EDITION 9

Modern Sociological Theory

GEORGE RITZER // JEFFREY STEPNISKY

Modern Sociological Theory

Ninth Edition

To Jeremy, with love

—GR

For Nora, with love

—JS

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• Brief Contents •

• Detailed Contents •

• Biographical and Autobiographical Sketches •

• Preface •

The purpose of this textbook is to introduce students to a broad range of modern sociological theories. This includes theories that have been developed from about the 1930s up to the present. Though the focus is on modern theories, the first two chapters (especially Chapter 1) provide a historical sketch that includes both modern and classical theories.

Changes in the Ninth Edition

Each revision of the textbook provides the opportunity to consider the newest developments in sociological theory. In this edition, the most significant new theories are introduced in Chapter 14, where we cover a range of theories that address issues in science, technology, and nature. This includes new sections on actor-network theory, Donna Haraway, and theories of the Anthropocene, a perspective that considers the relationship between societies and climate change.

To improve the flow of the text, we have moved the chapter on poststructuralism and postmodernism (formerly Chapter 13, now Chapter 11) to follow the chapter on modernity (Chapter 10). The section on queer theory, formerly part of Chapter 14, has been moved into the chapter on postructuralism and postmodernism (Chapter 11). As always, throughout this edition we have updated references and added new material. As such, the student can be assured that the treatment of all theorists in this book, as well as reference to contemporary scholarship, is as up-to-date as possible. To ensure that the text did not become too lengthy or cumbersome, we also removed or rewrote some sections. These decisions reflect the changing face of sociological theory. Among the major changes/additions are the following:

- Chapter 1 has several new additions: a stand-alone section on Ibn Khaldun to provide the reader with an example of premodern sociological theory; a section on Harriet Martineau to better contextualize her feminist writings within the history of sociological thought; and a section on "non-European" classical theory.
- New biographies on Hannah Arendt (Chapter 2), Raewyn Connell (Chapter 8), Bruno Latour (Chapter 14), and Donna Haraway (Chapter 14).
- Chapter 8 has been updated with new sections on hegemonic masculinity, postcolonial feminism, neoliberalism, and a biography on Raewyn Connell.
- Chapter 13, on globalization, includes a new section on the work of comparative historical sociologist Saskia Sassen and her concepts of the global city and expulsions.

- Chapter 14 has been redesigned with a focus on science, technology, nature, and consumption and an opening discussion of the relevance of these themes for sociological theory.
- The Chapter 14 section on actor-network theory and posthumanism has been significantly rewritten with a more detailed focus on Bruno Latour and Donna Haraway, especially Haraway's work on cyborgs and companion species.
- The largest new addition is a section in Chapter 14 on theories of the Anthropocene, a set of theories that theorize the connection between climate change and human society.

Despite some significant moves and additions, we remain committed to providing students with a textbook that communicates the core issues in sociological theory and their relevance to the contemporary moment.

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• Acknowledgments •

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Thanks also go to a panel of reviewers whose comments and suggestions helped to make this a better book.

—George Ritzer and Jeffrey Stepnisky

• About the Authors •

George Ritzer, Distinguished University Professor Emeritus at the University of Maryland, was named a Distinguished-Scholar Teacher there and received the American Sociological Association's Distinguished Contribution to Teaching Award. He holds an Honorary Doctorate from La Trobe University and the Robin William Lectureship from the Eastern Sociological Society. He has chaired four sections of the ASA—Theoretical Sociology, Organizations and Occupations, Global and Transnational Sociology, and the History of Sociology. Among his books in theory are *Sociology: A Multiple Paradigm Science* (1975/1980) and *Metatheorzing in Sociology* (1991). In the application of social theory to the social world, his books include *The McDonaldization of Society: Into the Digital Age* (9th ed., 2018), *Enchanting a Disenchanted World* (3rd ed., 2010), and *The Globalization of Nothing* (2nd ed., 2007). His books have been translated into more than twenty languages, with over a dozen translations of *The McDonaldization of Society* alone. Most of his widely cited work over the past decade, and currently, deals with prosumption.

Jeffrey Stepnisky is Associate Professor of Sociology at MacEwan University in Alberta, Canada, where he teaches classical and contemporary sociological theory. He has published in the area of social theory, especially as it relates to questions of selfhood and intersubjectivity and, most recently, atmosphere. This work appears in journals such as *Space and Culture*, the *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior,* and *Social Theory & Health*. He coedited the *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists* (2011) and served as the managing editor for the *Encyclopedia of Social Theory* (2005). In addition to this book, he has worked with George Ritzer on the textbooks *Classical Sociological Theory* and *Contemporary Sociological Theory and Its Classical Roots*.

PART I

Introduction to Sociological Theory

1

A Historical Sketch of Sociological Theory

The Early Years

Chapter Outline

A useful way to begin a book designed to introduce sociological theory is with several one-line summaries of various theories:

- Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the workers by the capitalists.
- The modern world offers less moral cohesion than did earlier societies.
- The modern world is an iron cage of rational systems from which there is no escape.

- Modern identities and relationships are shaped by the unique experience of city life.
- In their social lives, people tend to put on a variety of theatrical performances.
- The social world is defined by principles of reciprocity in give-and-take relationships.
- Especially in the past, but still in the present, Western societies are organized around the interests of men, to the disadvantage of women and minorities.
- Modern racism emerged with colonialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- Society is a "juggernaut" with the ever-present possibility of running amok.
- The world has entered a new postmodern era increasingly defined by the inauthentic, the fake, and simulations of reality.
- Paradoxically, globalization is associated with the worldwide spread of "nothing."
- Nonhumans (animals, technology) are key to the formation of society.
- Social theory must account for the planetary changes caused by global warming.

This book is devoted to helping the reader to better understand these theoretical ideas, as well as the larger theories from which they are drawn.

Introduction

Presenting a history of sociological theory is an important task (S. Turner, 1998), but because we devote only two chapters (1 and 2) to it, what we offer is a highly selective historical sketch (Giddens, 1995). The idea is to provide the reader with a scaffolding that should help in putting the later detailed discussions of theorists and theories in a larger context. As the reader proceeds through the later chapters, it will prove useful to return to these two overview chapters and place the discussions in their context. (It will be especially useful to glance back occasionally to Figures 1.1 and 2.1, which are schematic representations of the histories covered in those chapters.)

The theories treated in the body of this book have a *wide range* of application, deal with *centrally important social issues,* and have *stood the test of time*. These criteria constitute the definition of *sociological theory* used in this book. The focus is on the important theoretical work of sociologists or the work done by individuals in other fields that has come to be defined as important in sociology. To put it succinctly, this is a book about the "big ideas" in sociology.

Typically, the development of sociological theory is associated with the modern period in Europe, especially the 1800s and early 1900s. The theories

FIGURE 1.1 ● Sociological Theory: The Early Years

Sociological Theory: The Early Years	Social and Political Forces	Intellectual Forces	France	Germany	Italy	Great Britain	United States
1700s	Development of French and English Colonialism Industrial Revolution and Emergence of Capitalism American Revolution (1765–1783) French Revolution (1789–1799)	Enlightenment and Conservative Reaction to Enlightenment German Idealism Political Economy	Montesquieu (1689–1755) Rousseau (1712–1778) Maistre (1753–1821) Bonald (1754–1840) Saint-Simon (1760–1825)	Kant (1724–1804) Hegel (1770–1831)		Smith (1723–1790) Ricardo (1772–1823)	
1800s	Rise of Socialism Revolutions of 1848 (Sicily, France, Germany, Italy, Austrian Empire) Paris Commune (1871) Dreyfus Affair (1894–1906)	Evolutionary Theory Emergence of Social Sciences and Sociology	Comte (1798–1857) Tocqueville (1805–1859) Durkheim (1858–1917)	Feuerbach (1804–1872) Marx (1818–1883) Dilthey (1833–1911) Nietzsche (1844–1900) Freud (1856–1939) Simmel (1858–1918) Max Weber (1864–1920) Marianne Weber (1870–1954)	Pareto (1848–1923)	Martineau (1802–1876) Spencer (1820–1903) Darwin (1809–1882)	Veblen (1857–1929) Gilman (1860–1935) Addams (1860–1935) Cooper (1858–1964) Wells-Barnett (1862–1931) Du Bois (1868–1963) Mead (1863–1931)
1900s	Rise of Feminism World War I (1914–1918) Henry Ford's Model T (1908)	Feminist Theory Western Marxism Structural Functionalism		Lukács (1885–1971)	Gramsci (1902–1937)		Schumpeter (1883–1950) Parsons (1902–1979)

developed during this period are often called "classical" sociological theories because they are considered to be foundational to the discipline. (For a debate about what makes theory classical, see R. Collins, 1997; R. W. Connell, 1997.) While this chapter focuses on the history of the development of these classical theories, we start with a brief discussion of premodern theory, especially the ideas of Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldun. While premodern theories have not had a significant impact on the development of sociological theory, their discussion helps to understand some of the longer term origins of sociological thinking. In Chapter 2, we continue the historical review. This focuses largely on developments from the 1920s into the present. These are often referred to as modern and, after 1980, late-modern or postmodern theories.

Premodern Sociological Theory

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. Sociological theory emerged as a set of ideas that tried to explain and understand the social forces that developed during this modern period. That said, even though the bulk of sociological theory emerges with modernity, some scholars have found sociological ideas in classical/ancient Greek and Roman and medieval writing. For example, in his history of sociology Alan Sica (2012) discusses the ideas of Chinese philosopher Confucius (551–479 BCE), Greek historian Thucydides (460–400 BCE), Italian philosophers Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) and Giambattista Vico (1668–1755), and French philosopher Montesquieu (1689–1755). Though not as singularly focused on sociological phenomena as the later *sociological* theorists, these premodern thinkers discussed various aspects of social organization, especially as they applied to the societies in which they lived.

