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Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots: The Basics, 4th Edition by George Ritzer and Jeff Stepnisky
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2: Editions of Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots: The Basics by George Ritzer

Now with SAGE Publishing, Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots: The Basics, is a brief survey of sociology's major theorists and theoretical approaches, from the Classical founders to the present.

History of sociology The field of sociology itself and sociological theory by extension is relatively new. Both date back to the 18th and 19th centuries. The drastic social changes of that period, such as industrialization, urbanization, and the rise of democratic states caused particularly Western thinkers to become aware of society. The oldest sociological theories deal with broad historical processes relating to these changes. Since then, sociological theories have come to encompass most aspects of society, including communities, organizations and relationships. Sociological theory attempts to answer the following three questions: In the myriad attempts to answer these questions, three predominately theoretical i. These problems are largely inherited from the classical theoretical traditions. The consensus on the central theoretical problems is: The first deals with knowledge, the second with agency, and the last with time. Lastly, sociological theory often grapples with the problem of integrating or transcending the divide between micro, meso and macro-scale social phenomena, which is a subset of all three central problems. These problems are not altogether empirical problems, rather they are epistemological: Objectivity and subjectivity[edit] Main articles: Objectivity science, Objectivity philosophy, and Subjectivity The problem of subjectivity and objectivity can be divided into a concern over the general possibilities of social actions, and, on the other hand the specific problem of social scientific knowledge. The objective is often considered any public or external action or outcome, on up to society writ large. A primary question for social theorists, is how knowledge reproduces along the chain of subjective-objective-subjective, that is to say: While, historically, qualitative methods have attempted to tease out subjective interpretations, quantitative survey methods also attempt to capture individual subjectivities. Also, some qualitative methods take a radical approach to objective description in situ. The latter concern with scientific knowledge results from the fact that a sociologist is part of the very object they seek to explain. Bourdieu puts this problem rather succinctly: How can the sociologist effect in practice this radical doubting which is indispensable for bracketing all the presuppositions inherent in the fact that she is a social being, that she is therefore socialized and led to feel "like a fish in water" within that social world whose structures she has internalized? How can she prevent the social world itself from carrying out the construction of the object, in a sense, through her, through these unself-conscious operations or operations unaware of themselves of which she is the apparent subject â€” Pierre Bourdieu, "The Problem of Reflexive Sociology" in An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology [8] Structure and agency[edit] Main article: Structure and agency Structure and agency, sometimes referred to as determinism versus voluntarism, [9] form an enduring ontological debate in social theory: Discussions over the primacy of either structure and agency relate to the core of sociological epistemology "What is the social world made of? Synchrony and diachrony[edit] Synchrony and diachrony, or statics and dynamics, within social theory are terms that refer to a distinction emerging out of the work of Levi-Strauss who inherited it from the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure. Diachrony, on the other hand, attempts to analyze dynamic sequences. Following Saussure, synchrony would refer to social phenomena as a static concept like a language, while diachrony would refer to unfolding processes like actual speech. In terms of sociology, historical sociology is often better positioned to analyze social life as diachronic, while survey research takes a snapshot of social life and is thus better equipped to understand social life as synchronic. Some argue that the synchrony of social structure is a methodological perspective rather than an ontological claim. Classical theoretical traditions[edit] The contemporary discipline of sociology is theoretically multi-paradigmatic. Utilitarianism, also known as "rational choice" or "social exchange", although often associated with economics, is an established tradition within sociological theory. Ward and William Graham Sumner. Contemporary sociological theory retains traces of each these traditions and they are by no means mutually exclusive. Structural functionalism A broad historical paradigm in both sociology and anthropology, functionalism addresses the social structure as a whole and in terms of the necessary function of its constituent elements. Biology has been taken to provide a

