

Lecture Notes

Chapter 1: A Historical Sketch of Sociological Theory: The Early Years

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. Work of various theorists are discussed for two basic reasons:
 - i. In all cases, their work was important in its time and played a central role in the development of sociology in general and sociological theory in particular.
 - ii. Their ideas continue to be relevant to, and read by, contemporary sociologists, although this is less true of the work of Comte and Spencer.
 - B. Theories must meet a series of other criteria:
 - i. Must have a *wide range* of application.
 - ii. Must deal with *centrally important social issues*.
 - iii. Must stand up well under the *test of time*.
 - C. Focus on the important classical theoretical work of sociologists, including theorists who have, in the past been excluded from the sociological canon.
- II. Premodern Sociological Theory
 - A. The term “modernity” refers to the social, economic, and political developments that unfolded, largely in Europe and North America from the eighteenth to mid-twentieth century.
 - B. The fourteenth century Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldun has attracted particular attention as a precursor of modern sociology.
 - i. He is largely regarded as having developed the first systematic approach to the study of “social organization.”
 - ii. Khaldun presents a sociological theory that reflects the social world in which he lived, fourteenth century Andalusia (Southern Spain), North Africa, and Egypt.
 - C. Khaldun’s most important work, and the one in which he introduces his ideas about social organization, is the *Muqaddimah*.

- i. The *Muqaddimah* is the introductory section to a larger history of North Africa and the Middle East.
 - ii. In the *Muqaddimah* Khaldun distinguishes himself from previous Arab historians by seeking the “inner meaning of history.”
 - iii. This “involves speculation and attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events.”
- D. Khaldun argued that different societies had different natures, or essences.
- i. Khaldun identified two such societies: desert, nomadic, tribal society, and urban, sedentary society.
 - ii. Tribal society:
 - a. Nomadic societies had a relatively simple social organization, were based in strong kinship ties, and gave rise to brave fighters.
 - b. He seemed to regard tribal society as the superior and more admirable social form.
 - c. It was prior to sedentary society and provided the social bond out of which more complex social organization grew.
 - iii. Sedentary society:
 - a. Sedentary societies were based in urban centers.
 - b. In comparison to the tribal society, the sedentary society had a more complex division of labor.
 - c. Craftwork provided a wider range of luxury items, and therefore generated greater economic wealth than tribal societies.
 - d. In character though, those who lived in sedentary societies were weaker than those who lived in the desert.
- E. A crucial Khaldunian concept, one most often cited by contemporary sociologists, is *‘asibayya*.
- i. This word is interpreted as “group feeling”, other times as “social solidarity” or “social cohesion.”
 - ii. It refers to the bond that holds social groups together, and ultimately gives a community and the individuals within it, especially its leader, strength.

- iii. In his theory of four generations Khaldun argues that societies grow and then collapse across four generations.
 - a. The cycle begins with the nomadic tribes that possess the strongest *'asibayya*.
 - b. Strong group feeling translates into strong leaders and strong military strength and enables nomadic tribes to claim political power.
 - c. At this point, the tribal society begins the process of becoming a sedentary society.
 - d. The descendants of the original tribal leaders, now a royal authority, engage in the increasingly luxurious lifestyles demanded by city life.
 - e. The royal authority no longer has the power and support to defend itself against the insurgent tribal groups that are animated by much stronger *'asibayya*.
 - F. Khaldun was taught philosophy, math, logic, and religion by his father and the mathematician Al-Abili.
 - G. He also studied Maliki religious law, a particularly conservative version of Islamic jurisprudence.
 - H. Khaldun joined a political delegation at Damascus to negotiate with the invading army of Turco-Mongol leader Amir Timur.
- III. Social Forces in the development of Sociological Theory
- A. Political Revolutions
 - i. The long series of political revolutions ushered in by the French Revolution in 1789 and carrying over through the nineteenth century was the most immediate factor in the rise of modern sociological theorizing.
 - ii. The impact of these revolutions on many societies was enormous, and many positive changes resulted.
 - iii. However, what attracted the attention of many early theorists was not the positive consequences, but the negative effects of such changes.
 - iv. Thus, they sought instead to find new bases of order in societies that had been overturned by the political revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
 - B. The Industrial Revolution and the Rise of Capitalism

- i. The Industrial Revolution was many interrelated developments that culminated in the transformation of the Western world from a largely agricultural system to an overwhelmingly industrial one.
 - ii. Large numbers of people left farms and agricultural work for the industrial occupations offered in the burgeoning factories.
 - iii. Large economic bureaucracies arose to provide the many services needed by industry and the emerging capitalist economic system.
 - a. In this economy, the ideal was a free marketplace where the many products of an industrial system could be exchanged.
 - b. A few profited greatly, while the majority worked long hours for low wages.
- C. Colonialism
- i. A key force in the development of modern, capitalist societies was colonialism, which “refers to the direct political control of a society and its people by a foreign ruling state.”
 - ii. Colonialism led to “colonization,” which was when foreign nations established permanent settlements in a colonial possession.
 - iii. In *Capital*, Karl Marx argued that the development of capitalism was fueled by the “primitive accumulation” of gold and silver in the colonies.
 - iv. Once the Industrial Revolution was further advanced, colonies became stable sources of raw materials, such as the cotton used in textile manufacture.
- D. The Rise of Socialism
- i. Although some sociologists favored socialism as a solution to industrial problems, most were personally and intellectually opposed to it.
 - ii. On the one side, Karl Marx was an active supporter of the overthrow of the capitalist system and its replacement by a socialist system.
 - iii. Most of the early theorists, such as Weber and Durkheim, were opposed to socialism.
 - a. They feared socialism more than they did capitalism.
 - b. This fear played a far greater role in shaping sociological theory than did Marx’s support of the socialist alternative to capitalism.
- E. Feminism

- i. High points of feminist activity and writing occurred in the liberationist moments of modern Western history:
 - a. A first flurry of productivity in the 1780s and 1790s with the debates surrounding the American and French revolutions.
 - b. A far more organized, focused effort in the 1850s as part of the mobilization against slavery and for political rights for the middle class.
 - c. The massive mobilization for women's suffrage and for industrial and civic reform legislation in the early twentieth century, especially the Progressive Era in the United States.
 - ii. Feminist concerns filtered into sociology only on the margins, in the work of marginal male theorists or of the increasingly marginalized female theorists.
- F. Urbanization
- i. Partly as a result of the Industrial Revolution, large numbers of people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were uprooted from their rural homes and moved to urban settings.
 - ii. This massive migration was caused, in large part, by the jobs created by the industrial system in the urban areas.
 - iii. The expansion of the cities produced a seemingly endless list of urban problems, including overcrowding, pollution, noise, and traffic.
- G. Religious Change
- i. Social changes brought on by political revolutions, the Industrial Revolution, and urbanization had a profound effect on religiosity.
 - ii. Involvement of sociologists:
 - a. Durkheim wrote one of his major works on religion.
 - b. Morality played a key role not only in Durkheim's sociology but also in the work of Talcott Parsons.
 - c. A large portion of Weber's work also was devoted to the religions of the world.
 - d. Marx had an interest in religiosity, but his orientation was far more critical.
 - e. Spencer discussed religion as a significant component of society.
- H. The Growth of Science

- i. As sociological theory was being developed, there was an increasing emphasis on science, not only in colleges and universities but in society as a whole.
- ii. Sociologists from the beginning were preoccupied with science, and many wanted to model sociology after the successful physical and biological sciences.
- iii. A debate soon developed between those who wholeheartedly accepted the scientific model and those who thought that distinctive characteristics of social life made a wholesale adoption of a scientific model difficult and unwise.

IV. Intellectual Forces and the Rise of Sociological Theory

A. The Enlightenment

- i. The Enlightenment was a period of remarkable intellectual development and change in philosophical thought.
- ii. The influence of the Enlightenment on sociological theory, however, was more indirect and negative than it was direct and positive.
- iii. The thinkers associated with the Enlightenment were influenced, above all, by two intellectual currents: seventeenth-century philosophy and science.
 - a. Seventeenth-century philosophy was associated with the work of thinkers such as René Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke.
 - b. The emphasis was on producing grand, general, and very abstract systems of ideas that made rational sense.
 - c. The model for this was science, especially Newtonian physics.
- iv. The Enlightenment thinkers had a practical goal of creating a “better,” more rational world.
 - a. The Enlightenment was characterized by the belief that people could comprehend and control the universe by means of reason and empirical research.
 - b. The view was that because the physical world was dominated by natural laws, it was likely that the social world was, too.
 - c. It was up to the philosopher, using reason and research, to discover these social laws.

B. The Conservative Reaction to the Enlightenment

- i. French sociology became rational, empirical, scientific, and change-oriented, but not before it was also shaped by a set of ideas that developed in reaction to the Enlightenment.
 - ii. French Catholic counterrevolutionary philosophy represented by the ideas of Louis de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre.
 - a. In this view, God was the source of society; therefore, reason, which was so important to the Enlightenment philosophers, was seen as inferior to traditional religious beliefs.
 - b. It was believed that because God had created society, people should not tamper with it and should not try to change a holy creation.
 - c. De Bonald opposed anything that undermined such traditional institutions as patriarchy, the monogamous family, the monarchy, and the Catholic Church.
 - iii. The conservatives turned away from what they considered the “naive” rationalism of the Enlightenment.
 - iv. They regarded such phenomena as tradition, imagination, emotionalism, and religion as useful and necessary components of social life.
 - v. The conservatives tended to emphasize social order, an emphasis that became one of the central themes of the work of several sociological theorists.
- V. The Development of French Sociology
- A. Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859)
 - i. Tocqueville has long been seen as a political scientist, not a sociologist, and many have not perceived the existence of a social theory in his work.
 - ii. Three interrelated issues lie at the heart of Tocqueville’s theory.
 - a. As a product of the Enlightenment, he was first and foremost a great supporter of, and advocate for, *freedom*.
 - b. He was much more critical of *equality*, which he saw as tending to produce mediocrity in comparison to better political and cultural products produced by the aristocrats of a prior, less egalitarian era.
 - c. More importantly, it is also linked to what most concerned him, and that is the growth of *centralization*, especially in the government, and the threat centralized government poses to freedom.

- iii. Democracy's commitment to freedom is ultimately threatened by its parallel commitment to equality and its tendency toward centralized government.
 - iv. The strength of Tocqueville's theory lies in the interrelated ideas of freedom, equality, and, especially, centralization.
- B. Claude Henri Saint-Simon (1760–1825)
- i. The most interesting aspect of Saint-Simon was his significance to the development of *both* conservative (like Comte's) and radical Marxian theory.
 - a. On the conservative side, Saint-Simon wanted to preserve society as it was, but he did not seek a return to life as it had been in the Middle Ages, as did de Bonald and de Maistre.
 - b. On the radical side, Saint-Simon saw the need for socialist reforms, especially the centralized planning of the economic system.
- C. Auguste Comte (1798–1857)
- i. Comte was the first to use the term *sociology*.
 - ii. He developed his scientific view, *positivism*, or *positive philosophy*, to combat what he considered to be the negative and destructive philosophy of the Enlightenment.
 - iii. The use of the term *social physics* made it clear that Comte sought to model sociology after the "hard sciences."
 - iv. *Law of the three stages*: The theory proposes that there are three intellectual stages through which the world has gone throughout its history.
 - a. *Theological stage*: During this period, the major idea system emphasized the belief that supernatural powers and religious figures, modeled after humankind, are at the root of everything.
 - b. *Metaphysical stage*: This era was characterized by the belief that abstract forces like "nature," rather than personalized gods, explain virtually everything.
 - c. *Positivistic stage*: Characterized by belief in science. People now tended to give up the search for absolute causes (God or nature) and concentrated instead on observation of the social and physical world in the search for the laws governing them.

- v. Comte emphasized the need to engage in abstract theorizing and to go out and do sociological research.
 - a. He urged that sociologists use observation, experimentation, and comparative historical analysis.
- D. Emile Durkheim (1858–1917)
 - i. Durkheim also has been seen as the inheritor of the conservative tradition, especially as it was manifested in Comte’s work.
 - ii. Durkheim legitimized sociology in France, and his work ultimately became a dominant force in the development of sociology in general and of sociological theory in particular.
 - iii. As classical sociological theory developed, it was the Durkheimian interest on order and reform that came to dominate, while the Marxian position was eclipsed.
 - iv. Social Facts
 - a. He conceived of social facts as forces and structures that are external to, and coercive of, the individual.
 - b. In *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Durkheim differentiated between two types of social facts, material and nonmaterial.
 - c. Although he dealt with both in the course of his work, his main focus was on *nonmaterial social facts* (e.g., culture, social institutions) rather than *material social facts* (e.g., bureaucracy, law).
 - d. Earlier societies were held together primarily by nonmaterial social facts, specifically, a strongly held common morality, or what he called a strong *collective conscience*.
 - v. Religion
 - a. Durkheim examined primitive society to find the roots of religion.
 - He believed that he would be better able to find those roots in the comparative simplicity of primitive society than in the complexity of the modern world.
 - Society comes to define certain things as religious and others as profane.
 - b. Case study on totemism:

- The clan was the source of a primitive kind of religion, totemism, in which things such as plants and animals are deified.
- Totemism, in turn, was seen as a specific type of nonmaterial social fact, a form of the collective conscience.
- In the end, Durkheim came to argue that society and religion were one and the same.

VI. The Development of German Sociology

A. A split developed between Marx, who remained on the edge of sociology, and the early giants of mainstream German sociology, Max Weber and Georg Simmel.

B. The Roots and Nature of the Theories of Karl Marx (1818–1883)

i. Hegel

a. Two concepts represent the essence of Hegel's philosophy, the dialectic and idealism.

b. The *dialectic* is both a way of thinking and an image of the world.

□□ On the one hand, it is a way of thinking that stresses the importance of processes, relations, dynamics, conflicts, and contradictions.

□□ On the other hand, it is a view that the world is made up not of static structures but of processes, relationships, dynamics, conflicts, and contradictions.

c. The philosophy of *idealism*, which emphasizes the importance of the mind and mental products rather than the material world.

1. Idealists emphasize not only mental processes but also the ideas produced by these processes.

d. Hegel offered a general theory of the evolution of the world.

1. It is a subjective theory in which change is held to occur at the level of consciousness.

2. However, that change occurs largely beyond the control of actors.

3. Actors are reduced to little more than vessels swept along by the inevitable evolution of consciousness.

ii. Feuerbach

- a. Feuerbach was critical of Hegel for, among other things, his excessive emphasis on consciousness and the spirit of society.
 - b. To Feuerbach, God is simply a projection by people of their human essence onto an impersonal force.
 - c. People set God over and above themselves, and project a series of positive characteristics onto God (that He is perfect, almighty, and holy), while they reduce themselves to being imperfect, powerless, and sinful.
 - d. Real people, not abstract ideas like religion, are deified by a materialist philosophy.
- iii. Marx, Hegel, and Feuerbach
- a. Marx was simultaneously influenced by and critical of both Hegel and Feuerbach.
 - b. Social facts such as wealth and the state are treated by Hegel as ideas rather than as real, material entities.
 - c. Marx extracted what he considered to be the two most important elements from these two thinkers, Hegel's dialectic and Feuerbach's materialism.
 1. He fused them into his own distinctive orientation, dialectical materialism, which focuses on dialectical relationships within the material world.
- iv. Political Economy
- a. Marx's materialism and his consequent focus on the economic sector led him rather naturally to the work of a group of *political economists*.
 - b. Capitalists performed the rather simple trick of paying the workers less than they deserved, because they received a pay lesser than the value of what they actually produced in a work period.
 - c. The capitalist system grew by continually increasing the level of exploitation of the workers (and therefore the amount of surplus value) and investing the profits for the expansion of the system.
- v. Marx and Sociology
- a. From the beginning, there were those who were heavily influenced by Marx, and there has been a continuous strand of Marxian sociology, primarily in Europe.

- b. The basic reason for this rejection of Marx was ideological.
 - c. Another reason for the early rejection of Marx was the nature of his interests.
 - d. Another difference worth noting is the difference in philosophical roots between Marxian and conservative sociological theory.
- vi. Marx's Theory
- a. Marx offered a theory of capitalist society based on his image of the basic nature of human beings.
 - b. Marx believed that people are basically productive; that is, in order to survive, people need to work in, and with, nature.
 - c. Alienation occurs because capitalism has evolved into a two-class system in which a few capitalists own the production process, the products, and the labor time of those who work for them.
 - d. He believed that the contradictions and conflicts within capitalism would lead dialectically to its ultimate collapse, but he did not think that the process was inevitable.
- C. The Roots and Nature of the Theories of Max Weber (1864–1920) and Georg Simmel (1858–1918)
- i. Weber and Marx
- a. Marxian theory played a negative role in Weberian theory.
 - b. In other ways, however, Weber was working within the Marxian tradition, trying to “round out” Marx's theory.
 - c. A second view of Weber's relationship to Marx, is that he did not so much oppose Marx as try to round out Marx's theoretical perspective.
 - 1. Weber is seen as working more within the Marxian tradition than in opposition to it.
 - 2. His work on religion, interpreted from this point of view, was simply an effort to show that not only do material factors affect ideas, but ideas themselves affect material structures.
 - d. A good example of the view that Weber was engaged in a process of rounding out Marxian theory is in the area of stratification theory.

1. In this work on stratification, Marx focused on social class, the economic dimension of stratification.
2. Although Weber accepted the importance of this factor, he argued that other dimensions of stratification were also important.
3. He argued that the notion of social stratification should be extended to include stratification on the basis of prestige (status) and political power.
4. The inclusion of these other dimensions does not constitute a refutation of Marx but is simply an extension of his ideas.

ii. Other Influences on Weber

- a. The influence of Immanuel Kant on Weber, and on German sociology in general, shows that German sociology and Marxism grew from different philosophical roots.
- b. Kantian philosophy led at least some German sociologists to take a more static perspective.
- c. To Kant the world was a buzzing confusion of events that could never be known directly.
- d. The emphasis on these forms gave the work of those sociologists within the Kantian tradition a more static quality than that of the Marxists within the Hegelian tradition.

iii. Weber's Theory

- a. Weber developed his theories in the context of a large number of comparative historical studies of the West, China, India, and many other regions of the world.
- b. Weber saw the bureaucracy (and the historical process of bureaucratization) as the classic example of rationalization.
- c. He differentiated among three types of authority systems, traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal.
- d. Weber found more irrational religious systems (e.g., Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism), which helped inhibit the development of a rational economic system.

iv. The Acceptance of Weber's Theory

- a. Instead of espousing Marxian radicalism, Weber was more of a liberal on some issues and a conservative on others.
- b. From Weber's point of view, rationalization constituted an even greater problem in socialist than in capitalist societies.
- c. He operated in a philosophical tradition that also helped shape the work of later sociologists.
- d. Weber appeared to offer a much more rounded approach to the social world than did Marx.
 - 1. Whereas Marx appeared to be almost totally preoccupied with the economy, Weber was interested in a wide range of social phenomena.
- v. Simmel's Theory
 - a. Simmel's work helped shape the development of one of the early centers of American sociology, the University of Chicago and its major theory, symbolic interactionism.
 - b. Another atypical aspect of Simmel's work is his "level" of analysis, or at least that level for which he became best known in America.
 - c. Simmel was best known for his work on smaller-scale issues, especially individual action and interaction.
 - 1. He became famous early for his thinking, derived from Kantian philosophy, on *forms* of interaction (e.g., conflict) and *types* of interactants (e.g., the stranger).
 - 2. Simmel felt that he could isolate a limited number of forms of interaction that could be found in a large number of social settings.
 - d. Early American focus on Simmel's microsociology had the negative effect of obscuring two further aspects of Simmel's work.
 - 1. First, Simmel was an influential figure in the *Lebensphilosophie* (life philosophy) movement.
 - 2. Second, the focus on Simmel's smaller essays had the negative effect of obscuring Simmel's more massive, and macrosociological, works.

VII. The Origins of British Sociology

A. Political Economy, Ameliorism, and Social Evolution

- i. Political Economy
 - a. The British sociologists, like the political economists and unlike Marx, saw the market as a positive force, as a source of order, harmony, and integration in society.
 - b. The goal was to provide the government with the facts it needed to understand the way the system worked and to direct its workings wisely.
 - c. In dealing with large-scale structures, they tended to collect individual-level data and then combine them to form a collective portrait.
 - ii. Ameliorism
 - a. A desire to solve social problems by reforming individuals.
 - b. Although British scholars began to recognize that there were problems in society (e.g., poverty), they still believed in that society and wanted to preserve it.
 - c. Like French sociology and some branches of German sociology, British sociology was conservatively oriented.
 - iii. Social Evolution
 - a. One important influence was the work of Auguste Comte, part of which had been translated into English in the 1850s by Harriet Martineau.
 - b. A number of British thinkers sharpened their own conception of the world in opposition to some of the excesses of Comtian theory.
 - c. The real importance of Comte lay in his providing one of the bases on which opposition could be mounted against the “oppressive genius of Herbert Spencer.”
- B. Herbert Spencer (1820–1903)
- i. Spencer and Comte
 - a. Spencer is often categorized with Comte in terms of their influence on the development of sociological theory, but there are some important differences between them.
 - b. Spencer, like Comte, had an evolutionary conception of historical development.

1. However, Spencer was critical of Comte's evolutionary theory on several grounds.
 2. Specifically, he rejected Comte's Law of the Three Stages.
 3. He argued that Comte was content to deal with evolution in the realm of ideas, in terms of intellectual development.
 4. Spencer, however, sought to develop an evolutionary theory in the real, material world.
- ii. Evolutionary Theory
- a. Society grows through both the multiplication of individuals and the union of groups.
 - b. Spencer talked of the evolutionary movement from simple to compound, doubly compound, and trebly compound societies.
 - c. Spencer also offered a theory of evolution from *militant* to *industrial* societies.
 1. Earlier, militant societies are defined by being structured for offensive and defensive warfare.
 2. With the emergence of industrial society, warfare ceases to be functional and serves to impede further evolution.
 3. Industrial society is based on friendship, altruism, elaborate specialization, recognition for achievements rather than the characteristics one is born with, and voluntary cooperation among highly disciplined individuals.
- iii. The Reaction against Spencer in Britain
- a. Despite his emphasis on the individual, Spencer was best known for his large-scale theory of social evolution.
 - b. The reaction against Spencer was based more on the threat that his idea of survival of the fittest posed to the ameliorism so dear to most early British sociologists.
- C. Harriet Martineau (1802–1876)
- i. Harriet Martineau studied the relationship between economics, politics, and *social morality*.
 - ii. One of her main aims was to make the arguments of political economists relevant to a wide swath of people.

