (a bit of) order.
- ▶ Postmodern criticism of modern "narrative" (theory) as a "representation that arrests ambiguity and controls the proliferation of meaning by imposing a standard and standpoint of interpretation that is taken to be fixed and independent of the time it represents" (Richard Ashley)
- ▶ 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' theories. The problem of change. Theory as an 'arrest of change' vs. theory as a 'voice of change.'
- ▶ Existential meaning of theory: to transcend the contingent and transient nature of social life. Theorizing as a quest for immortality.

Modernity as discontinuity.

- ▶ "When contemporary society calls itself 'modern,' it identifies itself with the help of a differentiation from the past. "
- ▶ Modern society's relation to the past is constituted "not through identification but rather through disidentification, through difference. Whether we like it or not, we are no longer what we were, and we will not be what we are now....[T]he characteristics of today's modernity are not those of yesterday and not those of tomorrow, and in this lies modernity." (3)

- ▶ Luhmann, N. 1998. *Observations on Modernity*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Social theory as theorizing the rupture.

- ▶ „...social theory, and sociology in particular, was born of a strong sense of a rupture of present and past and a desire to overcome the dichotomies that this gave rise to: community and society, the sacred and the profane, status and contract, individual and society, self and other, origin and goal, differentiation and integration. Thus social theory was greatly preoccupied with the search for a principle of integration which would be capable of reconciling the contradictions of modernity and imposing unity on a disordered and fragmented world” (Delanty 2000, 29).

What is ‘the thing’ social theory looks at?

- ▶ Social theory is the ‘interpretation of “the social,” which came to be seen as a domain mediating the private world and the state.’ (Gerard Delanty)
- ▶ Social theory is a response to and reflection on modernity. Before modernity society ‘did not exist in the sense of a recognizable social domain distinct from kinship, economic and military functions, the state, or religious ties.’ (Delanty)

“Society” as a modern invention.

- ▶ ‘The idea that human beings can be understood from the social arrangements they form is a modern one...In the simplest sense, a society was a system of groups of people and institutions linked to each other in a variety of ways. This linkage...did not stem from a “plan”, was not stipulated in laws or rules and was neither purely “political” nor purely “economic” – and it was precisely this differentiation that made societies such complicated units that were so difficult to manage.’ (Johan Heilbron)

Three main problem areas of social theory. (Delanty)

- ▶ the socialization of the individual;
- ▶ the rationality of knowledge;
- ▶ the legitimation of power.

What makes 'the social'?

- ▶ 'Following the Enlightenment, the social was constructed around the play of four polar dimensions. These are materiality, morality and habit, culture and rationality. By materiality, I mean the view...that society is constituted primarily by forms of production, distribution and consumption. By morality and habit, I mean the view...that society is primarily a moral and organic entity integrated through shared values. By culture, I mean symbolic and linguistic practices transmitted through socialization but knowable through techniques of understanding and decoding. By reason, I mean the view that the social is constituted through calculated and goal-directed action...' (Larry Ray)

Materiality (Production, distribution, consumption)	Morality and habit (Shared values)
Culture (Communicative practices; socialization)	Rationality (Calculated action)

Essay topics.

- ▶ In what sense is social theory an intellectual product of modernity?
- ▶ In what sense is Karl Marx' thought a continuation of the Enlightenment and in what sense it is its negation?
- ▶ In which way(s) social theory of the 19th Century did approach social change?
- ▶ Compare Durkheim's and Weber's approaches to religion. Are they similar or different?
- ▶ What are the key elements of Weber's idea of sociology?
- ▶ What are the key elements of Parsons' concept of society?

Useful hints.

- Do not plagiarize: we'll find out and prosecute you severely.
- Do not use the Internet resources, in particular the Wikipedia: if you are a newcomer to social theory, you do not know enough to properly make use of such resources; if you are experienced, you do not need to use them.
- Do not quote too much.

Useful hints.

- ▶ You need to make a substantial reference to at least four texts. At least half of the texts to which you make reference must be those listed in the course syllabus.
- ▶ Navigate smartly between egocentrism and "death-of-the-author" approach.
- ▶ Please, avoid "and-now-I'll-give-you-an-example-from-my-country" approach.

Ancient Greece

- ▶ Homogeneous universe: a stable synthesis of the natural, the human and the sacred.
 - No clear boundaries;
 - 'Interchangeable languages';
 - 'Taken for granted';
 - Single, fundamental order.

Existential legitimacy.

- ▶ Legitimacy as a moral and as a factual problem.
- ▶ The "domination of truism" (M. Finley).
- ▶ Tradition.
- ▶ Religion.

Max Weber: traditional legitimacy - based on "an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy

of those exercising authority under them."

Single, fundamental order.

- ▶ Legitimacy based on the conception of the universe as an unified totality, characterized by a single, fundamental order, which structures both nature and society in a way that distinction between them cannot be expressed.

"It is over this order that Zeus, the father of gods and human beings, presides; and it is over particular communities within this order that kings preside, dispensing, if they are just, the justice that Zeus has entrusted to them." (A. MacIntyre)

Polis as order.

- ▶ Social/political organization of life in a city-state.
- ▶ Aristotle: human being as *zoon politikon*, "social and political creature" who lives in *polis* and only there can develop his/her human features. "Whoever does not live in *polis* is either a god or an animal."

Greek concept of justice.

- ▶ Two notions of justice:
 - justice as *themis*: justice dispensed by the ruler;
 - justice as *dike*: the quality of being just, enabling to conduct one's actions and affairs in accordance with the universal, sacred order.
- ▶ *Dike* as a manifestation of the sacred order. Function: maintaining the order as taken for granted, unchangeable; making it unnecessary to provide rational justifications for what people do and for what does exist.

The crisis of "justice."

- ▶ Degeneration of *themis*.
- ▶ Social conflicts; re-definition of *dike* by the subjects (W. Jäger).
- ▶ New concept of *dike* as a legal principle, independent of the ruler's mercy, to which each member of a community can appeal. *Dike* connected with equality: rulers and subjects meet each other as equal in face of the law. (Similarly to Weber's idea of legal-rational legitimacy.)

Social context.

- ▶ Acceleration of change; social/political transformations within *polis*.
- ▶ The encounter with the Other.
 - Crisis of ethnocentrism.
 - *Logographers* – the first Greek sociologists.

- The acceleration of change.

"An open-minded sailor became skeptical about the traditional order because he saw too many different and diverse things in other countries; and an Athenian citizen, on the other hand, living within the confines of his city and without knowledge of the 'foreign', had to greet with skepticism the value and meaning of what he treated as his own, because it changed too often during his life-time and even with his personal participation." (V. Solovyev.)

The role of writing.

- ▶ J.-P. Vernant: writing as an aspect of *logos*; medium through which justice and equality manifest in social life of *polis* as a rational and democratic form of social organization.
- ▶ Specificity of orally transmitted cultures: "paralyze of mind," "formular mentality," and hierarchical transmission of knowledge in a form of a monologue. Fixed in order not to forget. (E. Havelock)
- ▶ An alternative approach. J. Derrida: writing as *Pharmakon*: a dangerous drug which apparently helps memory but actually replaces its natural movement with the "dictatorship of signs;" writing is against life.

Writing against tradition.

- ▶ "The advent of literacy, especially mass literacy, is a major influence modifying tradition. When literacy is confined to a small elite, it is not necessarily directly corrosive of tradition, since its monopoly by the few can be used to sanction doctrines held to be inherent in 'classical scriptures'." (A. Giddens)

The role of philosophers.

- ▶ The death of Socrates or how in the situation of Crisis, Critical thinking can be perceived as Crime and how the real crime is easy to be committed. Plato's life tragedy (Solovyev): Starting with the rejection of the world in which Socrates had happened to be sentenced to death, ended up with the project of the world in which Socrates would be sentenced for sure (if allowed to speak in the first place).

