

Sociology 7213

Seminar: Comparative-Historical Sociology

Course Description:

This seminar considers the nature of sociological accounts of important historical phenomena. Max Weber said that a sociological account of an historical event provides a causal explanation of its occurrence and an interpretation of its significance. While this is a helpful guiding principle, a large variety of perspectives are compatible with it. We will consider three of the most important of these approaches at a theoretical level: that of Marx and Engels, Weber's own comparative-inductive approach, and Talcott Parsons' functionalism. We will then look briefly at several contemporary discussions of the logic of comparative-historical sociology. In the second part of the course, we apply each of the three theoretical approaches to three important historical cases: industrialization in England in the 18th and 19th century, the collapse of democracy/rise of Nazism in Germany in the 1930s, and the evolution of racial and ethnic inequality in twentieth-century America. The aim will not be to become experts on these cases, or even to arrive at definite answers. Rather, the aim is to get an exposure to some of the available approaches and, by seeing them applied, to understand what aspects of the questions each accounts for best.

Course Requirements:

1. Participation in class discussion and class presentations.
2. Preparation of one-page causal diagrams of an historical event that summarize the analyses made in each of the readings. In the first part of the course, diagrams will also be available from the instructor.
3. One 15 to 20-page paper. The paper should compare the strengths and weaknesses of each of the three theories in explaining different aspects of one of the historical cases in the course. Alternative topics or alternative historical cases may be used with the instructor's permission.

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READING LIST

PART I: SOCIAL THEORIES OF HISTORICAL CHANGE

A. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Class 1. "Manifesto of the Communist Party," pp. 469-500 in R. C. Tucker, The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd ed.

"On the Accumulation of Capital." Part 8 of Capital, vol. 1.

Preface of "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy," pp. 3-6 in Tucker.

"The German Ideology, Part I," pp. 146-200 in Tucker.

B. Max Weber

Class 2. General Economic History, ch. 22, 26-30.

Economy and Society. 1968. New York. Bedminster Press (or University of California Press). Pp. 3-26, 212-301.

Recommended:

Kalberg, Stephen. 1994. Max Weber's Comparative-Historical sociology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

C. Talcott Parsons

Class 3. "An Outline of the Social System," pp. 30-79 in Theories of Society.

"Comparative Studies and Evolutionary Change," pp. 97-139 in Ivan Vallier, ed., Comparative Methods in Sociology.

D. Contemporary Debates about Historical Sociology

Class 4. Selections from the following:

Skocpol, Theda and Somers, Margaret. 1980. "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry." Comparative Studies in Society and History 22(2): 174-97.

Skocpol, Theda. 1984. "Emerging Agendas and Recurrent Strategies in Historical Sociology." Pp. 356-391 in Skocpol, ed., Vision and Method in Historical Sociology. Cambridge. Cambridge UP.

Ragin, Charles. 1981. "Comparative Sociology and the Comparative Method." International Journal of Comparative Sociology.

Larry J. Griffin. 1992. "Temporality, Events, and Explanation in Historical Sociology - An Introduction." Sociological Methods & Research 20(4):403-427.

James S. Coleman. 1986. "Social Theory, Social Research, and a Theory of Action." American Journal of Sociology 91:1309-1335.

Zaret, David. 1978. "Sociological Theory and Historical Scholarship." The American Sociologist 13(2): 114-21.

Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." American Political Science Review 65 (3): 682-93.

Lijphart, Arend. 1975. "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research." Comparative Political Studies 8(2): 158-77.

Recommended - read some of the following:

- Bloch, Marc. 1967. "A Contribution towards a Comparative History of European Societies." Pp. 44-81 in Land and Work in Medieval Europe: Selected Papers by Marc Bloch. Trans. J. E. Anderson. New York. Harper and Row.
- Sewell, William H., Jr. 1967. "Marc Bloch and the Logic of Comparative History." History and Theory 6(2): 208-18.
- Braudel, Fernand. 1980 [1958]. "History and the Social Sciences: The Longue Duree." Pp. 25-54 in Braudel, On History. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.
- Bruce Western. 2001. "Bayesian Thinking about Macrosociology." American Journal of Sociology 107:353-78; and/or Bruce Western and Simon Jackman. 1994. "Bayesian Inference for Comparative Research." American Political Science Review 88:412-23.
- Kiser, Edgar and Michael Hechter. 1991. "The Role of General-Theory in Comparative-Historical Sociology." American Journal of Sociology 97(1):1-30.
- Somers, Margaret R. 1998. "'We're no angels': Realism, rational choice, and relationality in social science." American Journal of Sociology 104(3):722-784.
- Kiser, Edgar and Michael Hechter. 1998. "The debate on historical sociology: rational choice theory and its critics." American Journal of Sociology 104:785-816.
- Goldstone, Jack A. 1998. "Initial conditions, general laws, path dependence, and explanation in historical sociology." American Journal of Sociology 104:829-45.
- Calhoun, Craig. 1998. "Explanation in historical sociology: narrative, general theory, and historically specific theory." American Journal of Sociology 104:846-71.
- Stinchcombe, Arthur. Constructing Social Theories, pp. 57-130.
- Stinchcombe, Arthur. Theoretical Methods in Social History, ch. 1; skim ch. 4.
- Abrams, Philip. 1982. Historical Sociology. London. Open Books. Ch. 10.
- Bonnell, Victoria E. 1980. "The Uses of Theory, Concepts and Comparison in Historical Sociology." Comparative Studies in Society and History 22(2): 156-73.
- Strasser, Hermann and Susan Randall, An Introduction to Theories of Social Change, ch. 2-4; skim ch. 5-7. (This is a good summary comparison of Marxism - including functionalist Marxism - with functionalism.)