- iii. One of the ways she did this was through short novels “which illustrated the principles of production, distribution, consumption, and exchange.”
 - iv. She believed that scientific research could be the “basis for social progress and reform.”
 - v. She devoted particular attention to the study of women’s lives, including topics such as marriage, women’s education, violence against women, women’s fashion, prostitution, and the inequalities of women’s work.
- VIII. The Key Figure in Early Italian Sociology
- A. Vilfred Pareto (1848–1923) had an impact on early sociologists.
 - i. Pareto was rejecting not only Marx but also a good portion of Enlightenment philosophy.
 - ii. Pareto emphasized the role of nonrational factors such as human instincts.
 - iii. Pareto also developed a theory of social change that stood in stark contrast to Marxian theory.
 - a. Whereas Marx’s theory focused on the role of the masses, Pareto offered an elite theory of social change, which held that society inevitably is dominated by a small elite that operates on the basis of enlightened self-interest.
 - b. It rules over the masses of people, who are dominated by nonrational forces.
 - c. Pareto’s theory played a central role in the development of Parsons’s theory and, more generally, in structural functionalism.
- IX. Non-European Classical Theory
- A. Alatas and Sinha (2017) argue that it is important to consider the ideas of these non-European social theorists because they provide a perspective on social life not described in most European theory.
 - B. Non-European theorists introduce ideas about society unique to the cultures and traditions out of which they wrote.
 - i. In this respect, while some of the ideas introduced by these non-European theorists are inspired by and complement those developed by European theorists, they also provide ideas not found in European sociological theory.
 - C. A common theme among these social thinkers is the criticism of European colonialism.

- D. Pandita Ramabai's main interest was the status of women in Indian caste society.
 - i. She developed a criticism of patriarchy in Indian society and the Hindu religion.
 - ii. Ramabai relies on her personal experiences to analyze the social world.
 - iii. Ramabai's study of America is remarkable because it reverses this relationship.
 - iv. She analyzes western society from the perspective of "a colonized subject, a woman with feminist leanings."
 - v. Among Muslim nations, Nursi said, naturalism created "despair" a rough equivalent to Durkheim's concept of anomie, or Weber's concept of disenchantment.
- E. Sarkar is the only one who has a background in the social sciences.
 - i. Like the other thinkers described in this section, Sarkar opposed European colonialism and American imperialism.
 - ii. Sarkar challenged the view commonly expressed in European scholarship that the west (Europe) is the source of reason and progress, and the East is a "mystical and spiritual" place.
 - iii. He rejected Comte's evolutionary theory to argue instead for a view of history as *creative disequilibrium*.
- X. The Contemporary Relevance of Classical Sociological Theory
 - A. Edward Tiryakian (1994) has outlined three criteria for judging a sociological work a classic.
 - i. First, it is "must reading" for beginners because it demonstrates "the power and imagination of sociological analysis."
 - ii. Second, it is useful to both contemporary theorists and researchers.
 - iii. Third, it is of sufficient richness and depth that it is worth rereading at a later point in a sociologist's career.
 - B. Durkheim's concept of the social fact remains one of the most important contributions of the classical sociologists.
 - i. It provides a clear social science alternative to research, coming from disciplines like psychology and economics, which place the individual person at the center of social analysis.

- ii. Durkheim demonstrated how the social fact can be used to study phenomena like suicide and subsequent studies have developed these ideas.
- C. Jeffery Alexander (2001) has placed Durkheim's work front and center in the development of his cultural sociology.
- i. Using ideas from Durkheim's later work on religion, in combination with other theorists, Alexander shows how symbols, rituals, and performances structure social life.
- D. Sociologists have also come to appreciate the importance of the concept of rationalization to the development of modern societies.
- E. Simmel is a perennial favorite for sociologists interested in dynamic, philosophically rich interpretations of everyday life and interaction.
- i. Simmel's ideas have been reintroduced as a variety of "affect theory", a perspective that emphasizes the effervescent, difficult to conceptualize, aspects of social life.
 - ii. To understand the processes of globalization and recent economic crisis, sociologists have made use of Simmel's *Philosophy of Money*.
- F. Race and racialization are also major areas of contemporary sociological interest.

Lecture Notes

Chapter 2: A Historical Sketch of Sociological Theory: The Later Years

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. The term *sociology* was used as early as 1854.
 - B. During the 1880s, courses specifically bearing the title “Sociology” began to appear.
- II. Early American Sociological Theory
 - A. Politics
 - i. Early American sociologists are best described as political liberals, and early European theorists, as conservatives.
 - ii. The liberalism characteristic of early American sociology had two basic elements:
 - a. Belief in the freedom and welfare of the individual.
 - b. Associated with an evolutionary view of social progress.
 - iii. Liberalism, taken to its extreme, comes very close to conservatism.
 - a. Instead of imminent class struggle, the early sociologists saw a future of class harmony and class cooperation.
 - b. Early American sociological theory helped rationalize exploitation, domestic and international imperialism, and social inequality.
 - B. Social change and Intellectual Currents
 - i. The social changes that occurred in American society after the Civil War are of utmost importance.
 - ii. The early American sociologists saw the positive possibilities of industrialization, but they also were well aware of its dangers.
 - iii. American sociologists retained the Protestant interest in saving the world and merely substituted one language (science) for another (religion).
 - iv. Another major factor is the simultaneous emergence of academic professions (including sociology) and the modern university system, in the late 1800s.

- v. Another characteristic of early American sociology was its turn away from a historical perspective and in the direction of a positivistic, or “scientific,” orientation.
- vi. Another factor was the impact of established European theory on American sociological theory.
- vii. Herbert Spencer’s Influence on Sociology
 - a. Spencer’s ideas were so much more influential in the early years of American sociology than those of Comte, Durkheim, Marx, and Weber.
 - 1. He wrote in English, and in non-technical terms, making his work broadly accessible.
 - 2. He offered a comprehensive theory that seemed to deal with the entire sweep of human history.
 - 3. The breadth of his ideas, allowed his theory to be many different things to many different people.
 - 4. Society was, according to Spencer, steadily moving in the direction of greater and greater progress.
 - b. Spencer influenced many early American sociologists, and his most famous American disciple was William Graham Sumner.
 - c. His Social Darwinist ideas seemed ridiculous in the light of massive social problems, a world war, and a major economic depression.
- viii. William Graham Sumner (1840–1910)
 - a. William Graham Sumner taught the first course in the United States that could be called sociology.
 - b. Sumner contended that he had begun teaching sociology “years before any such attempt was made at any other university in the world.”
 - c. Sumner adopted a survival-of-the-fittest approach to the social world.
 - d. He was a supporter of human aggressiveness and competitiveness.
 - e. He is little remembered today, as he failed to establish a solid enough base at Yale to build a school of sociology with many disciples.
- ix. Lester F. Ward (1841–1913)

- a. Ward believed that early society was characterized by its simplicity and its moral poverty, whereas modern society was more complex, was happier, and offered greater freedom.
 - b. One task of sociology, *pure sociology*, was to study the basic laws of social change and social structure.
 - c. He believed that sociology should have a practical side; there should also be an *applied sociology*.
 - d. This applied sociology involved the conscious use of scientific knowledge to attain a better society.
- x. Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929)
- a. Thorstein Veblen produced a body of social theory that is of enduring significance to those in a number of disciplines, including sociology.
 - b. The central problem for Veblen was the clash between “business” and “industry.”
 - c. Thus, it anticipated the current shift in social theory away from a focus on production and toward a focus on consumption.
- xi. Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950)
- a. Joseph Schumpeter is best known for his work on the nature of capitalism, especially the process of “creative destruction” that, in his view, lies at the heart of the capitalist system.
 - b. He contrasted his approach to the more static theories that he saw as dominant in the field of economics and of which he was highly critical.
- C. The Chicago School
- i. The Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago was founded in 1892 by Albion Small.
 - ii. Early Chicago Sociology
 - a. The early Chicago department had several distinctive characteristics:
 - 1. Strong connection with religion.
 - 2. Small believed that “the ultimate goal of sociology must be essentially Christian.”
 - iii. W. I. Thomas (1863–1947)

- a. Thomas's lasting significance was in his emphasis on the need to do scientific research on sociological issues.
 - b. It moved sociology away from "abstract theory and library research and toward the study of the empirical world utilizing a theoretical framework."
 - c. *The Polish Peasant* was primarily a macrosociological study of social institutions.
 - d. It was to become one of the defining characteristics of Chicago's theoretical product, symbolic interactionism.
- iv. Robert Park (1864–1944)
- a. Park's importance in the development of sociology lay in several areas:
 - 1 He became the dominant figure in the Chicago department and dominated sociology into the 1930s.
 - 2. Second, he was instrumental in bringing continental European thinkers to the attention of Chicago sociologists.
 - 3. Third, Park had been a reporter, and that experience gave him a sense of the importance of urban problems and of the need to go out into the field to collect data through personal observation.
 - 4. Fourth, Park played a key role in guiding graduate students and helping develop "a cumulative program of graduate research."
 - 5. In 1921, Park and Ernest W. Burgess published the first sociology textbook, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*.
- v. Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929)
- a. Cooley theorized about large-scale phenomena such as social classes, social structures, and social institutions.
 - b. He is remembered today mainly for his insights into the social-psychological aspects of social life.
 - c. This is best exemplified by a concept of his that survives to this day—the *looking-glass self*.
 - d. Cooley's concept the *primary groups*: they are intimate, face-to-face groups that play a key role in linking the actor to the larger society.

- e. It is within the primary group that the looking-glass self emerges and that the ego-centered child learns to take others into account.
 - f. Cooley urged sociologists to use the method of sympathetic introspection, in order to analyze consciousness.
- vi. George Herbert Mead (1863–1931)
- a. Mead had a deep, personal impact on the people who were later to develop symbolic interactionism.
 - b. The work, *Mind, Self and Society*, moved his ideas from the realm of oral to that of written tradition.
 - c. Mead's ideas need to be seen in the context of psychological behaviorism.
 - d. Mead offered American sociology a social-psychological theory that stood in stark contrast to the primarily societal theories offered by most of the major European theorists.
- vii. The Waning of Chicago Sociology
- a. First, the discipline had grown increasingly preoccupied with being scientific, that is, using sophisticated methods and employing statistical analysis.
 - b. Second, more and more individuals outside Chicago grew increasingly resentful of Chicago's dominance of both the American Sociological Society and the American Journal of Sociology.
- D. Women in Early American Sociology
- i. Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida Wells-Barnett, Marianne Weber, and Beatrice Potter Webb formed a broad and surprisingly connected network of social reformers were also developing pioneering sociological theories.
 - ii. When the theories are read collectively, they represent a coherent and complementary statement of early feminist sociological theory.
 - iii. The chief hallmarks of their theories:
 - a. An emphasis on women's experience and women's lives and works being equal in importance to men's.
 - b. An awareness that they spoke from a situated and embodied standpoint.

- c. The idea that the purpose of sociology and sociological theory is social reform.
- d. The claim that the chief problem for amelioration in their time was inequality.
- iv. Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1935)
 - a. In her most comprehensive theoretical statement was *Women and Economics*, she described the evolution of what she called the sexuo-economic relation, and in particular, how modern society distorts basic human needs.
 - b. Informed by her theoretical ideas, she worked toward the establishment of a gender equitable social order.
- E. The Du Bois-Atlanta School
 - i. African American Sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois built the Du Bois-Atlanta school of sociology, which was dedicated to the study of black urban life.
 - ii. Mission: “sociological and economic factors were hypothesized to be the main causes of racial inequality that relegated black people to the bottom of the social order.”
 - iii. Throughout this varied career, Du Bois’s overarching interest was in the “race idea,” which he considered the “the central thought of all history.”
 - iv. One of his best-known theoretical ideas is the *veil*, which creates a clear separation, or barrier, between African Americans and whites.
 - v. Another key theoretical idea is *double consciousness*, a sense of “two-ness,” or a feeling among African Americans of seeing and measuring themselves through others’ eyes.

III. Sociological Theory to Midcentury

- A. The Rise of Harvard, the Ivy League, and Structural Functionalism
 - i. We can trace the rise of sociology at Harvard from the arrival of Pitirim Sorokin.
 - ii. Parsons became the dominant figure in American sociology for introducing European theorists to an American audience, for his own sociological theories, and for his many students who became major sociological theorists.
 - iii. Talcott Parsons (1902–1979)
 - a. His major contribution in the early years was his influence on graduate students.

- b. His book *The Structure of Social Action*:
 - 1. Introduced grand European theorizing to a large American audience.
 - 2. Marxian theory continued to be largely excluded from legitimate sociology.
 - 3. It made the case for sociological theorizing as a legitimate and significant sociological activity.
 - 4. Parsons argued for specific sociological theories that were to have a profound influence on sociology.
 - c. Parsons tended to concentrate on the structures of society and their relationship to each other.
 - d. His basic view on intersystemic relations was essentially the same as his view of intrasystemic relations.
 - e. His work also had negative consequences:
 - 1. His interpretations of European theorists seemed to reflect his own theoretical orientation more than theirs.
 - 2. Parsons largely ignored Marx.
 - 3. His own theory had a number of serious weaknesses.
 - iv. George Homans (1910–1989)
 - a. The publication of “*An Introduction to Pareto*” made Homans a sociologist even though Pareto’s work was virtually the only sociology he had read up to that point.
 - b. Homans argued that Parsons’s theory was not a theory at all but rather a vast system of intellectual categories into which most aspects of the social world fit.
 - c. In his own work, Homans amassed a large number of empirical observations over the years.
 - d. In the 1950s he hit upon a satisfactory theoretical approach with which to analyze those data, which was psychological behaviorism.
- B. Developments in Marxian Theory
- i. Marxian theory was first dominated by those who saw in his theory scientific and economic determinism.

- ii. Immanuel Wallerstein called this the era of “orthodox Marxism.”
- iii. There were several problems with this perspective:
 - a. For one thing, it seemed to rule out political action, a cornerstone of Marx’s position.
 - b. Deterministic Marxism seemed to rule out the dialectical relationship between individuals and larger social structures.
 - c. These problems led to a reaction among Marxian theorists and to the development of “Hegelian Marxism.”
- iv. The Hegelian theorists were significant for both theoretical and practical reasons.
- v. One major exponent of this point of view was Georg Lukács, the founding father of Western Marxism.
- vi. Over the years, a number of the most famous thinkers in Marxian theory were associated with the critical school.
 - a. In its early years, those associated with the institute tended to be fairly traditional Marxists, devoting a good portion of their attention to the economic domain.
 - b. Around 1930, a major change took place as this group of thinkers began to shift its attention from the economy to the cultural system.
 - c. A major step was to employ the rigorous social-scientific techniques developed by American sociologists to research issues of interest to Marxists.
 - d. Critical theorists made an effort to integrate individually oriented Freudian theory with the societal and cultural-level insights of Marx and Weber.
- vii. Karl Mannheim and the Sociology of Knowledge
 - a. He is best known, as the founder of an area of sociology called the sociology of knowledge.
 - b. The sociology of knowledge involves the systematic study of knowledge, ideas, or intellectual phenomena in general.
 - c. Mannheim is perhaps best known for his distinction between two idea systems, ideology and utopia.
 - 1. An ideology is an idea system that seeks to conceal and conserve the present by interpreting it from the point of view of the past.

2. A utopia, in contrast, is a system of ideas that seeks to transcend the present by focusing on the future.

IV. Sociological Theory from Midcentury

A. Structural Functionalism: Peak and Decline

- i. The 1940s and 1950s were paradoxically the years of greatest dominance and the beginnings of the decline of structural functionalism.
- ii. In the 1950s, these attacks were seen as little more than “guerrilla raids,” but as sociology moved into the 1960s, the dominance of structural functionalism was clearly in jeopardy.
- iii. Structural functionalism supported America’s dominant position in the world in two ways:
 - a. Its view was a celebration of the United States and its world hegemony.
 - b. Its emphasis on equilibrium meshed well with the interests of the United States.

B. Radical Sociology in America: C. Wright Mills

- i. Mills is noteworthy for his almost single-handed effort to keep a Marxian tradition alive in sociological theory.
- ii. Mills published two major works: *White Collar* and *Character and Social Structure*.
- iii. Mills’s radicalism put him on the periphery of American sociology.

C. The Development of Conflict Theory

- i. There was an effort on the part of a number of sociologists to overcome the problems of structural functionalism by integrating a concern for structure with an interest in conflict.
- ii. This work constituted the development of *conflict theory* as an alternative to structural-functional theory.
- iii. The biggest problem with most of conflict theory was that it lacked what it needed most, a sound basis in Marxian theory.
- iv. Conflict theory should be seen as little more than a transitional development in the history of sociological theory.

- v. It was helpful in setting the stage for the beginning of that acceptance by the late 1960s.
- D. The Birth of Exchange Theory
- i. The major figure in this development is George Homans.
 - ii. He found out that Skinner's behaviorism was applicable and that it provided a theoretical alternative to Parsonsian-style structural functionalism.
 - iii. Homans's basic view was that the heart of sociology lies in the study of individual behavior and interaction.
 - iv. Exchange theory is concerned not only with individual behavior but also with interaction between people involving an exchange of rewards and costs.
 - v. Peter Blau wanted to integrate this with exchange at the structural and cultural levels, beginning with exchanges among actors but quickly moving on to the larger structures that emerge out of this exchange.
 - vi. Exchange theory has now developed into a significant strand of sociological theory, and it continues to attract new adherents and to take new directions.
- E. Dramaturgical Analysis: The Work of Erving Goffman
- i. Erving Goffman is often thought of as the last major thinker associated with the original Chicago school.
 - ii. Goffman saw much in common between theatrical performances and the kinds of "acts" we all put on in our day-to-day actions and interactions.
 - iii. Dramaturgical analysis is clearly consistent with its symbolic-interactionist roots.
 - iv. Goffman found a brilliant metaphor in the theater to shed new light on small-scale social processes.
- F. The Development of Sociologies of Everyday Life
- i. Phenomenological Sociology and the Work of Alfred Schutz (1899–1959)
 - a. The effort to develop a sociological variant of phenomenology can be traced to the publication of Alfred Schutz's "The Phenomenology of the Social World."
 - b. Much of Schutz's work focuses on an aspect of the social world called the *life-world*, or the world of everyday life.

- c. Within the life-world, Schutz differentiated between intimate face-to-face relationships (“we-relations”) and distant and impersonal relationships (“they-relations”).
- ii. Ethnomethodology
 - a. Ethnomethodology and phenomenology are often seen as closely aligned, because Harold Garfinkel was a student of Alfred Schutz.
 - b. *Ethnomethodology* is the study of “the body of common-sense knowledge and the range of procedures and considerations [the methods] by means of which the ordinary members of society make sense of, find their way about in, and act on the circumstances in which they find themselves.”
 - c. Whereas phenomenological sociologists tend to focus on what people think, ethnomethodologists are more concerned with what people actually do.
 - d. Ethnomethodologists might be interested in the way a sense of these structures is created in everyday life; they are not interested in such structures as phenomena in themselves.
- G. Marxian Sociology
 - i. In the late 1960s, Marxian theory finally began to make significant inroads into American sociological theory.
 - ii. Along with an increase in interest came institutional support for such an orientation.
 - iii. Of considerable importance was the development of significant pieces of American sociology done from a Marxian point of view.
 - iv. The development of significant pieces of American sociology done from a Marxian point of view and spatial Marxism were important achievements.
 - v. In a response to Great Recession of 2018, and the growing economic inequality that has stemmed from the Recession, Marxian theory has undergone something of a revival.
 - vi. Marxist theory has been updated to include analyses of cutting-edge problems such as environmental crisis.
 - vii. Though it is constantly changing to address problems of the present, it is clear that Marxist social theory is not going to disappear anytime soon.

H. The Challenge of Feminist Theory

- i. In Western societies, one can trace the record of critical feminist writings back almost 500 years.
- ii. In America in 1920, the movement finally won the right for women to vote, fifty-five years after that right had been constitutionally extended to all men.
- iii. Three factors helped create this new wave of feminist activism:
 - a. The general climate of critical thinking that characterized the period;
 - b. The anger of women activists who flocked to the antiwar, civil rights, and student movements only to encounter the sexist attitudes of the liberal and radical men in those movements;
 - c. Women's experience of prejudice and discrimination as they moved in ever-larger numbers into wage work and higher education.
 - d. Initially, a major feature of this international women's movement was a literature on women that made visible all aspects of women's hitherto unconsidered lives and experiences.
 - e. Most recently, feminist theories have expanded beyond the focus on women to include research on the categories of gender and sexuality more broadly.
 - f. *Queer theory* contends that identities, especially gender and sex identities are not fixed and stable and do not determine who we.
 - g. It also shows how ideas about "normal" sex and gender identity often connected to broader social structures like capitalism and patriarchy, and often help to perpetuate inequalities that are a part of those social structures.

I. Theories of Race and Colonialism

- i. All modern race theorists agree that race is not a natural, biological category.
- ii. Instead, it is a social construction that changes over time and place.
- iii. Racial hierarchies, supported by scientific theories, such as Social Darwinism, were used to legitimate the racial violence and domination that oftentimes accompanied colonization.
- iv. One of the most important theorists of race and, more specifically, colonialism was Frantz Fanon.