In recent years, the fourteenth-century Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) has attracted particular attention as a precursor of modern sociology. Ibn Khaldun is interesting, and therefore worth spending some time with at the beginning of this chapter, for two reasons. First, he is largely regarded as having developed the first systematic approach to the study of "social organization." He sought to develop a "science of human society" (*'ilm al-ijtima'al-insani*, Alatas and Sinha, 2017:18). Ibn Khaldun even anticipates ideas found in the theories developed by the first sociologists (e.g., Durkheim's social solidarity and division of labor; Marx's labor theory of value). Second, Ibn Khaldun presents a sociological theory that reflects the social world in which he lived—fourteenth-century Andalusia (southern Spain), North Africa, and Egypt. Ibn Khaldun analyzed the forms of social organization that emerge out of the relationship between tribal, largely nomadic, desert societies (e.g., the Bedouin of North Africa) and urban, or sedentary society as found in cities like Tunis, Granada, Marrakesh, and Cairo. Classical European theories typically focused on urban life (studying work in factories, revolutions in city streets, organizational structures in office buildings, relations in family homes), sometimes on rural life, but they rarely considered the relationship between the two. Ibn Khaldun gives us insight into what a sociological theory looks like when it takes as its starting point the analysis of a society very different from the European and North American societies discussed by most early sociological theories.

Ibn Khaldun's most important work, and the one in which he introduces his ideas about social organization, is the *Muqaddimah*. The *Muqaddimah* is the

introductory section to a larger history of North Africa and the Middle East. In the *Muqaddimah* Ibn Khaldun distinguishes himself from previous Arab historians by seeking the "inner meaning of history" (Ibn Khaldun, 1967/2015:5). 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" (5). For Ibn Khaldun, history writing is not merely a "surface" description of events (Alatas and Sinha, 2017:18) but an inquiry into what sociologists would now call society's underlying structures. This interest in underlying structures led Ibn Khaldun to assert numerous axioms (self-evident truths) about the nature of humans and society, and to describe the forms of social organization that guided historical development. For example, among his axioms, Ibn Khaldun insisted that "society is necessary" (Alatas, 2012:53) as it helped humans to "mediate conflict and obtain sufficient food" (Dale, 2015:166).

Drawing on ideas originally developed by the Greek philosopher Aristotle (Alatas and Sinha, 2017; Dale, 2015), Ibn Khaldun argued that different societies had different natures, or essences. These essences, influenced by the natural environment, determined the organization of the society and the way the society develops. Ibn Khaldun identified two such societies: desert, nomadic, tribal society and urban, sedentary society. Nomadic societies had a relatively simple social organization, were based in strong kinship ties, and gave rise to brave fighters. Even though Ibn Khaldun was a scholar whose livelihood depended on sedentary society, he seemed to regard tribal society as the superior and more admirable social form. It was prior to sedentary society and provided the social bond out of which more complex social organization grew.

Sedentary societies were based in urban centers. In comparison to the tribal society, the sedentary society had a more complex division of labor. In his review of the different kinds of occupations found in sedentary society, Ibn Khaldun lists "glassblowers, goldsmiths, perfumers, cooks, coppersmiths, weavers of *tiraz* brocade cloth, owners of public baths, teachers of all kinds, and book producers" (Dale, 2015:231). This craftwork provided a wider range of luxury items and therefore generated greater economic wealth than tribal societies. In character though, those who lived in sedentary societies were weaker than those who lived in the desert. Here a crucial Khaldunian concept, one most often cited by contemporary sociologists, is *'asibayya*. Sometimes this word is interpreted as "group feeling" (Ibn Khaldun, 1967/2015), other times as "social solidarity" (Alatas and Sinha, 2017; Dale, 2015) or "social cohesion" (Alatas, 2012:56). In either case it refers to the bond that holds social groups together and ultimately gives a community and the individuals within it, especially its leader, strength. *'Asibayya* is strongest in desert communities and weakest in sedentary societies. It is built up through kinship ties, but especially through the development of those ties in the shared, practical activities demanded by desert life. Though it is often described as a phenomenon unto itself, Ibn Khaldun says that *'asibayya* can be strengthened, its bonding effect multiplied, through cultural phenomena like religion, in particular the Islamic religion of Ibn Khaldun's world.

The concept of *'asibayya* also underpins Ibn Khaldun's cyclical theory of history. Where many modern social theories offer linear, progressive explanations of social change (societies are developing toward a better, more improved state), Ibn Khaldun saw history, at least the history of his world, as moving in ever repeating circles. In his theory of four generations Ibn Khaldun argues that societies grow and then collapse across four generations. The cycle begins

with the nomadic tribes that possess the strongest *'asibayya*. Strong group feeling translates into strong leaders and strong military strength. This enables nomadic tribes to claim political power and in turn center their power in cities. At this point, the tribal society begins the process of becoming a sedentary society. Over four generations, the descendants of the original tribal leaders, now a royal authority, engage in the increasingly luxurious lifestyles demanded by city life. Most importantly, these leaders lose contact with the *'asibayya*, which gave earlier generations advantage over city dwellers. By roughly the fourth generation 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*. Though, in his historical studies, Ibn Khaldun found exceptions to this rule (royalty in wealthy cities like Cairo were able to extend their rule by hiring tribal groups to defend them), by and large he found the pattern repeated again and again in North Africa.

Despite the significance of Ibn Khaldun's ideas, it is only in the 1800s that we begin to find thinkers who can be clearly identified as sociologists. We begin by examining the main social and intellectual forces that shaped their ideas.

Social Forces in the Development of Sociological Theory

As should be evident from the previous discussion, intellectual fields are profoundly shaped by their social settings. This is particularly true of sociology, which not only is derived from that setting but takes the social setting as its basic subject matter. Ibn Khaldun developed a cyclical theory of social change because he lived in a world suffused with the tension between desert and urban life. So, too, the European and North American theories of the classical period grew out of the social conditions in which the theorists who developed them lived. In particular, the social conditions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were of the utmost significance in the development of the discipline of sociology and its accompanying theories. We describe these social conditions in this section. We also introduce the major figures in the history of sociological theory.

Political Revolutions

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. The impact of these revolutions on many societies was enormous, and many positive changes resulted. However, what attracted the attention of many early theorists was not the positive consequences but the negative effects of such changes. These writers were particularly disturbed by the resulting chaos and disorder, especially in France. They were united in a desire to restore order to society. Some of the more extreme thinkers of this period literally wanted a return to the peaceful and relatively orderly days of the European Middle Ages. The more sophisticated thinkers recognized that social change had made such a return impossible. 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. This interest in the issue of social order was one of the major concerns of classical sociological theorists, especially Comte, Durkheim, and Parsons.

The Industrial Revolution and the Rise of Capitalism

At least as important as political revolution in the shaping of sociological theory was the Industrial Revolution, which swept through many Western societies, mainly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Industrial Revolution was not a single event but many interrelated developments that culminated in the transformation of the Western world from a largely agricultural system to an overwhelmingly industrial one. Large numbers of people left farms and agricultural work for the industrial occupations offered in the burgeoning factories. The factories themselves were transformed by a long series of technological improvements. Large economic bureaucracies arose to provide the many services needed by industry and the emerging capitalist economic system. In this economy, the ideal was a free marketplace where the many products of an industrial system could be exchanged. Within this system, a few profited greatly while the majority worked long hours for low wages. A reaction against the industrial system and against capitalism in general followed and led to the labor movement as well as to various radical movements aimed at overthrowing the capitalist system.

The Industrial Revolution, capitalism, and the reaction against them all involved an enormous upheaval in Western society, an upheaval that affected sociologists greatly. Most figures in the early history of sociological theory were preoccupied with these changes and the problems they created for society as a whole. They spent their lives studying these problems, and in many cases they endeavored to develop programs that would help solve them.

Colonialism

A key force in the development of modern societies was colonialism, which "refers to the direct political control of a society and its people by a foreign ruling state" (Go, 2007a:602). In some cases, colonialism led to colonization, which was when foreign nations established permanent settlements in a colonial possession (602). An example is the North American colonies, which became the nations of the United States and Canada. Colonialism emerged in the fifteenth century when Portugal established trading colonies in Asia, and Spain violently plundered South America. This was followed by a period of colonial expansion by the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, and France and England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (MacQueen, 2007).

In addition to being a political relationship, colonialism also had economic, social, and cultural aspects (Go, 2007a). Colonies were a source of wealth for European nations. In *Capital*, Karl Marx argued that the development of capitalism was fueled by the "primitive accumulation" of gold and silver in the colonies (1867/1967:351). Once the Industrial Revolution was further advanced, colonies became stable sources of raw materials, such as the cotton used in textile manufacture. These materials were farmed on plantations, by African slaves, who had been brought to the Caribbean and North America to support colonial development. Colonialism also shaped European identity. Modern racism developed as European nations attempted to legitimize their domination of African and Indigenous populations. Scientific theories, such as social Darwinism, proposed hierarchies of racial superiority, and Europeans contrasted their civilized societies with the so-called uncivilized, savage, and barbaric societies of colonized peoples.

The Rise of Socialism

One set of changes aimed at coping with the excesses of the industrial system and capitalism can be combined under the heading "socialism" (Beilharz, 2005f). Although some sociologists favored socialism as a solution to industrial problems, most were personally and intellectually opposed to it. On the one side, Karl Marx was an active supporter of the overthrow of the capitalist system and its replacement by a socialist system. Although Marx did not develop a theory of socialism per se, he spent a great deal of time criticizing various aspects of capitalist society. In addition, he engaged in a variety of political activities that he hoped would help bring about the rise of socialist societies.

However, Marx was atypical in the early years of sociological theory. Most of the early theorists, such as Weber and Durkheim, were opposed to socialism (at least as it was envisioned by Marx). Although they recognized the problems within capitalist society, they sought social reform within capitalism rather than the social revolution argued for by Marx. They feared socialism more than they did capitalism. This fear played a far greater role in shaping sociological theory than did Marx's support of the socialist alternative to capitalism. In fact, as we will see, in many cases sociological theory developed in reaction *against* Marxian and, more generally, socialist theory.