Plato on *polis* and change.

The One remains,
the Many changes and passes.

.....

Life like a dome from many-coloured glass
stains the white radiance of eternity

until death tramples it into fragments.

Shelley, *Adonais*

Plato's politics.

"Politics [according to Plato] is the art of unifying and organizing human actions and directing them to a common end...It is the expression of Plato's fundamental tendency: the tendency to unify the manifold, to bring the chaos of our minds, of our desires and passions, of our political and social life into a cosmos, into order and harmony.

Ernst Cassirer, *Plato's Republic*, in: E. Cassirer, The Myth of the State,

Change is evil, rest is divine...

- ▶ "Good" – "everything that preserves."
- ▶ "Evil" – "everything that destroys or corrupts."
- ▶ How to "arrest change"? The idea of a "closed society."

"Closed society"

- ▶ Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. (1945)
 - Fixed and segregated slave state based on equality among guardians and inequality between them and the rest; "no-mingling" principle.
 - Control.
 - Elimination of property (to eliminate conflict).
 - No individual responsibility.
 - "Great project."

Popper on the "open society."

- ▶ A society of individuals who use their rationality to make decisions for which they are responsible and who may want to gradually change the arrangements of their social life ("piecemeal engineering") to eliminate what they decide to be wrong.
- ▶ Open society is made out of individual decisions that lead people into the unknown, the uncertain, the insecure...

Transformations of the forms of rule.

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An alternative approach: *The Statesman*

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EVIL	Who rules?	GOOD
Tyranny	One	Monarchy
Oligarchy	A few	Aristocracy
Lawless democracy	The many	Conservative (lawful) democracy

Mechanisms of change

- ▶ Psychological (quasi-ideal→timocracy).
- ▶ Between patterns of structuration (prestige vs. money: timocracy→oligarchy).
- ▶ Economic (rich vs. poor: oligarchy→ democracy).
- ▶ Multiple (within democracy).
- ▶ Access to means of coercion (democracy→ tyranny).
- ▶ Education, planned action (tyranny→ quasi-ideal monarchy).
Hypothetical.

Additional literature.

- ▶ Cassirer, Ernst. The Myth of the State.
- ▶ Derrida, Jacques. The Pharmakon, in: A Derrida Reader. Between the Blinds.
- ▶ Finley, Moses. The Ancient Greeks.
- ▶ Giddens, Anthony. Central Problems in Social Theory.
- ▶ Havelock, Eric. A Preface to Plato.
- ▶ Jäger, Werner. Paidea.
- ▶ Kohanski, Alexander. The Greek Mode of Thought in Western Philosophy.
- ▶ MacIntyre, Alasdair. Whose Justice, Which Rationality?
- ▶ Popper, Karl R. The Open Society and Its Enemies. Vol. 1.
- ▶ Solovyev, Vladimir. Plato's Life Tragedy.
- ▶ Vernant, Jean-Pierre. The Origins of Greek Thought.
- ▶ Vidal-Naquet, Pierre. The Black Hunter. Forms of Thought and Forms of Society in the Greek World.
- ▶ Voegelin, Eric. Order and History, Vol. 2: The World of Polis.

Lord Acton on the ancient state.

- ▶ The "vice of the classic State was that it was both Church and State in one. Morality was undistinguished from religion and politics from morals; and in religion, morality, and politics there was only one legislator and one authority... Individuals and families, associations and dependencies were so much material that the sovereign power consumed for its own purposes. What the slave was in the hands of his master, the citizen was in the hands of the community." (*The History of Freedom and Other Essays*)

Lord Acton on medieval politics.

- ▶ The "issue of ancient politics was an absolute state planted on slavery. The political produce of the Middle Ages was a system of states in which authority was restricted by the representation of powerful classes, by privileged associations, and by the acknowledgment of duties superior to those which are imposed

by man." (*The History of Freedom and Other Essays*)

Thomas Hobbes: separation of the social and the political.

- ▶ The crisis of monarchy in England 1625-1658.
- ▶ Main problem: how and from where, in the absence of monarchy, would authority and order come? What legitimates an absolute authority?
- ▶ From organic thinking to individualism: theories of social contract, *homo oeconomicus*, utilitarianism.
- ▶ Main task of *Leviathan* (1651): "to devise (or discover) a means of obliging people...to obey the absolute political authority that could protect them from their own worst inclinations and behaviors." (Schochet)

People in the state of nature.

- ▶ Equality.
 - "equality of ability → equality of hope"
- ▶ Generalized competition: the "war of all against all."
- ▶ Fear of death.
- ▶ Rationality.
- ▶ From instability and generalized fear to security and fear of the sovereign only. Irreversible transfer (alienation) of rights to Government (Leviathan).

Rational foundations of politics.

- ▶ Hobbes would argue that "a proper and rational understanding of one's interest would lead to the recognition that the political order imposed by an absolute sovereign was always to be preferred to a situation in which each person individually sought to maximize his or her advantages...The duty to obey the sovereign – political obligation – was thus a consequence of rationality." (Schochet)

Law of nature.

- ▶ Laws of nature: "convenient articles of peace," "upon which men may be drawn to agreement," suggested by reason and transforming passions inclining men to peace (fear of death) into covenant and contract.
- ▶ "One ought to lay down one's right and have as much liberty against other people as one would allow them to have against oneself."

Reason-Society-Politics

- ▶ Rationality as the rescue of humankind vs. "intellectualization of despotism."
- ▶ Human arrangements (including social institutions) are consciously made and reveal an idea behind them. They are manifestations of an intellectual concept/order, to be discovered or introduced.
- ▶ (Vidal-Naquet: polis as logos.)

Intellectualization of despotism?

- ▶ Despotism as potentially liberating and modernizing force. Hobbes was attempting at "dissolving the person of the despot and reconstituting him as an abstraction – absolute reason, a combination of power and reason that disguises power as rational legislation." (Wolin)

[Foucault: power-knowledge, dissemination of power; Baudrillard: dissolving of power]

Liberal interpretation of Hobbes.

- ▶ Limited political order.
 - No full control.
 - At the service of partial, fragmented and conflicted social orders.

Liberal interpretation of Hobbes.

- ▶ „Hobbes sometimes indulged himself in overstatement as to the possibility and desirability of achieving political and moral order through contract, covenant and the rule of the Leviathan. But we have to consider the possibility that the common or public order he thought possible and desirable would encompass no more than limited aspects of human life, was neither meant nor expected to impose any very extensive controls on the thinking and acting of individual human beings. The view that he is first and foremost a theorist of individual makings and unmakings suggests that public order is for the sake of the multiplicity of partial, personal, and internally conflicted orders that each of us makes and remakes for ourselves." (Flathman 6)

The world as "human-made."

- ▶ People as creators of themselves and their worlds: "Thomas Hobbes is first and foremost a theorist of individual human beings as the *Makers* of themselves and their worlds." (Flathman, 1)

In search of order and stability.

- ▶ The act of "naming" – making the world intelligible and predictable.
- ▶ Accumulation of "names" into languages, theories and sciences.
- ▶ Accumulation of "names" into modes of action: legal rules, political institutions.

"Semantic" conception of the social world.

- ▶ „The most fundamental artifice of all is inventing names and assigning them to nameless and largely incomprehensible things... By performing acts of naming they [individuals] endeavor to impart a degree of stability and intelligibility to themselves and their world. As they cumulate names into languages and form them into conceptions, further thinking and acting become possible, in particular those modes of thought and action that produce the vastly more complex makings that are the sciences and the arts, moral and legal rules, the institutions of government.“ (Flathman, 3)

The Ruler as the master of meaning.