- v. Postcolonial theorists argue that even though most of the world was decolonized by the 1960s, the basic power structures of colonialism remain intact.
 - vi. Some sociologists have shown how postcolonial ideas can inform contemporary sociological thought in important ways.
 - vii. Sociological theorists have also developed more specific theories of race, such as a social constructionist *theory of racial formation*, a *theory of color-blind racism*, and a *systematic theory of race*.
 - viii. There is an emerging field of scholarship that attempts to overcome the legacies of racism and colonialism through a rejection, or at least reformulation, of Western knowledge.
 - ix. These theories challenge conventional ideas about what theory is and how it should be done.
- J. Structuralism and Poststructuralism
- i. We can get a preliminary feeling for structuralism by delineating the basic differences that exist among those who support a structuralist perspective.
 - ii. As structuralism grew within sociology, outside sociology a movement was developing beyond the early premises of structuralism: poststructuralism.
 - iii. The major representative of poststructuralism is Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben.
 - iv. Poststructuralists accept the importance of structure but go beyond it to encompass a wide range of other concerns such as the role that disciplinary knowledge.
- V. Late Twentieth Century Integrative Theory
- A. Starting roughly in the 1980s sociologists and social theorists in both Europe and the United States began to develop theories that attempted to bridge this micro-macro or structure-agency gap.
 - B. The idea was that a complete and comprehensive theory must be able to conceptualize the relationship between small and large scale aspects of society at the same time.
 - C. Micro-Macro Integration

- i. George Ritzer argued that micro-macro linkage emerged as the central problematic in American sociological theory in the 1980s, and it continued to be of focal concern in the 1990s.
 - ii. There are four major levels of social analysis that must be dealt with in an integrated manner, macro subjectivity, macro objectivity, micro subjectivity, and micro objectivity.
- D. Agency-Structure Integration
- i. While there are many similarities between the micro-macro and agency-structure literatures, there are also substantial differences.
 - ii. Giddens's approach sees agency and structure as a "duality." That is, they cannot be separated from one another: agency is implicated in structure, and structure is involved in agency.
 - iii. Margaret Archer rejected the idea that agency and structure can be viewed as a duality, but instead sees them as a dualism. That is, agency and structure can and should be separated.
 - iv. Pierre Bourdieu from France: the agency-structure issue translates into a concern for the relationship between habitus and field.
 - a. *Habitus* is an internalized mental, or cognitive, structure through which people deal with the social world.
 - b. The *field* is a network of relations among objective positions.
 - c. Thus, there is a dialectical relationship between habitus and field.
 - v. The final major theorist of the agency-structure linkage is the German social thinker Jürgen Habermas.
 - vi. The system has its roots in the life-world, but it ultimately comes to develop its own structural characteristics.
- E. Theoretical Syntheses
- i. The movements toward micro-macro integration and agency-structure integration set the stage for the broader movement toward theoretical syntheses.
 - ii. What is involved here is a wide-ranging effort to synthesize two or more different theories (e.g., structural functionalism and symbolic interactionism).
 - iii. First, it is very widespread and not restricted to isolated attempts at synthesis.

- iv. Second, the goal is generally a relatively narrow synthesis of theoretical ideas.
- v. There are efforts to bring perspectives from outside sociology into sociological theory.
- vi. Rational choice theory is based in economics, but it has made inroads into a number of fields, including sociology; Systems theory has its roots in the hard sciences.

VI. Theories of Modernity and Postmodernity

- A. On one side is a group of theorists who believe that we continue to live in a society that still can best be described as modern and about which we can theorize in much the same way that social thinkers have long contemplated society.
- B. On the other side is a group of thinkers who contend that society has changed so dramatically that we now live in a qualitatively different, postmodern society.
- C. The Defenders of Modernity
 - i. Although contemporary theorists recognize these dramatic changes, there are some who believe that there is more continuity than discontinuity between the world today and the world that existed around the last *fin de siècle*.
 - ii. Giddens sees modernity today as a “juggernaut,” that is, at least to some degree, out of control.
 - iii. Beck contends that whereas the classical stage of modernity was associated with industrial society, the emerging new modernity is best described as a “risk society.”
 - iv. Habermas sees modernity as an “unfinished project.” That is, the central issue in the modern world continues, as it was in Weber’s day, to be rationality.
 - v. Taylor argues that contemporary selves and societies emerge out of cultural frameworks and moral ideals developed across the modern era.
 - vi. Weber focused on the bureaucracy.
- D. The Proponents of Postmodernity
 - i. *Postmodernity* is a historical epoch that is supposed to have succeeded the modern era, or modernity.
 - ii. *Postmodern social theory* is a way of thinking about postmodernity; the world is so different that it requires entirely new ways of thinking.

- iii. Rosenau defined the postmodern mode of thought in terms of the things that it opposes, largely characteristics of the modern way of thinking.
 - a. Postmodernists reject the kind of grand narratives that characterize much of classical sociological theory.
 - b. There is a rejection of the tendency to mark boundaries between disciplines.
 - c. Postmodernists are often more interested in shocking or startling the reader than they are in engaging in careful, reasoned academic discourse.

VII. Social Theory in the Twenty-First Century

A. Theories of Consumption

- i. Productivist bias: theories have tended to focus on industry, industrial organizations, work, and workers.
- ii. This bias is most obvious in Marxian and neo-Marxian theory.
- iii. Postmodern social theory has tended to define postmodern society as a consumer society, with the result that consumption plays a central role in that theory.
- iv. A very new direction in this domain is work on *prosumers*, those who simultaneously produce and consume, especially on the Internet.

B. Theories of Globalization

- i. Theories of globalization can be categorized under three main headings—economic, political, and cultural theories.
 - a. Economic theories, undoubtedly the best known, can be broadly divided into two categories: theories that celebrate the neoliberal global economic market, and theories, often from a Marxian perspective, that are critical of it.
 - b. In political theory, one position is represented by the liberal approach, and on the other side are thinkers more on the left.
 - 1. A central issue in political theory is the continued viability of the nation-state.
 - c. We can divide cultural theories into three broad approaches: cultural differentialism, cultural convergence, and cultural hybridization.

C. Theories of Science, Technology, and Society

- i. Some theorists in this field prefer to use the term technoscience to indicate the fusion of scientific knowledge with practical interventions into everyday life.

- ii. This field studies how science and technology impacts social, cultural, and personal life.
- iii. Many contemporary theories of science also focus on the interrelationship among capitalism, politics, and technoscience, using the terms *biopolitics* and *biocapital*.
- iv. In terms of contributions to social theory more generally, actor-network theory is likely the most important perspective in science and technology studies.
- v. The study of science and technology has also led theorists to a more interdisciplinary engagement with the findings of the natural sciences.
- vi. This emphasis on the variety of agents (especially techno-agents) involved in social life is in line with increasing scholarly interest in, the *posthuman* and the *postsocial*.
- vii. Most recently, theorists in the area of *affect theory* combine research in the life sciences with postmodern and poststructuralist ideas.

Lecture Notes

Chapter 5: Herbert Spencer

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. In the theoretical ideas of Herbert Spencer, we see a considerable advance over those of Auguste Comte.
 - B. Jonathan Turner, who has agreed with many of Spencer's ideas, pointed out that modern sociological theorists have been disinclined to take Spencer seriously, relegating him, like Comte, to the "dustbin" of history.
 1. Spencer and Comte
 - C. Spencer began with great praise for Comte's work: "In working out this conception [of positivism] he has shown remarkable breadth of view, great originality, immense fertility of thought, unusual powers of generalization."
 - D. Spencer was concerned mainly with positioning himself as one of Comte's "antagonists" and with distinguishing his own ideas from those of Comte because their work was "so utterly different in nature."
 - E. Spencer and Comte derived the terms *structure* and *function* largely from biology, and they tended to use them in similar ways.
 - i. In utilizing these terms and the perspective they imply, both Spencer and Comte played key historic roles in the development of structural functionalism.
 - F. Social statics and social dynamics: For Comte, these terms referred to all types of societies, whereas Spencer related them specifically to his future ideal society.
 - G. Although Spencer saw himself as a positivist, he did not accept Comte's version of positivism, especially Comte's sense of a positivist religion.
 - H. Spencer, like Comte, dealt with a wide range of sciences, but Spencer viewed the sciences as being interconnected and interdependent.

- I. Comte's professed aim is to give a coherent account of the progress of *human conceptions*, whereas Spencer's aim is to give a coherent account of the progress of the *external world*. The one end is *subjective*, the other is *objective*.
- J. Comte wanted to construct a society, even a world, dominated by a positivistic religion of humanity and led by the high priests of positivism.
 - i. Spencer's ideal is a society in which the government is reduced to a minimum and individuals are allowed maximum freedom.
- K. Comte believed that individuals could be taught morality, largely through the positivist religion, but Spencer ridiculed the idea that morality could be taught in any fashion and by any means.
 - 1. General Theoretical Principles
- L. Spencer articulated a series of general truths about the world, including the facts that matter is indestructible, that there is continuity of motion and persistence of force, that the relations among forces persist, and that matter and motion are continually redistributed.
 - i. By a process of *deduction* from these general laws, Spencer articulated a series of ideas that constitute his general *evolutionary theory*.
- M. Evolutionary Theory
 - i. Spencer believed that all inorganic, organic, and superorganic (societal) phenomena undergo evolution and devolution, or dissolution.
 - ii. Spencer's Evolutionary formula: Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent, heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.
 - iii. Key elements of Spencer's evolution theory: Integration, differentiation, and indefinite to the definite.
 - iv. Spencer associated structures with "matter" and saw them growing more integrated, heterogeneous, and definite. Functions are linked to "retained motion," and they, too, are seen as growing increasingly integrated, heterogeneous, and definite.
 - v. Reasons for the occurrence of evolution:

- a. Homogeneous phenomena are inherently unstable.
 - b. The multiplication of effects.
 - c. Segregation of sector serves to maintain differences among the sectors.
 - vi. While en route to their end state, phenomena move through a series of transitional states that can be described as “moving equilibria,” and the end state of the process is a new equilibrium.
 - vii. Spencer recognized, in a dialectical fashion, that the process of dissolution complements the evolutionary process and periodically leads to its undoing.
 - 1. Sociology
- N. Defining the Science of Sociology
- i. Sociology is “the natural history of societies” or, more specifically, “an order among those structural and functional changes which societies pass through.”
 - ii. Spencer’s sociology concentrates largely on macro-level social phenomena (social aggregates), societies, social structures, social institutions, as well as the functions of each.
 - iii. Spencer, like Comte, saw sociology, especially in its evolutionary concerns, as the most complex of sciences.
 - iv. To be a science, in Spencer’s view, a field of study need only consist of generalizations (laws) and interpretations based on those generalizations. Sociology seeks laws of social phenomena in the same way that the natural sciences seek the laws of natural phenomena.
 - v. Legitimizing Sociology
 - a. Spencer confronted the problem that many other early sociologists faced, the need to legitimize the field.
 - b. Spencer also confronted the misplaced confidence of laypeople in their views and their hostility to sociologists.
 - c. Spencer felt that sociologists, in contrast to laypeople, require disciplined habits of thought and that those habits are to be derived from a careful study of other sciences.
 - vi. Sociology and Biology
 - a. Three basic linkages between biology and sociology:

1. To understand social actions, the sociologist must know the basic laws of life, and it is biology that helps us comprehend those laws.
 2. An understanding of the biology of the living organism, which after all is far easier to study than the social organism, offers many keys to understanding society.
 3. A kind of natural progression and linkage exist between the two fields because humans are the “terminal” problem for biology and the starting point for sociology.
- b. A more specific similarity between biology and sociology is the operation of a survival-of-the-fittest process (“natural selection”) in both living and social organisms.

vii. Sociology and Psychology

- a. Psychology is the study of intelligence, feeling, and action.
- b. Spencer believed that one of the great lessons of psychology is that feeling, *not* intelligence, is linked to action.
 1. This belief led Spencer to emphasize sentiments and to downgrade the importance of intelligence and cognition in his sociological analyses.
- c. Spencer argued that primitive people were characterized by greater selfishness and that there was more altruism in the modern world.
- d. Spencer concluded that the units of society are individuals and that individuals are the source of social phenomena.

O. Sociological Methods

i. Difficulties Facing Sociology

- a. Social phenomena cannot be studied and measured with such instruments as clocks, thermometers, scales, and microscopes.
- b. Social facts cannot be studied through introspection.
- c. Sociologists inevitably deal with an enormous range of highly dispersed details. It is often difficult to gain a sense of what is happening, because things occur over a wide geographic area and over long periods of time.
- d. The data are often distorted by the subjective states of the witnesses to the events under study, but sociologists must rely on the reports of such witnesses

for their data. For another, the sociological observer is often misled by superficial and trivial facts and fails to see what is truly important.

- ii. Spencer's Approach
 - a. In seeking to exclude biases from sociological research, Spencer articulated a "value-free" position for the discipline.
 - b. In his own work, Spencer employed *comparative-historical* method.
 - c. Fifteen data volumes on various societies: These volumes reflect Spencer's commitment to empirical research of the comparative-historical variety in order to create a base whereby he and others could inductively support, or fail to support, theories derived deductively.
- II. The Evolution of Society
 - A. Spencer made the distinction between *nominalism* (society is nothing more than its component parts) and *realism* (society is a distinct and separable entity), supporting realism because of the "permanence of the relations among component parts which constitutes the individuality of a whole."
 - B. Methodological individualism generally leads to, and is more compatible with, a nominalist position on society.
 - i. Conversely, methodological individualism generally rules out a realist orientation to society.
 - C. Spencer saw societies as being like organic bodies (but unlike inorganic bodies) in that they are characterized by permanent relations among the component parts.
 - i. Spencer's *organicism* led him to see a number of parallelisms between society and organic entities.
 - D. In a more concrete sense, Spencer saw society as a gathering of people forming a group in which there is cooperation to seek common ends.
 - i. Cooperation in society implies some form of organization.
 - E. In Spencer's view, there are two basic types of cooperation:
 - i. The division of labor, which is a spontaneously and unconsciously developed system that directly serves the interests of individuals and indirectly serves the interests of society.

- ii. The political organization, which is a consciously and purposefully created system that directly serves the interests of society and indirectly those of the individual.
- F. The first element in Spencer's work on the evolution of society is society's growth in size.
- i. In his view, societies, similar to living organisms, "begin as germs."
- G. The increase in the size of society is accompanied by an increase in *structure*.
- i. Greater size requires more differentiation, a greater unlikeness of parts.
- H. The increasing differentiation of structures is accompanied by increasingly differentiated functions.
- I. In both social systems and organisms, the sustaining system is concerned with the *internal* matters needed to keep them alive.
- J. *External* matters for both social systems and organisms are handled by the regulative system.
- K. The regulative system takes the form of the neuromuscular system in organisms and the government-military apparatus in social systems.
- L. The distributive system links the sustaining and regulative organs and systems.
- M. Simple and Compounded Societies
- i. The primary method of classifying societies is based on the increasing number of members of the aggregate as well as the degree to which that aggregate is compounded, or added to, by combining with other aggregates through such means as conquest or peaceful merger.
 - ii. Four types of societies on the basis of their degree of compounding:
 - a. *Simple* societies, which constitute single working entities that are not connected with any other entities.
 - b. *Compound* societies, in which there is some increase in heterogeneity.
 - c. *Doubly compound* societies, formed on the basis of the recompounding of compound groups.
 - d. *Trebly compound* societies, or the great nations of the world, which are even more advanced in the areas just mentioned, as well as in many others.
- N. Militant and Industrial Societies

- i. Militant societies tend to be dominated by the regulative system, whereas industrial societies are characterized by their more highly developed sustaining systems.
- ii. Militant societies are characterized by highly structured organizations for offensive and defensive warfare.
- iii. Spencer believed that war is useful in militant societies in producing social aggregation (by, e.g., military conquest).
 - a. It is also useful in laying the groundwork for industrial society.
- iv. The industrial society is dominated by the sustaining system, and its industrial system is more developed and diverse.
 - a. The regulative control that continues to exist tends to be negative (people shall *not* do certain things) rather than positive (people must do certain things).
 - b. There is no need for despotic control, and the government tends to be democratic, with representatives of the people exercising power.
 - c. The control that remains tends to be much more decentralized.
 - d. Individuality is protected and permitted to flourish.
 - e. The military system is subordinated to the needs of the industrial system.
 - f. Control is exercised by contracts voluntarily entered into by individuals.

Harmony, rather than conflict and warfare, characterizes industrial societies.
- v. Spencer also discussed “hybrid societies,” which are only partially militant or industrial, although he contended that hybrid societies are likely to be more like militant societies than industrial societies.
- vi. Spencer recognized that regression to more militant societies is possible.

III. Ethics and Politics

- A. In his two-volume *The Principles of Ethics*, Spencer articulated a rather consistent ethical and political position that informs, and is informed by, his substantive work.
 - i. He described *The Principles of Ethics* as a set of “rules of right conduct on a scientific basis.”
- B. Spencer’s moral and political ideas are derived, to a large extent, from his methodological individualism.

- i. Spencer focused on macro-level phenomena, but he did so with the view that the basis for these phenomena was individual “units.”
 - C. Although individuals are the proximate cause of social morality, the more distant cause is God.
 - i. The things that people come to view as moral are in line with divine rule.
 - D. Another factor in evolution to a perfect moral state is that evil, in Spencer’s view, progressively disappears.
 - i. As he viewed it, evil is a result of nonadaptation to external conditions, or “unfitness to the conditions of existence.”
 - ii. As a result of the survival-of-the-fittest argument applied to evil, Spencer concluded that “the ultimate development of the ideal man is logically certain.”
 - E. Spencer contended that human happiness comes from the satisfaction of desires and that gratification can come only from an exercise of human faculties.
 - F. Because individuals are not endowed with the capacity to prevent their actions from infringing on the rights of others, society is needed to perform this function.
 - i. This leads to Spencer’s libertarian political position that there is a role for the state, but it is a highly limited one.
 - G. The state, as well as private philanthropists, is enjoined from preventing misery because to do so would cause greater misery for future generations.
 - H. Spencer opposed state-administered charity (or any charity, for that matter) and state-run education.
 - I. He believed that sociology, with its focus on the long history of unintentional evolutionary changes, would help disabuse us of the notion that “social evils admit of radical cures.”
 - J. Spencer associated socialism with militant societies and argued that it would “cease to be normal as fast as the society becomes predominantly industrial in its type.”
 - K. Spencer saw socialism as standing in opposition to the selfishness that he felt was an inherent part of human nature.
- IV. Criticisms and Contemporary Applications
- A. The moral and political views, as well as many others, led many sociologists, to dismiss Spencer’s theoretical perspective.

- B. There is a very suspicious fit between Spencer's "scientific" sociology and his moral and political views.
 - i. Spencer cautioned sociologists about being biased in their work, but it seems clear that Spencer's sociological theory is weakened by his own biases.
- C. There are two kinds of evolutionary perspectives in contemporary sociology:
 - i. The first, like Spencer's theory, focuses on the "study of long-term social evolution." Sanderson developed an approach called "evolutionary materialism" in which he details the "role of economic, demographic, technological and economic factors as the principle causes of social evolution".
 - ii. The second variety of sociological evolutionary theory was developed out of neo-Darwinian theories such as sociobiology and evolutionary psychology. This approach attempts to analyze the biological, especially genetic, foundations of social life.
 - a. Sociobiology explains human behavior "as an organism's attempt to maximize its reproductive success."
 - b. Evolutionary psychology emerged in response to these criticisms and "emphasize[d] that it is our minds that have evolved, not our disembodied behaviors."

Lecture Notes

Chapter 6: Karl Marx

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. Marx's most famous work is *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*.
 - B. It is difficult to separate the ideas of Marx from the political movements that they inspired.
 - C. Marx is the only theorist who has had political movements and social systems named after him.
 - D. There are many reasons for this lack of understanding of Marx's social theory:
 - i. He never really completed his social theory.
 - ii. He never did this final work and never even completed his separate work on economics.
 - iii. Although Marx could write clear and inspiring prose, especially in his political tracts, he often preferred a vocabulary that relied on complex philosophical traditions, and he made these terms even more difficult to understand.
 - E. Despite these problems, Marx's theories have produced one of sociology's most productive and significant research programs.
 - F. Rediscoveries and reinterpretations of Marx have often renewed sociology and opened up a fresh perspective on such issues as alienation, globalization, and the environment.
 - G. Despite differing interpretations, there is general agreement that Marx's main interest was in the historical basis of inequality, especially the unique form that it takes under capitalism.
- II. The Dialectic
 - A. We must understand some of Hegel in order to appreciate the central Marxian conception of the dialectic.

- B. According to Hegel, historical change has been driven by the contradictory understandings that are the essence of reality, by our attempts to resolve the contradictions, and by the new contradictions that develop.
- C. For Marx, such contradictions are resolved not by the philosopher sitting in an armchair but by a life-and-death struggle that changes the social world.
- D. This was a crucial transformation because it allowed Marx to move the dialectic out of the realm of philosophy and into the realm of a study of social relations grounded in the material world.
- E. The dialectic leads to an interest in the conflicts and contradictions among various levels of social reality.

III. Dialectical Method

A. Fact and Value

- i. In dialectical analysis, social values are not separable from social facts.
- ii. The dialectical thinker believes that it is impossible to keep values out of the study of the social world and also undesirable.
- iii. Facts and values are inevitably intertwined, with the result that the study of social phenomena is value-laden.
- iv. Research into the work of scientists indicates that the idea of a dispassionate scientist is largely a myth, and that the very best scientists are the ones who are most passionate about, and committed to, their ideas.

B. Reciprocal Relations

- i. For the dialectical thinker, social influences never simply flow in one direction as they often do for cause-and-effect thinkers.
- ii. To the dialectician, one factor may have an effect on another, but it is just as likely that the latter will have a simultaneous effect on the former.
- iii. When dialectical thinkers talk about causality, they are always attuned to reciprocal relationships among social factors as well as to the dialectical totality of social life in which they are embedded.

C. Past, Present, Future

- i. Dialecticians are interested not only in the relationships of social phenomena in the contemporary world but also in the relationship of those contemporary realities to both past and future social phenomena.
 - ii. This has two distinct implications for a dialectical sociology:
 - a. Dialectical sociologists are concerned with studying the historical roots of the contemporary world.
 - b. Many dialectical thinkers are attuned to current social trends in order to understand the possible future directions of society.
- D. No Inevitabilities
- i. The dialectical view of the relationship between the present and the future need not imply that the future is determined by the present.
 - ii. Because social phenomena are constantly acting and reacting, the social world defies a simple, deterministic model.
 - iii. Marx hoped and believed that the future was to be found in communism, but he did not believe that the workers could simply wait passively for it to arrive.
 - iv. Communism would come only through their choices and struggles.
 - v. This disinclination to think deterministically is what makes the best-known model of the dialectic, thesis, antithesis, synthesis inadequate for sociological use.
 - vi. The dialectician is interested in the study of real relationships rather than grand abstractions.
 - vii. It is this disinclination to deal in grand abstractions that led Marx away from Hegel and would lead him today to reject the oversimplification of the dialectic.
- E. Actors and Structures
- i. Dialectical thinkers are also interested in the dynamic relationship between actors and social structures.
 - ii. On the one hand, these large-scale structures help people fulfill themselves; on the other, they represent a grave threat to humanity.
 - iii. The dialectical method is even more complex than this, because, as we have already seen, the dialectician considers past, present, and future circumstances, both actors and structures.