Feminism

In one sense there has always been a feminist perspective. Whenever and wherever women are subordinated, they recognize and protest that situation in some form (Lerner, 1993). Although precursors can be traced to the 1630s, high points of feminist activity and writing occurred in the liberationist moments of modern history: a first flurry of productivity in the 1780s and 1790s with the debates surrounding the American and French revolutions; a far more organized, focused effort in the 1850s as part of the mobilization against slavery and for political rights for the middle class; and 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.

All of this had an impact on the development of sociology, in particular on the work of a number of women in or associated with the field—Harriet Martineau (Vetter, 2008), Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Jane Addams, Florence Kelley, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida Wells-Barnett, Marianne Weber, and Beatrice Potter Webb, to name just a few. But, over time, their creations were pushed to the periphery of the profession, annexed or discounted or written out of sociology's public record by the men who were organizing sociology as a professional power base. Feminist concerns filtered into sociology only on the margins, in the work of marginal male theorists or of the increasingly marginalized female theorists. The men who assumed centrality in the profession—from Spencer, through Weber and Durkheim—made basically conservative responses to the feminist arguments going on around them, making issues of gender an inconsequential topic to which they responded conventionally rather than critically in what they identified and publicly promoted as sociology. They responded in this way even as women were writing a significant body of sociological theory (e.g., see Deegan, 1988; Fitzpatrick, 1990; Gordon, 1994; Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1998; R. Rosenberg, 1982).

Urbanization

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. This massive migration was caused, in large part, by the jobs created by the industrial system in the urban areas. But it presented many difficulties for those people who had to adjust to urban life. In addition, the expansion of the cities produced a seemingly endless list of urban problems, including overcrowding, pollution, noise, and traffic. The nature of urban life and its problems attracted the attention of many early sociologists, especially Max Weber and Georg Simmel. In fact, the first major school of American sociology, the Chicago school, was in large part defined by its concern for the city and its interest in using Chicago as a laboratory in which to study urbanization and its problems.

Religious Change

Social changes brought on by political revolutions, the Industrial Revolution, and urbanization had a profound effect on religiosity. Many early sociologists came from religious backgrounds and were actively, and in some cases professionally, involved in religion (Hinkle and Hinkle, 1954). They brought to sociology the same objectives as they had in their religious lives. They wanted to improve people's lives (Vidich and Lyman, 1985). For some (such as Comte), sociology was transformed into a religion. For others, their sociological theories bore an unmistakable religious imprint. Durkheim wrote one of his major works on religion. Morality played a key role not only in Durkheim's sociology but also in the work of Talcott Parsons. Martineau's ideas were shaped by her Unitarian upbringing. A large portion of Weber's work was devoted to the religions of the world. Marx, too, had an interest in religiosity, but his orientation was far more critical. Spencer discussed religion ("ecclesiastical institutions") as a significant component of society.

The Growth of Science

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. The technological products of science were permeating every sector of life, and science was acquiring enormous prestige. Those associated with the most successful sciences (physics, biology, and chemistry) were accorded honored places in society. Sociologists (especially Comte, Durkheim, Spencer, Mead, and Schutz) from the beginning were preoccupied with science, and many wanted to model sociology after the successful physical and biological sciences. However, a debate soon developed between those who wholeheartedly accepted the scientific model and those (such as Weber) who thought that distinctive characteristics of social life made a wholesale adoption of a scientific model difficult and unwise (Lepenies, 1988). The issue of the relationship between sociology and science is debated to this day, although even a glance at the major journals in the field, at least in the United States, indicates the predominance of those who favor sociology as a science.

Intellectual Forces and the Rise of Sociological Theory

Although social factors are important, the primary focus of this chapter is the intellectual forces that played a central role in shaping sociological theory. In the

real world, of course, intellectual factors cannot be separated from social forces. For example, in the discussion of the Enlightenment that follows, we will find that that movement was intimately related to, and in many cases provided the intellectual basis for, the social changes discussed earlier in this chapter.

The many intellectual forces that shaped the development of social theories are discussed within the national context in which their influence was primarily felt (D. Levine, 1995; Rundell, 2001). We begin with the Enlightenment and its influences on the development of sociological theory in France.

The Enlightenment

It is the view of many observers that the Enlightenment constitutes a critical development in terms of the later evolution of sociology (Hawthorn, 1976; Hughes, Martin, and Sharrock, 1995; Nisbet, 1967; Zeitlin, 1996). The Enlightenment was a period of remarkable intellectual development and change in philosophical thought.[1] A number of long-standing ideas and beliefs—many of which related to social life—were overthrown and replaced during the Enlightenment. The most prominent thinkers associated with the Enlightenment were the French philosophers Charles Montesquieu (1689–1755) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) (B. Singer, 2005a, 2005b). The influence of the Enlightenment on sociological theory, however, was more indirect and negative than it was direct and positive. As Irving Zeitlin put it, "Early sociology developed as a reaction to the Enlightenment" (1996:10).

The thinkers associated with the Enlightenment were influenced, above all, by two intellectual currents: seventeenth-century philosophy and science.

Seventeenth-century philosophy was associated with the work of thinkers such as René Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke. The emphasis was on producing grand, general, and very abstract systems of ideas that made rational sense. The later thinkers associated with the Enlightenment did not reject the idea that systems of ideas should be general and should make rational sense, but they did make greater efforts to derive their ideas from the real world and to test them there. In other words, they wanted to combine empirical research with reason (Seidman, 1983:36–37). The model for this was science, especially Newtonian physics. At this point, we see the emergence of the application of the scientific method to social issues. Not only did Enlightenment thinkers want their ideas to be, at least in part, derived from the real world, they also wanted them to be useful to the social world, especially in the critical analysis of that world.

Overall, the Enlightenment was characterized by the belief that people could comprehend and control the universe by means of reason and empirical research. The view was that because the physical world was dominated by natural laws, it was likely that the social world was, too. Thus, it was up to the philosopher, using reason and research, to discover these social laws. After they understood how the social world worked, the Enlightenment thinkers had a practical goal—the creation of a "better," more rational world.

With an emphasis on reason, the Enlightenment philosophers were inclined to reject beliefs in traditional authority. When these thinkers examined traditional values and institutions, they often found them to be irrational—that is, contrary to human nature and inhibitive of human growth and development. The mission of the practical and change-oriented philosophers of the Enlightenment was to overcome these irrational systems. The theorists who were most directly and positively influenced by Enlightenment thinking were Alexis de Tocqueville and Karl Marx, although the latter formed his early theoretical ideas in Germany.

The Conservative Reaction to the Enlightenment

On the surface, we might think that French classical sociological theory, like Marx's theory, was directly and positively influenced by the Enlightenment. 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. In Steven Seidman's view, "The ideology of the counter-Enlightenment represented a virtual inversion of Enlightenment liberalism. In place of modernist premises, we can detect in the Enlightenment critics a strong anti-modernist sentiment" (1983:51). As we will see, sociology in general, and French sociology in particular, has been from the beginning an uncomfortable mix of Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment ideas.

The most extreme form of opposition to Enlightenment ideas was French Catholic counterrevolutionary philosophy (Reedy, 1994), as represented by the ideas of Louis de Bonald (1754–1840) (Bradley, 2005a) and Joseph de Maistre (1753–1821) (Bradley, 2005b). These men were reacting against not only the Enlightenment but also the French Revolution, which they saw partly as a product of the kind of thinking characteristic of the Enlightenment. Bonald, for example, was disturbed by the revolutionary changes and yearned for a return to the peace and harmony of the Middle Ages. 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. Furthermore, it was believed that because God had created society, people should not tamper with it and should not try to change a holy creation. By extension, Bonald opposed anything that undermined such traditional institutions as patriarchy, the monogamous family, the monarchy, and the Catholic Church.

Although Bonald represented a rather extreme form of the conservative reaction, his work constitutes a useful introduction to its general premises. The conservatives turned away from what they considered the "naive" rationalism of the Enlightenment. They not only recognized the irrational aspects of social life but also assigned them positive value. Thus, they regarded such phenomena as tradition, imagination, emotionalism, and religion as useful and necessary components of social life. In that they disliked upheaval and sought to retain the existing order, they deplored developments such as the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, which they saw as disruptive forces. The conservatives tended to emphasize social order, an emphasis that became one of the central themes of the work of several sociological theorists.

The Development of French Sociology

We turn now to the actual founding of sociology as a distinctive discipline—specifically, to the work of four French thinkers: Alexis de Tocqueville, Claude Henri de Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, and, especially, Emile Durkheim.

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859)

We begin with Alexis de Tocqueville even though he was born after both Saint-Simon and Comte. We do so because he and his work were such pure products of the Enlightenment discussed earlier (he was strongly and directly influenced by Montesquieu [B. Singer, 2005a], especially his *The Spirit of the Laws* [1748]) and because his work was not part of the clear line of development in French social theory from Saint-Simon and Comte to the crucially important

Durkheim. 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 (e.g., Seidman, 1983:306). However, not only is there a social theory in his work, but it is one that deserves a much more significant place in the history of social theory.

Tocqueville is best known for the legendary and highly influential *Democracy in America* (1835–1840/1969), especially the first volume that deals, in a very laudatory way, with the early American democratic system and that came to be seen as an early contribution to the development of "political science." However, in the later volumes of that work, as well as in later works, Tocqueville clearly developed a broad social theory that deserves a place in the canon of social theory.

Three interrelated issues lie at the heart of Tocqueville's theory. As a product of the Enlightenment, he was first and foremost a great supporter of, and advocate for, *freedom*. 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 (he was, himself, an aristocrat) of a prior, less egalitarian era. 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. In his view, it was the inequality of the prior age, the power of the aristocrats, which acted to keep government centralization in check. However, with the demise of aristocrats and the rise of greater equality, there were no groups capable of countering the ever-present tendency toward centralization. The mass of largely equal people were too "servile" to oppose this trend. Furthermore, Tocqueville linked equality to "individualism" (an important concept he claimed to "invent" and for which he is credited), and the resulting individualists were far less interested in the well-being of the larger "community" than the aristocrats that preceded them.