Tilly, Charles. 1981. As Sociology Meets History. New York. Academic Press. Ch. 1, "Sociology, Meet History."

PART II: THREE EMPIRICAL CASES

A. The Causes and Effects of Industrialization In England

Class 5. E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Preface, ch. 6, 10, 11; skim ch. 7-9.

Thompson, E. P. 1978. "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class." Social History 3, 2:133-165.

Hobsbawm, Eric. 1984. "The Making of the Working Class, 1870-1914." Pp. 194-213 in Hobsbawm, Workers: Worlds of Labour. New York. Pantheon.

Brown, Kenneth. 1982. The English Labour Movement, 1700-1951. New York. St. Martin's. Ch. 2.

Katznelson, Ira, "Working-Class Formation: Constructing Cases and Comparisons. Ch. 1 in Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg, eds, Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986).

Recommended:

Tom Kemp, Industrialization in 19th Century Europe, ch. 1, 2.

Morris, R. J. 1979. Class and Class Consciousness in the Industrial Revolution. London. Macmillan.

Rule, John. 1986. "Conclusion: Class and Class Consciousness." In The Labouring Classes in Early Industrial England, 1750-1850. New York. Longman.

Class 6. Neil Smelser, Social Change in the Industrial Revolution, chs. 9-11, 14.

Neil Smelser, Essays in Sociological Explanation, ch. 4, 6.

Recommended:

Chapters 27-28 by W. W. Rostow and Wilbert E. Moore, in Amitai Etzioni and Eva Etzioni-Halevy, eds., Social Change.

Class 7. Reinhard Bendix, Work and Authority in Industry, ch. 1, 2, 7.

Calhoun, Craig. 1982. The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), chs. 1, 6, 8, Epilogue.

Aristide R. Zolberg, "How Many Exceptionalisms?" Ch. 9 in Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg, eds, Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986).

Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1983. "Radicalism or Reformism: The Sources of Working-Class Politics." American Political Science Review 77: 1-18. (Reprinted in Lipset, Consensus and Conflict).

B. Explaining the Rise of Nazism in Germany

Class 8. M. Rainer Lepsius, "From fragmented party democracy to government by emergency decree and National Socialist takeover: Germany," ch. 2 in Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds., The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Europe.

Zimmermann, Ekkart, and Thomas Saalfeld, "Economic and Political Reactions to the World Economic Crisis of the 1930s in Six European Countries." International Studies Quarterly 3 (1988)

William Brustein. 1996. "Nazism Through Democracy: Why 14 Million Germans Voted for the Nazi Party." Extremism, Protest, Social Movements, and Democracy. Volume 3 of Research on Democracy and Society, edited by Frederick D. Weil. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Class 9. Pierre Ayçoberry, The Nazi Question, ch. 4, 5, 9, and pp. 119-127, 199-208.

Barrington Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, ch. 8.

Recommended:

John D. Stephens, "Democratic Transition and Breakdown in Western Europe, 1870-1939: A Test of the Moore Thesis." American Journal of Sociology 94:1019-1077 (1989).

** Brian Downing, "---" in Theory and Society (1988).

David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany (Oxford U. Press, 1984).

Class 10. Talcott Parsons, "Democracy and social structure in pre-Nazi Germany," "Some sociological aspects of the fascist movements," "The problem of controlled institutional change," "Certain primary sources and patterns of aggression in the social structure of the Western world," ch. 6, 7, 12, 14 in Essays in Sociological Theory, revised edition.

Franz Neumann, "Anxiety and politics." The Democratic and Authoritarian State, ch. 11.

Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man, expanded edition (1981), ch. 5 and pp. 488-503.

Ralf Dahrendorf, Society and Democracy in Germany, ch. 24-25.