IV. Human Potential

- A. Marx built his critical analysis of the contradictions of capitalist society on his premises about human potential, its relation to labor, and its potential for alienation under capitalism.
- B. To understand human potential, we need to understand social history, because human nature is shaped by the same dialectical contradictions that Marx believed shapes the history of society.
- C. When speaking of our general human potential, Marx often used the term *species being*, by which he meant the potentials and powers that are uniquely human and that distinguish humans from other species.
- D. Ideas about human nature have often been used to argue against any social change.
 - i. Such conceptions of human nature are innately conservative.
 - ii. If our problems are due to human nature, we had better learn to just adapt instead of trying to change things.
- E. There is evidence that Marx did have a notion of human nature.
 - i. Our concept of human nature dictates how society can be sustained and how it can be changed, but most important for Marx's theory, it suggests how society *should* be changed.
- F. Labor
 - i. For Marx, species being and human potential are intimately related to labor:
 - a. *Objectification*: The process in which we create external objects out of our internal thoughts.
 - b. *Material*: It works with the more material aspects of nature in order to satisfy our material needs.
 - c. *Transformation*: labor does not just transform the material aspects of nature but also transforms us, including our needs, our consciousness, and our human nature.
 - ii. Marx's use of the term labor is not restricted to economic activities:
 - a. It encompasses all productive actions that transform the material aspects of nature in accordance with our purpose.
 - b. In Marx's terms, artwork is an objectification of the artist.

- c. Labor, even artistic labor, is in response to a need, and the transformation that labor entails also transforms our needs.
 - d. The satisfaction of our needs can lead to the creation of new needs.
 - e. We labor in response to our needs, but the labor itself transforms our needs, which can lead to new forms of productive activity.
 - f. It is the development of our truly human powers and potentials.
 - g. Furthermore, labor is a social activity.
- iii. Consequently, the transformation of the individual through labor and the transformation of society are not separable.

V. Alienation

- A. *Alienation*: The inherent relation between labor and human nature which is perverted by capitalism.
- B. Marx analyzed the peculiar form that our relation to our own labor has taken under capitalism.
 - i. Rather than being an end in itself, an expression of human capabilities, labor in capitalism is reduced to being a means to an end: earning money.
 - ii. Because our labor is not our own, it no longer transforms us.
 - iii. Instead we are alienated from our labor and therefore alienated from our true human nature.
- C. Although it is the individual who feels alienated in capitalist society, Marx's basic analytic concern was with the structures of capitalism that cause this alienation.
- D. These structures, especially the division of labor, are the sociological basis of alienation.
- E. People feel freely active only in their animal functions, eating, drinking, and procreating.
- F. Alienation can be seen as having four basic components:
 - i. Workers in capitalist society are alienated from their *productive activity*.
 - ii. Workers in capitalist society are alienated not only from productive activities but also from the object of those activities, the *product*.
 - iii. Workers in capitalist society are alienated from their *fellow workers*.
 - iv. Workers in capitalist society are alienated from their own *human potential*.

- G. Alienation is an example of the sort of contradiction that Marx's dialectical approach focused on.
 - i. What Marx wanted to stress is that this contradiction cannot be resolved merely in thought, but only through real social change.

VI. The Structures of Capitalist Society

- A. Marx's analysis of alienation was a response to the economic, social, and political changes that Marx saw going on around him.
- B. Marx's work on human nature and alienation led him to a critique of capitalist society and to a political program oriented to overcoming the structures of capitalism.
- C. Capitalism is an economic system in which great numbers of workers who own little produce commodities for the profit of small numbers of capitalists who own all of the following:
 - i. The commodities;
 - ii. The means of producing the commodities;
 - iii. The labor time of the workers, which they purchase through wages.
- D. Capitalism is not simply an economic system; it is also a political system, a mode of exercising power, and a process for exploiting workers.
- E. In a capitalist system, the economy seems to be a natural force.
- F. Marx's aim was to:
 - i. Make the social and political structures of the economy clearer by revealing "the economic law of motion of modern society."
 - ii. Reveal the internal contradictions that he hoped would inevitably transform capitalism.
- G. Commodities
 - i. The basis of all of Marx's work on social structures is his analysis of commodities, or products of labor intended primarily for exchange.
 - ii. Marx's view of the commodity was rooted in his materialist orientation, with its focus on the productive activities of actors.
 - iii. *Use value*:
 - a. Objects are produced for personal use or for use by others in the immediate environment.

- b. Use value is connected to the intimate relation between human needs and the actual objects that can satisfy those needs.
- c. They are *qualitatively* different.

iv. *Exchange value*:

- a. Instead of being used immediately, they are exchanged in the market for money or for other objects.
- b. In the process of exchange, however, different commodities are compared to one another.
- c. They are *quantitatively* different.

H. *Fetishism of Commodities*

- i. The commodity takes on an independent, almost mystical external reality.
- ii. In capitalism, the products that we make, their values, and the economy that consists of our exchanges all seem to take on lives of their own, separate from any human needs or decisions.
- iii. Even the labor of self-employed commodity producers is alienated, because they must produce for the market instead of to achieve their own purposes and satisfy their own needs.
- iv. Granting reality to commodities and to the market, the individual in capitalism progressively loses control over them.
- v. *Reification*:
 - a. The “thingification,” or the process of coming to believe that humanly created social forms are natural, universal, and absolute things.
 - b. It implies that people believe that social structures are beyond their control and unchangeable.
 - c. People reify the whole range of social relationships and social structures, just like commodities or economic phenomena.

I. Capital, Capitalists, and the Proletariat

- i. Marx found the heart of capitalist society within the commodity.
- ii. Proletariat:
 - a. Workers who sell their labor and do not own their own means of production are members of the proletariat.

- b. Because members of the proletariat produce only for exchange, they are also consumers.
 - c. This makes the proletariat dependent on those who pay the wages.
 - iii. Capitalists:
 - a. Those who pay the wages are the capitalists.
 - b. Capitalists are those who own the means of production.
 - iv. Capital:
 - a. Capital is money that produces more money; capital is money that is invested rather than being used to satisfy human needs or desires.
 - b. *Circulation of commodities*: two types:
 - 1. Money → Commodities → (a larger sum of) Money (M1-C-M2).
 - 2. Commodities → Money → Commodities (C₁-M-C₂).
 - c. In a noncapitalist circulation of commodities, the circuit C1-M-C2 predominates.
 - d. In a capitalist circulation of commodities (M1-C-M2), the primary goal is to produce more money.
 - v. Capital is money that produces more money, but it is also a particular social relation.
 - vi. Capitalists are those who live off the profit of capital; they are the beneficiaries of the proletariat's exploitation.
- J. *Exploitation*
- i. In capitalism, exploitation is accomplished by the impersonal and "objective" economic system.
 - ii. *Reserve army* of the unemployed: If a worker does not want to do a job at the wage the capitalist offers, someone else in the reserve army of the unemployed will.
 - iii. *Surplus value*: The difference between the value of the product when it is sold and the value of the elements consumed in the formation of that product (including the worker's labor).
 - a. Surplus value, like capital, is a particular social relation and a form of domination, because labor is the real source of surplus value.

- iv. Capitalists may seem to be in control, but even they are driven by the constant competition between capitals.
 - v. *General law of capitalist accumulation*: The desire for more profit and more surplus value for expansion.
- K. Class Conflict
- i. *Class* was always defined in terms of its potential for conflict.
 - ii. In capitalism there is an inherent conflict of interest between those who hire wage laborers and those whose labor is turned into surplus value.
 - iii. It is this inherent conflict that produces classes.
 - iv. For Marx, a class truly exists only when people become aware of their conflicting relation to other classes.
 - a. Without this awareness, they only constitute a *class in itself*.
 - b. When they become aware of the conflict, they become a true class, a *class for itself*.
 - v. Marx's analysis discovered two primary classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat.
 - a. Bourgeoisie is Marx's name for capitalists in the modern economy.
 - b. The conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is another example of a real material contradiction.
 - vi. *Proletarianization*: The inevitable increase in the proletariat due to the displacement of the capitalists.
 - vii. Marx foresaw a situation in which society would be characterized by a tiny number of exploitative capitalists and a huge mass of proletarians and members of the industrial reserve army.
 - viii. The international linking of factories and markets encourages workers to be aware of more than their own local interests.
 - ix. Capitalists are under competitive pressure from one another, forcing each to try to reduce labor costs and intensify exploitation.
 - x. Marx usually did not blame individual members of the bourgeoisie for their actions; he saw these actions as largely determined by the logic of the capitalist system.

- xi. On the personal side, Marx believed that the facets of the alienation were at the root of the feeling of meaninglessness in so many people's lives.
 - xii. At the economic level, Marx predicted a series of booms and depressions as capitalists overproduced or laid off workers in their attempts to increase their profits.
 - xiii. At the political level, Marx predicted the increasing inability of a civil society to discuss and solve social problems.
- L. Capitalism as a Good Thing
- i. The birth of capitalism opened up new possibilities for the freedom of the workers.
 - ii. As the most powerful economic system ever developed, capitalism holds the promise of freedom from hunger and from other forms of material deprivation.
 - iii. In addition, Marx believed that capitalism is the root cause of the defining characteristics of the modern age.
 - iv. Capitalism has been a truly revolutionary force; however, Marx believed that its role is finished, and it is time for the new stage of communism to begin.

VII. Materialist Conception of History

- A. *Historical materialism*: The way in which people provide for their material needs determines or conditions the relations that people have with each other, their social institutions, and even their prevalent ideas.
- i. *Base*: Historical materialism along with the resultant economic relations.
 - ii. *Superstructure*: Noneconomic relations, other social institutions, and prevalent ideas.
- B. Advances in the satisfaction of needs tend to produce more needs so that human needs are both the motivating foundation and the result of the economic base.
- C. Marx's theory holds that a society will tend to adopt the system of social relations that best facilitates the employment and development of its productive powers.
- D. Capitalist economies foster unique relations between people and create certain expectations, obligations, and duties.
- i. Their propensity to class conflict.
 - ii. The effect of the relations of production in family and personal relations.

- a. Changes in the forces of production led to deep changes in the family structure.
- E. Marx's view of history was a dynamic one, and he therefore believed that the forces of production would change to better provide for material needs.
- F. A revolution is often required to change the relations of production.
 - i. An effective revolution, according to Marx, will cause the supporting relations, institutions, and prevalent ideas to change so that they validate the new relations of production.

VIII. Cultural Aspects of Capitalist Society

A. Ideology

- i. Ideologies: The prevalent ideas tending to prevent the changes necessary for development of the forces of production.
- ii. Ideology: Ideas that naturally emerge out of everyday life in capitalism but, because of the nature of capitalism, reflect reality in an inverted manner.
- iii. Two types:
 - a. The first type of ideology is represented by the fetishism of commodities or by money.
 - b. The second type of ideology refers to systems of ruling ideas that attempt once again to hide the contradictions that are at the heart of the capitalist system.
 - c. Three ways:
 - 1. They lead to the creation of subsystems of ideas that make the contradictions appear to be coherent;
 - 2. They explain away those experiences that reveal the contradictions, usually as personal problems or individual idiosyncrasies;
 - 3. They present the capitalist contradiction as really being a contradiction in human nature and therefore one that cannot be fixed by social change.
 - d. In general, members of the ruling class create this second type of ideology.
- iv. *Freedom, Equality, and Ideology*
 - a. According to Marx, our particular ideas of equality and freedom emerge out of capitalism.

- b. Marx thought that this change in our ideas could be traced to the everyday practices of capitalism.
- c. The very idea of capitalist exchange means that commodities are not taken by force but are freely traded.
- d. Marx believed that capitalist practices result in an inverted view of freedom; it seems that we are free, but, in fact, it is the capitalist that is free and we who are enslaved.
 - 1. The proletariat must work in order to live, but the capitalist has the choice to hire others from the reserve army of labor, or to mechanize, or to let the factory sit idle until the workers become desperate enough to “freely” accept the capitalist’s wages.
- e. Hence, the first level of the ideology of freedom and equality emerges from the practices of exchange in capitalism, but our ideas are inverted and do not represent real freedom and equality.
- f. This is why the second type of ideology is necessary.
- g. The rule of capitalism is reflected in the common saying that the rich get richer while the poor get poorer.
- h. Nevertheless, attempts to make the capitalist system more equal often are portrayed as forms of inequality.
- i. The ideas of freedom and equality emerge from capitalism itself, and it is these ideas that drive us toward the dissolution of capitalism, toward communism.

B. Religion

- i. Marx believed that religion, like all ideology, reflects a truth but that this truth is inverted.
- ii. Marx clearly expressed that he was not against religion per se, but against a system that requires the illusions of religion.
- iii. The religious form is vulnerable to disruption and therefore is always liable to become the basis of a revolutionary movement.

IX. Marx’s Economics: A Case Study

- A. *Use value* is defined qualitatively; that is, something either is or is not useful.

- i. It is defined by the amount of labor needed to appropriate useful qualities.
- B. Whereas use values are produced to satisfy one's own needs, exchange values are produced to be exchanged for values of another use.
- C. Whereas the production of use values is a natural human expression, the existence of exchange values sets in motion a process by which humanity is distorted
- D. *Exchange value*, however, is defined quantitatively; by the amount of labor needed to appropriate useful qualities.
 - i. The entire edifice of capitalism, including commodities, the market, money, and so forth, is erected on the basis of exchange values.
- E. Labor theory of value: The basic source of any value was the amount of socially necessary labor-time needed to produce an article under the normal conditions of production and with the average degree of skill and intensity of the time.
- F. Marx put at the heart of his sociology the theme of exploitation.
- G. *Surplus value*: The difference between the value of the product when it is sold and the value of the elements consumed in the formation of that product.
 - i. The most important derivation from surplus is its profit.
- H. *General law of capitalist accumulation*: The desire for more profit and more surplus value for expansion.
 - i. Marx basically argued that the structure and the ethos of capitalism push the capitalists in the direction of the accumulation of more and more capital.
 - ii. This shift to capital-intensive production is, paradoxically, a cause of the declining rate of profit because it is labor (not machines) that is the ultimate source of profit.
- I. As mechanization proceeds, more and more people are put out of work and fall from the proletariat to the "industrial reserve army."
 - i. Marx foresaw a situation in which society would be characterized by a tiny number of exploitative capitalists and a huge mass of proletarians and members of the industrial reserve army.
- J. The key point about the general law of capitalist accumulation is the degree to which actors, both capitalist and proletarian, are impelled by the structure and ethos of capitalism to do what they do.

- K. Marx usually did not blame individual capitalists for their actions; he saw these actions as largely determined by the logic of the capitalist system.
- L. The developmental process inherent in capitalism provides the conditions necessary for the ultimate reemergence of such creative action and, with it, the overthrow of the capitalist system.

X. Communism

- A. Marx thought that capitalism had developed its productive powers so that it was ready to enter a new mode of production, which he called communism.
- B. Marx was intellectually opposed to painting utopian visions of the future.
- C. He believed that such criticism would help bring down capitalism and create the conditions for the rise of a new socialist world.
- D. Marx believed that communism would involve making decisions about what is to be produced away from the reified economy that runs in the interests of the few capitalists.

XI. Criticisms

- A. Five problems in Marx's theory need to be discussed:
 - i. The first is the problem of communism as it came to exist.
 - ii. *Missing emancipatory subject*: Although Marx's theory places the proletariat at the heart of the social change leading to communism, the proletariat has rarely assumed this leading position and often is among the groups that are most opposed to communism.
 - iii. *Missing dimension of gender*: One of the main points of Marx's theory is that labor becomes a commodity under capitalism, yet it is a historical fact that the commodifying of labor has happened less to women than to men.
 - iv. The focus on production led Marx to ignore the role of consumption.
 - v. Marx's uncritical acceptance of Western conceptions of progress was also a problem.

XII. Contemporary Applications

- A. Marx's ideas have impacted political theory, cultural theory, economic sociology, spatial theory, and globalization theory.
- B. Some of the substantive topics that have been studied using Marx's theories:

- i. Democracy and civil society;
 - ii. The media;
 - iii. The transnational class system;
 - iv. Global political trends;
 - v. Violence;
 - vi. Financial and ecological crises.
- C. Potential contribution to the analysis of environmental problems:
- i. Marx's writings contain an important, but long-ignored, environmental theory.
 - ii. Marx developed the concept of "social metabolism," which played a central role in Marx's later economic theory.
 - iii. Those most hard hit by economic and environmental hardship will rise up to demand an end to capitalism or any future economic system that disturbs the social metabolism.

Lecture Notes

Chapter 7: Emile Durkheim

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. Two main themes of Emile Durkheim's work:
 - i. Priority of the social over the individual.
 - ii. Idea that society can be studied scientifically.
 - B. Durkheim provides the opposing approach.
 - i. For Durkheim, society is made up of "social facts," which exceed our intuitive understanding and must be investigated through observations and measurements.
 - C. The term *sociology* had been coined some years earlier by Auguste Comte; there was no field of sociology per se in late nineteenth-century universities.
 - D. To separate sociology from psychology, Durkheim argued that sociology should be concerned with the study of social facts, phenomena irreducible to individual psychology.
 - E. To separate sociology from philosophy, Durkheim argued that it should be oriented toward empirical research.
- II. Social Facts
 - A. Social facts are the social structures and cultural norms and values that are external to, and coercive of, actors.
 - B. Crucial in separating sociology from psychology and philosophy is the idea that social facts are to be treated as "things" and studied empirically.
 - i. Social facts must be studied by acquiring data from outside of our own minds through observation and experimentation.
 - C. Durkheim gave two ways of defining a social fact so that sociology is distinguished from psychology.
 - i. First, a social fact is experienced as an external constraint rather than an internal drive.

- ii. Second, it is general throughout the society and is not attached to any particular individual.
- D. Durkheim referred to social facts with the Latin term *sui generis*, which means “unique.”
- i. He used this term to claim that social facts have their own unique character that is not reducible to individual consciousness.
 - ii. To allow that social facts could be explained by reference to individuals would be to reduce sociology to psychology.
 - iii. Instead, social facts can be explained only by other social facts.
 - a. Durkheim explained the division of labor and even the rate of suicide with other social facts rather than individual intentions.
- E. He referred to language as a social fact, and it provides an easily understood example.
- i. First, language is a “thing” that must be studied empirically.
 - ii. Second, language is external to the individual.
 - iii. Third, language is coercive of the individual.
 - iv. Finally, changes in language can be explained only by other social facts and never by one individual’s intentions.
- F. Durkheim’s idea of social facts both established sociology as an independent field of study and provided one of the most convincing arguments for studying society as it is instead of what it should be.
- G. Material and Nonmaterial Social Facts
- i. *Material social facts*, such as styles of architecture, forms of technology, and legal codes, are the easier to understand of the two because they are directly observable.
 - ii. Nonmaterial social facts: Material social facts often express a far larger and more powerful realm of moral forces that are at least equally external to individuals and coercive over them.
 - iii. Durkheim recognized that nonmaterial social facts are, to a certain extent, found in the minds of individuals.
 - iv. *Relational realism*: The interactions, even when nonmaterial, have their own levels of reality.

- v. At another level are structural components (e.g., a bureaucracy), which are a mixture of morphological components (the density of people in a building and their lines of communication) and nonmaterial social facts (such as the bureaucratic norms).
- H. Types of Nonmaterial Social Facts
- i. Morality
 - a. Durkheim was a sociologist of morality in the broadest sense of the word.
 - b. Durkheim's view of morality had two aspects:
 - 1. First, Durkheim was convinced that morality is a social fact.
 - 2. Second, Durkheim was a sociologist of morality because his studies were driven by his concern about the moral "health" of modern society.
 - c. Durkheim's great concern with morality was related to his curious definition of *freedom*.
 - d. In Durkheim's view, people were in danger of a "pathological" loosening of moral bonds.
 - 1. These moral bonds were important to Durkheim, for without them the individual would be enslaved by ever-expanding and insatiable passions.
 - ii. Collective Conscience
 - a. Durkheim developed the idea of the *collective conscience*.
 - 1. In French, the word *conscience* means both "consciousness" and "moral conscience."
 - b. Collective conscience refers to the general structure of shared understandings, norms, and beliefs.
 - c. Durkheim employed this concept to argue that "primitive" societies had a stronger collective conscience than did modern societies.
 - iii. Collective Representations
 - a. The French word *représentation* literally means "idea."
 - 1. Durkheim used the term to refer to both a collective concept and a social "force."
 - 2. Examples of collective representations are religious symbols, myths, popular legends, and group memories

3. They represent collective beliefs, norms, and values, and they motivate us to conform to these collective claims.
- b. Collective representations also cannot be reduced to individuals because they emerge out of social interactions.
 1. But they can be studied more directly than collective conscience because they are more likely to be connected to material symbols such as flags, icons, and pictures or connected to practices such as rituals.
- iv. Social Currents
 - a. *Social currents*: Social facts “which do not present themselves in this already crystallized form.”
 - b. Although social currents are less concrete than other social facts, they are nevertheless social facts because they cannot be reduced to the individual.
 - c. Social currents can be viewed as sets of meanings that are shared by the members of a collectivity.
 1. Social currents can only be explained intersubjectively, that is, in terms of the *interactions* between individuals.
 2. They exist at the level of interactions, not at the level of individuals.
 3. These collective “moods,” or social currents, vary from one collectivity to another.

III. The Division of Labor in Society

- A. In this work, Durkheim traced the development of the modern relation between individuals and society.
- B. Moral crisis due to increasing division of labor:
 - i. In simpler societies, people do basically the same thing, such as farming, and they share common experiences and consequently have common values.
 - ii. In modern society, in contrast, everyone has a different job.
 - iii. When different people are assigned various specialized tasks, they no longer share common experiences.
 - iv. This diversity undermines the shared moral beliefs that are necessary for a society to function harmoniously.
 - v. Consequently, people will not sacrifice in times of social need.