It is for this reason that Tocqueville was critical of democracy and especially socialism. Democracy's commitment to freedom is ultimately threatened by its parallel commitment to equality and its tendency toward centralized government. Of course, from Tocqueville's point of view, the situation would be far worse in socialism because its far greater commitment to equality, and the much greater likelihood of government centralization, poses more of a threat to freedom. The latter view is quite prescient given what transpired in the Soviet Union and other societies that operated, at least in name, under the banner of socialism.

Thus, the strength of Tocqueville's theory lies in the interrelated ideas of freedom, equality, and, especially, centralization. His "grand narrative" on the increasing control of central governments anticipated other theories, including Weber's work on bureaucracy and the more contemporary work of Michel Foucault on "governmentality" and its gradual spread, increasing subtlety, and propensity to invade even the "soul" of the people controlled by it.

Claude Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825)

Saint-Simon was older than Auguste Comte; in fact, Comte, in his early years, served as Saint-Simon's secretary and disciple. There is a very strong similarity between the ideas of these two thinkers, yet a bitter debate developed between them that led to their eventual split (Pickering, 1993; K. Thompson, 1975).

The most interesting aspect of Saint-Simon was his significance to the development of *both* conservative (like Comte's) and radical Marxian theory. 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 Bonald and Maistre.

In addition, he was a *positivist* (Durkheim, 1928/1962:142), which meant that he believed that the study of social phenomena should employ the same scientific techniques as those used in the natural sciences. On the radical side, Saint-Simon saw the need for socialist reforms, especially the centralized planning of the economic system. But Saint-Simon did not go nearly as far as Marx did later. Although he, like Marx, saw the capitalists superseding the feudal nobility, he felt it inconceivable that the working class would come to replace the capitalists. Many of Saint-Simon's ideas are found in Comte's work, but Comte developed them in a more systematic fashion (Pickering, 1997).

Auguste Comte (1798–1857)

Comte was the first to use the term *sociology* (Pickering, 2011; J. Turner, 2001).[2] He had an enormous influence on later sociological theorists (especially Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim). And he believed that the study of sociology should be scientific, just as many classical theorists did and most contemporary sociologists do (Lenzer, 1975).

Comte was greatly disturbed by the anarchy that pervaded French society and was critical of those thinkers who had spawned both the Enlightenment and the revolution. He developed his scientific view, *positivism*, or *positive philosophy*, to combat what he considered to be the negative and destructive philosophy of the Enlightenment. Comte was in line with, and influenced by, the French counterrevolutionary Catholics (especially Bonald and Maistre). However, his work can be set apart from theirs on at least two grounds. First, he did not think it possible to return to the Middle Ages; advances in science and industry made that impossible. Second, he developed a much more sophisticated theoretical system than his predecessors, one that was adequate to shape a good portion of early sociology.

Comte developed *social physics*, or what in 1839 he called *sociology* (Pickering, 2011). The use of the term *social physics* made it clear that Comte sought to model sociology after the "hard sciences." This new science, which in his view would ultimately become the dominant science, was to be concerned with social statics (existing social structures) and social dynamics (social change). Although both involved the search for laws of social life, he felt that social dynamics was more important than social statics. This focus on change reflected his interest in social reform, particularly reform of the ills created by the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. Comte did not urge revolutionary change, because he felt the natural evolution of society would make things better. Reforms were needed only to assist the process a bit.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
AUGUSTE COMTE

Auguste Comte was born in Montpellier, France, on January 19, 1798 (Pickering, 1993:7; Orenstein, 2007; Wernick, 2005). His parents were middle class, and his father eventually rose to the position of official local agent for the tax collector. Although a precocious student, Comte never received a college-level degree. He and his whole class were dismissed from the

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Ecole Polytechnique for their rebelliousness and their political ideas. This expulsion had an adverse effect on Comte's academic career. In 1817 he became secretary (and "adopted son" [Manuel, 1962:251]) to Claude Henri de Saint-Simon, a philosopher forty years Comte's senior. They worked closely together for several years, and Comte acknowledged his great debt to Saint-Simon: "I certainly owe a great deal intellectually to Saint-Simon . . . he contributed powerfully to launching me in the philosophic direction that I clearly created for myself today and which I will follow without hesitation all my life" (Durkheim, 1928/1962:144). But in 1824 they had a falling-out because Comte believed that Saint-Simon wanted to omit Comte's name from one of his contributions. Comte later wrote of his relationship with Saint-Simon as "catastrophic" (Pickering, 1993:238) and described him as a "depraved juggler" (Durkheim, 1928/1962:144). In 1852, Comte said of Saint-Simon, "I owed nothing to this personage" (Pickering, 1993:240).

Heilbron (1995) describes Comte as short (perhaps 5 feet, 2 inches), a bit cross-eyed, and very insecure in social situations, especially ones involving women. He was also alienated from society as a whole. These facts may help account for the fact that Comte married Caroline Massin (the marriage lasted from 1825 to 1842). She was an illegitimate child whom Comte later called a "prostitute," although that label has been questioned recently (Pickering, 1997:37). Comte's personal insecurities stood in contrast to his great security about his own intellectual capacities, and it appears that his self-esteem was well founded:

> Comte's prodigious memory is famous. Endowed with a photographic memory he could recite backwards the words of any page he had read but once. His powers of concentration were such that he could sketch out an entire book without putting pen to paper. His lectures were all delivered without notes. When he sat down to write out his books he wrote everything from memory. (Schweber, 1991:134)

In 1826, Comte concocted a scheme by which he would present a series of seventy-two public lectures (to be held in his apartment) on his philosophy. The course drew a distinguished audience, but it was halted after three lectures when Comte suffered a nervous breakdown. He continued to suffer from mental problems, and once in 1827 he tried (unsuccessfully) to commit suicide by throwing himself into the Seine River.

Although he could not get a regular position at the Ecole Polytechnique, Comte did get a minor position as a teaching assistant there in 1832. In 1837, Comte was given the additional post of admissions examiner, and this, for the first time, gave him an adequate income (he had often been economically dependent on his family until this time). During this period, Comte worked on the six-volume work for which he is best known, *Cours de Philosophie Positive,* which was finally published in its entirety in 1842 (the first volume had been published in 1830). In that work Comte outlined his view that sociology was the ultimate science. He also attacked the Ecole Polytechnique, and the result was that in 1844 his assistantship there was not renewed. By 1851 he had completed the four-volume *Système de Politique Positive,* which had a more practical intent, offering a grand plan for the reorganization of society.

Heilbron argues that a major break took place in Comte's life in 1838, and it was then that he lost hope that anyone would take his work

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on science in general, and sociology in particular, seriously. It was also at that point that he embarked on his life of "cerebral hygiene"; that is, Comte began to avoid reading the work of other people, with the result that he became hopelessly out of touch with recent intellectual developments. It was after 1838 that he began developing his bizarre ideas about reforming society that found expression in *Système de Politique Positive*. Comte came to fancy himself as the high priest of a new religion of humanity; he believed in a world that eventually would be led by sociologist-priests. (Comte had been strongly influenced by his Catholic background.) Interestingly, in spite of such outrageous ideas, Comte eventually developed a considerable following in France, as well as in a number of other countries.

Auguste Comte died on September 5, 1857.

This leads us to the cornerstone of Comte's approach—his evolutionary theory, or the *law of the three stages*. The theory proposes that there are three intellectual stages through which the world has gone throughout its history. According to Comte, not only does the world go through this process, but groups, societies, sciences, individuals, and even minds go through the same three stages. The *theological* stage is the first, and it characterized the world prior to 1300. 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. In particular, the social and physical world is seen as produced by God. The second stage is the *metaphysical* stage, which occurred roughly between 1300 and 1800. This era was characterized by the belief that abstract forces like "nature," rather than personalized gods, explain virtually everything. Finally, in 1800 the world entered the *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.

It is clear that in his theory of the world, Comte focused on intellectual factors. Indeed, he argued that intellectual disorder is the cause of social disorder. The disorder stemmed from earlier idea systems (theological and metaphysical) that continued to exist in the positivistic (scientific) age. Only when positivism gained total control would social upheavals cease. Because this was an evolutionary process, there was no need to foment social upheaval and revolution. Positivism would come, although perhaps not as quickly as some would like. Here Comte's social reformism and his sociology coincide. Sociology could expedite the arrival of positivism and hence bring order to the social world. Above all, Comte did not want to seem to be espousing revolution. There was, in his view, enough disorder in the world. In any case, from Comte's point of view, it was intellectual change that was needed, so there was little reason for social and political revolution.

We have already encountered several of Comte's positions that were to be of great significance to the development of classical sociology—his basic conservatism, reformism, and scientism and his evolutionary view of the world. Several other aspects of his work deserve mention because they also were to play a major role in the development of sociological theory. For example, his sociology does not focus on the individual but rather takes as its basic unit of analysis larger entities such as the family. He also urged that we look at both social structure and social change. Of great importance to later sociological theory, especially

the work of Spencer and Parsons, is Comte's stress on the systematic character of society—the links among and between the various components of society. He also accorded great importance to the role of consensus in society. He saw little merit in the idea that society is characterized by inevitable conflict between workers and capitalists. In addition, Comte emphasized the need to engage in abstract theorizing and to go out and do sociological research. He urged that sociologists use observation, experimentation, and comparative historical analysis. Finally, Comte believed that sociology ultimately would become the dominant scientific force in the world because of its distinctive ability to interpret social laws and to develop reforms aimed at patching up problems within the system.

Comte was in the forefront of the development of positivistic sociology (C. Bryant, 1985; Halfpenny, 1982). To Jonathan Turner, Comte's positivism emphasized that "the social universe is amenable to the development of abstract laws that can be tested through the careful collection of data," and "these abstract laws will denote the basic and generic properties of the social universe and they will specify their 'natural relations'" (1985:24). As we will see, a number of classical theorists (especially Spencer and Durkheim) shared Comte's interest in the discovery of the laws of social life. Even though Comte lacked a solid academic base on which to build a school of Comtian sociological theory, he nevertheless laid a basis for the development of a significant stream of sociological theory. But his long-term significance is dwarfed by that of his successor in French sociology and the inheritor of a number of its ideas, Emile Durkheim. (For a debate over the canonization of Durkheim, as well as other classical theorists discussed in this chapter, see Mouzelis, 1997; D. Parker, 1997.)