- ▶ Power as a limited public order constructed by individuals to protect stability of their social life. (Liberal interpretation: Flathman)
- ▶ Power as an active agent, controlling language and corrupting communication. (Critical interpretation: Wolin)

The control of language and the corruption of communication

- ▶ "The absolute lawmaking authority of the sovereign means that he is the master of meaning in the social world or, more precisely, its monopolist. Hobbes extended the despotic into the very terms of discourse and sought to expel the forms of communication which threatened his monological ideal. The despotic is expressed in his insistence that scientific progress and man's happiness depend upon 'exact definitions, first snuffed and purged from ambiguity.' What lies behind his obsession for linguistic purity is a concern to constrain the possibilities of interpretation while extending those of undeniable, logically necessary demonstrations." (Sheldon Wolin)

[Bourdieu: symbolic violence]

The problem of change, the problem of unity.

- ▶ Dynamic character of the world as designed in Hobbes' theory:
- ▶ A world "constructed out of nothing more substantial than the arbitrary wills and

artifices of radically particularized individual beings could hardly be orderly, stable or durable." (Flathman, 5)

- ▶ Hobbesian alternative: "peace, order and a measure of commodious living at the price of docile submission to authoritarian government; assertive self-making and self-direction at the cost of disorder, conflict, and mutual destruction." (Flathman, 7)

The principle of representation.

- ▶ As a solution to the "One – Many" problem.
- ▶ As a solution to the "stability – change" problem.

"A Multitude of men are made *One* Person, when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented; so that it be done with the consent of every one of that Multitude in particular. For it is the *Unity* of the Representer, not the *Unity* of the represented, that maketh the Person *One*." (Hobbes, Leviathan)

Literature.

- ▶ Norberto Bobbio, The Future of Democracy, in: The Polity Reader in Social Theory. (1995)
- ▶ Richard E. Flathman, Thomas Hobbes: Skepticism, Individuality and Chastened Politics. (1993)
- ▶ Gordon J. Schochet, Intending (Political) Obligation: Hobbes and the Voluntary Basis of Society, in: Mary G. Dietz (ed.) Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory. (1990)
- ▶ Margaret R. Sommers, The Privatization of Citizenship. How to Unthink a Knowledge Culture, in: V. E. Bonnell and L. Hunt (eds.), Beyond the Cultural Turn. New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture. (1999)
- ▶ David L. Westby, The Growth of Sociological Theory. Human Nature, Knowledge, and Social Change. (1991)
- ▶ Sheldon S. Wolin, Hobbes and the Culture of Despotism, in: Mary G. Dietz (ed.), Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory. (1990)

"The One and the Many" revisited.

- ▶ "The multitude which is not reduced to unity is confusion, the unity which does not depend on the multitude is tyranny."
(Blaise Pascal, 1623-1662)

The Enlightenment's solutions:

"Progress"

"Society"

The idea of progress.

- ▶ The idea of the universal history of humankind, in which human potential unfolds gradually, passing through certain stages, towards a continuous advancement to greater perfection. (A. R. J. Turgot, 1750)

- ▶ The idea of progress as an answer to the acceleration of change and to the uniformity/diversity dilemma.

Aspects of the idea of progress.

- ▶ Progress is a fact. (Science needed)
- ▶ Global character of progress. (An attribute of humankind)
- ▶ Unilinearity of progress.
- ▶ Continuity and accumulation → evolution.
- ▶ Infinite character of progress.

An example: Condorcet.

- ▶ Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas Caritat, Marquise de Condorcet, *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of Human Mind* (1793)

Condorcet: table of content.

- ▶ Men are united in tribes;
- ▶ Pastoral peoples: The transition from this stage to that of agricultural people;
- ▶ The progress of agricultural peoples up to the invention of the alphabet;
- ▶ The progress of the human mind in Greece up to the division of the sciences about the time of Alexander the Great;
- ▶ The progress of the sciences from their division to their decline;

Condorcet, content.

- ▶ The decadence of knowledge to its restoration about the time of the Crusades;
- ▶ The early progress of science from its revival in the West to the invention of printing;
- ▶ From the invention of printing to the time when philosophy and the sciences shook off the yoke of authority;
- ▶ From Descartes to the foundation of the French republic;
- ▶ The future progress of the human mind.

Condorcet: factors of progress.

- ▶ Factors accelerating progress: science, philosophy, education,

inventions (individual and collective), globalization.

- ▶ Factors hindering progress: superstitions, tradition, “comforts of the state of nature.”
 - Superstitions: of the uneducated, of the educated, of the rulers.

Society.

- ▶ Immanuel Kant: Society as a framework and a result of progress. Society as a compromise between chaos and regulation.
- ▶ Society as a domain of freedom.

Chaos (conflict)–freedom–regulation (order).

Kant on society.

- ▶ “*The highest purpose of nature—i.e. the development of all natural capacities—can be fulfilled for mankind only in society...which has not only the greatest freedom, and therefore a continual antagonism among its members, but also the most precise specification and preservation of the limits of this freedom in order that it can coexist with the freedom of others.*” (Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht, 1784)

Society: aspects of the new meaning of the term.

- ▶ descriptive: every institution, every human arrangement implies social interaction and can thus be defined as “society” (Diderot);
- ▶ polemical: the social arrangements as purely secular matter, more fundamental than the politically/legally defined relations (criticism of state expressed in the name of society);
- ▶ normative: “the term society had a positive connotation that was linked to the original meaning of a form of free association, in which the rights of individuals were respected” (Heilbron).

A definition (Guillaume [“Abbé”] Raynal)

- ▶ “Society is a product of the needs of people, and government a product of their shortcomings. Society always tends towards goodness, government should always be predisposed to suppress evil. Society comes first, it is in origin independent and free; government is set up on its behalf and is solely its instrument...Lastly, society is in essence good; government can be evil, as we well know...” (Histoire philosophique et

politique des deux Indes, 1770)

Critique of "society" – Jean Jacques Rousseau.

- ▶ The "man of man" vs. the "man of nature."
- ▶ Progress as "denaturalization": from nature to conventions.
- ▶ Society is conventional.
- ▶ Society as the fundamental order.
 - Society → politics;
 - Society → human beings (conformity, limited freedom; "relational identity" - in society individuals construct the meaning of their existence and of who they are out of the communications with others).

Rousseau on society.

- ▶ Society does not satisfy natural needs; it satisfies needs it has created.
- ▶ Society is responsible for the growth of inequality (division of labor, property, comparing prestige).
- ▶ Society produces illusions: ("to protect the weaker"). Slavery disguised as freedom.

Dialectic of Enlightenment.

- ▶ T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer on the ambiguity of reason:
 - transcendental reason which "comprises the idea of a free, human social life in which men organize themselves as the universal subject";
 - instrumental reason which "adjusts the world for the ends of self-preservation and recognizes no function other than the preparation of the object from mere sensory material in order to make it the material of subjugation."

The ambiguity of the Enlightenment.

- ▶ "On the one hand the growth of economic productivity furnishes the conditions for a world of greater justice; on the other hand it allows the technical apparatus and the social groups which administer it a disproportionate superiority to the rest of the population. The individual is wholly devalued in relation to the economic powers, which at the same time press the control of society over nature to hitherto unsuspected heights." (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1947, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*)

The Enlightenment and the project of modernity.

- ▶ “The project of modernity as it was formulated by the philosophers of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century consists in the relentless development of (...) sciences, of the universalistic foundations of morality and law, and of autonomous art, all in accord with their own immanent logic. But at the same time it also results in releasing the cognitive potentials accumulated in the process from their esoteric high forms and attempting to apply them in the sphere of praxis, that is to encourage the rational organization of social relations.” (J. Habermas, *Modernity: An Unfinished Project*, p. 45)

The main problem of the Enlightenment.

