

Principles of Sociology

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

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Lecturer: Dimitris Lallas

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**Founders of Sociology: The development of
French, German, British and Italian Sociology**

The development of French Sociology



Auguste Comte
(1798-1857)

- Auguste Comte is deemed as the “father”/founder of new science of social life.
- He gave prominence to the social science as a distinct scientific field, that he called *social physics*. The use of the term *social physics* made it clear that Comte sought to model sociology after the “hard sciences.”
- In 1839, Comte coined the name “sociology” for the new science of society.
- Advocator of a philosophical system, *positivism*, which argues that abstract laws govern the relationships among phenomena in the world, including its social elements, and that these laws can be tested using empirical data.
- He urged sociologists to use *systematic observation*, *experimentation*, and *comparative historical analysis* as their methods.

- Comte's scientific view is described as "positivism" or "positive philosophy".
- "Positive philosophy" was set against to the 'negative' and 'destructive' philosophy of the Enlightenment.
- Society as organic whole composed of parts that are organically connected to each other, in such way that vital needs of society (social reproduction) to be fulfilled.
- Basic units of analysis larger entities such as the family. the state.
- The role of consensus in society is the focus of Comte's scientific attention.

- **Division of study of society into *social statics* and *social dynamics***
- **Social statics** involve those aspects of social life that have to do with order, stability, and social organization that allow societies and groups to hold together and endure:
 - a) Family
 - b) Religion
 - c) division of labor
 - d) “spirit”: social conscience-social solidarity-sense of duty-consensus

- **Social dynamics** refer to those processes of social life that pattern institutional development and have to do with social change.
- “Social order” and “progress”
- Progress refers to the process of social order’s evolution.
- Transition of lower to higher (advanced) stage of social organization and human state of mind.

- **Comte's evolutionary theory: *The law of the three stages***

- **Theological stage**

- **a)** up to Medieval Society (1300 AD)

- **b)** “militaristic spirit” (militaries as conveyors of this spirit)

- **c)** supernatural powers and religious figures as causes of social phenomena

- **d)** divine law

- **e)** Family as the main social entity

- **Metaphysical stage**
- **a)** Early modern period (Enlightenment and authoritarian regimes, 1300-1800 AD)
- **b)** the Nature as the source of phenomena
- **c)** metaphysical abstractions: “doctrines” about social equality, personal freedom, human rights and “natural” rights of human
- **d)** “legal spirit” (jurists and lawyers as conveyors of this spirit)
- **e)** the principle of “people power”
- **f)** the State as the main social entity

- **Positivistic stage**
- **a)** modern urbanized, industrial society
- **b)** “positive spirit” (scientists and industrialists as conveyors of this spirit)
- **c)** “positive politics”
- **d)** Humanity as the main social entity

● **The historical role of Sociology**

- Sociology could expedite the arrival of positivism and hence bring order to the social world.
- Sociology is the supreme stage of human spirit evolution.
- The finding and formulation of “laws” of “physical social state of harmony” can be achieved by positive sociology.
- On the base of this knowledge, the reorganization of society on “real” foundations is possible.



**Emile Durkheim
(1858-1916)**

The Rules of Sociological Method (1895)

- The special task of sociology to study is what he called *social facts*.
- **Social facts** are aspects of social life that cannot be explained in terms of the biological or mental characteristics of the individual.
- **Social facts** are forces and structures that are external to, and coercive of, the individual .
- **Social facts** include not only legal and moral rules in society but also relationships and behavior patterns that affect our day-to-day lives.
- **Material social facts** include society's major institutions (the state, religion, family, education, etc.), and the various forms that underlie society (housing patterns, the crime rate, population distributions, etc.).
- **Nonmaterial social facts** are the social rules, principles of morality, meanings of symbols, and the shared consciousness that results from these.

● *Suicide (1897)*

- Durkheim interested in the causes of differences in suicide rates among groups, regions, countries, and different categories of people (for example, married and single).
- ***Research findings:***
- a) suicide rates were higher among Protestants than Catholics, higher among the unmarried than the married, and higher among soldiers than civilians.
- b) suicide rates were higher in times of peace than in times of war and revolution, and higher in times of economic prosperity and recession than in times of economic stability.
- ***Research conclusion:***
- Durkheim challenged the idea that suicide was the result of purely individual factors. As an alternative, he proposed that suicide is affected by two types of bonds within society, *social integration* and *social regulation*.
- People who are strongly integrated into social groups, and whose desires and aspirations are regulated by social norms, are less likely to commit suicide.