Emile Durkheim (1858–1917)

Durkheim's relation to the Enlightenment was much more ambiguous than Comte's. He has been seen as an inheritor of the Enlightenment tradition because of his emphasis on science and social reformism. However, Durkheim also has been seen as the inheritor of the conservative tradition, especially as it was manifested in Comte's work. But whereas Comte had remained outside of academia as had Tocqueville, Durkheim developed an increasingly solid academic base as his career progressed. 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 (Milbrandt and Pearce, 2011; Rawls, 2007).

Durkheim was politically liberal, but he took a more conservative position intellectually. Like Comte and the Catholic counterrevolutionaries, Durkheim feared and hated social disorder. His work was informed by the disorders produced by the general social changes discussed earlier in this chapter, as well as by others (such as industrial strikes, disruption of the ruling class, church–state discord, the rise of political anti-Semitism) more specific to the France of Durkheim's time (Karady, 1983). In fact, most of his work was devoted to the study of social order. His view was that social disorders are not a necessary part of the modern world and could be reduced by social reforms. Whereas Marx saw the problems of the modern world as inherent in society, Durkheim (along with most other classical theorists) did not. As a result, Marx's ideas on the need for social revolution stood in sharp contrast to the reformism of Durkheim and the others. As classical sociological theory developed, it was the Durkheimian interest on order and reform that came to dominate, while the Marxian position was eclipsed.

Social Facts

Durkheim developed a distinctive conception of the subject matter of sociology and then tested it in an empirical study. In *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895/1982), Durkheim argued that it is the special task of sociology to study what he called *social facts*. He conceived of social facts as forces (Takla and Pape, 1985) and structures that are external to, and coercive of, the individual. The study of these large-scale structures and forces—for example, institutionalized law and shared moral beliefs—and their impact on people became the concern of many later sociological theorists (e.g., Parsons). In *Suicide* (1897/1951), Durkheim reasoned that if he could link an individual behavior such as suicide to social causes (social facts), he would have made a persuasive case for the importance of the discipline of sociology. His basic argument was that it was the nature of and changes in social facts that led to differences in suicide rates. For example, a war or an economic depression would create a collective mood of depression that would in turn lead to increases in suicide rates.

In *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Durkheim differentiated between two types of social facts—material and nonmaterial. 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). This concern for nonmaterial social facts was already clear in his earliest major work, *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893/1964). His focus there was a comparative analysis of what held society together in the primitive and modern cases. He concluded that earlier societies were held together primarily by nonmaterial social facts, specifically, a strongly held common morality, or what he called a strong *collective conscience*. However, because of the complexities of modern society, there had been a decline in the strength of the collective conscience. The primary bond in the modern world was an intricate division of labor, which tied people to others in dependency relationships. However, Durkheim believed that the modern division of labor brought with it several "pathologies"; it was, in other words, an inadequate method of holding society together. Given his conservative sociology, Durkheim did not feel that revolution was needed to solve these problems. Rather, he suggested a variety of reforms that could "patch up" the modern system and keep it functioning. Although he recognized that there was no going back to the age when a powerful collective conscience predominated, he did think that the common morality could be strengthened in modern society and that people thereby could cope better with the pathologies that they were experiencing.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

EMILE DURKHEIM

Emile Durkheim was born on April 15, 1858, in Epinal, France. He was descended from a long line of rabbis and studied to be a rabbi, but by the time he was in his teens, he had largely disavowed his heritage (Strenski, 1997:4). From that time on, his lifelong interest in religion was more academic than theological (Mestrovic, 1988). He was dissatisfied not only with his religious training but also with his general education and its emphasis on literary and aesthetic matters. He longed for schooling in scientific methods and in the moral principles needed to guide social life.

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He rejected a traditional academic career in philosophy and sought instead to acquire the scientific training needed to contribute to the moral guidance of society. Although he was interested in scientific sociology, there was no field of sociology at that time, so between 1882 and 1887 he taught philosophy in a number of provincial schools in the Paris area.

His appetite for science was whetted further by a trip to Germany, where he was exposed to the scientific psychology being pioneered by Wilhelm Wundt (Durkheim, 1887/1993). In the years immediately after his visit to Germany, Durkheim published a good deal, basing his work, in part, on his experiences there (R. Jones, 1994). These publications helped him gain a position in the philosophy department at the University of Bordeaux in 1887.

In his role at Bordeaux he offered public lectures on the social sciences and covered topics such as social solidarity, the family, suicide, crime, and religion. These were the first courses in social science offered in a French university. His main responsibility, however, was teaching courses in education to school teachers where he focused on moral education. Durkheim saw himself not merely as an educator and "scholar but also as a citizen" (Fournier, 2007/2013:117). As a result, his lectures had a "practical character" that would address the problems encountered in everyday work. Durkheim was admired for his teaching, which was described as original, systematic, and "strikingly powerful." He was listened to with a "sort of fervor" that exercised a "considerable influence" on his students and at times concerned university administration (Watz, cited in Fournier, 2007/2013:348).

The years that followed were characterized by a series of personal successes for Durkheim. In 1893 he publicly defended his Latin thesis on Montesquieu and his French doctoral thesis, which was soon thereafter published as *The Division of Labor in Society* (Durkheim, 1892/1997; Fournier, 2007/2013). There was some resistance to the work. It was described as moralistic and deterministic. Some of the examiners were wary of Durkheim's focus on sociology because it was "too closely related to socialism" (Perreur, cited in Fournier, 2007/2013:153). Nevertheless, the defense was regarded as a great success: "one of the most remarkable of oral examinations, and one of the most completely satisfying" (Fournier, 2007/2013:155). His major methodological statement, *The Rules of Sociological Method,* appeared in 1895, followed (in 1897) by his empirical application of those methods in the study *Suicide.* Each of these works increased Durkheim's reputation as one of the major figures in the developing field of sociology, but again these works were challenged by his competitors, who criticized Durkheim's method and were troubled by his rejection of psychological accounts of social life. By 1896 he had become a full professor at Bordeaux. In 1902 he was summoned to the famous French university the Sorbonne, and in 1906 he was named professor of the science of education, a title that was changed in 1913 to professor of the science of education and sociology. The other of his most famous works, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* was published in 1912.

Durkheim, as we will see throughout this book, had a profound influence on the development of sociology, but his influence was not restricted to it (Halls, 1996). Much of his impact on other fields came through the journal *L'Année Sociologique,* which he founded in 1898. Though the journal contained original articles (including a piece by Georg Simmel in the first issue) it was largely a collection of book reviews

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and bibliographic materials. Its purpose was to "fight the still widespread conception according to which sociology is a branch of philosophy" and to counter the "popular sociology of the day" (Heilbron, 2015:82–83).

Though Durkheim, the editor, clearly took on the bulk of the work, especially in the early issues, this was a collaborative enterprise drawing together scholars trained in philosophy but committed to the development of a rigorous scientific sociology. Durkehim used the *Année* to build a team of like-minded scholars, a task crucial to the development of scientific sociology. Prominent figures included Célestin Bouglé, Gaston Richard, François Simiand, Henri Hubert, and Durkheim's nephew Marcel Mauss. The work was hard, occupying at least four or five months per year. The focus on book reviews and bibliography, though important, frustrated Durkheim because it took away from the equally important task of getting on with doing original sociological work. Durkheim was not only concerned about his own time but also that of his younger collaborators: "I feel responsible for all that, and that causes me a lot of pain. I cannot tell you how painful I find it" (Fournier, 2007/2013:376).

Alongside his nephew Marcel Mauss, one of Durkheim's most promising collaborators and students was his own son, André Durkheim, who had trained as linguist. Despite his promising career, André was sent to the front lines of World War 1 and died from wounds on December 17, 1915. Durkheim attempted to remain strong and continue his work, but he died shortly afterward on November 15, 1917. Many remarked that his death was caused by the loss of André. Mauss wrote: "The death [of André] affected him both as a father and as an intellectual; it was this that brought about the death of Durkheim" (Mauss, cited in Fournier, 2007/2013:722). Though at the time Durkheim was a celebrated figure in French intellectual circles, it was not until over twenty years later, with the publication of Talcott Parsons's *The Structure of Social Action* (1937), that his work became a significant influence on American sociology.

Religion

In Durkheim's later work, nonmaterial social facts occupied an even more central position. In fact, he came to focus on perhaps the ultimate form of a nonmaterial social fact—religion—in his last major work, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912/1965). 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. What he found, he felt, was that the source of religion was society itself. Society comes to define certain things as religious and others as profane. Specifically, in the case he studied, 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 (or, more generally, the collective conscience) were one and the same. Religion was the way society expressed itself in the form of a nonmaterial social fact. In a sense, then, Durkheim came to deify society and its major products. Clearly, in deifying society, Durkheim took a highly conservative stance: one would not want to overturn a deity or its societal source.

These books and other important works helped carve out a distinctive domain for sociology in the academic world of turn-of-the-century France, and they earned Durkheim the leading position in that growing field. In 1898, Durkheim set up a scholarly journal devoted to sociology, *L'Année sociologique* (Besnard,

1983). It became a powerful force in the development and spread of sociological ideas. Durkheim was intent on fostering the growth of sociology, and he used his journal as a focal point for the development of a group of disciples. They later would extend his ideas and carry them to many other locales and into the study of other aspects of the social world (e.g., sociology of law and sociology of the city) (Besnard, 1983). By 1910, Durkheim had established a strong center of sociology in France, and the academic institutionalization of sociology was well under way in that nation (Heilbron, 1995).