- ▶ “How can the growth of capabilities be disconnected from the intensification of power relations?” (M. Foucault, *What is Enlightenment*, 48)
- ▶ In other words:
 - What are the purely social mechanisms of social integration that would not limit (too much) an individual freedom?
 - What keeps individuals together in a society?
 - How to reconcile social integration with progress?
 - What is the role of knowledge (reason)?

The legacy of the Enlightenment in the 19th Century.

- ▶ The legacy of the Enlightenment:
 - The problem of history: progress of technology vs. limitation of freedom.
 - The problem of society: order vs. chaos.
 - The problem of reason: science vs. social criticism.
- ▶ 19th Century’s reply: Herbert Spencer: evolutionism and organicism. Auguste Comte: science and transformation of social order. Karl Marx: criticism and deconstruction of society.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857)

The man who invented “sociology.”

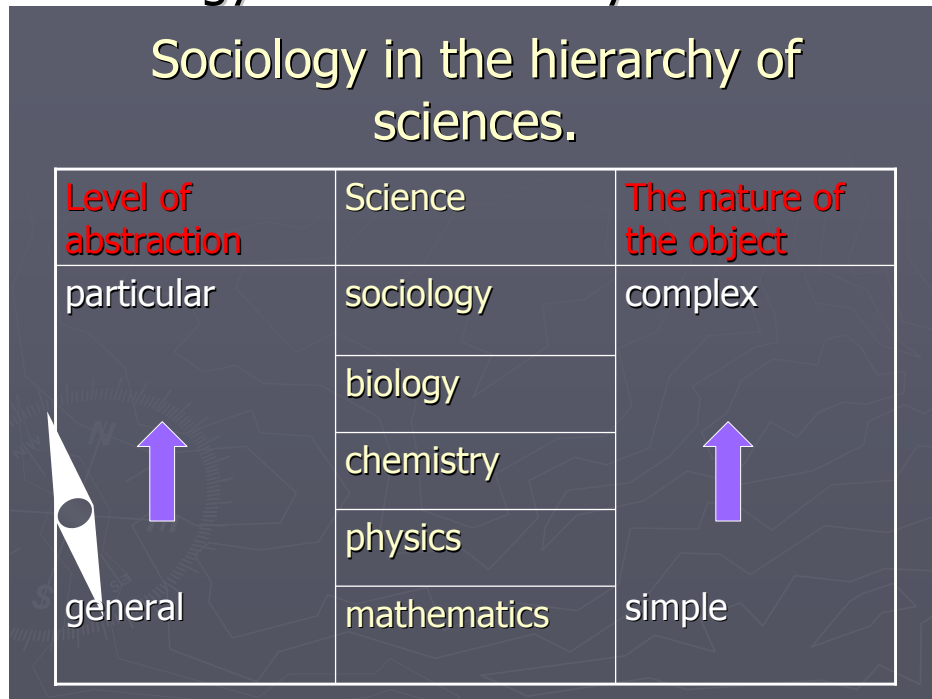
The great transformation.

- ▶ Comte’s “forming crisis:” the transition from theological/military society to scientific/industrial society.
 - Growth and decentralization of wealth: new potential for change.
 - Scientific organization of work.
 - Concentration of working masses.
 - Collapse of “moral discipline”: atomization and weakening of social cohesion.
- ▶ Main problem: how to keep change under control and how to find forces that keep society together?

The idea of sociology.

- ▶ Comte's answer: "Social change must be anchored in the living traditions of a nation's past and in an understanding of the principles of social order." (Seidman) Individuals do not make societies out of nothing.
- ▶ Sociology as a science that studies social order and its transformations.
 - Social statics;
 - Social dynamics.

Sociology in the hierarchy of sciences.



Social statics.

- ▶ The problem of consensus or what transforms individuals into community? "How is self-interest curbed to permit social stability?" (Seidman)
- ▶ Institutions of consensus: force, industry, property and language, family, religion and its secular forms.
- ▶ Comte's concept of society "as a realm of social interaction, social rules, and institutions that are independent of the psychology of individuals." (Seidman).

Sociology as secular religion.

- ▶ “Crisis of civilization can be solved and social stability can be restored on better premises by adjusting human desires to the scientifically established laws of society and by re-establishing a moral order (this time based on science) to replace the deposed authority of Catholic Church.”

Social dynamics.

- ▶ Social change as a transformation (ideally: a growth) of social order. From one form of order to another.
- ▶ Ideal social order: durable but flexible – change does not destroy order but transforms it.
- ▶ Ideal social change: eliminates pathologies of the old order and replaces it with a new one.

The “law of three stages.”

- ▶ Theological: rigid and fixed social order, based on coercion and religion.
- ▶ Metaphysical: disorganization of social order as a result of philosophical critique and revolutionary action.
- ▶ Positive: rational reorganization of social order.

Karl Marx (1818-1883).

- ▶ *Philosophical-Economic Manuscripts* 1844
- ▶ *The German Ideology* 1846
- ▶ *The Poverty of Philosophy* 1847
- ▶ *The Capital. The Criticism of Political Economy.* 1st volume: 1867

Capitalism as the reproduction of the Enlightenment’s paradoxes.

- ▶ “Capitalism brings into existence social conditions that make possible true human freedom, but, at the same time, it blocks that potential by channelling its immense social productivity to the benefit mostly of one small segment of society. The realization of the great human potential created by capitalism requires its transformation.” (Steven Seidman)

Two visions of history in Marx’s thought.

- ▶ deterministic: freedom understood as human ability to use the laws of nature to develop technology and to increase control over nature; history as a progress of the forces of production and growing control of nature.
- ▶ romantic: freedom understood as a true unity of an individual and community; history as a growing slavery of human beings in the economic, political and social spheres.

L. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*.

“Early Marx”: alienation.

- ▶ *Entäusserung* → *Vergegenständlichung* (externalization → objectification: subject – object relation).
- ▶ *Entfremdung* → *Verdinglichung* (estrangement → reification: subject – thing relation).

Alienation.

- ▶ A philosophical concept describing human condition and the constitution of the social world:
 - The world created by human beings appears to them as an alien and hostile entity, ruled by its own, uncontrollable laws. (“Alienation of labor”)
 - Human being separates from his/her “essence”: creativity and self-development.
 - Human beings separate from one another, being unable to set up the authentic, non-instrumental relations. (Social alienation)

False consciousness/ideology.

- ▶ A concept describing the situation of knowledge in the alienated world.
 - Social knowledge is “socially rooted”: an expression of historical conditions (relations of production).
 - Social knowledge is an expression of the ruling class’ interests and legitimizes its domination.
 - Social knowledge is generally a false picture of reality, which makes people unable to recognize the nature of social reality and of their slavery.

“Anti-sociology” of Marx.

- ▶ Sociology as a form of false consciousness that reproduces the system of domination.
- ▶ “Society” as a fiction, as surface reality hiding the real mechanisms of

social processes.

- ▶ "Critical theory" instead the science of society.
- ▶ "Deconstruction" of society:
 - Theory of socio-economic "formations."
 - Theory of class struggle.

Theory of "formation."

- ▶ Mode of production = relations of production (mostly based on the ownership of the means of production) + forces of production (means of production, technologies etc.).
- ▶ Mode of production + "superstructure" = formation.
- ▶ Types of formations:
 - Marx: Ancient, Asiatic, Feudal, Capitalist.
 - Marxists: Primitive Community, Slavery, Feudal, Capitalist, Communist.

History as "trans-formation."

