

Action Theory

Fold

Description

Another term for Interactionism based on the idea that society is created from the bottom up by individuals interacting and going through their daily routines

Collective Conscience

Fold

Description

From Durkheim

Expression of society's collective will, or the values everyone accepts that shape individual beliefs and choices

Critical Theory

Fold

Description

From The Frankfurt School

Focused on understanding, critiquing and ultimately changing society by analyzing the underlying ideologies that influence our social relationships and power structures.

Determinism

Fold

Description

Assumption that individual or group behavior is determined by forces outside of human agency. Human beings have no choice in their outcomes.

Economic Determinism

Fold

Description

Assumption that individual and group behavior is determined by economic factors such as accessing resources.

Feminist Theory “Feminism”

Fold

Description

More of a perspective that looks at the ways in which women are systematically disadvantaged in society. Makes the assumption that women deserve equal status with men.

Liberal Feminism

Fold

Description

Examines the influence of sexism based on traditional gender roles and discrimination as key obstacles to equality for women. Advocate for equal opportunities in key institutions like education, workplace and the family.

Marxist Feminism

Fold

Description

Examines capitalism as the key factor in women's subordination including un-paid “women's work” done in the family, exploitation in the marketplace, and commodifying women's sexuality in advertising

Radical Feminism

Fold

Description

Examine the role of men, both individually and collectively in a patriarchal society, in oppressing women. Until patriarchy can be destroyed, women will continue to be oppressed.

Black Feminism

Fold

Description

From bell hooks

Analyzes how racism, feminism and social class serve as combined forces of discrimination that contribute to and reinforce each other.

Functionalist Perspective

Fold

Description

Theoretical perspective that emphasizes the function of social structures. Often assumes that long term structures exist because they serve a function for perpetuating a stable society.

Manifest and Latent Functions

Fold

Description

From Robert Merton

Manifest Functions: Those openly expressed by the institutions

Latent Functions: Unintended consequences of the functions

Can also be Manifest and Latent Dysfunctions

Interactionist Perspective

Fold

Description

Sociological perspective that explains society as the sum of all interactions between individuals and small groups.

Conflict Perspective

“Conflict Structuralism”

Fold

Description

Sociological perspective that explains society as composed of social groups that exist in a state of conflict for power and economic resources. The dominant group imposes order on subordinate groups.

Interpretivism

Fold

Description

An approach to sociology research which examines how different people in different situations interpret the social world. It focuses on human subjectivity

Positivism

Fold

Description

An approach to sociology research which applies scientific methods used in the natural sciences to studying social phenomena. The approach focuses on objective observation and external influences on human behavior

Looking Glass Self

Fold

Description

From Charles Horton Cooley

Explains identify formation as a process of interaction in which the individual

1. Plans an interaction
2. Evaluates the interaction based on how he/she perceives the other is responding
3. Incorporates positively received interactions into their sense of self.

Marxist Theory

Fold

Description

Originates with Karl Marx

Conflict Theory that sees social conflict as a competition for resources. In which one group holds the wealth resources and the other must submit in order to get access to the resources. In capitalist societies the Bourgeoisie holds the capital and the proletariat must sell its labor to survive.

Dialectical Materialism

Fold

Description

From Karl Marx

Model of history in which competition between groups that hold the wealth and groups that do not drives social change. In Marxist theory, this competition will lead to a revolution of the proletariat overthrowing the capitalists and creating a classless, communist society.

Neo-Marxist Theory

Fold

Description

Theory that explains how capitalists maintain power over the working class by using ideological state apparatuses like the media, politics and education to keep the working class from creating a class consciousness.

Organic and Mechanical Solidarity

Fold

Description

From Emile Durkheim

Description of how historical changes lead to changes in social solidarity (bonds that hold people together). Organic Solidarity, common in pre-industrial times, are bonds based on shared traditions and values. Mechanical Solidarity, rising from industrial society, is held together through mutual interdependence.

Phenomenology

Fold

Description

Approach to sociology that tries to link Interactionism with Functionalism. Society is composed of structural “phenomena” that is both negotiated and interpreted through interaction

Thomas Theorem

Fold

Description

What a man [people] perceive[s] to be real becomes real in its consequences.