The Development of German Sociology

Whereas the early history of French sociology is a fairly coherent story of the progression from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution to the conservative reaction and to the increasingly important sociological ideas of Tocqueville, Saint-Simon, Comte, and Durkheim, German sociology was fragmented from the beginning. A split developed between Marx (and his supporters), who remained on the edge of sociology, and the early giants of mainstream German sociology, Max Weber and Georg Simmel.[3] However, although Marxian theory itself was deemed unacceptable, its ideas found their way in a variety of positive and negative ways into mainstream German sociology.

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

The dominant intellectual influence on Karl Marx was the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831).

Hegel

According to Terence Ball, "it is difficult for us to appreciate the degree to which Hegel dominated German thought in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. It was largely within the framework of his philosophy that educated Germans—including the young Marx—discussed history, politics and culture" (1991:125). Marx's education at the University of Berlin was shaped by Hegel's ideas as well as by the split that developed among Hegel's followers after his death. The "Old Hegelians" continued to subscribe to the master's ideas, whereas the "Young Hegelians," although still working in the Hegelian tradition, were critical of many facets of his philosophical system.

Two concepts represent the essence of Hegel's philosophy—the dialectic and idealism (Beamish, 2007b; Hegel, 1807/1967, 1821/1967). The *dialectic* is both a way of thinking and an image of the world. It is a view that the world is made up not of static structures but of processes, relationships, dynamics, conflicts, and contradictions. Marx, trained in the Hegelian tradition, accepted the significance of the dialectic. However, he was critical of some aspects of the way Hegel used it. For example, Hegel tended to apply the dialectic only to ideas, whereas Marx felt that it applied as well to more material aspects of life—for example, the economy.

Hegel is also associated with the philosophy of *idealism* (Kleiner, 2005), which emphasizes the importance of the mind and mental products rather than the material world. It is the social definition of the physical and material worlds that matters most, not those worlds themselves. In its extreme form, idealism asserts that *only* the mind and psychological constructs exist. Some idealists believed

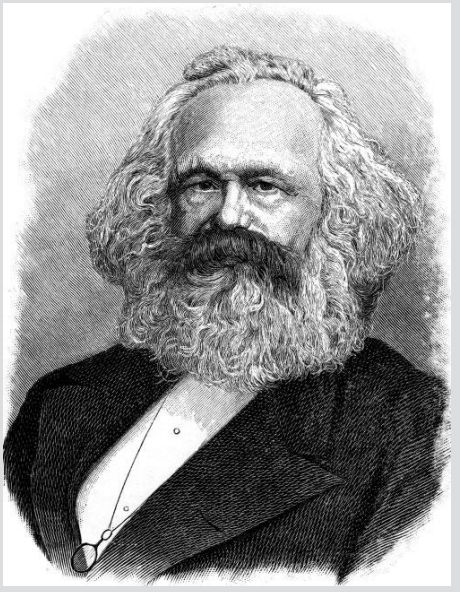
that their mental processes would remain the same even if the physical and social worlds no longer existed. Idealists emphasize not only mental processes but also the ideas produced by these processes. Hegel paid a great deal of attention to the development of such ideas, especially to what he referred to as the "spirit" of society.

In fact, Hegel offered a kind of evolutionary theory of the world in idealistic terms. At first, people were endowed only with the ability to acquire a sensory understanding of the world around them. They could understand things like the sight, smell, and feel of the social and physical world. Later, people developed the ability to be conscious of, to understand, themselves. With self-knowledge and self-understanding, people began to understand that they could become more than they were. In terms of Hegel's dialectical approach, a contradiction developed between what people were and what they felt they could be. The resolution of this contradiction lay in the development of an individual's awareness of his or her place in the larger spirit of society. Individuals come to realize that their ultimate fulfillment lies in the development and the expansion of the spirit of society as a whole. Thus, individuals in Hegel's scheme evolve from an understanding of things to an understanding of self to an understanding of their place in the larger scheme of things.

Hegel, then, offered a general theory of the evolution of the world. It is a subjective theory in which change is held to occur at the level of consciousness. However, that change occurs largely beyond the control of actors. Actors are reduced to little more than vessels swept along by the inevitable evolution of consciousness.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

KARL MARX



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Karl Marx was born in Trier, Prussia, on May 5, 1818 (Antonio, 2011; Beilharz, 2005d). His father, a lawyer, provided the family with a fairly typical middle-class existence. Both parents were from rabbinical families, but for business reasons the father had converted to Lutheranism when Karl was very young. In 1841 Marx received his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Berlin, a school heavily influenced by Hegel and the Young Hegelians, supportive, yet critical, of their master. Marx's doctorate was a dry philosophical treatise, but it did anticipate many of his later ideas. After graduation he became a writer for a liberal-radical newspaper and within ten months had become its editor in chief. However, because of its political positions, the paper was closed shortly thereafter by the government. The early essays published in this period began to reflect a number of the positions that would guide

Marx throughout his life. They were liberally sprinkled with democratic principles, humanism, and youthful idealism. He rejected the abstractness of Hegelian philosophy, the naive dreaming of utopian communists, and those activists who were urging what he considered to be premature political action. In rejecting these activists, Marx laid the groundwork for his own life's work:

> Practical attempts, even by the masses, can be answered with a cannon as soon as they become dangerous, but ideas that have overcome our intellect and conquered our conviction, ideas to which reason has riveted our conscience, are chains from which one cannot break loose without breaking one's heart; they are demons that one can only overcome by submitting to them. (Marx, 1842/1977:20)

Marx married in 1843 and soon thereafter was forced to leave Germany for the more liberal atmosphere of Paris. There he continued to grapple with the ideas of Hegel and his supporters, but he also encountered two new sets of ideas—French socialism and English political economy. It was the unique way in which he combined Hegelianism, socialism, and political economy that shaped his intellectual orientation. Also of great importance at this point was his meeting the man who was to become his lifelong friend, benefactor, and collaborator—Friedrich Engels (Carver, 1983). The son of a textile manufacturer, Engels had become a socialist critical of the conditions facing the working class. Much of Marx's compassion for the misery of the working class came from his exposure to Engels and his ideas. In 1844 Engels and Marx had a lengthy conversation in a café in Paris and laid the groundwork for a lifelong association. Of that conversation Engels said, "Our complete agreement in all theoretical fields became obvious . . . and our joint work dates from that time" (McLellan, 1973:131). In the following year, Engels published a notable work, *The Condition of the Working Class in England.* During this period Marx wrote a number of abstruse works (many unpublished in his lifetime), including *The Holy Family* (1845/1956) and *The German Ideology* (1845–1846/1970) (both coauthored with Engels), but he also produced *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (1932/1964), which better foreshadowed his increasing preoccupation with the economic domain.

Although Marx and Engels shared a theoretical orientation, there were many differences between the two men. Marx tended to be theoretical, a disorderly intellectual, and very oriented to his family. Engels was a practical thinker, a neat and tidy businessman, and a person who did not believe in the institution of the family. In spite of their differences, Marx and Engels forged a close union in which they collaborated on books and articles and worked together in radical organizations, and Engels even helped support Marx throughout the rest of his life so that Marx could devote himself to his intellectual and political endeavors.

In spite of the close association of the names of Marx and Engels, Engels made it clear that he was the junior partner:

> Marx could very well have done without me. What Marx accomplished I would not have achieved. Marx stood higher, saw farther, and took a wider and quicker view than the rest of us. Marx was a genius. (Engels, cited in McLellan, 1973:131–132)

In fact, many believe that Engels failed to understand many of the subtleties of Marx's work (C. Smith, 1997). After Marx's death, Engels became the leading spokesperson for Marxian theory and in various ways distorted and oversimplified it, although he remained faithful to the political perspective he had forged with Marx.

Because some of his writings had upset the Prussian government, the French government (at the request of the Prussians) expelled Marx in 1845, and he moved to Brussels. His radicalism was growing, and he had become an active member of the international revolutionary movement. He also associated with the Communist League and was asked to write a document (with Engels) expounding its aims and beliefs. The result was the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 (1848/1948), a work that was characterized by ringing political slogans (e.g., "Working men of all countries, unite!").

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In 1849 Marx moved to London, and, in light of the failure of the political revolutions of 1848, he began to withdraw from active revolutionary activity and to move into more serious and detailed research on the workings of the capitalist system. In 1852, he began his famous studies in the British Museum of the working conditions in capitalism. These studies ultimately resulted in the three volumes of *Capital*, the first of which was published in 1867; the other two were published posthumously. He lived in poverty during these years, barely managing to survive on a small income from his writings and the support of Engels. In 1864 Marx became reinvolved in political activity by joining the International, an international movement of workers. He soon gained preeminence within the movement and devoted a number of years to it. He began to gain fame both as a leader of the International and as the author of *Capital*. But the disintegration of the International by 1876, the failure of various revolutionary movements, and personal illness took their toll on Marx. His wife died in 1881, a daughter in 1882, and Marx himself on March 14, 1883.

Feuerbach

Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872) was an important bridge between Hegel and Marx. As a Young Hegelian, Feuerbach was critical of Hegel for, among other things, his excessive emphasis on consciousness and the spirit of society. Feuerbach's adoption of a materialist philosophy led him to argue that what was needed was to move from Hegel's subjective idealism to a focus not on ideas but on the material reality of real human beings. In his critique of Hegel, Feuerbach focused on religion. To Feuerbach, God is simply a projection by people of their human essence onto an impersonal force. People set God over and above themselves, with the result that they become alienated from God 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. Feuerbach argued that this kind of religion must be overcome and that its defeat could be aided by a materialist philosophy in which people (not religion) became their own highest object, ends in themselves. Real people, not abstract ideas like religion, are deified by a materialist philosophy.

Marx, Hegel, and Feuerbach

Marx was simultaneously influenced by and critical of both Hegel and Feuerbach (Staples, 2007). Marx, following Feuerbach, was critical of Hegel's adherence to an idealist philosophy. Marx took this position not only because of his adoption of a materialist orientation but also because of his interest in practical activities. Social facts such as wealth and the state are treated by Hegel as ideas rather than as real, material entities. Even when he examined a seemingly material process such as labor, Hegel was looking only at abstract mental labor. This is very different from Marx's interest in the labor of real, sentient people. Thus, Hegel was looking at the wrong issues as far as Marx was concerned. In addition, Marx felt that Hegel's idealism led to a very conservative political orientation. To Hegel, the process of evolution was occurring beyond the control of people and their activities. Because people seemed to be moving toward greater consciousness of the world as it could be, there seemed no need for any revolutionary change; the process was already moving in the "desired" direction.