C. Explaining Racial and Ethnic Differences in America

Class 11. The Culturalist Hypothesis and Functionalism

Oscar Lewis. 1968. "The Culture of Poverty." In Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ed., On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Sciences. New York. Basic Books.

Gans, Herbert. 1967. "The Negro Family: Reflections on the Moynihan Report." Pp. 445-457 in Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey, eds., The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy. Cambridge, MA. MIT.

Gans, Herbert J. 1968. "Culture and Class in the Study of Poverty: An Approach to Antipoverty Research." In Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ed., On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Sciences. New York. Basic Books.

Thomas Sowell, Ethnic America, ch. 1, 11.

Stephan Steinberg, The Ethnic Myth, ch. 4, 8.

Ann Swidler. 1986. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." American Sociological Review 51:273-286.

Recommended:

Valentine, C. A. 1968. Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter Proposals. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

Class 12. A Structuralist Debate. Networks of Opportunity.

William Julius Wilson, The Declining Significance of Race, second edition, ch. 1, 7, 8.

Wilson, William Julius. 1987. The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, The Underclass, and Public Policy. Chicago. University of Chicago Press. Chs. 1-2; skim 3-4, 7.

Murray, Charles. 1984. Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980. New York. Basic Books.

Recommended:

Edna Bonacich, "Advanced capitalism and black/white race relations in the United States: a split labor market interpretation," American Sociological Review 41 (Feb. 1976): 34-51.

Edna Bonacich, "Abolition, the extension of slavery, and the position of free blacks: a study of split labor markets in the United States, 1830-1863," American Journal of Sociology 81, 3: 601-628.

Kasarda, John D. 1978. "Caught in the Web of Change." Society 21:4-7.

Kathryn M. Neckerman, Robert Aponte, and William Julius Wilson, "Family Structure, Black Unemployment, and American Social Policy." Ch. 12 in Margaret Weir, et al., eds, The Politics of Social Policy in the United States (Princeton U. Press, 1988).

Class 13. Another Structuralist Debate: Queues, Niches, and Social Capital.

Stanley Lieberson, A Piece of the Pie: Blacks and White Immigrants since 1880, ch. 1, 12.

Roger Waldinger. 1996. Still The Promised City? African-Americans and New Immigrants In Postindustrial New York. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Ch. 1, 4, 9.

Coleman, James S. 1990. Foundations of Social Theory. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Ch. 12.

Portes, Alejandro and Julia Sensenbrenner. 1993. "Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Economic Action." American Journal of Sociology 98:1320-1350.

Portes, Alejandro and Min Zhou. 1993. "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and its Variants." The Annals 530:74-96.

More to be listed

Recommended:

Roger Waldinger, ed. 2001. Strangers at the Gates. New Immigrants in Urban America. Berkeley: University of California Press. Ch. 1, 9.

More to be listed

Class 1 - Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Marx and Engels wrote the Communist Manifesto as - among other things - a general introduction and summary of their theories of historical change. And part 8 of Capital, "On the Primitive Accumulation of Capital," was one of the relatively small number of concrete histories they wrote to apply their theories.

In The Communist Manifesto note especially the following features.

- What does it mean when they say that history consists of class struggle? See whether they and other Marxists maintain this assertion throughout their empirical historical writings.
- What is their theory of the State, and what is the importance of politics? What is their attitude toward capitalism? (It is not simply hostile.)
- Note their reasons for predicting a proletarian revolution. Why do they also predict class polarization, and what are their characterizations of other classes?

Pay very close attention to agency and causation in "On the Primitive Accumulation of Capital:" which historical actors (generally, but not always, classes) were doing what to whom and with what effect.

- Exactly what role did the newly emerging industrial capitalist mode of production play in making the landed masses available as industrial workers?
- Marx says in the Communist Manifesto that the state is controlled by the ruling class. In whose interests was legislation enacted against vagabondage? In whose interests were colonial, debt, tax, and protection policies (p. 1242ff) carried out? Where was the capitalist class at this time? What is the role of force?
- What is the relationship of agricultural growth to industrial growth? Where do domestic markets come from? Where do consumers come from?
- What is the predicted role for the proletariat (see pp. 1247ff)? What is the importance of the concentration of workers in one place, of the development of a world market, of the constant reduction in the number of capitalists?
- In their theory of colonization, note how the laws of market- or capitalist society do not come into play as long as there is an open frontier.

The The German Ideology and the "Preface" to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy contain Marx and Engels' theory of history and historical change, and also some elements of a theory of the concrete, empirical course of history (the Communist Manifesto and Capital contained more material on the latter). Be sure to understand both aspects.

- On their theory of history, note especially these features: the basis of human activity in labor; the relationship of the forces of production to the relations of production and how their interaction drives history forward (their terminological consistencies may cause some confusion here, but see pp. 4-5, 180, 192-6); the sources of consciousness in this dynamic; and the progressive cycle of revolutions which results from this process - and Marx and Engels' teleological predictions of the ends of history.