- C. The thesis of *The Division of Labor* is that modern society is not held together by the similarities between people who do basically similar things.
 - i. It is the division of labor itself that pulls people together by forcing them to be dependent on each other.
- D. Mechanical and Organic Solidarity
 - i. A society characterized by *mechanical* solidarity is unified because all people are generalists.
 - a. The bond among people is that they are all engaged in similar activities and have similar responsibilities.
 - ii. A society characterized by *organic* solidarity is held together by the differences among people, by the fact that all have different tasks and responsibilities.
 - iii. Diminution of collective conscience:
 - a. Durkheim argued that primitive societies, compared to modern societies, have a stronger collective conscience, that is, a greater number of shared understandings, norms, and beliefs.
 - b. The increasing division of labor has caused a diminution of the collective conscience.
 - c. The collective conscience is of much less significance in a society with organic solidarity than it is in a society with mechanical solidarity.
 - iv. Anthony Giddens pointed out that the collective conscience in the two types of society can be differentiated on four dimensions.
 - a. *Volume* refers to the number of people enveloped by the collective conscience;
 - b. *Intensity* refers to how deeply the individuals feel about it;
 - c. *Rigidity* refers to how clearly it is defined; and
 - d. *Content* refers to the form that the collective conscience takes in the two types of society.
- E. Dynamic Density
 - i. Durkheim believed that the cause of the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity was *dynamic density*.

- a. This concept refers to the number of people in a society and the amount of interaction that occurs among them.
 - ii. The problems associated with dynamic density usually are resolved through differentiation and, ultimately, the emergence of new forms of social organization.
- F. Repressive and Restitutive law
- i. Durkheim argued that a society with mechanical solidarity is characterized by *repressive law*.
 - a. Because everyone feels the offense and believes deeply in the common morality, a wrongdoer is likely to be punished severely for any action that offends the collective moral system.
 - b. Even minor offenses against the moral system are likely to be met with severe punishment.
 - ii. A society with organic solidarity is characterized by *restitutive law*, which requires offenders to make restitution for their crimes.
 - a. Because there is a weak common morality, most people do not react emotionally to a breach of the law.
 - b. Instead of being severely punished for every offense against the collective morality, offenders in an organic society are likely to be asked to make restitution to those who have been harmed by their actions.
- G. Normal and Pathological
- i. There is one interesting idea that Durkheim derived from this argument: the idea that crime is normal rather than pathological.
 - a. He argued that because crime is found in every society, it must be normal and provide a useful function.
 - b. Crime, he claimed, helps societies define and delineate their collective conscience.
 - ii. In *The Division of Labor*, Durkheim used the idea of pathology to criticize some of the “abnormal” forms the division of labor takes in modern society.
 - iii. He identified three abnormal forms:

- a. The *anomic division of labor* refers to the lack of regulation in a society that celebrates isolated individuality and refrains from telling people what they should do.
- b. *Forced division of labor*: This second pathology refers to the fact that outdated norms and expectations can force individuals, groups, and classes into positions for which they are ill suited.
- c. Finally, the third form of abnormal division of labor is evident when the specialized functions performed by different people are *poorly coordinated*.

H. Justice

- i. Modern societies are no longer held together by shared experiences and common beliefs.
 - a. Instead, they are held together through their very differences, so long as those differences are allowed to develop in a way that promotes interdependence.
- ii. He predicted in his second book, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, that sociology itself would succumb to the division of labor and break down into a collection of specialties.

IV. Suicide

- A. Durkheim chose to study suicide because it is a relatively concrete and specific phenomenon for which there were comparatively good data available.
- B. Durkheim assumed that only social facts could explain why one group had a higher rate of suicide than did another.
- C. Durkheim proposed two related ways of evaluating suicide rates.
 - i. One way is to compare different societies or other types of collectivities.
 - ii. Another way is to look at the changes in the suicide rate in the same collectivity over time.
- D. Changes in the collective sentiments lead to changes in social currents, which, in turn, lead to changes in suicide rates.
- E. The Four Types of Suicide
 - i. Durkheim's theory of suicide can be seen more clearly if we examine the relation between the types of suicide and his two underlying social facts.
 - a. Integration refers to the strength of the attachment that we have to society.

b. Regulation refers to the degree of external constraint on people.

ii. Egoistic Suicide

- a. High rates of *egoistic suicide* are likely to be found in societies or groups in which the individual is not well integrated into the larger social unit.
- b. Durkheim believed that the best parts of a human being, our morality, values, and sense of purpose come from society.
 - 1. Without these things, we are liable to commit suicide at the smallest frustration.
- c. The lack of social integration produces distinctive social currents, and these currents cause differences in suicide rates.
- d. The case of egoistic suicide indicates that in even the most individualistic, most private of acts, social facts are the key determinant.

iii. Altruistic Suicide

- a. Whereas egoistic suicide is more likely to occur when social integration is too weak, *altruistic suicide* is more likely to occur when “social integration is too strong.”
- b. More generally, those who commit altruistic suicide do so because they feel that it is their duty to do so.
- c. When integration is high, they commit suicide in the name of that greater good.

iv. Anomic Suicide

- a. *Anomic suicide* is more likely to occur when the regulative powers of society are disrupted.
 - 1. Such disruptions are likely to leave individuals dissatisfied because there is little control over their passions, which are free to run wild in an insatiable race for gratification.
 - 2. Rates of anomic suicide are likely to rise whether the nature of the disruption is positive (e.g., an economic boom) or negative (an economic depression).

- b. People thus freed will become slaves to their passions and as a result, in Durkheim's view, commit a wide range of destructive acts, including killing themselves.
- v. Fatalistic Suicide
 - a. *Fatalistic suicide* is more likely to occur when regulation is excessive.
 - b. The classic example is the slave who takes his own life because of the hopelessness associated with the oppressive regulation of his every action.
- F. Suicide Rates and Social Reform
 - i. Durkheim concluded his study of suicide with an examination of what reforms could be undertaken to prevent it.
 - a. He believed most attempts to prevent suicide fail because it is seen as an individual problem.
 - ii. Durkheim admitted that some suicide is normal, but he argued that modern society has seen a pathological increase in both egoistic and anomic suicides.
 - iii. The modern state is too distant from the individual to influence his or her life with enough force and continuity.
- V. The Elementary Forms of Religious Life
 - A. Early and Late Durkheimian Theory
 - i. Parsons presented Durkheim as undergoing a theoretical change between *Suicide* and *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.
 - ii. Durkheim, in his later period, more directly addressed how individuals internalize social structures.
 - iii. Durkheim's often overly zealous arguments for sociology and against psychology have led many to argue that he had little to offer on how social facts affected the consciousnesses of human actors.
 - B. Theory of Religion – The Sacred and the Profane
 - i. Durkheim's sociology of religion consisted of an attempt to identify the enduring essence of religion through an analysis of its most primitive forms.
 - ii. Durkheim's most daring argument is that this moral bond becomes a cognitive bond because the categories for understanding, such as classification, time, space, and causation, are also derived from religious rituals.

- iii. *Sacred*, that is, that are set apart from the everyday form the essence of religion.
 - a. The sacred brings out an attitude of reverence, awe, and obligation.
 - iv. The rest are defined as *profane*, the commonplace, the utilitarian, the mundane aspects of life.
 - v. Beliefs, Rituals, and Church
 - a. The differentiation between the sacred and the profane and the elevation of some aspects of social life to the sacred level are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the development of religion.
 - b. Three other conditions are needed:
 - 1. First, there must be the development of a set of religious beliefs.
 - 2. Second, a set of religious *rituals* is necessary.
 - 3. Finally, a religion requires a *church*, or a single overarching moral community.
 - c. Rituals and the church are important to Durkheim's theory of religion because they connect the representations of the social to individual practices.
- C. Why Primitive?
- i. The major sources of his data were studies of a clan-based Australian tribe, the Arunta, who, for Durkheim, represented primitive culture.
 - ii. Durkheim wanted to study religion within a "primitive" culture for several reasons.
 - a. First, he believed that it is much easier to gain insight into the essential nature of religion in a primitive culture.
 - b. Whereas religion in modern society takes diverse forms, in primitive society there is "intellectual and moral conformity."
 - iii. Durkheim studied primitive religion only to shed light on religion in modern society.
 - a. Religion in a nonmodern society is an all-encompassing collective conscience.
 - b. But as society grows more specialized, religion comes to occupy an increasingly narrower domain.
 - c. It becomes simply one of a number of collective representations.
- D. Collective Effervescence

- i. Durkheim argued that the life of the clan is divided between two phases.
 - a. In the first of these phases, the clan separates into small groups and these groups live independently from one another, pursuing their occupations.
 - b. In the other phase, members of the clan gather together in celebration of religious ceremony.
 - ii. Collective energy acquires form as song and dance, but it also gets named and becomes a collective representation, a shared symbol.
 - iii. Durkheim argued that the totem is an excellent example of this kind of collective representation.
 - a. The totem represents the energy, or moral force, of the group.
 - b. The totem can also remind members of their collective bond and, in doing so, maintain and revive the moral force of the group.
- E. Totemism
- i. Durkheim relied upon the practice of totemism, especially among the Australian Arunta, to discuss these symbolic aspects of religion.
 - ii. *Totemism* is a religious system in which certain things, particularly animals and plants, come to be regarded as sacred and as emblems of the clan.
 - iii. The totems are the material representations of the nonmaterial force that is at their base, and that nonmaterial force is none other than society.
 - iv. In totemism, three classes of things are connected: the totemic symbol, the animal or plant, and the members of the clan.
- F. Sociology of Knowledge
- i. Philosophy had proposed two general models for how humans are able to develop concepts from their sense impressions.
 - a. One, called *empiricism*, contends that our concepts are just generalizations from our sense impressions.
 - b. Another school of philosophy, *apriorism*, contends that we must be born with some initial categories of understanding.
 - ii. Categories of Understanding

- a. *The Elementary Forms* presents an argument for the social origin of six fundamental categories that some philosophers had identified as essential to human understanding.
 1. *Time* comes from the rhythms of social life.
 2. The category of *space* develops from the division of space occupied by society.
 3. In totemism *classification* is tied to the human group.
 4. *Force* is derived from experiences with social forces.
 5. Imitative rituals are the origin of the concept of *causality*.
 6. Finally, society itself is the representation of *totality*.
- b. Despite their autonomous development, some categories are universal and necessary.
- c. To summarize Durkheim's sociology of knowledge, he claimed that concepts and even our most fundamental categories are collective representations that society produces.

VI. Moral Education and Social Reform

A. Morality

- i. Durkheim offered courses and gave public lectures on moral education and the sociology of morals.
- ii. Morality, for Durkheim, has three components.
 - a. First, morality involves discipline, that is, a sense of authority that resists egoistic impulses.
 - b. Second, morality involves attachment to society because society is the source of our morality.
 - c. Third, morality involves autonomy, a sense of individual responsibility for our actions.
- iii. Modern morality should be based on the relation between individuals and society as revealed by Durkheim's new science of sociology.

B. Moral Education

- i. *Education* was defined by Durkheim as the process by which the individual acquires the physical, intellectual, and, most important to Durkheim, moral tools needed to function in society.
- ii. Before Durkheim began to reform education, there had been two approaches.
 - a. One saw education as an extension of the church.
 - b. Others saw education as the unfolding of the natural individual.
- iii. Durkheim viewed the classroom as a small society and concluded that its collective effervescence could be made powerful enough to inculcate a moral attitude.
- iv. Three elements of morality:
 - a. First, it would provide individuals with the discipline they need to restrain the passions that threaten to engulf them.
 - b. Second, education could develop in the students a sense of devotion to society and to its moral system.
 - c. Most important is education's role in the development of autonomy, in which discipline is "freely desired" and the attachment to society is by virtue of "enlightened assent."

C. Occupational Associations

- i. All the workers, managers, and owners involved in a particular industry should join together in an association that would be both professional and social.
- ii. Durkheim believed that any such conflict occurred only because the various people involved lacked a common morality, which was traceable to the lack of an integrative structure.
- iii. Moral system, with its derived rules and laws, would serve to counteract the tendency toward atomization in modern society as well as help stop the decline in the significance of collective morality.

VII. Criticisms

- A. Whether Durkheim himself was a functionalist is open to debate and depends upon how one defines functionalism.
- B. Functionalism can be defined in two different ways, a weak sense and a strong sense.

- C. Durkheim urged that we distinguish functions from the historical causes of social facts.
 - i. The historical study is primary because social needs cannot simply call structures into existence.
- D. Durkheim is frequently said to have failed to give consciousness an active role in the social process.
 - i. He treated the actor and the actor's mental processes as secondary factors.
- E. Durkheim has also been judged a conservative because of his criticisms of socialism, his resistance to the feminist movement, his emphasis on morality, and the relative neglect he paid to the powers of individual creativity.
- F. He was critical of Marxism not because he rejected socialism but because it was a set of "disputable and out-of-date hypotheses."

VIII. Contemporary Applications

- A. Durkheim's focus on social facts is that his work has inspired microsociologists such as Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel.
- B. Durkheim's ideas have also figured in the development of cultural sociology.
- C. Jeffrey Alexander has revived Durkheimian sociology to develop a "strong program" for cultural sociology.
- D. Mustafa Emirbayer and Matthew Desmond rely on Durkheim's theory of culture to describe the symbolic structures of the racial order.
- E. Another contemporary phenomenon that has been examined using Durkheimian sociology is information and communication technology (ICT), such as mobile phones and social media.

Lecture Notes

Chapter 8: Max Weber

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. Max Weber is probably the most influential figure in sociological theory.
 - B. Weber's work is so varied and subject to so many interpretations that it has influenced a wide array of sociological theories.
 - C. Symbolic interactionists have been affected by Weber's ideas on *verstehen*, as well as by other of Weber's ideas.
 - D. Rational choice theorists have acknowledged their debt to Weber.
- II. Methodology
 - A. History and Sociology
 - i. Weber's early career was dominated by an interest in history.
 - ii. Although Weber felt that each field needed the other, his view was that the task of sociology was to provide a needed "service" to history.
 - iii. Weber explained the difference between sociology and history:
 - a. "Sociology seeks to formulate type concepts and generalized uniformities of empirical processes.
 - b. This distinguishes it from history, which is oriented to the causal analysis and explanation of individual actions, structures, and personalities possessing cultural significance."
 - iv. Weber defined his ideal procedure as "the sure imputation of individual concrete events occurring in historical reality to *concrete, historically given* causes through the study of precise empirical data which have been selected from specific points of view."
 - v. The most important of these debates was over the issue of the relationship between history and science.

- a. At the poles in this debate were those (the positivists) who thought that history was composed of general (nomothetic) laws and those (the subjectivists) who reduced history to idiosyncratic actions and events.
 - b. Weber rejected both extremes and in the process developed a distinctive way of dealing with historical sociology.
 - c. Although Weber was clearly in favor of generalizing, he also rejected historians who sought to reduce history to a simple set of laws.
 - d. This view is reflected in various specific historical studies.
 - vi. In rejecting these opposing views of German historical scholarship, Weber fashioned his own perspective, which constituted a fusion of the two orientations.
 - a. Weber felt that history (i.e., historical sociology) was appropriately concerned with both individuality and generality.
 - vii. Weber's views on historical sociology were shaped in part by the availability of, and his commitment to the study of, empirical historical data.
 - viii. He sought to combine the specific and the general in an effort to develop a science that did justice to the complex nature of social life
- B. Verstehen
- i. Weber felt that sociologists had an advantage over natural scientists.
 - ii. That advantage resided in the sociologist's ability to understand social phenomena, whereas the natural scientist could not gain a similar *understanding* of the behavior of an atom or a chemical compound.
 - iii. The German word for understanding is *verstehen*.
 - iv. *Hermeneutics*:
 - a. A special approach to the understanding and interpretation of published writings.
 - b. Its goal was to understand the thinking of the author as well as the basic structure of the text.
 - v. One common misconception about *verstehen* is that it is simply the use of "intuition" by the researcher.
 - vi. However, for Weber, *verstehen* was a rational procedure of study.

- vii. Weber's focus on the cultural and social-structural contexts of action leads us to the view that *verstehen* is a tool for macro-level analysis.
- C. Causality
- i. Weber was inclined to see the study of the causes of social phenomena as being within the domain of history, not sociology.
 - ii. By *causality*, Weber meant the probability that an event will be followed or accompanied by another event.
 - iii. Weber operates with a multicausal approach in which "hosts of interactive influences are very often effective causal factors."
 - a. Weber was quite clear on the issue of multiple causality in his study of the relationship between Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism.
 - iv. The critical thing to remember about Weber's thinking on causality is:
 - a. His belief that because we can have a special understanding of social life (*verstehen*);
 - b. The causal knowledge of the social sciences is different from the causal knowledge of the natural sciences.
 - v. Weber's thoughts on causality were intimately related to his efforts to come to grips with the conflict between nomothetic and idiographic knowledge.
 - vi. *Adequate causality*:
 - a. The best we can do in sociology is to make probabilistic statements about the relationship between social phenomena.
 - b. If x occurs, then it is *probable* that y will occur.
 - c. The goal is to "estimate the *degree* to which a certain effect is 'favored' by certain 'conditions.'"
- D. *Ideal Types*
- i. It is a concept constructed by a social scientist, on the basis of his or her interests and theoretical orientation, to capture the essential features of some social phenomenon.
 - ii. The most important thing about ideal types is that they are heuristic devices.

- iii. Its function is the comparison with empirical reality in order to establish its divergences or similarities, to describe them with the *most unambiguously intelligible concepts*, and to understand and explain them causally.
- iv. Next, the social scientist must look for the causes of the deviations:
 - a. Actions of bureaucrats that are motivated by misinformation.
 - b. Strategic errors, primarily by the bureaucratic leaders.
 - c. Logical fallacies undergirding the actions of leaders and followers.
 - d. Decisions made in the bureaucracy on the basis of emotion.
 - e. Any irrationality in the action of bureaucratic leaders and followers.
- v. The elements of an ideal type are not to be thrown together arbitrarily; they are combined on the basis of their compatibility.
- vi. In Weber's view, the ideal type was to be derived inductively from the real world of social history.
- vii. In line with Weber's efforts to find a middle ground between nomothetic and idiographic knowledge, he argued that ideal types should be neither too general nor too specific.
- viii. Although ideal types are to be derived from the real world, they are not to be mirror images of that world.
- ix. Weber argued that the ideal type need not be positive or correct; it can just as easily be negative or even morally repugnant.
- x. Because society is constantly changing, and the interests of social scientists are as well, it is necessary to develop new typologies to fit the changing reality.
- xi. Varieties of ideal types:
 - a. Historical ideal types.
 - b. General sociological ideal types.
 - c. Action ideal types.
 - d. Structural ideal types.
- xii. Ideal types constitute the theoretical building blocks for the construction of a variety of theoretical models, and these models are then used to analyze specific historical developments.

E. Values

- i. A common perception of Weber's view is that social scientists should not let their personal values influence their scientific research in any way.
- ii. *Values and Teaching*
 - a. Academicians have a perfect right to express their personal values freely in speeches, in the press, and so forth, but the academic lecture hall is different.
 - b. The most important difference between a public speech and an academic lecture lies in the nature of the audience.
 - c. The academician is to express "facts," not personal values, in the classroom.
 - d. The only question is whether it is realistic to think that professors can eliminate most values from their presentations.
- iii. *Values and Research*
 - a. Weber believed in the ability to separate fact from value, and this view could be extended to the research world.
 - b. He often differentiated between existential knowledge of what is and normative knowledge of what ought to be.
 - c. We should employ the regular procedures of scientific investigation, such as accurate observation and systematic comparison.
 - d. *Value-relevance*: a selection of those parts of empirical reality which for human beings embody one or several of those general cultural values which are held by people in the society in which the scientific observers live.
 - e. Although Weber was opposed to confusing fact and value, he did not believe that values should be excised from the social sciences.
 - f. Weber was more of a nationalist than he was a classical liberal.
 1. Weber's view is that there is no way of scientifically choosing among alternative value positions.
 2. Thus, social scientists cannot presume to make such choices for people.

III. Substantive Sociology

A. What Is Sociology?

- i. Sociology is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences.

B. Social Action

- i. Weber's entire sociology, if we accept his words at face value, was based on his conception of social action.
- ii. He differentiated between action and purely reactive behavior.
- iii. To Weber, the task of sociological analysis involved "the interpretation of action in terms of its subjective meaning."
- iv. *Economic action*: A conscious, primary orientation to economic consideration for what matters is not the objective necessity of making economic provision, but the belief that it is necessary.
- v. In his action theory, Weber's clear intent was to focus on individuals and patterns and regularities of action and not on the collectivity.
- vi. Weber utilized his ideal-type methodology to clarify the meaning of action by identifying four basic types of action:
 - a. *Means–ends rationality*.
 - b. *Value rationality*.
 - c. *Affectual action*.
 - d. *Traditional action*.

C. Class, Status, and Party

- i. Weber contends that a "class situation" exists when three conditions are met:
 - a. A number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances.
 - b. This component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income.
 - c. This component is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets.
- ii. A *class* is not a community but merely a group of people in the same economic, or market, situation.
- iii. Status situation: Every typical component of the life of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honor*?
- iv. Parties: *Structures* struggling for domination.

D. Structures of Authority

- i. *Domination*: The probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons.
- ii. *Authority*: Legitimate forms of domination.
- iii. Three bases: Rational, traditional, charismatic.
- iv. *Rational-Legal Authority*
 - a. *Bureaucracy*: The purest type of exercise of legal authority.
 - b. *Ideal typical Bureaucracy*:
 1. A bureaucracy is capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency, and is in this sense formally the most rational known means of exercising authority over human beings.
 2. It is a purposeful exaggeration of the rational characteristics of bureaucracies.
 - c. *Any Alternatives?*
 1. Weber believed that in the case of socialism, we would see an increase, not a decrease, in bureaucratization.
 - d. *Any Hope?*
 1. Professionals who stand outside the bureaucratic system can control it to some degree.
- v. *Traditional Authority*
 - a. It is based on a claim by the leaders, and a belief on the part of the followers, that there is virtue in the sanctity of age-old rules and powers.
 - b. It also does not have a rational ordering of relations of superiority and inferiority; it lacks a clear hierarchy.
 - c. Types of traditional authority:
 1. *Gerontocracy*: Rule by elders.
 2. *Primary patriarchy*: Leaders who inherit their positions.
 3. *Patrimonialism*: Traditional domination with an administration and a military force that are purely personal instruments of the master.
 4. *Feudalism*: Limits the discretion of the master through the development of more routinized, even contractual, relationships between leader and subordinate.