● **Types of suicide**

- 1) *Egoistic suicides* = low integration in society, feeling of isolation-loneliness
- 2) *Anomic suicides* = lack of social regulation, normlessness
- 3) *Altruistic suicides* = *over-integration in society*
- 4) *Fatalistic suicides* = *over-regulation, feeling of powerlessness*

- Variations of suicide rates show that there are social forces that influence suicide rates.

- *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1912)*

- Research focus on the ultimate form of a nonmaterial social fact — **religion**.
- Durkheim examined primitive society in order to find the roots of religion.
- *Research findings:*
 - **a)** the source of religion was society itself.
 - **b)** the clan was the source of a primitive kind of religion, *totemism*.
 - **c)** Totemism as a specific type of nonmaterial social fact, a form of the collective conscience.
 - **d)** society and religion (or, more generally, the collective conscience) were one and the same.

● **Social intergration**

- Central to Durkheim's sociology is the concept of *social integration*.
- *Social* integration refers to the density of social relationships.
- The more people are connected to one another, the stronger and more meaningful are the sentiments that emerge out of these relationships.
- Social integration is necessary for the maintenance of the social order and for the happiness of individuals.
- His work was informed by the disorders produced by the general social changes.
- Durkheimian view was that social disorders are not a necessary part of the modern world and could be reduced by social reforms.

- ***The Division of Labor in Society (1893)***

- ***Mechanical solidarity***

- In early societies such as hunting and gathering or agrarian societies, the social structure was relatively simple, with *little division of labor*. People were knit together by their engagement in similar tasks. They derived a *sense of oneness* from being so much alike, what Durkheim termed *mechanical solidarity*.

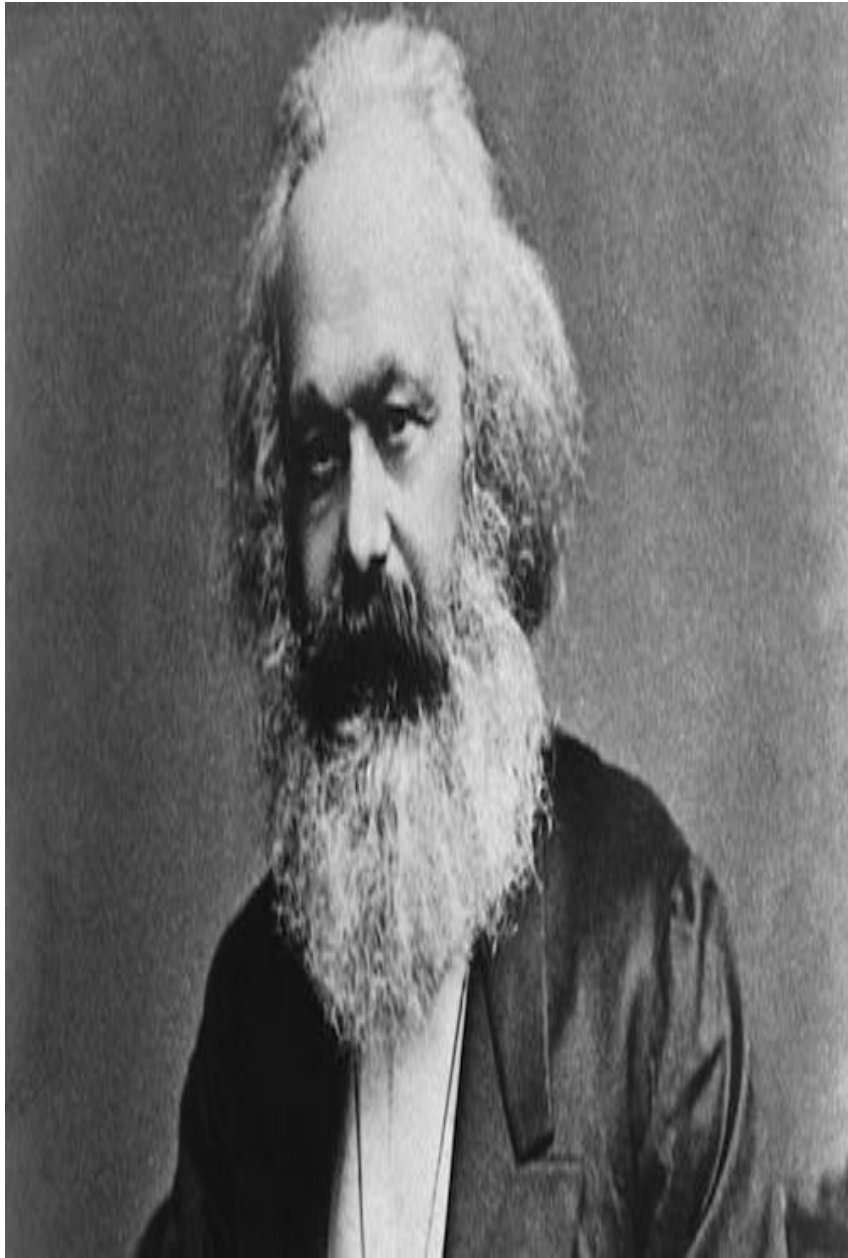
- *These societal formations was characterized by a strong collective conscience.*