- Their empirical history may be found mainly on pp. 151-4 and 176-86. How do changes in property relations and class relations fit into their general theory referred to above? Follow the stages of development closely. Note that they also refer to the origins of classes: what are these origins in civil society and how does this square with their assertion that all of history is the history of class struggle?
- What are the precise reasons Marx and Engels give for predicting a proletarian revolution? (See pp. 161f, 172f, 192f, 197f, and the writings from last meeting.) Note their sketch of communist society (p. 160), which is unique in their writings. Why is the State an illusory community?

Class 2 - Max Weber

Weber's General Economic History is his most complete account of the origins of capitalism, and it incorporates the more familiar account from his Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism - and the explanation of capitalism's religious origins now becomes only one component of a more general explanation. Likewise, in contrast to Marx, Weber takes full account of the political factors in economic development.

Note the elements of Weber's definition of capitalism (there are six of them). Which of them are most central?

Note also, and more especially, the factors in the development of capitalism. Which of these were most important?

- Weber dismisses colonial policy as a major factor: why?
- Marx says that technology was not a major cause of the emergence of industrial capitalism. Does Weber agree? (He devotes a whole chapter to the question.)
- There are two chapters on political factors, one on citizenship and one on the rational state. Be sure to follow Weber's account of the connections between citizenship, urbanism, and military history closely. On the rational state, Weber recognizes that mercantilism was perhaps the most "rational" economic state policy - but he knows, following Adam Smith, that this was not the most "rational" form of capitalism. What is he trying to say?
- The last chapter is a reformulation of his argument from The Protestant Ethic. What is the "spirit" of capitalism, and how important is it compared to the other factors discussed? What does Weber say the role of the Jews was? Note here the distinction between internal and external ethics, which is crucial for understanding his argument. Also follow closely his account of worldly asceticism.

The readings in Economy and Society concern two points: (1) the nature of an historical sociological account, and (2) the forms of political or state domination (this is now the preferred translation of Weber's term, Herrschaft: see p. 324, note 2).

Be sure to understand especially the following points in Weber's "Fundamental Concepts of Sociology."

- Note the two component parts of sociology as a science (the German word for science, Wissenschaft, does not connote natural science as in English, but rather, systematic knowledge): interpretive understanding and causal explanation. Note further the ways in which these two are interconnected and the range of problems sociology confronts in trying to produce its accounts.
- How does the sociological observer correctly understand the social actor's intentions? How does he assign meaning or causation to events or structures which are not the direct product of human intention (so-called "unintended consequences")? Is "false consciousness" possible, as Marxists (or Freudians) have used the term? How does he understand and explain the different types of social action, especially if they seem irrational to him?
- What role do ideal types play? What are statistical regularities? Laws?

You may remember the image of the Iron Cage from the last pages of The Protestant Ethic, which referred to the trap of rational compulsion under modern capitalism. It is clear, however, that Weber was also thinking of such rational compulsion under a rational state: bureaucracy is the feature common to both.

- What is the nature of legitimacy? Does it refer to the rulers or the ruled? How is power different from authority? And how can one empirically decide what domination is legitimate? (Do the forms of social action or the principles of sociological method help at all here?)
- Try to think of the three types of legitimate domination not only as an abstract typology but also as categories to be applied to an historical analysis.
- What are Weber's views of revolution, of bureaucracy, of democracy?

Class 3 - Talcott Parsons

At first glance, it may be difficult to see that Parsons is interested in social change at all (see the discussion of this problem in the Strasser and Randall book), but he states his rationale at the beginning (p. 31): neither morphological nor dynamic analysis of society has priority over the other, but stable structural reference points are necessary for analyzing change. Furthermore, Parsons wants to distinguish processes of dynamic equilibrium from processes of social change. To understand his theories of social change, it will be necessary to understand both these distinctions.

Parsons recognizes that any social analysis must begin with some feature as given, and for him, this is the system of values of a society. Indeed, he calls the system of values itself the "social structure."

- How does this approach compare with Marx's theories of the origins of values? With Weber's?
- The primacy of values and norms is Parsons' approach to the question of how social order is possible in a large and diverse society (see p. 43). Elsewhere, he attributes the identification of this problematic to Hobbes. How does he apply this approach to such questions as class and ethnic conflict, differential access to power or money, the position of the family and (perhaps implicitly) of women, the development of the economy, religion, the State?
- What does he mean when he says that values must be institutionalized to have an effect?

To understand Parsons' theories of dynamic equilibrium for our purposes, it is perhaps not necessary to understand his four-fold classification of social functions (see his table, p. 61) in full detail. However, do try to understand the logic of these processes: the idea of exogenous and endogenous, inputs and outputs, the process of resource processing, and the mechanisms which control resource processing.