- d. Weber saw structures of traditional authority, in any form, as barriers to the development of rationality.

vi. *Charismatic Authority*

- a. If the disciples define a leader as charismatic, then he or she is likely to be a charismatic leader irrespective of whether he or she actually possesses any out-standing traits.

b. *Charisma and Revolution*

1. Charisma was one of the most important revolutionary forces in the social world.
2. What distinguishes charisma as a revolutionary force is that it leads to changes in the minds of actors; it causes a “subjective or internal reorientation.”
3. Whereas charisma is an internal revolutionary force that changes the minds of actors, Weber saw (formal) rationality as an external revolutionary force changing the structures of society and individuals.

c. *Charismatic Organizations and the Routinization of Charisma*

1. Compared to that of the ideal-typical bureaucracy, the staff of the charismatic leader is lacking on virtually all counts.
2. Weber found the staff of the charismatic leader to be “greatly inferior” to the staff in a bureaucratic form of organization.
3. In the long run, charisma cannot be routinized and still be charisma; it must be transformed into either traditional or rational-legal authority.

vii. *Types of Authority and the “Real World”*

- a. The three forms of authority are not parallel structures, and in the real world there is constant tension and, sometimes, conflict among them.
- b. The charismatic leader is a constant threat to the other forms of authority.
- c. In such a society, the only hope lies with isolated charismatic individuals who manage some-how to avoid the coercive power of society.

E. Rationalization

- i. Objectified *rationality*: Action that is in accord with some process of external systematization.

ii. *Types of Rationality*

- a. *Practical rationality*: Every way of life that views and judges worldly activity in relation to the individual's purely pragmatic and egoistic interests.
- b. *Theoretical rationality*: It involves a cognitive effort to master reality through increasingly abstract concepts rather than through action.
- c. *Substantive rationality* directly orders action into patterns through clusters of values.
- d. *Formal rationality* involves means-ends calculation.
- e. Bureaucratic rationalization revolutionizes with technical means, in principle, as does every economic reorganization.

iii. *An Overarching Theory?*

- a. Weber saw capitalism and bureaucracies as being derived from the same basic sources.
- b. He rejected the idea of "general evolutionary sequence."
- c. Weber had a deep concern for the overarching effect of the formal rationalization of the economy and bureaucracies on the Western world.

iv. *Formal and Substantive Rationality*

- a. Six characteristics:
 1. Formally rational structures and institutions emphasize calculability, or those things that can be counted or quantified.
 2. There is a focus on efficiency, on finding the best means to a given end.
 3. There is great concern with ensuring predictability, or that things operate in the same way from one time or place to another.
 4. A formally rational system progressively reduces human technology and ultimately replaces human technology with nonhuman technology.
 5. Formally rational systems seek to gain control over an array of uncertainties, especially the uncertainties posed by human beings who work in, or are served by, them.
 6. Rational systems tend to have a series of irrational consequences for the people

- b. Formal rationality stands in contrast to all the other types of rationality but is especially in conflict with substantive rationality.
- v. *Rationalization in Various Social Settings*
 - a. *Economy*
 1. Weber defined a specific example of a rational economy as a “functional organization oriented to money-prices which originate in the interest-struggles of men in the market.”
 2. The development of a capitalistic system hinged on a variety of developments within the economy as well as within the larger society.
 3. A rational economy is dependent upon a variety of noneconomic forces throughout the rest of society in order to develop.
 - b. *Religion*
 1. Religion in the West proved to be alterable; it was amenable to rationalization, and it played a key role in the rationalization of other sectors of society.
 2. Although the pressure for rationalization exists in many of the world’s religions, in areas outside the Western world, the barriers to rationalization more than counterbalance the pressures for rationalization.
 3. Weber differentiated between two types of prophets: ethical and exemplary.
 4. This rationalized religion proved particularly well suited to winning converts among the urban middle class, and it was there that it played a key role in the rationalization of economic life.
 - c. *Law*
 1. Primitive law was a rather undifferentiated system of norms, and highly irrational.
 2. In law, as in religion, Weber placed great weight on the process of professionalization: the legal profession is crucial to the rationalization of Western law.

3. Weber differentiated between two types of legal training: craft and academic legal training.
4. However, the most important aspect of Weber's work in this area is the degree to which law is regarded as part of the general process of rationalization throughout the West.

d. *Polity*

1. A community whose social action is aimed at subordinating to orderly domination by the participants a territory and the conduct of the persons within it, through readiness to resort to physical force, including normally force of arms.
2. The development of the polity in the West involves the progressive differentiation and elaboration of these functions.

e. *The City*

1. The city provided an alternative to the feudal order and a setting in which modern capitalism and, more generally, rationality could develop.

f. *Art Forms*

1. Weber viewed music and painting in the West as having developed in a peculiarly rational direction.

F. Religion and the Rise of Capitalism

- i. One of his overriding concerns was the relationship among a variety of the world's religions and the development only in the West of a capitalist economic system.
- ii. Weber's work on religion and capitalism involved an enormous body of cross-cultural historical research.
- iii. By according the religious factor great importance, Weber appeared to be simultaneously building on and criticizing his image of Marx's work.

iv. *Paths to Salvation*

- a. *Asceticism*: An orientation toward action with the commitment of believers to denying themselves the pleasures of the world.

- b. *Otherworldly asceticism* involves a set of norms and values that command the followers not to work within the secular world and to fight against its temptations.
- c. *Innerworldly asceticism* does not reject the world; instead, it actively urges its members to work within the world so that they can find salvation, or at least signs of it.
- d. *Mysticism*:
 - 1. *World-rejecting mysticism* involves total flight from the world.
 - 2. *Innerworldly mysticism* leads to contemplative efforts to understand the meaning of the world.
- v. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*
 - a. Weber traced the impact of ascetic Protestantism—primarily Calvinism—on the rise of the spirit of capitalism.
 - b. On a theoretical level, by stressing that he was dealing with the relationship between one ethos (Protestantism) and another (the spirit of capitalism), Weber was able to keep his analysis primarily at the level of systems of ideas.
 - c. In Weber’s view, capitalism was an *unanticipated consequence* of the Protestant ethic.
- vi. *Calvinism and the Spirit of Capitalism*
 - a. One feature of Calvinism was the idea that only a small number of people are chosen for salvation.
- vii. *Religion and Capitalism in China*
 - a. In Weber’s view, the rudimentary capitalism of China “pointed in a direction opposite to the development of rational economic corporate enterprises.”
- viii. *Structural Barriers*
 - a. Structure of the typical Chinese community.
 - b. The structure of the Chinese state.
 - c. The nature of the Chinese language.
 - d. The lack of the required “mentality”; the lack of the needed idea system.
- ix. *Confucianism*

- a. Weber contended that Confucianism became a relentless canonization of tradition.
- x. *Taoism*
 - a. One trait common to Taoism and Confucianism is that neither produced enough tension, or conflict, among the members to motivate them to much innovative action in this world.
- xi. *Religion and Capitalism in India*
 - a. Weber discussed the structural barriers of the caste system.
 - b. Among other things, the caste system erected overwhelming barriers to social mobility, and it tended to regulate even the most minute aspects of people's lives.
 - c. The Hindu religion posed similar ideational barriers.

IV. Criticisms

- A. Weber's *verstehen* method:
 - i. On the one hand, it could not simply mean a subjective intuition because this would not be scientific.
 - ii. On the other hand, the sociologist could not just proclaim the "objective" meaning of the social phenomenon.
- B. Weber lacks a fully theorized macrosociology.
- C. He lacks a critical theory, which can be demonstrated through examining Weber's theory of rationalization.
- D. The unremitting pessimism of Weber's sociology.

V. Contemporary Applications

- A. Methodologically, Weber developed a historically grounded, hermeneutic alternative to both positivist and postmodern sociology.
- B. Sociologists have also made use of Weber's substantive ideas to analyze contemporary social life.
- C. Sociologists have applied Weber's concept of charismatic authority to understand leaders of new religious movements/cults.

Lecture Notes

Chapter 9: Georg Simmel

Chapter Outline

I. Primary Concerns

A. Georg Simmel is best known as a microsociologist who played a significant role in the development of small-group research.

B. Levels and Areas of Concern

i. Four basic levels of concern in Simmel's work:

- a. First are his microscopic assumptions about the psychological components of social life.
- b. Second, on a slightly larger scale, is his interest in the sociological components of interpersonal relationships.
- c. Third, and most macroscopic, is his work on the structure of, and changes in, the social and cultural "spirit" of his times.
- d. Fourth, his work that involves ultimate metaphysical principles of life.

ii. Three separable problem "areas" in sociology:

- a. "Pure" sociology: Psychological variables are combined with forms of interactions.
- b. "General" sociology, dealing with the social and cultural products of human history.
- c. "Philosophical" sociology, that dealt with his views on the basic nature, and inevitable fate, of humankind.

C. Dialectical Thinking

i. A dialectical approach is:

- a. Multicausal and multidirectional;
- b. Integrates fact and value;
- c. Rejects the idea that there are hard-and-fast dividing lines between social phenomena;

- d. Focuses on social relations;
 - e. Looks not only at the present but also at the past and the future; and
 - f. Deeply concerned with both conflicts and contradictions.
- ii. Simmel manifested his commitment to the dialectic in various ways.
 - iii. He stated that the world can best be understood in terms of conflicts and contrasts between opposed categories.
 - iv. *Fashion*
 - a. Simmel illustrated the contradictions in fashion in a variety of ways:
 - 1. On the one hand, fashion is a form of social relationship that allows those who wish to conform to the demands of the group to do so.
 - 2. On the other hand, fashion also provides the norm from which those who wish to be individualistic can deviate.
 - b. Fashion is also dialectical in the sense that the success and spread of any given fashion lead to its eventual failure.
- D. Life
- i. According to Simmel, reality is always changing, and life is the concept that Simmel used to describe the changing nature of reality.
 - ii. Life is the process of constant *becoming* rather than a settled, easily grasped, state of *being*.
 - iii. The concept of life has important implications for sociology.
 - iv. Life is not simply flow and change, but better understood as that which creates social forms and then overcomes or “transcends” those forms.
 - v. Despite the complexity of the ideas, Simmel’s life philosophy is quite straightforward: humans live in a world of constant change and flow.
 - vi. More-Life and More-Than-Life
 - a. People possess a doubly transcendent capability.
 - b. The objective existence of these phenomena (more-than-life) comes to stand in opposition to the creative forces (more-life) that produced the objects in the first place.

II. Individual Consciousness and Individuality

- A. Simmel's sociology focused primarily on forms of association and interactions between persons.
 - B. Simmel believed that individuals are the "bearers" of the life process.
 - C. As bearers of the life process, individuals are creative beings always driven to transcend that which is fixed and stable.
 - D. Simmel stated that society is not simply "out there" but is also "'my representation'—something dependent on the activity of consciousness."
 - E. Simmel had a conception of people's ability to confront themselves mentally, to set themselves apart from their own actions.
 - F. Individuality was important to Simmel as an ethical or moral ideal.
 - G. In effect, Simmel argued that socialism destroys the creativity of life in the name of society.
- III. Social Interaction ("Association")
- A. Simmel made clear here that one of his primary interests was interaction (association) among conscious actors and that his intent was to look at a wide range of interactions.
 - B. In his general and philosophical sociologies, Simmel held a much larger-scale conception of society as well as culture.
 - C. Interaction: Forms and Types
 - i. One of Simmel's dominant concerns was the *form* rather than the *content* of social inter-action.
 - ii. In Simmel's view, the sociologist's task is to do precisely what the lay-person does, that is, impose a limited number of forms on social reality, on interaction in particular, so that it may be better analyzed.
 - iii. Simmel's interest in the forms of social interaction has various criticisms:
 - a. He has been accused of imposing order where there is none.
 - iv. Defending Simmel's approach to formal sociology:
 - a. First, it is close to reality.
 - b. Second, it does not impose arbitrary and rigid categories on social life but tries instead to allow the forms to emerge from social life.

- c. The goal was not to impose order on social life per se, but to show how people always organize and reorganize their lives through the creation of social forms.
- d. Formal sociology militates against the poorly conceptualized empiricism that is characteristic of much of sociology.
- v. *Social Geometry*
 - a. *Numbers*
 - 1 *Dyad and Triad:* For Simmel there was a crucial difference between the dyad (two-person group) and the triad (three-person group).
 - b. *Group Size*
 - 1 At a more general level, there is Simmel's ambivalent attitude toward the impact of group size.
 - c. *Distance*
 - 1 The properties of forms and the meanings of things are a function of the relative distances between individuals and other individuals or things.
- vi. *Social Types*
 - a. *The Poor*
 - 1. As is typical of types in Simmel's work, the poor were defined in terms of social relationships, as being aided by other people or at least having the right to that aid.
 - 2. From his point of view, poverty is found in all social strata.
 - 3. This concept foreshadowed the later sociological concept of relative deprivation
- vii. *Social Forms*
 - a. *Superordination and Subordination*
 - 1. They have a reciprocal relationship.
 - 2. Even in the most oppressive form of domination, subordinates have at least some degree of personal freedom.
 - b. *Social Forms and Simmel's Larger Problematic*

1. In Simmel's view, the discovery of objectivity—the independence of things from the condition of their subjective or psychological genesis—was the greatest achievement in the cultural history of the West.

IV. Social Structures and Worlds

- A. Simmel said relatively little directly about the large-scale structures of society.
- B. He was uncomfortable with the nominalist conception that society is nothing more than a collection of isolated individuals.
- C. Although Simmel enunciated an interactionist position, in much of his work he operated as a realist, as if society were a real material structure.
- D. Simmel discussed three particularly important worlds: science, religion, and art.
 - i. Despite their common origin in life, each of these worlds organizes the contents of life in different ways.
 - ii. Worlds eventually turn upon their creators, shaping life rather than giving immediate expression to the needs and necessities of life.

V. Objective Culture

- A. Objective culture is the cultural level of social reality.
- B. It grows and expands in various ways:
 - i. First, its absolute size grows with increasing modernization.
 - ii. Second, the number of different components of the cultural realm also grows.
 - iii. Finally, the various elements of the cultural world become more and more intertwined in an ever more powerful, self-contained world that is increasingly beyond the control of the actors.
- C. What worried Simmel most was the threat to individual culture posed by the growth of objective culture.
- D. He saw the modern metropolis as the “genuine arena” of the growth of objective culture and the decline of individual culture.
- E. Simmel thought of all social exchanges as involving “profit and loss.”
- F. Consequently, money as a form of exchange represented for Simmel one of the root causes of the alienation of people in a modern reified social structure.

VI. The Philosophy of Money

- A. Simmel's interest in the phenomenon of money is embedded in a set of his broader theoretical and philosophical concerns:
- i. At one level, Simmel was interested in the broad issue of value, and money can be seen as simply a specific form of value.
 - ii. At another level, Simmel was interested not in money per se but in its impact on such a wide range of phenomena, such as the "inner world" of actors and the objective culture as a whole.
 - iii. At still another level, he treated money as a specific phenomenon linked with a variety of other components of life, including "exchange, ownership, greed, extravagance, cynicism, individual freedom, the style of life, culture, the value of the personality, etc."
 - iv. Finally, and most generally, Simmel saw money as a specific component of life capable of helping us understand the totality of life.
- B. The *Philosophy of Money* begins with a discussion of the general forms of money and value. Later the discussion moves to the impact of money on the "inner world" of actors and on culture in general.
- C. Money and Value
- i. Simmel argued that people create value by making objects, separating themselves from those objects, and then seeking to overcome the "distance, obstacles, difficulties."
 - ii. People try to place themselves at a proper distance from objects, which must be attainable, but not too easily.
 - iii. In the economic realm, money serves both to create distance from objects and to provide the means to overcome it.
 - iv. Money thus performs the interesting function of creating distance between people and objects and then providing the means to overcome that distance.
- D. Money, Reification, and Rationalization
- i. In the process of creating value, money also provides the basis for the development of the market, the modern economy, and ultimately modern (capitalistic) society.

- ii. Simmel argued that money allows for “long-range calculations, large-scale enterprises and long-term credits.”
 - iii. Not only does money help create a reified social world, it also contributes to the increasing rationalization of that social world.
 - iv. Less obviously, money contributes to rationalization by increasing the importance of intellectuality in the modern world.
- E. Negative Effects
- i. Two negative effects are increase in cynicism and increase in a blasé attitude.
 - a. Cynicism is induced when both the highest and the lowest aspects of social life are for sale, reduced to a common denominator—money.
 - b. A blasé attitude is all things as being of an equally dull and grey hue, as not worth getting excited about.
 - c. Another negative effect of a money economy is the increasingly impersonal relations among people.
 - d. A money economy leads to an increase in individual enslavement.
 - e. Another impact of the money economy is the reduction of all human values to dollar terms, “the tendency to reduce the value of man to a monetary expression.”
 - f. The key to Simmel’s discussion of money’s impact on style of life is in the growth of objective culture at the expense of individual culture.
- F. Tragedy of Culture
- i. The major cause of this increasing disparity between objective culture and individual culture is the increasing division of labor in modern society.
 - ii. As objective culture grows, individual culture atrophies.
 - iii. Relationships among people are highly specialized and impersonal.
 - iv. The unevenness that was characteristic of earlier epochs has been leveled and replaced in modern society by a much more consistent pattern of living.
 - v. Intellectual stimulation, which formerly was restricted to an occasional conversation or a rare book, is now available at all times because of the ready availability of books and magazines.
 - vi. Positive elements:

- a. People have much more freedom because they are less restricted by the natural rhythm of life.
- b. Money allows us to *relativize* everything.
- c. The gains to people in terms of increased freedom from absolute ideas are far outweighed by the costs.

vii. Liberating aspects:

- a. First, it allows us to deal with many more people in a much-expanded marketplace.
- b. Second, our obligations to one another are highly limited (to specific services or products) rather than all-encompassing.
- c. Third, the money economy allows people to find gratifications that were unavailable in earlier economic systems.
- d. Fourth, people have greater freedom in such an environment to develop their individuality to a fuller extent.
- e. Fifth, people are better able to maintain and protect their subjective center, because they are involved only in very limited relationships.
- f. Sixth, the separation of the worker from the means of production allows the individual some freedom from those productive forces.
- g. Finally, money helps people grow increasingly free of the constraints of their social groups.

VII. Secrecy: A Case Study in Simmel's Sociology

- A. *Secrecy* is defined as the condition in which one person has the intention of hiding something while the other person is seeking to reveal that which is being hidden.
- B. Simmel began with the basic fact that people must know some things about other people in order to interact with them.
 - i. Simmel saw a dialectical relationship between interaction (being) and the mental picture we have of others (conceiving).
- C. People, in contrast to any other object of knowledge, have the capacity to intentionally reveal the truth about themselves or to lie and conceal such information.
- D. In all interaction, we reveal only a part of ourselves, and which part we opt to show depends on how we select and arrange the fragments we choose to reveal

- E. This brings us to the lie, a form of interaction in which the liar intentionally hides the truth from others.
 - i. In the lie, it is not just that others are left with an erroneous conception but also that the error is traceable to the fact that the liar intended that the others be deceived.
- F. Even the most intimate relationships require both nearness and distance, reciprocal knowledge and mutual concealment.
- G. Thus, secrecy is an integral part of all social relationships, although a relationship may be destroyed if the secret becomes known to the person from whom it was being kept.
- H. At the most macroscopic level, we should note that secrecy not only is a form of interaction (which, as we have seen, affects many other forms) but also can come to characterize a group in its entirety.
- I. In such a society there is a constant tension caused by the fact that the secret can be uncovered, or revealed, and thus the entire basis for the existence of the secret society can be eliminated.
- J. Secrecy and Social Relationships
 - i. Simmel argued that the increasing objectification of culture brings with it more and more limited-interest groups and the kinds of relationships associated with them.
 - ii. In the impersonal relationships characteristic of modern objectified society, *confidence*, as a form of interaction, becomes increasingly important.
 - iii. Another form of social relationship is *acquaintanceship*: We know our acquaintances, but we do not have intimate knowledge of them.
 - iv. *Discretion*: We are discrete with our acquaintances, staying away from the knowledge of all the other does not expressly reveal to us.
 - v. Another form of association is *friendship*: Simmel contradicts the assumption that friendship is based on total intimacy, full reciprocal knowledge; lack of full intimacy is especially true of friendships in modern, differentiated society.
 - vi. *Marriage*: Simmel argued that there is a temptation in marriage to reveal all to the partner, to have no secrets.

- a. Complete self-revelation (assuming such a thing is even possible) would make a marriage matter-of-fact and remove all possibility of the unexpected.

K. Other Thoughts on Secrecy

- i. Simmel saw the secret as “one of man’s greatest achievements; the secret produces an immense enlargement of life: numerous contents of life cannot even emerge in the presence of full publicity.”
- ii. Human interaction in general is shaped by secrecy and its logical opposite, *betrayal*.
 - a. The secret is always accompanied dialectically by the possibility that it can be discovered.
 - b. Betrayal can come from two sources:
 - 1. Externally, another person can discover our secret;
 - 2. Internally, there is always the possibility that we will reveal our secret to others.
- iii. To Simmel, the modern world is much more dependent on honesty than earlier societies were.
 - a. For one thing, the modern economy is increasingly a credit economy, and credit is dependent on the fact that people will repay what they promise.
 - b. For another, in modern science, researchers are dependent on the results of many other studies that they cannot examine in minute detail.
- iv. Simmel associated the secret with the modern money economy; money makes possible a level of secrecy that was unattainable previously.
- v. Simmel also saw that in the modern world, public matters, such as those relating to politics, have tended to lose their secrecy and inaccessibility.

VIII. Criticisms

- A. Whereas Marx believed that alienation would be swept away with the coming of socialism, Simmel had no such political hope.
- B. Undoubtedly, the most frequently cited criticism of Simmel is the fragmentary nature of his work.

- C. Consequently, Simmel has often been regarded as a natural resource of insights to be mined for empirical hypothesis rather than as a coherent framework for theoretical analysis.
- D. The characterization of Simmel as fragmented and unsystematic may have more to do with the way in which Simmel has been received in America than it has to do with his own theoretical vision.
- E. It is also argued that Simmel's sociology is unified and systematic.