- ▶ Economic mechanism: contradiction within mode of production (relations of production start to slow down the development of the forces of production and need to be re-adjusted).
- ▶ Social mechanism: class struggle.
 - Conflict between the basic classes; "third party winning" (until capitalism).
 - "Dichotomization" of class structure in capitalism
 - The final battle – toward classless, "true" society.

Evolution vs. revolution.

- ▶ Conflict between privileged and unprivileged classes: dynamic force of history but not the main factor of "trans-formation" – until capitalism. Conflict between old and newly emerging dominant classes as the main transforming force until capitalism.
- ▶ Capitalism: revolution as a jump from the Kingdom of Necessity into the Kingdom of Freedom. Discontinuity of history, negation of past history, and the fulfilment of history's "essence."

Food for thought:

- ▶ *The time of revolution is by its very nature anti-historical, the time of reform always makes people think of the paths of history.* (Y. Lotman)

Herbert Spencer 1820-1903

- ▶ *Social Statics* (1851)

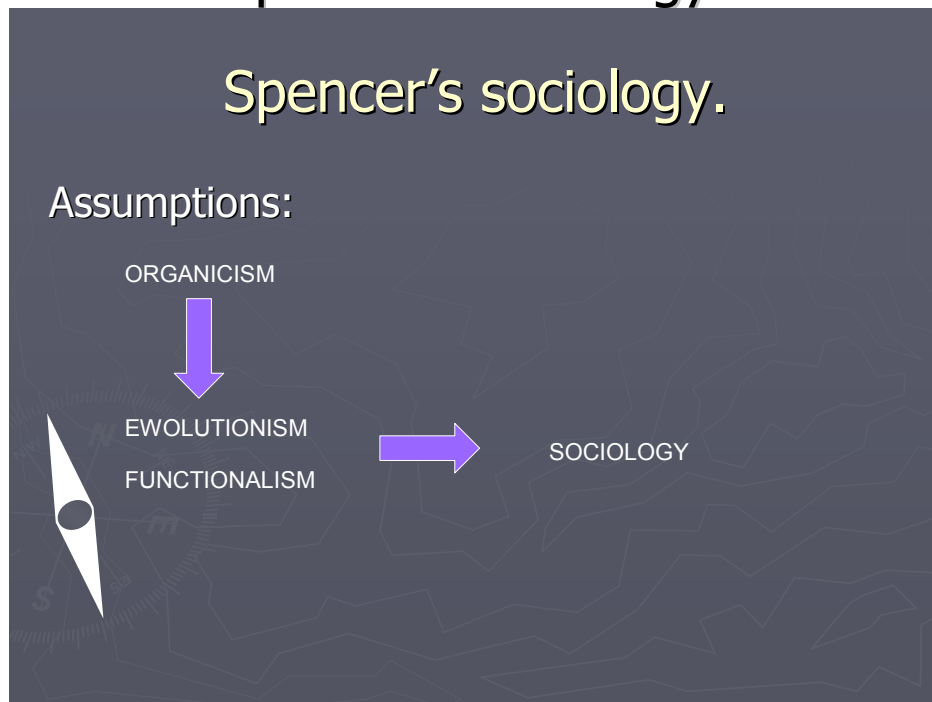
- ▶ *Principles of Sociology* 3 vols. (1874-1896)

The role of Spencer.

- ▶ "If it was Darwin who discovered the principle of evolution, it was Spencer who invented Darwinism."

(Robert Bierstedt, *The Making of Society*)

Spencer's sociology.



Organicism.

- ▶ Society as an organism made out of "organs", "tissues" and "cells."
- ▶ Particular organs are responsible for sustaining the vital functions of the social organism.

Evolutionism

- ▶ Growth of an organism: gradual manifestation of the "organic" tendencies for development.
- ▶ Growth as progress: perfecting the functioning of social organism and its internal structures; better adjustment to the

environment.

Functionalism

- ▶ Function: system-conditioned and system-sustaining action or its result that connects system's needs (functional imperatives) and structures (institutions of social life).

„Laws“ of social evolution.

- ▶ The law of growing integration (bigger and more cohesive populations).
- ▶ The law of growing differentiation and particularization (growing differentiation of social institutions that perform more specific functions).
- ▶ The law of longer duration (of social groups).

Society.

- ▶ An aggregate of people who cooperate in order to achieve common goals. Cooperation presupposes coordination and coordination requires organization. The organization of society (a system of structures or institutions) makes society a special, irreducible form of being.

Organization of society.

- ▶ Unconscious: the division of labor. Individuals strive to achieve their goals and by doing so unconsciously contribute to the development of society.
- ▶ Conscious: political organization. Consciously created to serve society (protection, order) satisfies directly the imperatives of the system but indirectly serves individuals.

Émile Durkheim 1858 - 1917

- ▶ *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893)
- ▶ *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895)
- ▶ *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (1897)
- ▶ *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912)

The Division of Labor...

- ▶ Durkheim's main problem: what makes modern society relatively

integrated collectivity in spite of the existing divisions? What is the source of social *consensus*?

- ▶ Traditional society: *mechanical solidarity*. People stick to each other because they are similar, and they are similar because they are doing similar stuff. No social differentiation → mental similarity (shared worldview) → social solidarity.

Modern society.

- ▶ *Organic solidarity*: solidarity of the different. People specialize in different forms of activity which contribute to the functioning of social organism. The understanding of this leads to the feeling of unity: everybody is needed for the whole to survive. Reflective character of social bonds.

Two sources of integration.

- ▶ Division of labor (social differentiation).
- ▶ Collective consciousness.

Division of labor.

- ▶ Factors influencing the division of labor.
 - The volume of the society: the number of individuals belonging to a given community;
 - The material density: the number of individuals on a given territory;
 - The moral density: the intensity of communication between individuals.Division of labor (social differentiation) as a peaceful solution to the problems of competition and coordination in conditions of growing volume of the society and increase of both material and moral density.

Consequences of Durkheim's approach.

- ▶ Anti-Marxist: social divisions are factors of integration, not a sign of the fundamental social antagonism. Functionalism vs. conflict approach.
- ▶ Anti-psychologist: an individual (individual identity) is the consequence of social divisions. "The individual is born of society, not society of individuals." "Sociologism": primacy of society over an individual.
 - historical: societies with mechanical solidarity come first;
 - methodological: we may explain individual phenomena by the state of collectivity, not the other way round.

Collective consciousness.

- ▶ The body of beliefs, values and norms, which characterizes a

given collectivity and usually is shared by the majority of its members. It is:

- internalized (becomes the content of internal motives)
- and works as a social imperative guarded by sanctions.

Collective consciousness.

- ▶ As a factor of social integration (shared views, values and feelings).
- ▶ As a factor of social regulation (external control of society over individuals).

Suicide.

- ▶ Suicide as a social phenomenon: from psychological to sociological explanation.
- ▶ General idea: suicide as a consequence of a particular type of social ties within a group.
- ▶ An example of religious groups: not the content of belief but the nature of social cohesion matters.

Suicide and social integration.

Suicide and social integration.		
	integration	
	weak	strong
suicide	egoistic	altruistic

Egoistic suicide.

- ▶ Weak social integration makes people commit suicide for they feel disconnected, do not have a sense of obligation and responsibility to their groups, and generally believe that suicide is their private business.

Altruistic suicide.

- ▶ Strong social integration makes people to commit suicide as a “sacrifice” to the benefit of the group.

Suicide and social regulation.

Suicide and social regulation.		
suicide	regulation	
	weak	strong
	anomic	fatalistic

Anomie.

- ▶ “Lawlessness”: breakdown of a normative system characterized by:
 - Lack of the norms regulating human actions;
 - The existence of contradicting norms;
 - Lack of clarity regarding the interpretation of the norm.