Post Modernism

Fold

Description

Social perspective that assumes that the contemporary world can no longer be understood by using “modern” theories based on reason. Because of media, consumerism, globalism and technology, human identity can only be understood in terms of personal narratives and how those personal narratives are shaped and negotiated.

Social Constructionism

“Social Construction of Reality”

Fold

Description

From Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman

Theory that human understanding of reality is social constructed through language and interaction, the repetition of this interaction (habituation), institutionalization, and internalized by individuals

Social Control Theory

Fold

Description

Human behavior is constrained by two kinds of social controls:

External Social Controls: Rewards (Positive Sanctions) & Punishments (Negative Sanctions)

Internal Social Controls: Individual emotionally and sympathetically bonded to the community

Structuration Theory

Fold

Description

From Anthony Giddens

Theory attempts to unify Functionalism with Interactionism. Through interaction, individuals create structures (rules + resources). These structures then constrain future interactions, but are also shaped by future interactions.

Structuralism

Fold

Description

Approach to social theory that assumes that social structures largely determines human behavior and interaction.

Subjectivity and Objectivity

Fold

Description

Related to identity and perceptions of the individual. Subjectivity is those areas that are influenced by individual choices and goals. Objectivity is those areas in which the individual is being acted upon by outside forces outside of his or her control.

Symbolic Interactionism

Fold

Description

From George Herbert Mead & Herbert Blumer

1. Human beings act based on how they interpret symbolic meaning.
2. Meaning is negotiated through interaction
3. Meaning is subject to further negotiation

Value Consensus

Fold

Description

Functionalist description of the overall agreement over and conformity to given mores and norms in society resulting from successful socialization.

Verstehen

Fold

Description

From Max Weber

Approach to social research emphasizing human motivations.

Labor Theory of Value

Fold

Description

From Karl Marx

The value of a good or service is created by those who actually do the labor. According to Marx, the surplus value created by shaping raw materials into finished products is stolen by the Bourgeoisie as profit.

Weberian Theory

Fold

Description

From Max Weber

Approach to studying society that includes an understanding of the society's history, economy and culture as well as the lived experience of individuals within the society.

Deterrence Theory

Fold

Description

If the benefits of the deviant act outweigh the costs, then people are more likely to be deviant. If penalties for deviance are swift, sure and severe, people will be deterred from deviant acts. Assumes that people are making rational decisions.

Labelling Theory

Fold

Description

From Howard Becker

A deviant is one who has been effectively labelled as a deviant. Primary Deviance = the labelling process. Secondary Deviance = the person labelled accepts the label as valid. Tertiary Deviance = person labelled defines his deviance as normal

Multidimensional Class Theory

“Multidimensional Theory of Social Stratification”

Fold

Description

From Max Weber

Social Class has three dimensions (as opposed to one dimension proposed by Marx)

1. Wealth
2. Party/Power
3. 3. Status/Privilege

Rationalization Theory

Fold

Description

From Max Weber

Process by which industrial societies deal with increasing complexity by creating bureaucracies to organize social work more efficiently. Ultimately, this would lead to a proliferation of rules and procedures that exist only for their own sake.

Iron Cage of Bureaucracy

Fold

Description

From Max Weber

Individual's loss of identity and meaning stifled by bureaucratic rationalization.

Ideal Types

Fold

Description

From Max Weber

An approach to studying society by creating an ideal model of a social structure and comparing the corresponding real structure to it.

Weberian Theory of the State

Fold

Description

From Max Weber

The modern state is an administrative structure with three elements:

1. Territoriality: It has a clear jurisdiction
2. Violence: War and policing
3. Legitimacy: In the eyes of the citizen.

Weberian Theory of Legitimate Authority

Fold

Description

From Max Weber

There are three types of state authority:

1. Rational Legal (dominant in modern societies)
2. Traditional
3. Charismatic

The “I” and the “me”

Fold

Description

From George Herbert Mead

The “I” = Subjective self, that which acts
The “me” = Objective self, that which is acted upon

Generalized Other

Fold

Description

From George Herbert Mead

Final stage of socialization in which the individual recognizes that his or her actions take place within a larger society, the requirements of which must be recognized and largely followed.

Ethnomethodology

Fold

Description

From Harold Garfinkel

Method of research which focuses on the rules and scripts people use to create meaning in everyday life. One famous technique is to violate a rule and observe the response from others.