guide to conceptualizing the structure and the function of social systems and to analyzing processes of evolution via mechanisms of adaptation Conflict theories Social conflict is the struggle between segments of society over valued resources. Capitalists are people who own and operate factories and other businesses in pursuit of profits. In other words, they own virtually all large-scale means of production. However, capitalism turned most other people into industrial workers, whom Marx called proletarians. Proletarians are people who, because of the structure of capitalist economy, must sell their labor for wages. Conflict theories draw attention to power differentials, such as class, gender and race conflict, and contrast historically dominant ideologies. It is therefore a macro level analysis of society that sees society as an arena of inequality that generates conflict and social change. Symbolic interactionism , Dramaturgy sociology , Interpretive sociology , and Phenomenological sociology Symbolic interaction , often associated with interactionism , phenomenological sociology , dramaturgy , and interpretivism , is a sociological tradition that places emphasis on subjective meanings and the empirical unfolding of social processes, generally accessed through analysis. Society is nothing more than the shared reality that people construct as they interact with one another. This approach sees people interacting in countless settings using symbolic communications to accomplish the tasks at hand. Therefore, society is a complex, ever-changing mosaic of subjective meanings. It is also in this tradition that the radical-empirical approach of Ethnomethodology emerges from the work of Harold Garfinkel. Utilitarianism , Rational choice theory , and Exchange theory Utilitarianism is often referred to as exchange theory or rational choice theory in the context of sociology. This tradition tends to privilege the agency of individual rational actors and assumes that within interactions individuals always seek to maximize their own self-interest. As argued by Josh Whitford , rational actors are assumed to have four basic elements, the individual has 1 "a knowledge of alternatives," 2 "a knowledge of, or beliefs about the consequences of the various alternatives," 3 "an ordering of preferences over outcomes," 4 "A decision rule, to select amongst the possible alternatives". Homans , Peter Blau and Richard Emerson. March and Herbert A. The utilitarian perspective in sociology was, most notably, revitalized in the late 20th century by the work of former ASA president James Coleman. List of contemporary theories[edit] Anomie theory , seeks to understand normlessness , where society provides little moral guidance to individuals. In *The Division of Labor in Society* , Durkheim described anomie as one result of an inequitable division of labour within the society. Mawson, University of Keele, UK, notes. As "actors," we have a status, which is the part that we play, where we are given various roles. Feminism is a collection of movements aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights for women. Feminism, from a social conflict perspective, focuses on gender inequality and links sexuality to the domination of women by men. It is concerned with how individuals construct such fields, with how the fields are structured, and with the effects the field has on people occupying different positions in it. Grounded theory is a systematic methodology in the social sciences involving the generation of theory from data. It is currently the de facto dominant approach to sociological theory construction, especially in the United States. Middle range theory starts with an empirical phenomenon as opposed to a broad abstract entity like the social system and abstracts from it to create general statements that can be verified by data. Mathematical sociology aims to take sociological theory, which is strong in intuitive content but weak from a formal point of view, and to express it in formal terms. The benefits of this approach include increased clarity and the ability to use mathematics to derive implications of a theory that cannot be arrived at intuitively. The models typically used in mathematical sociology allow sociologists to understand how predictable local interactions are often able to elicit global patterns of social structure. Introspective and intuitional attempts to gain knowledge are rejected. The positivist approach has been a recurrent theme in the history of western thought , from ancient times to the present day. Network theory is a structural approach to sociology that is most closely associated with the work of Harrison White , who views norms and behaviors as embedded in chains of social relations. In essence, phenomenology is the belief that society is a human construction. It was originally developed by Edmund Husserl. Post-colonial theory is a post-modern approach that consists of the reactions to and the analysis of colonialism. Postmodernism is a theoretical perspective approach that criticises modernism and believes anti-theory and anti-method and has a great mistrust of grand theories and ideologies. Due to human subjectivity, theorists believe that discovering

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the objective truth is impossible or unachievable. This approach uses both micro and macro level analysis. Pure sociology is a theoretical paradigm developed by Donald Black that explains variation in social life with social geometry, that is, locations in social space. A recent extension of this idea is that fluctuations in social space "called social time" are the cause of social conflict. Costs are extrinsic, meaning intrinsic values such as feelings of guilt will not be accounted for in the cost to commit a crime. Social constructionism is a sociological theory of knowledge that considers how social phenomena develop in particular social contexts. Unlike other living species, humans need socialization within their cultures for survival. For example, a teacher who believes a certain student to be intellectually gifted may well encourage exceptional academic performance.

3: Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots: The Basics by George Ritzer

Designed as a short text to be used in one-semester courses in sociological theory, this book stems from the need of some instructors for a brief text to be used in one-semester courses in contemporary sociological theory, or sociological theory more generally. At least some students (and their

4: CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY AND ITS CLASSICAL ROOTS: THE BASICS - Ebook pdf

Contemporary Social Theory and Its Classical Roots: The Basics is ideal for those looking for a brief, yet accessible text on sociological theory. An affordable alternative to a standard text, this volume is concise, comprehensive, informative, engaging, includes a range of pedagogical features, and it appeals to a wide range of students.

5: Sociological theory - Wikipedia

Now with SAGE Publishing, Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots: The Basics, is a brief survey of sociology's major theorists and theoretical approaches, from the Classical founders to the present.

6: Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots by Ritzer, George

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7: McGraw-Hill Education Canada Highereducation

This is the first textbook for sociological theory that is modeled after the texts routinely available for introductory sociology courses. It is concise (although it covers a lot of ground), written in a highly accessible fashion, and includes much of the pedagogy that one expects to find in an introductory text.

8: Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots: The Basics

Feminist theory is one of the major contemporary sociological theories, which analyzes the status of women and men in society with the purpose of using that knowledge to better women's lives. Feminist theory is most concerned with giving a voice to women and highlighting the various ways women have contributed to society.

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