Anomic suicide.

- ▶ Weak regulation makes people commit suicide because there is no normative order that would govern the social life and guide an individual who does not know how to act, how to live, and has a feeling that "nothing makes sense."

Fatalist suicide.

- ▶ Strong regulation makes people commit suicide because they feel oppressed, totally controlled, and have a feeling that "nothing can be done" to change their situation.

The Rules of Sociological Method.

- ▶ In search of the elementary unit of sociological analysis: sociology as science of social facts.
- ▶ In search of the ontology of society.

Social fact.

- ▶ Preliminary definition: "A category of facts which consist of manners of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual, which are invested with a coercive power by virtue of which they exercise control over him."

The meaning of externality.

- ▶ objectivity: social facts exist outside the consciousness of the individual;
- ▶ ready-made character: social facts had existed before an individual entered the area of their influence;
- ▶ independence: social facts function independently of the use we make of them, they are "enshrined in the written word";
- ▶ self-sufficiency: social facts are not to be found wholly in the applications made of them by individuals; they can even exist without being applied at the time

The meaning of coercion.

- ▶ The rules which create social facts
 - are given as obligatory;
 - are accompanied by sanctions;
 - resist change.

Social fact: final definition and criticism.

- ▶ "A social fact is any way of acting, whether fixed or not, capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint, which is general over the whole of a given society whilst having an existence of its own, independent of its individual manifestations"

How to study social facts?

- ▶ As "things":
 - Elimination of preconceptions;
 - Definition by external characteristics;
 - Concentration on the established facts, isolated from their individual manifestations.

Two levels of social reality.

- ▶ The level of objectified cultural patterns and institutionalized actions: the collective aspect of social facts (what characterizes society as such).
- ▶ The level of concrete manifestations of cultural patterns and individual actions: The general aspect of social facts (what is statistically most common).

Society as the supreme reality.

- ▶ Society does exist really, independently of its elements.
- ▶ Society is more than the sum of its elements.
- ▶ Society develops according to its own, specific laws.

The problem of social order.

- ▶ Durkheim's ambiguity: to combine collective order with individual freedom. Coercive power of social facts vs. voluntary acceptance.
- ▶ "We are the victims of an illusion which leads us to believe that we have ourselves produced what has been imposed upon us externally."
- ▶ "Society cannot be constituted without creating ideals. These ideals are simply the ideas in terms of which a society sees itself."
- ▶ "If the idea of society were extinguished in individual minds...society would die."

- ▶ Durkheim's solution: collective order is accepted and maintained voluntarily because it is held to be sacred.

Durkheim on religion.

Religion as a system of beliefs and practices that are related to the things sacred, that is things separated and prohibited, which integrate the believers in a community called church.

The social construction of *sacrum*.

Integrative function.

Institutional aspect.

The social nature of religion.

- ▶ Religion is socially determined: the causal hypothesis. The assembled group and institutions of "collective effervescence" as the very source of religious images and their power.
- ▶ "The sacred beings, the creations of collective thought, attain their greatest intensity at the moment when people are assembled together and are in immediate relations with one another, sharing the same idea."

The social nature of religion.

- ▶ Religion represents social realities: the interpretative hypothesis. In a cognitive sense, religion is a system of ideas in terms of which individuals "know" their society; in a symbolic sense, religion symbolizes social reality.

The social nature of religion.

- ▶ Religion has social consequences: the functional hypothesis. Consequences for society: strengthening social cohesion, identity, vitality; consequences for an individual: gives a sense of belonging, reinforces the cultural element of personality, strengthens psychological structures.

The role of ritual.

- ▶ Ritual as a bridge between the realm of cultural patterns and the realms of social actions.
- ▶ Ritual according to Durkheim: "rule-governed activity of symbolic

character which draws the attention of its participants to objects of thought and feeling which they hold to be of special significance.”
(Lukes)

- ▶ Religious ritual as a reproduction of the universal order. The synthesis of the real world with the “really real” (Geertz).
- ▶ Ritual as consolation: how to make suffering sufferable?” (Geertz)

Society as the hidden God of Durkheim’s religion.

- ▶ “The believer was not deceived when he believes in the existence of a moral power upon which he depends. This power exists, it is society.”
 - Transcends individuals.
 - Is eternal.
 - Gives patterns.
 - Punishes.
 - When it shows up, it is irresistible.

Religious community as the synthesis of freedom and coercion.

- ▶ “Volition must be seen as a social act, and structure must be seen as involving individual actions in turn. The social must be given some power—sacred or otherwise—to structure by virtue of its subjective attraction, and the individual must be given some capacity for ordering that comes out of his or her personal wish.” (J. Alexander)

Freedom as the “fruit of regulation.”

- ▶ “Man is free through collective and impersonal forces liberating him both from personal dependency on others and from his own desires. Man is free when there is a superior force to which he is submitted.”

Max Weber (1864-1920)

- ▶ *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-1905)
- ▶ *Economy and Society* (1922)

Max Weber’s work.

- ▶ *Die protestantische Ethik und der ‘Geist’ des Kapitalismus* (1904-

1905); as Vol. I, Part 1 of *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (1920-1921).

- ▶ In English: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930) Then many editions.

Max Weber's work.

- ▶ *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (1922; 1925 – 2 vols.)
- ▶ English editions:
 - *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (1947: Vol. 1 of WuG).
 - *The City* (1958: Vol. 2 of WuG).
 - *Economy and Society* (1968: 3 vols.; 1978: 2 vols.)

Max Weber's work.

- ▶ *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (1920-21; 3 vols.).
- ▶ *Gesammelte politische Schriften* (1921).
- ▶ *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (1922).
- ▶ *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Sozialpolitik* (1924)
- ▶ In English:
 - *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (1946)
 - *On the Methodology of the Social Sciences* (1949)

Weber's definition of sociology.

- ▶ "Sociology is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences. We shall speak of 'action' insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behavior—be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence. Action is 'social' insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course."

Weber's sociological individualism.

- ▶ "Interpretative sociology considers the individual and his action as the basic unit, as its 'atom.'... Such concepts as 'state,' 'association,' 'feudalism,' and the like, designate certain categories of human interaction. Hence it is the task of sociology to reduce these concepts to 'understandable' action..."
- ▶ Social reality is made and remade by and in the individual actions.
- ▶ Institutions of society as a probability that certain actions will take place.

The philosophy of sociological knowledge.

- ▶ The concept of value-relevance (*Wertbeziehung*): "There is no absolutely 'objective' scientific analysis of culture or... of 'social phenomena' independent of special and 'one-sided' viewpoints according to which—expressly or tacitly, consciously or unconsciously—they are selected, analyzed and organized..."

Value-relevance.

- ▶ Limited epistemological faculties of the knowing subject in the unlimited world: necessity of selection.
- ▶ Our knowledge is ordered (not chaotic) only insofar as we focus on certain aspects of reality which are meaningful since they have been related to certain cultural values.
- ▶ The order which makes things knowable is not inherent in those things but is given in the (culturally determined) manner in which our mind classifies them.
- ▶ Perspectives: "cohering frameworks," not subjected to empirical verification, that guide problem selection and help to develop concepts, typologies and causal models.
- ▶ Perspectives as influenced by cultural values: change together with them.

"Ideal type."

- ▶ "An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent *concrete individual* phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified *analytical* construct."

Ideal type.

- ▶ Between the abstract and the particular: middle range language for sociology.
- ▶ Ideal type as a result of "relating to values" and the research aims of the researcher.
- ▶ A non-proportional model of a certain structure or process constructed by focusing on those aspects, which are seen to have particular significance.
- ▶ "Types of ideal types":
 - Types of particular social units ("Protestant Ethics," "western city.")
 - Types of abstract categories: "bureaucracy," feudalism.
 - Types of behavior: economic, religious, rational etc.