Marx took a very different position, arguing that the problems of modern life can be traced to real, material sources (e.g., the structures of capitalism) and that the solutions, therefore, can be found only in the overturning of those structures by the collective action of large numbers of people (Marx and Engels, 1845/1956:254). Whereas Hegel "stood the world on its head" (i.e., focused on consciousness, not the real, material world), Marx firmly embedded his dialectic in a material base.

Marx applauded Feuerbach's critique of Hegel on a number of counts (e.g., its materialism and its rejection of the abstractness of Hegel's theory), but he was far from fully satisfied with Feuerbach's position (Thomson, 1994). For one thing, Feuerbach focused on the religious world, whereas Marx believed that it was the entire social world, and the economy in particular, that had to be analyzed. Although Marx accepted Feuerbach's materialism, he felt that Feuerbach had gone too far in focusing one-sidedly, nondialectically, on the material world. Feuerbach failed to include the most important of Hegel's contributions, the dialectic, in his materialist orientation, particularly the relationship between people and the material world. Finally, Marx argued that Feuerbach, like most philosophers, failed to emphasize *praxis*—practical activity—in particular, revolutionary activity (Wortmann, 2007). As Marx put it, "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it" (cited in R. Tucker, 1970:109).

Marx extracted what he considered to be the two most important elements from these two thinkers—Hegel's dialectic and Feuerbach's materialism—and fused them into his own distinctive orientation, *dialectical materialism*,[4] which focuses on dialectical relationships within the material world.

Political Economy

Marx's materialism and his consequent focus on the economic sector led him rather naturally to the work of a group of *political economists* (e.g., Adam Smith and David Ricardo [Howard and King, 2005]). Marx was very attracted to a number of their positions. He lauded their basic premise that labor was the source of all wealth. This ultimately led Marx to his *labor theory of value*, in which he argued that the profit of the capitalist was based on the exploitation of the laborer. Capitalists performed the rather simple trick of paying the workers less than they deserved, because they received less pay than the value of what they actually produced in a work period. This surplus value, which was retained and reinvested by the capitalist, was the basis of the entire capitalist system. 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.

Marx also was affected by the political economists' depiction of the horrors of the capitalist system and the exploitation of the workers. However, whereas they depicted the evils of capitalism, Marx deplored their general acceptance of capitalism and the way they urged people to work for economic success within it. He also was critical of the political economists for failing to see the inherent conflict between capitalists and laborers and for denying the need for a radical change in the economic order. Such conservative economics was hard for Marx to accept, given his commitment to a radical change from capitalism to socialism.

Marx and Sociology

Marx was not a sociologist and did not consider himself one. Although his work is too broad to be encompassed by the term *sociology*, there is a sociological theory to be found in Marx's work. 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. But for the majority of early sociologists, his work was a negative force, something against which to shape their sociology. For many years, sociological theory, especially in the United States, had been characterized by either hostility to or ignorance of Marxian theory. As we will see in Chapter 4, this has changed dramatically, but the negative reaction to Marx's work was a major force in the shaping of much of sociological theory (Gurney, 1981).

The basic reason for this rejection of Marx was ideological. Many of the early sociological theorists were inheritors of the conservative reaction to the disruptions of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Marx's radical ideas and the radical social changes he foretold and sought to bring to life were clearly feared and hated by such thinkers. Marx was dismissed as an ideologist. It was argued that he was not a serious sociological theorist. However, ideology per se could not have been the real reason for the rejection of Marx, because the work of Comte, Durkheim, and other conservative thinkers also was heavily ideological. It was the nature of the ideology, not the existence of ideology as such, that put off many sociological theorists. They were ready and eager to buy conservative ideology wrapped in a cloak of sociological theory, but not the radical ideology offered by Marx and his followers.

There were, of course, other reasons why Marx was not accepted by many early theorists. He seemed to be more an economist than a sociologist. Although the early sociologists would certainly admit the importance of the economy, they would also argue that it was only one of a number of components of social life.

Another reason for the early rejection of Marx was the nature of his interests. Whereas the early sociologists were reacting to the disorder created by the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and later the Industrial Revolution, Marx was not upset by these disorders—nor by disorder in general. Rather, what interested and concerned Marx most was the oppressiveness of the capitalist system that was emerging out of the Industrial Revolution. Marx wanted to develop a theory that explained this oppressiveness and that would help overthrow that system. Marx's interest was in revolution, which stood in contrast to the conservative concern for reform and orderly change.

Another difference worth noting is the difference in philosophical roots between Marxian and conservative sociological theory. Most of the conservative theorists were heavily influenced by the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Among other things, this led them to think in linear, cause-and-effect terms. In contrast, Marx was most heavily influenced, as we have seen, by Hegel, who thought in dialectical rather than cause-and-effect terms. Among other things, the dialectic attunes us to the ongoing reciprocal effects of social forces.

Marx's Theory

To oversimplify enormously, Marx offered a theory of capitalist society based on his image of the basic nature of human beings. Marx believed that people are basically productive; that is, in order to survive, people need to work

in, and with, nature. In so doing, they produce the food, clothing, tools, shelter, and other necessities that permit them to live. Their productivity is a perfectly natural way by which they express basic creative impulses. Furthermore, these impulses are expressed in concert with other people; in other words, people are inherently social. They need to work together to produce what they need to survive.

Throughout history, this natural process has been subverted, at first by the mean conditions of primitive society and later by a variety of structural arrangements erected by societies in the course of history. In various ways, these structures interfered with the natural productive process. However, it is in capitalist society that this breakdown is most acute; the breakdown in the natural productive process reaches its culmination in capitalism.

Basically, capitalism is a structure (or, more accurately, a series of structures) that erects barriers between an individual and the production process, the products of that process, and other people; ultimately, it even divides the individual himself or herself. This is the basic meaning of the concept of *alienation:* it is the breakdown of the natural interconnection among people and between people and what they produce. 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. Instead of naturally producing for themselves, people produce unnaturally in capitalist society for a small group of capitalists. Intellectually, Marx was very concerned with the structures of capitalism and their oppressive impact on actors. Politically, he was led to an interest in emancipating people from the oppressive structures of capitalism.

Marx actually spent very little time dreaming about what a utopian socialist state would look like (Lovell, 1992). He was more concerned with helping to bring about the demise of capitalism. 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. People had to act at the appropriate times and in the appropriate ways for socialism to come into being. The capitalists had great resources at their disposal to forestall the coming of socialism, but they could be overcome by the concerted action of a class-conscious proletariat. What would the proletariat create in the process? What is socialism? Most basically, it is a society in which, for the first time, people could approach Marx's ideal image of productivity. With the aid of modern technology, people could interact harmoniously with nature and with other people to create what they needed to survive. To put it another way, in socialist society, people would no longer be alienated.

The Roots and Nature of the Theories of Max Weber (1864–1920) and Georg Simmel (1858–1918)

Although Marx and his followers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries remained outside mainstream German sociology, to a considerable extent early German sociology can be seen as developing in opposition to Marxian theory.

Weber and Marx

Albert Salomon, for example, claimed that a large part of the theory of the early giant of German sociology, Max Weber, developed "in a long and intense

debate with the ghost of Marx" (1945:596). This is probably an exaggeration, but in many ways Marxian theory did play a negative role in Weberian theory. In other ways, however, Weber was working within the Marxian tradition, trying to "round out" Marx's theory. Also, there were many inputs into Weberian theory other than Marxian theory (Burger, 1976). We can clarify a good deal about the sources of German sociology by outlining each of these views of the relationship between Marx and Weber (Antonio and Glassman, 1985; Schroeter, 1985). Bear in mind that Weber was not intimately familiar with Marx's work (much of it was not published until after Weber's death) and that Weber was reacting more to the work of the Marxists than to Marx's work itself (Antonio, 1985:29; B. Turner, 1981:19–20).

Weber *did* tend to view Marx and the Marxists of his day as economic determinists who offered single-cause theories of social life. That is, Marxian theory was seen as tracing all historical developments to economic bases and viewing all contemporaneous structures as erected on an economic base. Although this is not true of Marx's own theory, it was the position of many later Marxists.

One of the examples of economic determinism that seemed to rankle Weber most was the view that ideas are simply the reflections of material (especially economic) interests, that material interests determine ideology. From this point of view, Weber was supposed to have "turned Marx on his head" (much as Marx had inverted Hegel). Instead of focusing on economic factors and their effect on ideas, Weber devoted much of his attention to ideas and their effect on the economy. Rather than seeing ideas as simple reflections of economic factors, Weber saw them as fairly autonomous forces capable of profoundly affecting the economic world. Weber certainly devoted a lot of attention to ideas, particularly systems of religious ideas, and he was especially concerned with the impact of religious ideas on the economy. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904–1905/1958), he was concerned with Protestantism, mainly as a system of ideas, and its impact on the rise of another system of ideas, the "spirit of capitalism," and ultimately on a capitalist economic system. Weber had a similar interest in other world religions, looking at how their nature might have obstructed the development of capitalism in their respective societies. A second view of Weber's relationship to Marx, as mentioned earlier, is that he did not so much oppose Marx as try to round out Marx's theoretical perspective. Here Weber is seen as working more within the Marxian tradition than in opposition to it. 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.