Parsons says that "The process of structural change may be considered the obverse of equilibrating process. The distinction is made in terms of boundary-maintenance" (p. 70).

- Since he identifies structure with values, structural change means change in the value system. If the value system is given, how does this work?
- It is perhaps easier to account for value change from exogenous sources in Parsons' theory. How does he attempt to address the above consideration with his theory of endogenous change stemming from "strains" between substructures? Does this force him to relinquish his image of society as a unitary entity?

One of the keys to understanding Parsons' structural-functionalist approach is to keep his remarks about the influence of biological evolutionism on him clearly in mind as you read his account. There are two primary points to note (and Parsons traces them both back to the 19th century English sociologist, Herbert Spencer). (a) All units in the system are related since they all stem from a single source, and any comparisons must take this fact into account. And (b) change or development proceeds by a process of (binary) functional differentiation and (re-) integration of units within the system.

- How does this compare to Marx's notions of holistic system? to his notions of class conflict (i.e., to conflict between units of the system)?

- How does it compare to Weber's comparative-historical method? Does Weber take a systems approach and thus assume that the units he is comparing are related or stem from the same source? How does Weber's methodological standpoint - and the level of abstraction of his sociology - affect this comparison?

Note Parsons' remarks about the temporal order of functional differentiation: the sequence of development of political power, religious and cultural centers, and non-domestic economy from primitive, relatively undifferentiated societies.

- Inasmuch as Parsons says economic differentiation came relatively late, is he disagreeing with Marx, who said that all of history must be explained in economic terms?
- Note Parsons' account of the protest response to each level of economic "adaptive upgrading." How does this fit into his general theory of system equilibrium and structural change?

Is there a contradiction in Parsons' account of value generalization? On one hand, values become more universalistic to cover the great functional variety in society. But on the other hand, increasingly universalistic values bring forth fundamentalist protest and further dogmatic assertion of universalistic values - a conflict which can only be resolved at a higher level of value generality.

Class 4 - Logic of Historical Sociology

- No notes yet ... I'm still reading these things, too.

Class 5 - The Causes and Effects of Industrialization In England: E. P. Thompson

E. P. Thompson is one of the best-known living English Marxists, but he is a Marxist of a somewhat unorthodox and eclectic sort. He is engaged in a self-conscious effort to develop Marxist theory in order to overcome certain objections which have been made of its classical (19th and first half of the 20th century) forms, and to continue its polemic with its critics. We will want to understand in what ways he departs from or modifies classical Marxism, and also what elements he draws from other theories - and to ask whether in the end he remains recognizably a Marxist.

We will want to focus on three factors in particular. First, how does Thompson define "class?" Study his remarks on pp. 9-11 closely.

- Note how he uses the concepts historical, structural, category, relationship, consciousness.
- What is the relationship between given structural situation, its development, consciousness of social position, and political action?

The second thing to understand is his concept of "exploitation." What are the relations between its objective and subjective components as described in chapters 6-10?

- The list of "grievances felt by working people" (emphasis added) on pp. 202-3 is crucial, as is his conclusion about living standards on pp. 211-2 and expanded on in ch. 10. You will want to compare his descriptions of subjective feeling with those of Smelser and Bendix (and note Thompson's polemic against the former).
- One of the strongest objections to the Marxian position is that what is described as exploitation is actually the hardships of economic transition. This position is taken to a greater or lesser degree, as we will see, by Smelser and Bendix: what is Thompson's position?

The third important factor to consider is Thompson's account of the effects of religion. (A fourth factor would be the political dimension, but we don't have time to consider that here.)

- As you no doubt know, Marx characterized religion as the "opium" of the masses - that is, a distraction from real problems and their sources and solutions - while Weber considered it of real and central importance for economic outcomes. Where does Thompson stand on this question? How good are his Marxist credentials when he is finished - or has he changed the qualifications for Marxist credentials?
- What does he mean by "psychic exploitation" (p. 375)? In what ways is religion a form of protest?

Class 6 - The Causes and Effects of Industrialization In England:
Neil Smelser

Smelser was a student and collaborator of Parsons and is therefore well placed to represent a Parsonsian position on the question of the Industrial Revolution. Moreover, it is helpful to read him since he lays out the distinctions between his own account and - especially - the Marxian account so clearly and sharply.

While we have read criticisms of Parsons' method for being overly general and abstract, a careful reading of Smelser reveals a wealth of concrete hypotheses about English industrialization and suggestions for comparative analyses, centering around the idea of structural differentiation (see esp. ch. 6 of Essays).