Dramaturgy

“Performance Management”

Fold

Description

From Erving Goffman

Model for analyzing interaction as a stage performance in which the identity of the individuals is contingent upon the stage or setting and the expected roles of the interactants.

Alienation

Fold

Description

From Karl Marx

In General, a sense of meaninglessness, powerlessness and isolation of individuals in a society. Used by Marx to describe the disconnect between the proletariat and the benefits of their own labor that is stolen by the Bourgeoisie.

Anomie

Fold

Description

From Emile Durkheim

Situation in which the norms and values are not clear, leaving people without rules through which to guide their behavior

Strain Theory

Fold

Description

From Robert Merton

Deviance is the result of social strain between the goals set by society and the legitimate means of achieving those goals.

- Conformists: Accept the goals and means
- Innovators: Accept the goals reject the means
- Ritualists: Reject the goals Accept the means
- Retreatists: Reject both
- Rebels: Seek to change goals and/or means

Exchange Theory

Fold

Description

Model of looking at interaction as a form of exchange in which the participants seek a benefit from the interaction.

Dual Consciousness Theory

Fold

Description

From W. E. B. Dubois

State in which African Americans must be aware of themselves in a personal context, but also aware of how the dominant world perceives them (usually as a problem). This can be applied to members of any subordinate group.

Differential Association Theory

Fold

Description

People who associate with deviance are more likely to become deviant themselves.

Contradictory Class Locations

Fold

Description

Erik Olin Wright

Expansion on Marxist Theory by looking at the Middle Class in terms of relation to authority, and relation to the means of production and skill levels. The Middle Class, having more scarce skills by which to demand higher wages and higher levels of authority have greater loyalty to the capitalist class.

Wright's Class Typology

Fold

Description

Figure W.1: Wright's Class Typology

		Relation to means of production				Relation to authority
		Owner	Employees			
Number of employees	Many	Capitalists	Expert Managers	Skilled Managers	Nonskilled Managers	Managers
	Few	Small Employers	Expert Supervisors	Skilled Supervisors	Nonskilled Managers	Supervisors
	None	Petite Bourgeoisie	Experts	Skilled Workers	Nonskilled Workers	Non-management
			Experts	Skilled	Nonskilled	
		Relation to scarce skills				

Adapted from Wright, 1997, p. 25

Merton's Typology of Prejudice & Discrimination

Fold

Description

Discriminates Does Not Discriminate

Is Prejudiced

Prejudiced Discriminator	Prejudiced Non-Discriminator
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Is Not Prejudiced

Non-Prejudiced Discriminator	Non-Prejudiced Non-Discriminator
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Davis-Moore Thesis

Fold

Description

Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore

Economic inequality is a functional element of modern industrial societies. Such societies are mostly meritocratic and based on achieved status. Economic inequality provides motivation to increase one's personal productivity.

Equilibrium Theory

Fold

Description

Talcott Parsons

Society tends to be stable and orderly, in a state of equilibrium. Social changes happen as a result of changes in population, technology and cultural interaction. When changes happen too quickly, this destabilizes society, requiring adaptation

Weber's Theory of Social Change

Fold

Description

Max Weber

Social change happens as differences between the social strata lead to the lower strata questioning the legitimacy of the upper strata.

Power/Knowledge

Fold

Description

Michael Foucault

Connects power & knowledge. Power uses and reproduces knowledge to maintain and to justify its power. How individuals know themselves and regulate their behavior is based on the discourses shaped by knowledge produced by the power dynamics

Governmentality

Fold

Description

Michel Foucault

Rather than by a sovereign who governs by force or by law, in a postmodern world people govern themselves based on what experts define as normal and on the assumption that they are subject to surveillance.

Intersectionality

Fold

Description

Kimberlé Crenshaw

Identities are more complex when there are overlapping (intersecting) marginalized identities, such as an individual who is a disabled, homosexual black woman

Hyperreality

Fold

Description

Jean Baudrillard

Social arrangement in which it is impossible to distinguish reality from the imaginary

Implosion of Signs

Fold

Description

Jean Baudrillard

early society, symbols represented something in the real world (simulations). As modern societies developed, symbols represented abstract ideas & other (simulacra). In postmodern societies, symbols represent nothing but themselves. Eg. Nike swoosh

Theory

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