Value-freedom. (*Wertfreiheit*)

- ▶ In the “pedagogical” sense: as teachers we must not make value-judgments
 - to avoid abusing the authority of science for the defense of views that cannot be scientifically defended.
 - to protect human freedom and responsibility.
- ▶ We can tell the social actors what may be the consequences of their actions, but we must not tell them whether to act or not.
- ▶ The moral role of science (Seidman): “By clarifying the social world as a sphere of individual actions, science compels individuals to grasp their own actions as socially consequential.”

Value-freedom.

- ▶ In an epistemological sense:
 - stronger version: cultural values may influence the construction of an object of knowledge but the subsequent scientific procedures must be based only on the objective methodology (Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*);
 - weaker version: cultural values may influence the construction of an object of knowledge AND the way we explain it, in the latter case, however, they are specific scientific values, not the cultural ones (Parsons, *Value-Freedom and Objectivity*)

Rationality.

- ▶ Human history (in the West) as the process of rationalization.
- ▶ Rationalization:
 - From irrationality to rationality;
 - From substantive rationality to instrumental rationality.

Substantive rationality (value-rationality, *Wertrationalität*).

- ▶ “Actions are purely value-rational when the agents, regardless of foreseeable consequences, act according to their convictions of what seems to them to be required by duty, honor, beauty, a religion call, piety, or the importance of some ‘cause’, no matter in what it consists. Value-rational action is always action in accordance with ‘commands’ or ‘demands’ which the actor believes himself to be placed under.”

Instrumental (purposive) rationality (*Zweckrationalität*).

- ▶ Rational behavior as the best possible (according to actor’s

knowledge) application of the available means to the ends the actor wants to achieve.

- ▶ “Pure type” of instrumental rationality: the best possible (in a given situation) application of the available means to the ends the actor wants to achieve.

Elements of purposive rationality.

- ▶ technique: use of means, consciously and systematically oriented to experience and reflection; a system of rules which makes our action regular and reproducible, calculable and predictable to our partners in interaction;
- ▶ success: the rationality of employing means is measured by the objectively testable efficacy; rational technique: efficient in relation to given ends;

Elements of purposive rationality.

- ▶ rationality of choice: an actor's ends must be selected in the rational way; the actor must be aware of his/her preferences, make precise the criteria of choice, be conscious of different possible ends, must have sound knowledge of the most efficient means-end relations;
- ▶ secondary results (consequences): to act rationally, an actor must take into account the secondary consequences of his/her actions.

Definition of purposive rationality.

- ▶ The employment of a successful technique to the rationally selected ends with respect to the secondary consequences.
- ▶ Weber: “Action is purposive-rational when it is oriented to ends, means, and secondary results. This involves rationally weighing the relations of means to ends, the relations of ends to secondary consequences, and the relative importance of different possible ends.”

Typology of Action.

Typology of Action.

Type of action	Means	Ends	Values	Consequences
Instrumentally rational action	+	+	+	+
Value-rational action	+	+	+	-
Affective action	+	+	-	-
Traditional action	+	-	-	-

The role of religion.

- ▶ Religion is a step towards rationalization.
- ▶ From (religious) substantive rationality to instrumental rationality.
- ▶ Specific situation of Protestantism.
- ▶ Elements of religious rationality:
 - disenchantment of religion: from „bribing gods“ to religious motivation of secular pursuits;
 - cognitive disenchantment of the world: the world is not perceived any longer as an ethically meaningful cosmos; expansion of organized, instrumental mastery of empirical processes;

Elements of religious rationality continued:

- the idea of calling or vocation (*Beruf*);
- innerworldly asceticism;
- the methodical rigor of individual self-discipline;

Comparing worldviews.

Comparing worldviews.

	Active attitude	Passive attitude
Rejection of the world	Domination (Judaism, Christianity)	Escape (Hinduism)
Acceptance of the world	Adjustment (Confucianism)	Contemplation (Greek metaphysics)

Paradox of rationalization.

- ▶ Rationality can degenerate into tradition and/or coercion. The problem of "iron cage."
- ▶ "The Puritan wanted to work in a calling, we are forced to do so." (Weber)
- ▶ "The original conditions necessary for the emergence of capitalism were not necessary for its continuation. The original religious ethic could fade, once the calculability of massive economic transactions had become a matter of routine." (R. Collins)
- ▶ "Rationalization of society...is...likely to lead to an increasing imprisonment of modern man in dehumanized system." (A. Wellmer)
- ▶ "Rationalization is at once disenchantment, intellectualization, and rational empowerment. It has lead to increased freedom and at the same time facilitated enormous domination...Rationalization is at once a terrible condition, the worst evil, and the only human path for liberation." (J. Alexander)

Rationalization on the societal level.

- ▶ Economy: capitalist enterprise, which
 - is separated from the household and,
 - with the help of capital accounting (rational bookkeeping),
 - orients investments decisions to the opportunities of the commodity, capital, and labor markets,
 - efficiently sets in action formally free labor power, and
 - makes technical use of scientific knowledge.

Rationalization on the societal level.

- ▶ State: rational public institution, which
 - on the basis of a centralized and permanent tax system
 - has at its disposal a centrally commanded, standing military force,

- has a monopoly on setting laws and legitimately using force, and
- organizes administration bureaucratically, that is, in the form of rule by specialized officials.

Rationalization on the societal level.

- ▶ Formal law: organizing the economy and the state and regulating interactions between them; Rationalization of legal and moral rules:
 - conventional and limited character of legal norms,
 - legal norms as abstract rules applied to particular cases,
 - From personal rulers and subjects to office-holders and citizens)
- ▶ Autonomization of value spheres: for example religion – science.

Social change.

- ▶ An interplay between ideas (values) and interests related to social positions as the factor that transforms the probability of certain types of social action to take place.
- ▶ Culture <--> Structure => change

Social structure.

- ▶ Three dimensions of social structure:
 - Economic – class;
 - Social-cultural – status group (estate);
 - Political (party).

Class.

- ▶ A class is made by people who "(1) have in common a specific causal component of their life chances in so far as (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) it is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor market."
- ▶ Classes of property and of income.
- ▶ Privileged, middle, unprivileged.
- ▶ Classes are usually not social groups (no cohesion based on the sense of belonging), except the situations when "class position" becomes "transparent" for those who occupy it.

Status group (estate).

- ▶ Large social groupings defined (by their members and others) by:
 - Common patterns of consumption and lifestyle.
 - Social prestige, honor.
 - Intensive social interaction within the group:

- ▶ Conubium,
- ▶ Commensalism,
- Limited social interaction outside the group: social distances.

Party. (Political groupings).

- ▶ Power and authority.
 - Power: a chance that some people “realize their own will... even against the resistance of others.”
 - Authority: a legitimate expectation that subjects will be willingly obedient (authority = legitimate power).
- ▶ The sources of power: in the economy, in the status position, in the politics itself.

The sources of authority.

- ▶ Tradition: authority based on “an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them.” inherited or invested.
- ▶ Legal-rational: impersonal rule, legally enacted or contractually established and rationally evaluated.
- ▶ Charismatic: based on:
 - Individual virtues of a leader: “virtuoso.”
 - His/her ability to make people act against the existing normative structures of conduct, thought, and institution.

Recommended literature.