- Does Smelser depart from Weber's theory in the General Economic History - or from Marx's - that the development of industrial capitalism centrally entails the separation of production from the household and the uniform introduction of rational calculation into economic relations?
- Note the consequences of this element of differentiation: e.g., the family's loss of control over the education and upbringing of children (this is his central argument in Social Change), the growth of alternative centers of loyalty or community (nation, subculture, party or club).
- What are the responses to the problems of development? What are traditionalism, uneven development (or lags), anomie? Note the possibilities for conflict he mentions on p. 141 of Essays and recall Parsons' comments about strains in the social system. What structural elements affect the emergence of protest and its chances of succeeding (as against being redirected or suppressed)? Note the very important concept that dissatisfaction may be displaced (in an almost Freudian sense) into activity which has no realistic chance of correcting the problem (see p. 142).

Smelser's argument with Marx and the Marxists is that their concept of exploitation is too imprecise (he does not deny its existence or general effect): that it cannot sufficiently predict just when protest will break out.

- What is Thompson's argument against this? Does he fill the gaps of which Smelser complains?
- To what extent do the two theories actually contradict each other, and to what extent are they complementary, each specifying a different portion of the causal chain? (Be careful of facile synthesis: Smelser and Thompson both insist that there are contradictions between their theories.)
- Smelser writes that "people come to be disturbed about inadequate performance in roles" (p. 81 of Essays). Is this an alternative to exploitation as a motive for protest?

Class 7 - The Causes and Effects of Industrialization In England:
Reinhard Bendix

In his Work and Authority in Industry, Bendix takes almost as explicitly a Weberian approach as Thompson did a Marxist and Smelser a Parsonsian - and his credentials for doing so are fully as good as theirs: his large book interpreting Weber's theories was one of the two most important in print before the renewed publication activity of recent years (the other was Parsons' own). On the other hand, Bendix is perhaps less explicit about what is so Weberian about his account. This is a matter we will want to explore.

What is the significance of ideology in Bendix's account of the changes in English society during the time of the industrial revolution?

- What are the points of similarity regarding the causal importance of ideology in socioeconomic development between Bendix and Weber? How does Bendix's treatment compare to Thompson's and Smelser's - and to Marx's and Parsons'?
- Note Bendix's remarks about the relation of ideology to material change on pp. 88-89. What do you make of these?
- Both Thompson and Smelser discuss the sources of protest in the subjective feelings of loss of status among the working classes. How do the ideological developments described by Bendix contribute to this? What were the ideological responses of the working classes?

Although we are not reading Bendix's descriptions of the three other cases he examines (Russia, the United States, and East Germany), he does make a number of methodological observations - as well as substantive summary remarks - about his comparative-historical approach. Why does he argue that this approach is superior to the analysis of a single case? What can he discover in this way that he could not with a single case?

One of the most interesting and important things which Bendix describes is the pattern of shifting alliances of the English aristocracy, industrialists, and workers - especially those surrounding the dispute over the Corn Laws. (You should look up a brief account of this dispute under "Corn Laws" in any historical encyclopedia for background: the entry in the 1930s Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences is very good and to the point.)

- Are there permanent class interests? Long-term ones? What can be inferred about the nature of class interests if they vary by political or economic issue? Can one make a distinction between (long-term) class strategic- and (short-term) tactical alliances?

Class 8 - Explaining the Rise of Nazism in Germany: M. Rainer Lepsius

Rainer Lepsius is one of the most important German sociologists since World War II, but he is not as familiar to English-speaking readers as some others since he writes largely on German topics, and not much of his work has been translated. I have included Lepsius' essay on the fall of the Weimar Republic as a Weberian account, although his approach remains somewhat eclectic. (By the way, he is professor of sociology at Heidelberg, where Weber was located throughout most of his career.)

Probably the most important concept in Lepsius' account is that of legitimacy. This is related to Weber's usage, but in certain ways it expands on it or departs from it. With legitimacy as the "dependent variable," Lepsius' argument lends itself especially well to being sketched as a causal diagram: trying to draw one is one of the best ways to understand his article. What did the legitimacy of the Weimar Republic consist of?

- What was the "democratic potential," the political culture, the German character, the German value system? Does he use all these concepts as explanations? In what way was the party system an indicator of democratic potential?
- In what ways did the party system institutionalize the democratic potential? How did the very structure of the party system - given certain value orientations - itself affect the legitimation of the Republic?
- Why does Lepsius argue that the economic crisis alone was incapable of undermining the German democracy? How were different social segments nevertheless differentially affected by the crisis, and how did this affect their support for (legitimation of) the regime? Is this an implicit critique of Marxist theory?
- In Lepsius' discussion of Hitler's charisma, does he add anything to Weber's concept? Note his description of Hitler's ability to withhold or deliver disorder, and the effect of this ability on the legitimacy of the Republic.