IX. Contemporary Applications

- A. While Simmel's micro-focused "interactionism" remains relevant, contemporary sociology has made use of him in other ways.
- B. In fact, it was Simmel's emphasis on culture combined with his presumed impressionistic and fragmentary writing style that made him popular among postmodern sociologists in the 1980s and 1990s.
- C. More specifically, Simmel's work has been applied to twenty-first-century social phenomena such as the impact of digital technologies on privacy, secrecy, and personal identity.
- D. Recent scholarship has also applied Simmel's theories to understand the contemporary problem of globalization.
- E. Simmel's famous essay on the "stranger" can help us to think about the kinds of social relationships that emerge out of these global processes.
- F. It is argued that Simmel's work can provide a starting point for thinking through the kinds of social conditions necessary for the construction of a creative, flourishing "global humanity."

Lecture Notes

Chapter 10: Early Women Sociologists and Classical Sociological Theory: 1830–1930

Chapter Outline

I. Introduction

- A. The traditional telling of the history of sociological theory has been shaped by a politics of gender that tends to emphasize male achievement and erase female contributions.
- B. As conventionally told, the creation of sociological theory is presented as the work of two generations of men, ignoring the women.
- C. The reclamation of forgotten female figures is currently under way in the burgeoning of feminist-inspired research of the past three decades.
- D. Dorothy E. Smith's conception: "A sociology is a systematically developed consciousness of society and of social relations."
- E. The parts that seem essential to any social theory:
 - i. The fundamental organization of society;
 - ii. The nature of the human being;
 - iii. The relation between ideas and materiality;
 - iv. The purpose and methods appropriate to social-science study;
 - v. A definition of the social role of the sociologist;
 - vi. The articulation of a principle from which to judge the essential fairness of the society in place.
- F. From the vantage point of contemporary feminist sociological theory, we recognize certain themes and concerns central to the theories of these women:
 - i. The theorist's awareness of her gender and her stance in that gender identity as she develops her sociological theory;
 - ii. An awareness of the situatedness of her analysis and of the situatedness of the vantage points of others;

- iii. A consistent focus on the lives and work of women;
 - iv. A critical concern with the practices of social inequality;
 - v. Commitment to the practice of sociology in pursuit of social amelioration.
- II. Harriet Martineau (1802–1876)
- A. Harriet Martineau indisputably belongs in that founding generation of sociologists usually represented by Comte, Spencer, and Marx, thinkers who undertook the ambitious task of delineating an intellectual undertaking that would systematically and scientifically study human society.
 - B. The Social Role of the Sociologist
 - i. Martineau’s first venture into this new science was an attempt to popularize “political economy,” an intellectual forerunner both of economics and sociology.
 - ii. Martineau embraced the role of sociologist as public educator.
 - iii. She defined her audience democratically and inclusively:
 - a. The educated intelligentsia like herself;
 - b. The political class of Britain;
 - c. The ordinary working people of both the middle and working classes;
 - d. Women;
 - e. Children (by means of a popular series of children’s stories);
 - f. Her public in America (where since 1837 her popularity had been enormous);
 - g. Feminists and abolitionists on both sides of the Atlantic!
 - h. In what must be a sociological first—the disabled—in this case, those who, like her, were deaf.
 - C. The Organization of Society
 - i. Sociology’s subject matter, for Martineau, is social life in society—its patterns, causes, consequences, and problems.
 - ii. She argued that a system of social arrangements is conducive to human happiness to the extent that it allows individuals to realize their basic human nature as autonomous moral and practical agents.
 - iii. Morals and Manners

- a. Sociology's project is, thus, to assess the extent to which a people develop "morals and manners" that produce or subvert this great end of social life, human happiness.
- b. The principle that the aim of human association is human happiness—as much a "law of nature", that is, one to which societies should conform if they are to progress.
- c. In the truest sense of the term, she was a qualitative, comparative sociologist.
- d. The life of each society in its uniqueness from, as well as its similarities to, other societies was her immediate subject of attention.

iv. Anomaly

- a. Martineau called a misalignment between a society's morals or ideals and its manners or everyday practices an *anomaly*.
- b. These anomalies are the institution of slavery, the unequal status of women, the pursuit of wealth, and the fear of public opinion.
- c. Three measures of this progress:
 1. The condition of the less powerful—women, racial minorities, prisoners, servants, those in need of charity.
 2. Cultural attitudes toward authority and autonomy.
 3. The extent to which all people are provided with the necessities for autonomous moral and practical action.

D. Methods

- i. "Things" and Sympathy
 - a. A concern with issues of measurement is part of Martineau's deep interest in methods for research and for sound scientific thinking.
 - b. Martineau gave instruction in the appropriate attitude of the sociologist toward the research experience, in problems of sampling, and in the identification of social indicators.
 - c. She also developed the first guidelines for the practice of interpretive sociology.
 - d. To overcome problems of sampling, the sociologist must look for "things" that represent the collectivity.

e. Martineau was much more advanced methodologically than Comte or Spencer, and she anticipated the work of the next generation of academically based or trained sociologists, both male and female.

ii. Feminism

- a. Martineau made the relational facts of marriage in the United States a key index of the moral condition of that society.
- b. For Martineau, the domination of women closely paralleled the domination of slaves.
- c. In various studies, she brought together the double oppressions of class and gender.
- d. She expanded her analytic efforts to a wide range of other topics.
- e. Her sociological perspective, although anchored in her gendered life experience and permeated by a woman-centered sensibility, did not produce only a sociology of gender.
- f. In the end, Harriet Martineau was defeated by the very issue she knew to be inseparable from others' reactions to her work—her gender.

III. Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1935)

- A. Gilman's project was to present, in the impersonal, objective voice that we have come to associate with authoritative theorizing, a formal, theoretical analysis of society.
- B. Theory-building is Gilman's method of doing sociology, and it is as a theorist that she defined her social role as a sociologist.

C. The Organization of Society

i. *The Sexuo-Economic Relation*

- a. Gilman argued that in the foundational social institutions, the economy and the family, we find a basic stratificational practice that explains most of the ills observable in societies, in individual experience, and in history: that practice is gender inequality.
- b. The sexuo-economic arrangement presents just this barrier to self-actualizing work, for both women and men, though for women much more than for men.

- c. Gilman's books give us as comprehensive an analysis of society that traces the complex interaction between materiality and ideas in the sexuo-economic relation.

D. Origins of Gender Stratification

- i. Out of this primary though distorted need for sociability or recognition arises male domination and female subordination.
- ii. Gender will be her only instrument of countervailing power, the wiles of femininity, a focus on sexuality, the fact as well as the ploy of her economic helplessness.
- iii. *Androcentric Culture*
 - a. Gilman shows how this culture creates the ideals of masculinity (aggressive and assertive) and femininity (yielding and compliant) and she describes the extensive impact of androcentrism on all aspects of society.
- iv. *Public and Private Spheres*
 - a. The ramifications of this system are not only psychological and cultural; they profoundly penetrate and distort economic and community life.
 - b. Society can be understood as dividing between the public economy of the marketplace and the private economy of the household.
 - c. From this pressure arises a social system encouraging individualism, competition, conflict, class divisions, excessive greed, and wealth, hand in hand with crippling exploitation and deprivation.

E. Feminism

- i. The solution to this wasteful sexuo-economic arrangement is to break up the arrangement of the sex classes.
 - a. It requires fundamental changes in gender socialization and in education, the physical development of women to their full size and strength, a rethinking and renegotiation of the personal, relational, and sexual expectations between women and men.
 - b. It requires the rational dismantling and reconstruction of the institution of the household, so that women can have freedom to do the work they choose and so that society may thus be enriched by their labor.

F. Erasure

- i. Charlotte Perkins Gilman has been systematically written out of American sociology's construction of its past.
- ii. Only a complex process of antiwoman and antifeminist bias explains Gilman's disappearance from the record of sociology and sociological theory.
- iii. Without a large population of women in the profession or a strong feminist movement in society after 1920, Gilman could be first marginalized and then allowed to disappear.
- iv. It continues along several lines—intellectual biography, cross-cultural comparisons, critiques of Gilman, especially on issues of race and eugenics; socialism and social theory.

IV. Jane Addams (1860–1935) and the Chicago Women's School

- A. Jane Addams was the focal energy of the Chicago women's school.
- B. Although connected to the men of the University of Chicago, these women formed their real professional and personal networks with each other.
- C. Settlements were communities of (mostly) young, educated people who "settled" in the poorest neighborhoods of the cities, sharing a common residence and seeking to ameliorate the lives of impoverished neighbors.
- D. It is hard to overstate the significance of this network for the women personally, for U.S. history in the Progressive Era.
 - i. Besides Addams, this network included Edith and Grace Abbott, Sophonisba Breckinridge, Florence Kelley, Frances Kellor, Julia Lathrop, Annie Marion MacLean, Virginia Robinson, Anna Garlin Spencer, Jessie Taft, and Marion Talbot.
- E. They were part of the larger women's network, and devised an astounding range of policies and associations to protect subordinate groups from classist, racist, and sexist politics.
- F. The Social Role of the Sociologist
 - i. The years from 1890 to 1914 were a golden era for the reform movement of "Progressivism."
 - ii. The Chicago women helped lead the fight for:

- a. Women's suffrage;
- b. Factory legislation;
- c. Child labor laws;
- d. Protection of working women;
- e. Aid for dependent mothers and children;
- f. Better sanitation in the cities;
- g. Trade unions;
- h. Arbitration of labor disputes;
- i. Minimum wages and minimum-wage boards; and
- j. Immigrant rights and African American rights.

G. Jane Addams (1860–1935)

- i. Addams' sociology grew directly out of her social activism, but until about thirty years ago, she was remembered only for that activism.
- ii. *The Basic Thesis*
 - a. Social ethics is Addams's most original concept and the lynchpin of her theory.
 - b. Addams defines social ethics as the practice of rules of right relationship that produce and sustain in the individual an orientation to action based on "concern for the welfare of a community" or "identification with the common lot."
- iii. *Methods*
 - a. Addams chose her life's work as an activist and social theorist after a series of experiences of "bifurcated consciousness," the awareness of a division between formal textual descriptions of life and one's own lived experience.
 - b. Her analysis was developed not so much through the crafting of theoretical generalizations as through the presentation of paradigmatic case studies from participant observation.
 - c. Neighborly relation: Addams sought something more than *verstehen*; she sought to establish what contemporary feminist theorists call for in research: an authentic, caring relation between the researcher and the subject of the research.

iv. *The Organization of Society*

- a. Addams developed the central tenet of her sociological theory on the basis of a series of implicit propositions about the fundamental organization of society, human nature, and social change.
- b. Her interest was in seeing how to make them all possess certain common qualities of social democracy, that she assumed that progress demanded.

v. *Human Nature and Ethics*

- a. Addams understood the human being to be an embodied subjectivity, that is, a mind capable of reason and emotion, in a body that materially experiences the world.
- b. On the basis of this understanding of human nature, Addams rested her argument that ethical systems are a foundational feature of social life.

vi. *Social Production and Ethics*

- a. The human being is located in a society that is always evolving or changing, but this process of change is one that humans must now control through the collective exercise of mind.
- b. She viewed materiality and ideas as mutually interdependent; ethical systems must be aligned with the social relations of production, but will in turn determine the forms of those relations.

vii. *The Social Ethic*

- a. Much of Addams's sociological theory is devoted to analyzing how to transform democracy from a political creed, enacted occasionally in elections, into a social creed informing all human interactions

viii. *Belated Ethics*

- a. A *militaristic* ethic is one in which people feel their ethical responsibility should be to a hierarchically organized group which participates in approved collective violence.
- b. The *belated* ethic of individualism endorses people following their personal sense of right and wrong without negotiation with others.

ix. *Situated Vantage Points*

- a. Addams presented the failure of an elite class to understand the real and valuable ethics of the poor, the lack of a general ethic that understands the world of multiple viewpoints.
 - x. *Learning the Social Ethic*
 - a. Addams offered many strategies for establishing democratic social ethics as the necessary complement to industrialization.
- H. The Chicago Women's School
- i. Addams's core belief—that society needs not individual but collective action realized in democratic association—is clearly visible in the relationships, work, and sociology of the circle we call “the Chicago women's school.”
 - ii. The Organization of Society and Social Role of the Sociologist
 - a. Four major propositions:
 1. Interdependence.
 2. Acting collectively.
 3. Basic critical position of “equity.”
 4. The role of the social scientist.
 - iii. Methods
 - a. The Chicago Women invented an array of techniques for discovering and reporting their evidence using both primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative data sources.
 - iv. Collective Action and Social Change
 - a. The most daring explorations of collective action by Florence Kelley:
 1. Kelley argues that all bourgeois philanthropy, no matter how well intended, is really only a palliative, a restitution to the working class, the real creators of wealth, of what has been taken from them.
 2. Kelley attempted to give consciousness to a new social category, “consumers.”
 - b. The essential principles of the sociology of the Chicago women are all in this statement:
 1. That social science must act for change;

2. That all citizens, including women still denied suffrage, are nevertheless morally responsible for the welfare of the country;
3. That every action ties a person to other people;
4. That effective personal virtue today must be done through associations because it is only in associations that people can gain the knowledge and the power.

V. Anna Julia Cooper (1858–1964) and Ida Wells-Barnett (1862–1931)

A. Anna Julia Cooper and Ida Wells-Barnett were African American women of the same generation as Gilman, Addams, and many of the Chicago women sociologists.

B. Cooper and Wells-Barnett both consciously drew on their lived experiences as African American women to develop a “systematic consciousness of society and social relations.”

C. They lay the foundation for a feminist sociological theory based in the interests of women of color.

D. Methods

- i. Wells-Barnett’s method is a pioneering adaptation of secondary data analysis that uses the oppressor’s own reports as the main source.
- ii. Cooper, in contrast, was explicitly engaged in theoretical work; she sought to describe the patterns of social life and to situate herself in that work of theoretical creation.

E. *The Lens of Race Relations*

i. *Groups and Power*

- a. Power: A group’s ability to influence social outcomes affecting its members, ranging from ongoing negotiations among groups (equilibrium) to a constant ability to produce outcomes seen as being in a particular group’s interest (domination).
- b. Race, then, is at the center of both women’s social theories; the power relations between whites and blacks in Western history and contemporary American society give them their paradigm of domination and of stratification.

F. Intersections: Race, Gender, Class

- i. Cooper analyzed gender inequality between white women and men and between African American women and men.
 - ii. Wells-Barnett looked at an even more explosive interaction of race and gender, exploring the interplay of those issues around sexuality.
 - iii. Both women further expanded the theme of social inequality to class relations.
- G. The Organization of Society
- i. Cooper gave serious attention to the cultural themes of masculinity and femininity and to the outcome of those themes for personality and for societal functioning.
 - ii. Her criterion for a critical evaluation of society was whether it was characterized by equilibrium or domination, not whether it was free of conflict.
- H. Vantage Point and “the Singing Something”
- i. She inserts herself into sociological analysis by speaking from her distinctive vantage point as a black woman—the claim for which she is best known.
 - ii. This claim of vantage point is based in Cooper’s understanding of human nature, an understanding she shared with Wells-Barnett.
- VI. Marianne Schnitger Weber (1870–1954)
- A. The Standpoint of Women
- i. She saw the human being, in the tradition of German Idealism, as an individual who wants to control his or her own destiny and to become all he or she is created capable of becoming.
 - ii. She claimed that there is a women’s standpoint that in all its possible iterations differs from that of men.
 - iii. She developed three major themes around this central concern:
 - a. The need for autonomy for women equal to that of men;
 - b. The significance of women’s work in the production of culture;
 - c. The situated differences of standpoint among women.
- B. Gender and Power: Authority and Autonomy
- i. For women, the tension then may be construed not as one between coercion and authority but as one between autonomy and domination, between a free exercise of one’s will in action and subordinating one’s will to another.

- C. Gender and Culture: Objective Culture, Personal Culture, and the “Middle Ground of Daily Life”
 - i. Weber pointed out that there is much about women’s work in the household that is not spiritual but intensely practical, instrumental, and objective.
 - ii. She questioned Simmel’s claim, arguing that it is more useful to think of a common nature and of typical maleness and femaleness as circles intersecting within the common space.
- D. Differences Among Women
 - i. She contrasted the life experiences of women in agricultural work, paid domestic employment, factory work, and professional employment.
 - ii. The interaction of capitalism and patriarchy creates barriers to the attempts of women, especially non-elite women, to seek full autonomy.
 - iii. She saw that housework for most women is an area of incessant drudgery, that women who stay at home, whatever their class, are oppressed by economic dependency and by patriarchal male authority.
- E. Social Change
 - i. Weber discussed legal reforms such as spousal rights, job training for women as a route to better employment and more meaningful lives, and, most radical of all, various formulas that would provide monetary independence for the housewife.
 - ii. A reformed, that is, nonpatriarchal household, was one setting in which women could find vocation and self-actualization.

VII. Beatrice Potter Webb (1858–1943)

- A. Webb became a leading British socialist; a solid empiricist, she was nevertheless moved to her descriptive and analytic studies by what she called “a consciousness of sin.”
- B. The problems she focused on were economic inequality, the causes of poverty, and ways to reform the capitalist economy.
- C. Method: Natural Experiments
 - i. Her experiences led her to the insight that the best way to understand how to reform the capitalist economic system was to find examples of working-class people successfully organizing to create alternative economic systems.

- ii. Webb outlined how economic equity could be arrived at through democratic decision making by showing how a British working-class buyers' co-operative functioned.
- D. Social Change: Permeation
- i. The Webbs were guided by three main principles:
 - a. Marx is wrong in his prediction of the “withering away of the state”;
 - b. Inequality has advanced to such a point of social crisis that such intervention is inevitable;
 - c. It is possible for socialists to advocate gradual rather than revolutionary reforms because gradualism is inevitable.
 - ii. Webb’s vision of society was, above all, of *the working out of processes between the structures in which people are contained*—structures such as state, class, trade unions, and sweatshops.
 - iii. She pointed to the vast increase in the interventions of government in the conduct of the economy as her prime proof.
- E. The Social Role of the Sociologist
- i. Webb’s saw the primary role of the sociologist as providers of the information on which a reformist state could be established and make policy.
 - ii. Webb’s sociological significance has not received the attention it deserves.
- VIII. Contemporary Applications
- A. Martineau is now recognized as amongst the first to have produced a clear sociological method.
 - B. Gilman is recognized as a major feminist sociologist of the turn of the century and her books *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *Herland* are regularly read in college classes.
 - C. Ida B. Wells is studied as a heroine of the African American civil rights movement both as an in-your-face activist and for her methods of analysis and presentation—especially her unflinching descriptions of the crime of lynching.
 - D. Anna Julia Cooper is central to Black feminist writing across the disciplines; her pioneering descriptions of the experience of intersectionality lay the ground work for one of the key concepts in contemporary Black and Feminist sociology.

- E. In this present moment of national and global crisis, Addams's theories and actions are being turned to with a new urgency and respect.

Lecture Notes

Chapter 11: W. E. B. Du Bois

Chapter Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Until recently, the important theoretical work of African-American scholar W.E.B Du Bois has been excluded from the canon of sociological thought.
- B. He relied both upon qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- C. He also adopted different writing styles, each to communicate a different kind of sociological vision.
- D. *In Souls of Black Folk* Du Bois used his experience as a black man in the United States to describe the social situation of African Americans.
- E. He placed great emphasis on the aesthetics of what he wrote—how he said things seemed at times to be at least as important as what he said.
- F. Du Bois' central interest was the role that race plays in organizing modern society.
- G. He viewed race not as a subtopic for sociological theory or as a problem of interest only to black Americans and policy makers.

II. Intellectual Influences

A. Science and Positivism

- i. In Germany, Du Bois was exposed to a methodological rigor that was not present in America at the time.
- ii. Du Bois's view of science was different from the kind of science typically associated with the term positivism.
- iii. He did not believe that sociology should model itself on the natural sciences nor did he believe that sociologists could discover invariant laws of social life.
- iv. Du Bois took from positivism the emphasis on "value-free" research and the utility of quantitative analysis.

- v. Although he was critical of white America for what it was doing to black Americans, he was equally hard on the latter, making it clear that they bore some of the responsibility for their plight.
 - vi. He continued to argue for the dispassionate, scientific study of race relations, even though he was less and less inclined to do such studies himself.
- B. German Historicism and Romanticism
- i. Though *The Souls of Black Folk* includes numerical information, this is overshadowed by Du Bois's autobiographical accounts of racism, his analysis of black cultural forms, and his study of black historical figures.
 - ii. Du Bois's ideas about race and nationalism had much in common with the German scholar Johann Gottfried Herder.
 - iii. Du Bois believed that the Sorrow Songs expressed something unique about black historical experience and that they demanded sociological attention.
 - iv. Like the method of *verstehen*, this was a kind of sociology that used cultural expressions to deepen our understanding of a people's experience of the world.
 - v. In all, Du Bois viewed struggle as both a collective and an individual problem.
- C. Marxism
- i. Du Bois believed that the goal of modern science was to contribute to human progress and betterment.
 - ii. Du Bois believed that "the world was thinking wrong about race because it didn't know."
 - iii. Despite these efforts, Du Bois's message went unheard and he became increasingly skeptical of the scientific approach and the efficacy of academic work itself.
 - iv. Du Bois was not only interested in the relationship between racism and capitalism in America, he was also interested in global capitalism and its connection to race.
- III. Studying Race Scientifically: The Philadelphia Negro
- A. In its use of multiple methods, and in its many, very contemporary sounding conclusions about black Americans and race relations, it is a book that has aged well and stands up in comparison to the widely acknowledged classics of this genre.
 - B. Several things stand out about this piece of work:

- i. First, Du Bois did it all on his own fieldwork;
 - ii. Second, his inquiries focused on topics that a similar study done today would also concern itself with;
 - iii. Du Bois also examined key contemporary social problems such as illiteracy, crime, and racial prejudice and discrimination.
- C. Du Bois showed a very contemporary sense of important issues in the social sciences, especially time, space, and their intersection.
- D. One of the things that strikes today's reader is the multifaceted character of Du Bois's analysis; he saw virtually everything in multifactorial terms.
- E. Crime
- i. One of the most impressive aspects of *The Philadelphia Negro* is its analysis of the high crime rates among African Americans.
 - ii. Du Bois was careful to analyze the social causes of high crime rates among African Americans after the close of the Civil War.
 - iii. Although Du Bois found that whites are in general "quite unconscious of any such powerful and vindictive feeling," blacks "regard this prejudice as the chief cause of their present unfortunate condition."
- F. Social Inequality: Caste and Class
- i. Du Bois not only wanted to make it clear that there are vast differences within the black community in terms of class, but he also wanted to give special importance to the highest classes within the black community.
 - ii. Du Bois came to be known for the phrase "The Talented Tenth" to describe the small group at the top that were to be the leaders of the black community.
- G. The Benevolent Despot
- i. At this early stage in his work, Du Bois retained some faith in whites, strong and benevolent leaders, and in capitalism.
 - ii. Du Bois argued that a benevolent despot might have sought to deal with the lack of training of African Americans and the discrimination practiced against them.
 - a. However, characteristically Du Bois also called on African Americans to take responsibility.