- ***Organic Solidarity***

- The primary bond in the modern world was an *intricate division of labor*, which tied people to others in dependency relationships. Modern societies, in contrast, are characterized by complex social structures and a sophisticated division of labor. No one person is self-sufficient, and all must depend upon others to survive.

- Under these circumstances, society is held together by the interdependence fostered by the differences among people, what Durkheim labeled *organic solidarity*.

The development of German Sociology



**Karl Marx
(1818-1883)**

- Marx's concern referred to the structures of capitalism and their oppressive impact on human.
- For Marx, science is not only as a vehicle for understanding society but also a tool for transforming it.
- Marx was especially eager to change the structure of capitalist institutions and to establish new institutions in the service of humanity.
- He was interested in emancipating people from the oppressive structures of capitalism.

● **Substructure (economic base) and superstructure**

● ***Substructure:***

- 1) Means of production, level of production technology
- 2) production relations

● ***Superstructure:***

- 1) Family organization
- 2) system of law
- 3) arts
- 4) religion
- 5) science
- 6) education
- 7) political organization
- 8) political ideologies

- Superstructure is strongly influenced by the economic base of society.
- The materially dominant class is also intellectually dominant.
- Marx argued that “the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas”.
- *Economic determinism*: economic factors (ownership or/and control of the means of production) are primary.
- Marx recognized also the fact that the superstructure can have effect on the economic base.

- **Dialectical and historical materialism**

- Socio-historical development depends on the clash of opposing social forces and the subsequent creation of new, more advanced structures.
- The social world is made up not of static structures but of dynamic processes, it's a world of becoming rather than of being.
- Historical stages: Slavery-feudalism-capitalism-socialism-communism.

- **History as field of class struggles**

- Society is divided into those who own the means of producing wealth and those who do not.
- The driving force of history is class conflict.
- In contemporary Western societies, class antagonisms revolve around the struggle between the oppressing capitalist class (bourgeoisie) and the oppressed working class (proletariat)

- The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles... Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.... The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.” – *Communist Manifesto (1848)*

● **Marxian Labor theory of value**

- The capitalistic profit is based on the exploitation of the worker.
- The workers sell their labor power to the capitalists in exchange of payment that is less than the value of the product that they produced.
- The unpaid part of this value is called *surplus value*, that capitalists usurp.
- The capitalist system grew by continually increasing the level of exploitation of the workers.
- The expansion of the capitalistic system depends on the augmentation of surplus value, that is reinvested.

● **Theory of Alienation**

- Human beings are essentially productive beings.
- Their productivity is a perfectly natural way by which they express basic creative impulses.
- People produce in concert with other people, and for this they are inherently social beings.
- Capitalist mode of production has subverted the natural productive process.
- In capitalist production relations, laborer loses his/her control over productive process, the final product, and he/she is isolated.
- The liberating, emancipating and creative qualities of work-production are mutilated, for human labor is subjugated to the main capitalist imperative, profit.



**Max Weber
(1864-1920)**

- **“Verstehen”-oriented sociological approach**
- Weberian sociology focus on the study of human subjectivity: the intentions, values, beliefs, and attitudes that underlie people’s behavior.
- This sociological perspective deals with the meaning attached to behavior.
- **Value-free sociology**
- Sociologists must not allow their personal biases to affect the conduct of their scientific research.
- Sociological study must be characterized by objectivity and pursuit the scientifically verifiable knowledge.
- **Ideal type**
- Ideal type is a concept constructed by sociologists to portray the principal characteristics of something they want to study.
- The ideal type serves as a measuring tool against which sociologists can evaluate actual cases

- *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1904–1905)*

- The active role of ideas in history.
- The impact of religious ideas on the economy.
- *Weber concerned* with Protestantism, and its impact on the rise of another system of ideas, the “spirit of capitalism,” and ultimately on a capitalist economic system.
- Weber attempted to show that not only do material factors affect ideas but ideas themselves affect material structures.