- ▶ Alexander, Jeffrey C. (1989) *The Dialectic of Individuation and Domination: Weber’s Rationalization Theory and Beyond*. In: J.C.Alexander, *Structure and Meaning. Relinking Classical Sociology*.
- ▶ Collins, Randall (1986) *Max Weber. A Skeleton Key*.
- ▶ Collins, Randall (1986) *Weberian Sociological Theory*.
- ▶ Eliaeson, Sven (2007) *Max Weber Methodologies*.
- ▶ Schluchter, Wolfgang (1996) *Paradoxes of Modernity. Culture and Conduct in the Theory of Max Weber*.
- ▶ Wellmer, Albrecht (1985) *Reason, Utopia and the Dialectic of Enlightenment*. In: *Habermas and Modernity*. Ed. by Richard J. Bernstein.

Social theory after Weber.

- ▶ The focus on action.
 - The problem of meaning: American sociology and Symbolic Interactionism.
 - The problem of interrelating the actors: Structural-Functionalism.

The social context of American social theory.

- ▶ New society – different problems:
 - Europe: traditional vs. modern society, diachronic perspective, the problem of the breakdown and “solid grounds.”
 - US: a society emerging here and now, synchronic perspective, the problem of subjective responses to modernization process and to the ‘situation of a newcomer.’
- ▶ End of 19th Century: influx of immigrants (external and internal) of different background. Nothing that could be assumed as having been “shared.”
- ▶ American sociology as a sociology of men and women building together their worlds out of scratch, in an interaction with one another, here and now, in an empty space and without a reference to the past.

Key concepts of the interactionist tradition.

- ▶ Charles Horton Cooley.
 - Looking-glass self: the image of how the others see us.
 - Primary groups: small groups in which the process of socialization (including the construction of the looking-glass self) takes place.
- Very different people have something in common: we all have looking-glass selves and we all have been socialized in primary groups.

Key concepts of the interactionist tradition.

- ▶ George Herbert Mead.
 - Significant symbols: gestures which have been symbolized in the process of interpretation of meaning.
 - Interpretation of meaning: a process of interaction between the elements of the Self: *I* and *Me*. *I*: a spontaneous disposition to act; *Me*: a set of organized attitudes of others which an individual assumes projecting his/her action.
 - Generalized Other: ‘the organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self.’ Learned in the processes of ‘role-taking.’

Key concepts of the interactionist tradition.

- ▶ William I. Thomas.
 - Definition of the situation: ‘If men define things as real, they are real in their consequences.’ Crucial in adapting to social situations. In the final instance: the world is what people think it is.

Key concepts of the interactionist tradition.

- ▶ Herbert Blumer.
 - Symbolic interaction: an ‘activity in which human beings interpret each other’s gestures and act on the basis of the meaning yielded by that interpretation.’
 - Interactionist reduction: all social processes and entities can be

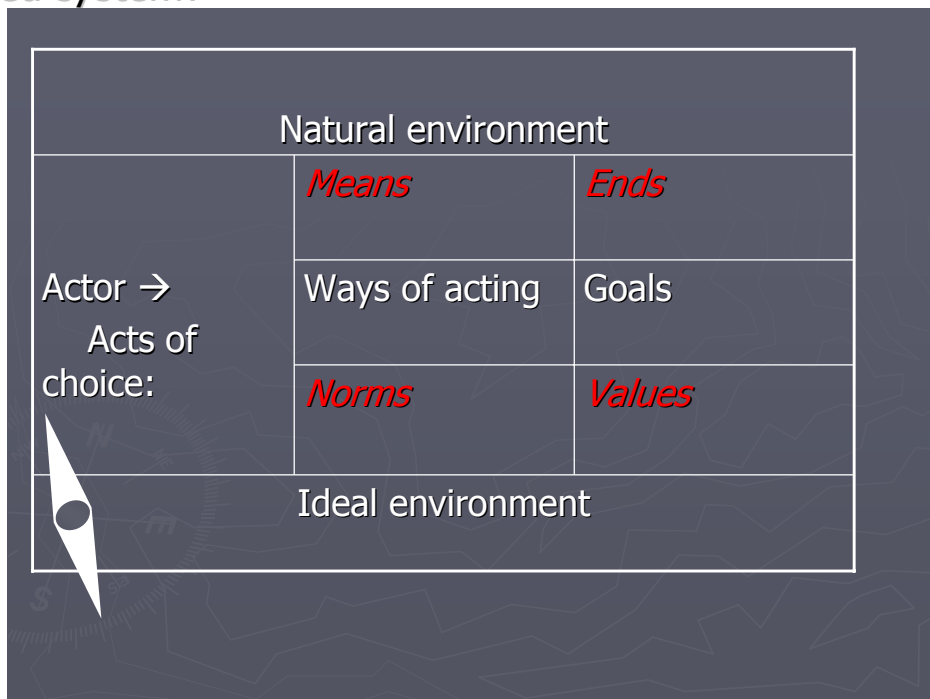
- reduced to meaningful interpersonal behavior or to 'acting units.'
- 'People ...do not act toward culture, social structure or the like; they act toward situations.'

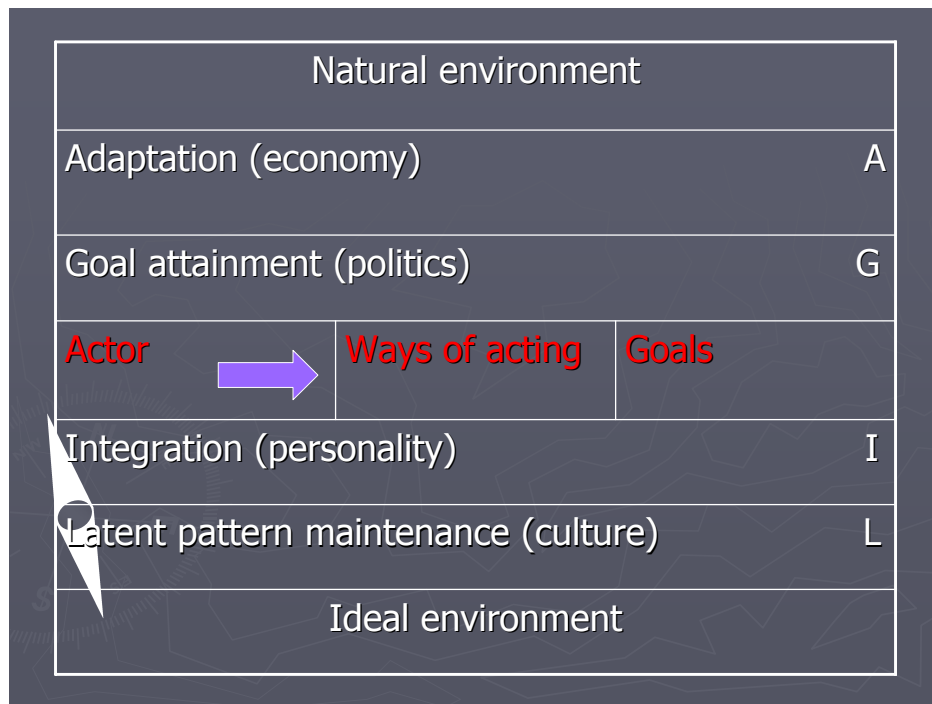
Structural functionalism.

- ▶ Function: system-determined and system-sustaining activity (or its result) which relates structures and needs (functional imperatives, necessary conditions of existence).
- ▶ Functionalism: society as a system of interrelated parts in which no part can be understood in isolation from the whole. A change in any part is seen as leading to a certain degree of imbalance, which in turn results in changes in other parts of the system, and to a reorganization of the system as a whole.

Talcott Parsons: from action to system

- ▶ How to reconcile the vision of the social world as emerging out of the actions of free individuals ("voluntaristic theory of action") and the vision of the social world as an organized, ordered system?





Social system.

- ▶ "A social system consists in a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, actors who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the 'optimization of gratification' and whose relation to their situations (...) is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols" (Parsons, *The Social System*).