- iii. Du Bois did not long hold out much hope for aid from the benevolent despot or, more specifically, from the capitalist.
- H. Appeal to White Self-Interest
- i. Du Bois argued that whites, as well as society as a whole, would benefit from black educational and economic advancement as well as an amelioration of problems within the black community.
 - ii. The fact that whites were unwilling to recognize this, let alone help blacks, pointed to the fact that “one of the great postulates in the science of economics—that men will seek their economic advantage—is in this case untrue.”

IV. Theoretical Contributions

- A. There is no general theory in his work because he never set out to create one and because he was involved in many other kinds of work, including *The Philadelphia Negro*.
- B. The Race Concept
- i. His early ideas were shaped by a German romantic tradition that treated race (sometimes referred to as nation) as a real category of human difference.
 - ii. Du Bois held the racialist view that there are distinct races and that these races have unique qualities.
 - iii. However, as can be seen in the previous quotation, these differences are not biologically determined in any simple sense.
 - iv. The early emphasis on racial and cultural difference also led Du Bois to the view that the goal of African Americans is not necessarily integration or absorption, but rather, to serve as the “advance guard” of “Pan-Negroism.”
 - v. The tragedy of modern life is that one race, the white race, had come to dominate and subjugate all others.
 - vi. Along these lines, he made it clear that he was not opposed to segregation per se but segregation accompanied by discrimination.
 - vii. Race, of course, was at the base of what Du Bois famously called the “Negro Problem,” or the frictions between the races in America.
 - viii. However, later Du Bois came to broaden his perspective and to see the American case as part of a global color-line.

- ix. In spite of this focus on race, Du Bois recognized that there were no “pure” races and that the vast majority of the differences between the races stemmed from differences in their environment, especially their social environment.
 - x. Du Bois also clearly saw that it was a construction built out of cultural, economic, and political forces, most of which operated against persons of color.
- C. The Veil
- i. The concepts of the *Veil* are important because they illustrate Du Bois’s nuanced understanding of racial division.
 - ii. In using the image of the Veil Du Bois meant that there is a separation, a barrier, between blacks and whites.
 - a. However, the division is not like a wall through which one cannot see.
 - b. Rather, the Veil is a thin, porous material through which members of each race can see the other.
 - c. No matter how thin and porous the Veil, no matter how easy it is to see through, it still clearly separates the races.
 - iii. Overall, “worlds within and without the Veil of Color are changing, and changing rapidly, but not at the same rate, not in the same way; and this must produce a peculiar wrenching of the soul, a peculiar sense of doubt and bewilderment.”
 - iv. Among the notable things about this statement is Du Bois’s recognition that while the Veil is a “thought thing,” an idea or rather a series of ideas, it is not easily lifted, cut, or destroyed.
- D. Double Consciousness, or “Twoness”
- i. Double consciousness: African Americans were simultaneously outsiders and insiders, or more specifically, outsiders within.
 - ii. Given the existence of this double consciousness, Du Bois argued that the black American longs “to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self.”
 - iii. Du Bois’s thinking on double consciousness resonates with a number of classical and contemporary theoretical ideas.

- a. It was considered a social psychological theory of self-development equivalent to the theories of William James, George Herbert Mead, and Charles Horton Cooley.
 - iv. Although Du Bois was largely ignored by the mainstream within sociology in general, and sociological theory in particular, his ideas do resonate with a number of strands of theory and empirical research within the mainstream.
- V. Economics
- A. Du Bois devoted a great deal of attention to economic factors, and although he discussed many other factors, in the end he usually came back to economics.
 - B. However, although Du Bois recognized the ultimate importance of economic factors, he was highly critical of the attention accorded, and the amount of time and energy devoted, to the striving for economic success.
 - C. This is part of the reason why Du Bois argued so often and so determinedly for the importance of education, especially higher education, in the black community.
 - D. Education would permit blacks to achieve a range of higher goals and objectives than mere economic success.
- VI. Karl Marx, Socialism, and Communism
- A. After completing the early scientific phase of his career, he became active in the Niagara Movement and in the NAACP in an effort to improve the situation of black Americans.
 - B. At the turn of the twentieth century, Du Bois was critical of socialism, characterizing it as “cheap and dangerous.”
 - C. Du Bois saw black workers suffering from competition from white laborers, primarily immigrants.
 - D. Du Bois came to the conclusion “that without the overthrow of capitalist monopoly the Negro cannot survive in the United States as a self-respecting cultural unit, integrating gradually into the nation, but not on terms which imply self-destruction or loss of his possible gifts to America.”
 - E. Gradually, in his later years, Du Bois moved fitfully in the direction of communism.

- F. By the 1950s, discouraged by the continuing humiliation of, and discrimination against, African Americans, Du Bois was arguing for some sort of socialist/communist change within the United States.
- G. At the age of 93, Du Bois applied for membership in the Communist Party of the United States.
- H. He began to read Marx seriously during World War I and claimed that he later mastered Marx's theory.
- I. Although he was influenced by Marxian theory, Du Bois was disinclined to write scholarly metatheoretical treatises.
- J. It seems fair to say that in Marxian terms, Du Bois was always drawn to an integration of theory and praxis.
- K. To Du Bois, it was capitalism that had undermined Reconstruction and it was that economic system that was destroying America and much of the rest of the world in his day.

VII. Contemporary Applications

- A. Du Bois anticipated the contemporary interest in studies of race, racism, and colonization.
- B. Not only did he introduce concepts that have now become of central importance to sociology, but Du Bois's Atlanta Sociological Laboratory could be considered the first established school of American sociology.
- C. Contemporary scholars have also made use of Du Boisian concepts to understand contemporary social problems.
- D. Du Bois has also been discussed by scholars who study democracy and human rights.
 - i. Du Bois, throughout his writing, was concerned with the problem of human dignity, especially the dignity of African Americans.
- E. Du Bois also recognized that the ability for black Americans to express themselves was compromised by macrosociological factors.
- F. Yet at the same time this double consciousness allows black Americans, like Du Bois, to think about human rights and dignity in complex ways that cannot be fully appreciated by those on the other side of the color-line.

G. For these reasons and others, Du Bois's voluminous and varied body of work has become a model for both academics and political activists.

Lecture Notes

Chapter 15: George Herbert Mead

Chapter Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Mead is primarily remembered as the founding figure of symbolic interactionism, one of the most important approaches to contemporary social psychology.

II. Intellectual Roots

A. Behaviorism

- i. Mead defines behaviorism as simply an approach to the study of the experience of the individual from the point of view of his conduct.
- ii. Mead had no trouble with this approach to behaviorism, but he did have difficulty with the way in which behaviorism came to be defined and practiced by John B. Watson.
- iii. Mead believed that even inner experience can be studied from the point of view of the behaviorist, as long as this viewpoint is not narrowly conceived.
- iv. The symbolic-interactionist theory that emerged, in significant part from Mead's theory, is very different from behaviorist theories.
- v. Mead wanted to study the mind behavioristically, rather than introspectively.
- vi. Mead defined the mind in *functional* rather than idealist terms.

B. Pragmatism

- i. Pragmatism reflected the triumph of science and the scientific method within American society and their extension into the study of the social world.
- ii. Mead regarded pragmatism as a "natural American outgrowth."
- iii. Pragmatists believe in the superiority of scientific data over philosophical dogma and all other types of knowledge.
- iv. Following the scientific model, they regard all ideas as provisional and subject to change in light of future research.

- v. Pragmatism also involves a series of ideas that relate more directly to Mead's sociological theory:
 - a. First, to pragmatists, truth and reality do not exist "out there" in the real world; they are "actively created as we act in and toward the world."
 - b. Second, people remember the past and base their knowledge of the world on what has proved useful to them.
 - c. Third, people define the social and physical "objects" that they encounter in the world according to their use for them.
 - d. Finally, if we want to understand actors, we must base our understanding on what they actually do in the world.
- vi. Pragmatism is a "pragmatic" philosophy in several senses:
 - a. It adopts the scientists' focus on the here and now as well as scientific methods;
 - b. It is concerned with what people actually do;
 - c. It is interested in generating practical ideas that can help us cope with society's problems.
- vii. Two strands of pragmatism:
 - a. *Nominalist pragmatism*: although societal phenomena exist, they do not exist independently of people and do not have a determining effect upon individual consciousness and behavior.
 - b. *Philosophical realism*: associated with Mead.
 - c. Elements of both in Mead's thinking: In other words, there is a dialectic between realism and nominalism in Mead's work.

C. Dialectics

- i. Another important source of Mead's thinking was the philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel, especially his dialectical approach.
- ii. Dialectical thinking makes it almost impossible to separate Mead's many theoretical ideas; they are dialectically related to one another.
- iii. However, adopting the strategy followed by Mead himself, we differentiate among various concepts for the sake of clarity of discussion

III. The Priority of the Social

- A. In Mead's view, traditional social psychology began with the psychology of the individual in an effort to explain social experience.
- B. In contrast, Mead always gave priority to the social world in understanding social experience.
- C. To Mead, the social whole precedes the individual mind both logically and temporally.
- D. A thinking, self-conscious individual is logically impossible in Mead's theory without a prior social group.
- E. The social group comes first, and it leads to the development of self-conscious mental states.

IV. The Act

- A. Mead considered the act to be the most "primitive unit" in his theory.
- B. Mead said, "We conceive of the stimulus as an occasion or opportunity for the act, not as a compulsion or a mandate."

C. Stages

- i. Mead identified four basic and interrelated stages in the act:
 - a. *Impulse*:
 - 1. It involves an "immediate sensuous stimulation" and the actor's reaction to the stimulation, the need to do something about it.
 - 2. The actor (both nonhuman and human) may respond immediately and unthinkingly to the impulse, but more likely the human actor will think about the appropriate response.
 - b. *Perception*:
 - 1. Here the actor searches for and reacts to stimuli that relate to the impulse.
 - 2. Perception involves incoming stimuli, as well as the mental images they create.
 - 3. Perception and object cannot be separated from (are dialectically related to) one another.
 - c. *Manipulation*:
 - 1. It involves taking action with regard to it.

2. The manipulation phase constitutes an important temporary pause in the process so that a response is not manifested immediately.

d. *Consummation*: This is the taking of action that satisfies the original impulse.

ii. Mead saw a dialectical relationship among the four stages: Facets of each part are present at all times from the beginning of the act to the end, such that each part affects the other.

D. Gestures

i. In Mead's view, the *gesture* is the basic mechanism in the social act and in the social process more generally.

ii. He defined them, "gestures are movements of the first organism which act as specific stimuli calling forth the (socially) appropriate responses of the second organism."

iii. Humans sometimes engage in mindless conversations of gestures: Mead labeled such unconscious actions "nonsignificant" gestures; what distinguishes humans is their ability to employ "significant" gestures, or those that require thought on the part of the actor before a reaction.

iv. The vocal gesture is particularly important in the development of significant gestures.

a. However, it is the development of vocal gestures, especially in the form of language that is the most important factor in making possible the distinctive development of human life.

b. When we make a physical gesture, such as a facial grimace, we cannot see what we are doing.

c. On the other hand, when we utter a vocal gesture, we hear ourselves just as others do.

d. This ability to control oneself and one's reactions is critical, as we will see, to the other distinctive capabilities of humans.

e. More generally, "it has been the vocal gesture that has preeminently provided the medium of social organization in human society.

E. Significant Symbols

i. A *significant symbol* is a kind of gesture, one which only humans can make.

- ii. Gestures become significant symbols when they arouse in the individual who is making them the same kind of response.
 - iii. Physical gestures can be significant symbols, but as we have seen, they are not ideally suited to be significant symbols because people cannot easily see or hear their own physical gestures.
 - iv. One of the things that language, or significant symbols more generally, does is call out the same response in the individual who is speaking as it does in others.
 - v. Adopting his pragmatist orientation, Mead also looked at the “functions” of gestures in general and of significant symbols in particular.
 - a. Although the nonsignificant gesture works, the “significant symbol affords far greater facilities for such adjustment and readjustment because it calls out the same attitude toward it.
 - vi. Of crucial importance in Mead’s theory is another function of significant symbols—that they make the mind, mental processes, and so on, possible.
 - a. *Thinking*: An internalized or implicit conversation of the individual with himself by means of such gestures.
 - vii. Significant symbols also make possible symbolic interaction; people can interact with one another not just through gestures but also through significant symbols.
- V. Mental Processes and the Mind
- A. For Mead, words like “mind” and “mental life” do not refer to a set of established entities that automatically exist within human beings.
 - B. Instead, mental life is the product of ongoing dialectical relationships with other people and the world.
 - C. As a pragmatist, for Mead, minds emerge and develop as people attempt to solve the ever-changing problems presented to them by their environments.
 - D. Intelligence
 - i. The mutual adjustment of the acts of organisms.
 - a. By this definition, lower animals clearly have “intelligence,” because in a conversation of gestures they adapt to one another.
 - b. However, what distinguishes humans is that they can also exhibit intelligence, or mutual adaptation, through the use of significant symbols.

- c. Mead argued that animals have “unreasoning intelligence.” In contrast, humans have “reason.”
 - d. What is crucial to the reflective intelligence of humans is their ability to inhibit action temporarily, to delay their reactions to a stimulus.
 - e. There are three components here:
 - 1. First, humans, because of their ability to delay reactions, are able to organize in their own minds the array of possible responses to a situation.
 - 2. Second, people are able to test out mentally, again through an internal conversation with themselves, the various courses of action.
 - 3. Finally, humans are able to pick out one stimulus among a set of stimuli rather than simply reacting to the first or strongest stimulus.
 - ii. The ability to choose among a range of actions means that the choices of humans are likely to be better adapted to the situation than are the immediate and mindless reactions of lower animals.
- E. Consciousness
- i. Two distinguishable meanings:
 - a. The first is that to which the actor alone has access, that which is entirely subjective.
 - b. Reflective intelligence.
 - ii. Mead believed that consciousness is not lodged in the brain: Consciousness is functional not substantive.
 - iii. Mead refused to position mental images in the brain, but saw them as social phenomena.
 - iv. Meaning is yet another related concept that Mead addressed behavioristically; he rejected the idea that meaning lies in consciousness.
 - v. Similarly, Mead rejected the idea that meaning is a “psychical” phenomenon or an “idea.”
 - vi. Meaning is found in behavior, and meaning becomes conscious when it is associated with symbols.

- vii. However, although meaning can become conscious among humans, it is present in the social act prior to the emergence of consciousness and the awareness of meaning.
- F. Mind
- i. The mind, which is defined by Mead as a process and not a thing, as an inner conversation with one's self, is not found within the individual; it is not intracranial but is a social phenomenon.
 - ii. A distinctive characteristic of the mind is the ability of the individual "to call out in himself not simply a single response of the other but the response, so to speak, of the community as a whole.
 - iii. Mead also looked at the mind in another, pragmatic way:
 - a. That is, the mind involves thought processes oriented toward problem solving.
 - b. The real world is rife with problems, and it is the function of the mind to try to solve those problems and permit people to operate more effectively in the world.

VI. Self

- A. Self is the peculiar ability to be both subject and object.
- B. It arises with development and through social activity and social relationships.
- C. To Mead, it is impossible to imagine a self-arising in the absence of social experiences.
- D. However, after a self has developed, it is possible for it to continue to exist without social contact.
- E. The self is dialectically related to the mind:
 - i. On one hand, Mead argued that the body is not a self and becomes a self only when a mind has developed.
 - ii. On the other hand, the self, and its reflexiveness, is essential to the development of the mind.
- F. Mead resisted the idea of lodging it in consciousness and instead embedded it in social experience and social processes.
- G. The general mechanism for the development of the self is reflexivity, or the ability to put ourselves unconsciously into others' places and to act as they act.

- H. The self also allows people to take part in their conversations with others.
- I. To have selves, individuals must be able to get “outside themselves” so that they can evaluate themselves, so they can become objects to themselves.
- J. The standpoint from which one views one’s self can be that of a particular individual or that of the social group as a whole.
- K. Child Development
 - i. Mead traced the genesis of the self through two stages in childhood development.
 - ii. *Play Stage*
 - a. It is during this stage that children learn to take the attitude of particular others to themselves.
 - b. Mead gave the example of children imagining invisible companions or playing games in which they pretend to be a mother, teacher, or police officer.
 - c. As a result of such play, the child learns to become both subject and object and begins to become able to build a self.
 - d. However, they lack a more general and organized sense of themselves.
 - iii. *Game Stage*
 - a. It is required if the person is to develop a self in the full sense of the term.
 - b. Whereas in the play stage the child takes the role of discrete others, in the game stage the child must take the role of everyone else involved in the game.
 - c. In the play stage, children are not organized wholes because they play at a series of discrete roles.
 - d. However, in the game stage, such organization begins and a definite personality starts to emerge.
 - e. Children begin to become able to function in organized groups and, most important, to determine what they will do within a specific group.
- L. Generalized Other
 - i. It is the attitude of the entire community or, in the example of the baseball game, the attitude of the entire team.
 - ii. It is also crucial that people be able to evaluate themselves from the point of view of the generalized other and not merely from the viewpoint of discrete others.

- iii. Taking the role of the generalized other, rather than that of discrete others, allows for the possibility of abstract thinking and objectivity.
 - iv. Not only is taking the role of the generalized other essential to the self, but it is also crucial for the development of organized group activities.
 - v. At the individual level, the self allows the individual to be a more efficient member of the larger society.
 - a. Because individuals can be counted on to do what is expected of them, the group can operate more effectively.
 - vi. Selves share a common structure, but each self receives unique biographical articulation.
 - vii. Mead identified two aspects, or phases, of the self, which he labeled the “I” and the “me”
 - a. It is important to bear in mind that the “I” and “me” are processes within the larger process of the self; they are not “things.”
- M. “I” and “Me”
- i. The “I” is the immediate response of an individual to others:
 - a. It is the incalculable, unpredictable, and creative aspect of the self.
 - b. We are never totally aware of the “I,” and through it we surprise ourselves with our actions.
 - c. We know the “I” only after the act has been carried out.
 - ii. Mead laid great stress on the “I” for four reasons:
 - a. First, it is a key source of novelty in the social process.
 - b. Second, Mead believed that it is in the “I” that our most important values are located.
 - c. Third, the “I” constitutes something that we all seek—the realization of the self. It is the “I” that permits us to develop a “definite personality.”
 - d. Finally, Mead saw an evolutionary process in history in which people in primitive societies are dominated more by “me,” whereas in modern societies there is a greater component of “I.”
 - iii. The “I” gives Mead’s theoretical system some much-needed dynamism and creativity.

- iv. “Me” is the adoption of the generalized other:
 - a. In contrast to the “I,” people are conscious of the “me”; the “me” involves conscious responsibility.
 - b. It is through the “me” that society dominates the individual.
 - c. Indeed, Mead defined the idea of social control as the dominance of the expression of the “me” over the expression of the “I.”
- v. Mead also looked at the “I” and “me” in pragmatic terms.
- vi. The “me” allows the individual to live comfortably in the social world, whereas the “I” makes the change of society possible.

VII. Society

- A. Mead insisted that the self could not be understood outside of its social context.
- B. A full understanding of Mead’s theory of society requires a “critical reconstruction” of Mead’s theory of society.
- C. Mead used the term society to mean the ongoing social process that precedes both the mind and the self.
 - i. On the one side of this dialectic, society guides the actions of individuals.
 - ii. On the other side, society depends upon the self-reflective consciousness of its citizens.
 - iii. According to Mead, the emergence of the political institution of “mass democracy” signals a new level of social evolution in which social change depends on the exercise of reflective individual self-consciousness at a collective level.
- D. Mead also used the concept of *emergence* in his work, which describes processes in which unique wholes develop out of the relationship between their parts.
 - i. Emergence involves a reorganization, but the reorganization brings in something that was not there before.
- E. Mead also had a number of things to say about social institutions:
 - i. institutions are stabilized “frameworks of order” that are built up through the “interweaving of action.”
 - ii. The whole community acts toward the individual under certain circumstances in an identical way.

- iii. Education is an example of a process by which the common habits of the community (the institution) are “internalized” in the actor.
 - iv. To Mead, institutions should define what people ought to do only in a very broad and general sense and should allow plenty of room for individuality and creativity.
 - v. Mead was distinct from the other classical theorists in emphasizing the enabling character of society—arguably disregarding society’s constraining power.
- VIII. Criticisms and Contemporary Applications
- A. Mead’s theory continues to be influential in contemporary symbolic interactionism, social psychology, and sociology more generally.
 - B. Mead’s work still attracts theorists both in the United States and in the rest of the world, in spite of a number of notable weaknesses in his theory.
 - C. Weaknesses of Mead’s theory:
 - i. Mead has little to offer to our understanding of the macrosocietal level or issues of power and inequality.
 - ii. Some vague and fuzzy concepts:
 - a. An inconsistent definition of concepts (especially intelligence);
 - b. His lack of concern, in spite of his focus on the micro level, for emotional and unconscious aspects of human conduct.
 - D. Currently there is a resurgence that explores the relevance of Mead’s ideas beyond the traditional interest in Mead’s social psychology.
 - E. His work is particularly important in the current moment when problems such as climate change require that scholars across the sciences understand each other.
 - F. In Meadian terms, society develops not only as humans learn to take the role of other persons but also as they learn to take the role of nonhuman objects and entities.
 - G. Another area of recent growth is “neuropragmatism”:
 - i. This field applies the perspectives of pragmatism, including Mead’s ideas, to research in neuroscience and cognitive science.
 - ii. Here Mead’s pragmatism can contribute to the development of neuroscience that is better attuned to relational conceptions of the human organism.

- iii. Even a concept as intriguing as the mirror neuron needs to be developed alongside a social theory, like Mead's, that is able to show how the work of mirror neurons can be enhanced or extended through human culture.
 - iv. In other words, we need to see how culture and biology work together.
- H. Mead, a classical theorist, was light years ahead of his time in the conceptualization of such complex intellectual problems.