Note carefully how Lepsius uses the concept of integration: citizens were integrated into certain organizational structures (churches, unions, professional, industrial, and regional associations, political parties) which expressed the interests of their social segments and anchored their political orientations.

- Which citizens were most receptive to Nazi appeals (note that some support simply fell into their laps), and how does an analysis of integration help explain their rise and democracy's fall?
- Is there any connection between this use of the concept of integration and that of Parsons and Smelser? (Recall the latter's discussion of the strains of modernization.)

Class 9 - Explaining the Rise of Nazism in Germany: Pierre Ayçoberry

Whether or not Ayçoberry himself is a Marxist, he does present such a rich catalog or handbook of Marxist arguments that his book is appropriate as a source of Marxist perspectives on Nazism for our purposes. In fact, his summaries of other arguments are equally useful: this is a good place to look up a variety of theories of Nazism.

Classical - and to a lesser extent, revisionist - Marxism has had great trouble explaining Nazism for a number of reasons, including the following. (a) The bourgeoisie seems to have given up or lost control of the state without a proletarian revolution. At the least, this seems to demonstrate a problematical autonomy of the political realm; at worst, a contradiction of orthodox Marxist assertions. (b) A mass-based revolutionary movement arose which was not based on the working class. (c) The (posited) middle-class mass base of Nazi support undermines Marx's prediction of class polarization and the disappearance of the middle classes under capitalism. How did Marxist theorists attempt to work around these problems? How seriously do you take what Ayçoberry calls "the theory of agents" (p. 68)?

- Note the summary of theories Ayçoberry lists on p. 68 and the list of problematical theses on pp. 57-8. Many of the Marxists' answers centered on the "theory of Bonapartism:" what is this?
- Some of the other Marxist theories concern stages of development of capitalism, and most of these seem to stem from Lenin's theories of imperialism. Try to see how these theories are used, and contrast them to the more (non-Marxist) Parsonian developmental theories we have seen elsewhere.

Clearly, much more could be explained if one relaxed Marx's dictums about class polarization. But it is unclear whether a class-based explanation using a number of classes remains Marxist.

- In fact, the roots of the analyses of Geiger and others (ch. 5; more in ch. 9) can be traced to the "revisionist" debates within the Marxist German Social Democratic Party around the turn of the century. Be sure to follow these arguments.
- Once a multi-class framework is accepted, very rich psychologically informed accounts are possible. How are the concepts of resentment, authoritarianism, and asynchronism used, and how are they connected to a (multi-) class analysis? You might look ahead to the descriptions of Parsons' and Fromm's theories (p. 100f; Neumann paralleled Fromm) for a perspective on the next weeks' readings.

Class 10 - Explaining the Rise of Nazism in Germany: Talcott Parsons,
Franz Neumann, Seymour Martin Lipset, Ralf Dahrendorf

As we saw last time, Ayçoberry claims that Parsons was ten years too late in publishing his accounts of German Nazism to make any claims of originality in explaining it. He was anticipated by a host of European scholars, including Wilhelm Reich, Ernst Bloch, and other members of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. However, even if his explanation remains derivative, (1) the theory itself is most important, and (2) we will want to see how it fits with Parsons' more general theory - and whether it fits equally well with Marxist or Weberian theory.

The key to Parsons' theory probably lies in the concept of "anomie." What does this mean, and what does it explain? You will want to note carefully the relation between this concept and the concepts of status anxiety developed next time by Neumann, Lipset and Dahrendorf. Again, as Ayçoberry notes, this group of theories are not really new with Parsons (even in their application to explaining the Nazi question), but we will want to see which author provides the most satisfactory formulation.

- How does Parsons characterize pre-Nazi Germany? What is its social structure, and what are its values? Are these the source of Nazism: is Parsons developing a theory of the "German character" (which is perhaps an "authoritarian personality")? If they are not the direct source, how does their breakdown make the Germans particularly susceptible to anxiety?
- How is anxiety related to hostility and aggression? Parsons' account is, of course, informed by Freudian theory (as were those of his antecedents), but he also cites certain factors from the social structure: how are these elements combined? Do you find Parsons' explanation of the target group of hostility (the Jews) convincing: why this and not other groups? (In fact, there were a number of other target groups: does Parsons account for this?)
- How does Parsons combine his observations about German social structure and the general character of aggression to explain the attraction of certain strata of the German population to Nazism?

Parsons' recommendations for the reconstruction of a democratic Germany were quite prescient. However, if he posits the primacy of the value system in his general theory, why does he not recommend that the victorious Allies address these values at their source (in schools, family structure, and political ideology), but rather direct their energies toward restructuring the economy? Is this an implicit admission of the primacy of the economy?