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

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

MAX WEBER

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Max Weber was born in Erfurt, Germany, on April 21, 1864, into a decidedly middle-class family (Radkau, 2005/2009). Important differences between his parents had a profound effect upon both his intellectual orientation and his psychological development. His father was a bureaucrat who rose to a relatively important political position. He was clearly a part of the political establishment and as a result eschewed any activity or idealism that would require personal sacrifice or threaten his position within the system. In addition, the senior Weber was a man who enjoyed earthly pleasures, and in this and many other ways he stood in sharp contrast to his wife. Max Weber's mother was a devout Calvinist, a woman who sought to lead an ascetic life largely devoid of the pleasures craved by her husband. Her concerns were more otherworldly; she was disturbed by the imperfections that were signs that she was not destined for salvation. These deep differences between the parents led to marital tension, and both the differences and the tension had an immense impact on Weber.

Because it was impossible to emulate both parents, Weber was presented with a clear choice as a child (Marianne Weber, 1975:62). He first seemed to opt for his father's orientation to life, but later he drew closer to his mother's approach. Whatever the choice, the tension produced by the need to choose between such polar opposites negatively affected Max Weber's psyche.

At age 18, Max Weber left home for a short time to attend the University of Heidelberg. Weber had already demonstrated intellectual precocity, but on a social level he entered Heidelberg shy and underdeveloped. However, that quickly changed after he gravitated toward his father's way of life and joined his father's old dueling fraternity. There he developed socially, at least in part because of the huge quantities of beer he consumed with his peers. In addition, he proudly displayed the dueling scars that were the trademark of such fraternities. Weber not only manifested his identity with his father's way of life in these ways but also chose, at least for the time being, his father's career—the law.

After three terms, Weber left Heidelberg for military service, and in 1884 he returned to Berlin and to his parents' home to take courses at the University of Berlin. He remained there for most of the next eight years as he completed his studies, earned his Ph.D., became a lawyer (see Turner and Factor, 1994, for a discussion of the impact of legal thinking on Weber's theorizing), and started teaching at the University of Berlin. In the process, his interests shifted more toward his lifelong concerns—economics, history, and sociology. During his eight years in Berlin, Weber was financially dependent on his father, a circumstance he progressively grew to dislike. At the same time, he moved closer to his mother's values, and his antipathy to his

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father increased. He adopted an ascetic life and plunged deeply into his work. For example, during one semester as a student, his work habits were described as follows: "He continues the rigid work discipline, regulates his life by the clock, divides the daily routine into exact sections for the various subjects, saves in his way, by feeding himself evenings in his room with a pound of raw chopped beef and four fried eggs" (Mitzman, 1969/1971:48; Marianne Weber, 1975:105). Thus Weber, following his mother, had become ascetic and diligent, a compulsive worker—in contemporary terms a "workaholic."

This compulsion for work led in 1896 to a position as professor of economics at Heidelberg. But in 1897, when Weber's academic career was blossoming, his father died following a violent argument between them. Shortly thereafter Weber began to manifest symptoms that were to culminate in a nervous breakdown. Often unable to sleep or to work, Weber spent the next six or seven years in near-total collapse. After a long hiatus, some of his powers began to return in 1903, but it was not until 1904, when he delivered (in the United States) his first lecture in six and a half years, that Weber was able to begin to return to active academic life. In 1904 and 1905, he published one of his best-known works, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* In this work, Weber announced the ascendance of his mother's religion on an academic level. Weber devoted much of his time to the study of religion, though he was not personally religious.

Although he continued to be plagued by psychological problems, after 1904 Weber was able to function, indeed to produce some of his most important work. In these years, Weber published his studies of the world's religions in world-historical perspective (e.g., China, India, and ancient Judaism). At the time of his death (June 14, 1920), he was working on his most important work, *Economy and Society* (1921/1968). Although this book was published, and subsequently translated into many languages, it was unfinished.

In addition to producing voluminous writings in this period, Weber undertook a number of other activities. He helped found the German Sociological Society in 1910. His home became a center for a wide range of intellectuals, including sociologists such as Georg Simmel, Robert Michels, and his brother Alfred Weber, as well as the philosopher and literary critic Georg Lukács (Scaff, 1989:186–222). In addition, Max Weber was active politically and wrote essays on the issues of the day.

There was a tension in Weber's life and, more important, in his work between the bureaucratic mind, as represented by his father, and his mother's religiosity. This unresolved tension permeates Weber's work as it permeated his personal life.

Other Influences on Weber

We can identify a number of additional sources of Weberian theory, including German historians, philosophers, economists, and political theorists. Among those who influenced Weber, the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) stands out above all the others. But we must not overlook the impact of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) (Antonio, 2001)—especially his emphasis on the hero—on Weber's work on the need for individuals to stand up to the impact of bureaucracies and other structures of modern society.

The influence of Immanuel Kant on Weber, and on German sociology in general, shows that German sociology and Marxism grew from different philosophical roots. As we have seen, it was Hegel, not Kant, who was the important philosophical influence on Marxian theory. Whereas Hegel's philosophy led Marx and the Marxists to look for relations, conflicts, and contradictions, Kantian philosophy led at least some German sociologists to take a more static perspective. To Kant the world was a buzzing confusion of events that could

never be known directly. The world could be known only through thought processes that filter, select, and categorize these events. The content of the real world was differentiated by Kant from the forms through which that content can be comprehended. 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.

Weber's Theory

Whereas Karl Marx offered basically a theory of capitalism, Weber's work was fundamentally a theory of the process of rationalization (Brubaker, 1984; Kalberg, 1980, 1990, 1994). Weber was interested in the general issue of why institutions in the Western world had grown progressively more rational while powerful barriers seemed to prevent a similar development in the rest of the world.

Although rationality is used in many ways in Weber's work, what interests us here is a process involving one of four types identified by Stephen Kalberg (1980, 1990, 1994; see also Brubaker, 1984; D. Levine, 1981, *formal rationality*. Formal rationality involves, as was usually the case with Weber, a concern for the actor making choices of means and ends. However, in this case, that choice is made in reference to universally applied rules, regulations, and laws. These, in turn, are derived from various large-scale structures, especially bureaucracies and the economy. 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. In those studies, he sought to delineate the factors that helped bring about or impede the development of rationalization.

Weber saw the bureaucracy (and the historical process of bureaucratization) as the classic example of rationalization, but rationalization is perhaps best illustrated today by the fast-food restaurant (Ritzer, 2015b). The fast-food restaurant is a formally rational system in which people (both workers and customers) are led to seek the most rational means to ends. The drive-through window, for example, is a rational means by which workers can dispense and customers can obtain food quickly and efficiently. Speed and efficiency are dictated by the fast-food restaurants and the rules and regulations by which they operate.

Weber embedded his discussion of the process of bureaucratization in a broader discussion of the political institution. He differentiated among three types of authority systems—traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. Only in the modern Western world can a rational-legal authority system develop, and only within that system does one find the full-scale development of the modern bureaucracy. The rest of the world remains dominated by traditional or charismatic authority systems, which generally impede the development of a rational-legal authority system and modern bureaucracies. Briefly, *traditional* authority stems from a long-lasting system of beliefs. An example would be a leader who comes to power because his or her family or clan has always provided the group's leadership. A *charismatic* leader derives his or her authority from extraordinary abilities or characteristics or, more likely, simply from the belief on the part of followers that the leader has such traits. Although these two types of authority are of historical importance, Weber believed that the trend in the West, and ultimately in the rest of the world, is toward systems of *rational-legal* authority (Bunzel, 2007). In such systems, authority is derived from rules legally and rationally enacted. Thus, the president of the United States derives his or her authority ultimately from the laws of society. The evolution of rational-legal authority,

with its accompanying bureaucracies, is only one part of Weber's general argument on the rationalization of the Western world.

Although rationalization lies at the heart of Weberian theory, it is far from all there is to the theory. But this is not the place to go into that rich body of material. Instead, let us return to the development of sociological theory. A key issue in that development is: Why did Weber's theory prove more attractive to later sociological theorists than did Marxian theory?

The Acceptance of Weber's Theory

One reason is that Weber proved to be more acceptable politically. Instead of espousing Marxian radicalism, Weber was more of a liberal on some issues and a conservative on others (e.g., the role of the state). Although he was a severe critic of many aspects of modern capitalist society and came to many of the same critical conclusions as did Marx, he was not one to propose radical solutions to problems (Heins, 1993). In fact, he felt that the radical reforms offered by many Marxists and other socialists would do more harm than good.

Later sociological theorists, especially Americans, saw their society under attack by Marxian theory. Largely conservative in orientation, they cast about for theoretical alternatives to Marxism. One of those who proved attractive was Max Weber. (Durkheim and Vilfredo Pareto were others.) After all, rationalization affected not only capitalist but also socialist societies. Indeed, from Weber's point of view, rationalization constituted an even greater problem in socialist than in capitalist societies.

Also in Weber's favor was the form in which he presented his judgments. He spent most of his life doing detailed historical studies, and his political conclusions were often made within the context of his research. Thus, they usually sounded very scientific and academic. Marx, although he did much serious research, also wrote a good deal of explicitly polemical material. Even his more academic work is laced with acid political judgments. For example, in *Capital* (1867/1967), he described capitalists as "vampires" and "werewolves." Weber's more academic style helped make him more acceptable to later sociologists.

Another reason for the greater acceptability of Weber was that he operated in a philosophical tradition that also helped shape the work of later sociologists. That is, Weber operated in the Kantian tradition, which meant, as we have seen, that he tended to think in cause-and-effect terms. This kind of thinking was more acceptable to later sociologists, who were largely unfamiliar and uncomfortable with the dialectical logic that informed Marx's work.

Finally, Weber appeared to offer a much more rounded approach to the social world than did Marx. Whereas Marx appeared to be almost totally preoccupied with the economy, Weber was interested in a wide range of social phenomena. This diversity of focus seemed to give later sociologists more to work with than the apparently more single-minded concerns of Marx.

Weber produced most of his major works in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Early in his career Weber was identified more as a historian who was concerned with sociological issues, but in the early 1900s his focus grew more and more sociological. Indeed, he became the dominant sociologist of his time in Germany. In 1910, he founded (with, among others, Georg Simmel, whom we discuss next) the German Sociological Society (Glatzer, 1998). His home in Heidelberg was an intellectual center not only for sociologists but for scholars from many fields. Although his work was broadly influential in Germany, it was to become even