- **The process of rationalization and its principles**

- 1) Calculability
- 2) Efficiency
- 3) Predictability
- 4) Non-Human Technology
- 5) Control Over Uncertainties
- *Bureaucracy* (and the historical process of bureaucratization) as the classic example of rationalization.
- *Rationalization and political organization:*
- Three ideal types of authority systems
- a) traditional
- b) charismatic
- c) rational-legal



**Georg Simmel
(1858-1918)**

- Georg Simmel was Weber's contemporary and a cofounder of the German Sociological Society.
- Simmel's work contributed to the development of one of the early centers of American sociology—the University of Chicago—and its major theory, *Symbolic Interactionism*.
- According to Simmel, one of the major tasks of sociology refers to the understanding interaction among people.
- Forms of interaction and Types of interactants.

- *Philosophy of Money (1907)*

- The domination of the culture as a whole over the individual
- In the modern world, the larger culture and all its various components (including the money economy) expand and the importance of the individual decreases.
- According to Simmel, in the modern world, the expansion of the larger culture leads to the growing insignificance of the individual.

The development of British Sociology

- British sociology was shaped in the nineteenth century by three often conflicting sources:
- *a) political economy*
- Acceptance of Smith's idea that there was an "invisible hand" that shaped the market for labor and goods.
- The market as a positive force, as a source of order, harmony, and integration in society.
- Sociologist was not to criticize society but simply to gather data on the laws by which it operated. 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.
- In the mid-1800s statisticians dominated British social science.
- Data collection was deemed to be the major task of sociology.

- ***b) ameliorism***

- *a desire to solve social problems by reforming individuals.*
- Much attention was devoted to a long series of individual problems (impurity, bad sanitation, pauperism, crime, intemperance, spiritual destitution).
- Sociologists talk about individual pathologies, and not about social pathologies.
- The ameliorists lacked a theory of social structure, a theory of the social causes of such individual problems.

- ***c) social evolution***

- In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the interest in social evolution grew.



**Herbert Spencer
(1820-1903)**

- Society as a biological organism.
- Spencer was concerned with the overall structure of society, the interrelationship of the *parts of society, and the functions of the parts for each other* as well as for the system as a whole.
- Just as the human body is made up of organs, so society is made up of institutions (e.g., the family, religion, education, the state, and the economy).
- This image of society is inline with what sociologists now call *Structural Functional theory*.

● **Social Darwinism**

- Evolutionary theory of historical development.
- Spencer applied the concept of survival of the fittest to the social.
- Social institutions, like plants and animals, adapted progressively and positively to their social environment.
- If this principle were allowed to operate world, freely, human beings and their institutions would progressively adapt themselves to their environment and reach higher and higher levels of historical development.
- Spencer's social Darwinist ideas were used extensively within England and the United States to justify unrestrained capitalism.
- Government should not interfere with the natural processes going on in a society.

- ***The evolutionary perspectives:***
- The increasing size of society brings with it larger and more differentiated social structures, as well as the increasing differentiation of the function.
- Evolutionary movement from simple to compound, doubly-compound, and trebly-compound societies.
- **From *militant to industrial societies:***
- *Earlier*, militant societies are defined by being structured for offensive and defensive warfare.
- *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.
- Voluntary contractual relations and a strong common morality ensure the social unity and stability.



Harriet Martineau (1802-1876)

- The study of society represents a separate scientific field.
- The study of society must include all its aspects, including key political, religious and social institutions.
- The analysis of a society must include an understanding of women's lives.
- She investigated previously ignored issues, including marriage, children, domestic and religious life, and race relations.
- Martineau argued that sociologists should do more than just observe; they should also act in ways to benefit a society.
- She was a defender of women's rights.
- Martineau showed the similarities between the position of women in Western societies and that of American slaves.
- Sociological researches of social behavior in the United States and England [*How to Observe Manners and Morals, 1838*].
- Comparative study of the stratification systems of Europe and the United States.
- Her sociological work was marginalized by the male domination in sociological field.

The development of Italian Sociology



Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923)

- Whereas the Enlightenment philosophers emphasized rationality, Pareto emphasized the role of nonrational factors such as human instincts.
- Socio-economic revolution was unrealistic, for nonrational, instinctual factors were so important and so unchanging.

- **Pareto's cyclical theory of social change**
- Society is dominated by a small elite that operates on the basis of self-interest.
- Elite controls the masses of people, who are dominated by nonrational forces.
- The masses devoid of rational capacities cannot act as a revolutionary force.
- Social change occurs when the elite begins to degenerate and is replaced by a new elite derived from the nongoverning elite or higher elements of the masses.

- Pareto conceived of society as a system in equilibrium, a whole consisting of interdependent parts. A change in one part was seen as leading to changes in other parts of the system.
- Pareto hold an organic image of society and so his theory played a crucial role in the development of structural functionalism.

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