The readings by Neumann, Lipset, and Dahrendorf combine a number of elements of explanation from the previous works we have read, but in many ways, they seem to vindicate aspects of Parsons' approach - even if, as Ayçoberry notes, Parsons' own formulation was antedated by others with different orientations. Parsons' central thesis in this regard is that those sectors of society most dislocated by "modernization" (a term which must be further specified) were most prone (1) to be dis-integrated from their traditional political moorings, (2) to overlook the inconsistencies and problems in the Nazis' programmatic statements, and (3) to be attracted by the Nazis' "reactionary" appeal (this also must be specified). We will want to examine such questions as these:

- Was "modernization" in fact simply part of the process of capitalist development (a Marxist thesis)?
- Which were the strata most dislocated, and what does dislocation mean here (e.g., anomie, unemployment, bankruptcy)?

- Even if certain strata were dislocated, what made them susceptible to the particular Nazi appeal - not just to hostility and violence, but to the impracticability of Nazi programs in effectively solving their problems?

Lipset's answers to these questions are fairly direct. What are they: who were the Nazi voters and why did they support the Nazis? Are the reasons he attributes to the Nazi supporters mainly economic?

How does Neumann incorporate Freudian theory to explain the attraction of the Nazi supporters to aggression, hostility, and scapegoat theories? Does he succeed in relating these explanations to the findings of empirical voting research? (See also his footnotes 83 and 85 for further empirical references.) Do Neumann's or Lipset's accounts satisfy the criteria established by Lepsius for explaining Nazi success?

Dahrendorf - and Barrington Moore - work at a more explicitly systemic level. How do they explain dislocations? Note how they use concepts of uneven development - especially the idea that Germany had a capitalist economy but no bourgeois political hegemony (even before the rise of Nazism), and that the traditional landed upper classes combined with the discontented lower middle classes in protest against the dislocations of industrialization. Why does each author say the result was Nazism? How do they use value-orientations and class alliances as explanations? Who is more persuasive?

Class 11 - Explaining Racial and Ethnic Differences in America:
Oscar Lewis, Herbert Gans, Thomas Sowell, and Stephan Steinberg

Studies of racial and ethnic inequality in America sometimes shed more heat than light on the issue - and while I have tried to find analytical works from several points of view, the books we are reading this session are sometimes rather more polemical. Still, the authors do lay out the lines of debate about "cultural" causes of inequality clearly, and I think we will find a number of analytical arguments in them if we read closely.

You may find it odd that the economist Thomas Sowell resorts to - seemingly - sociological cultural arguments to explain economic inequality. What are the components of his culturalist argument, and how does he relate cultural orientations to economic outcomes?

- What is the theory of "human capital," associated with the economist Gary Becker (who is now also a member of our sociology department)? Becker usually spoke of human capital in terms of education or on-the-job training: how does Sowell make this concept a cultural attribute?
- How does Sowell use cultural explanations to account for behavioral attributes which affect economic success, like hard work, thrift, risk-taking, etc.? And how does he use them to account for other factors, like differential migration patterns and discriminatory practices, which may mediate the direct effects of culture on economic behavior.

Steinberg's two essays are polemics against culturalist explanations of the causes of poverty and of discrimination. His basic point, of course, is that "cultural" beliefs and actions are themselves (rational) responses to the material conditions in which groups find themselves, and that "culture" has little permanence itself so long as it is not sustained by these material conditions.

- You should by now immediately recognize the elements of Marxian and Parsonsian theory in these positions. What are they, and what evidence do Steinberg and Sowell present to support their views? Why does Steinberg say that the culturalist position "inverts cause and effect" (p. 122)?
- If the "ethnic backlash" is not prejudice, according to Steinberg, then what is it? Why does he devote so much of the chapter to a history of the black occupational structure and migration?

Do anti-culturalist arguments adequately account for group solidarity under a variety of conditions - affluence and poverty, discrimination and favoritism? What alternatives to "culture" and class conflict theories might there be? (Hint: keep this question in mind over the next two meetings.)

Class 12 - Explaining Racial and Ethnic Differences in America:
William Julius Wilson

Wilson clearly takes theoretical questions very seriously in his treatment of historical issues - not just racial inequality, but also class structure. But one of the merits of his account is his willingness to let what Weber calls "uncomfortable facts" obtrude on his own theoretical constructions. Thus, while he steadily argues against the culturalist explanations for racial inequality offered by many theorists of "ethnicity" (often neo-conservatives) and the accounts which give causal primacy to racial discrimination suggested by many black leaders and scholars, he also argues against historically invariant class-based principles supported by many Marxist analysts.

If Wilson argues from "materialist" principles, does this mean he is a Marxist? Are there non-Marxist materialist accounts?

- How do the structural principles which determine racial inequality vary for each of the three periods of American history which he identifies?
- Recall how Sowell and Steinberg defined discrimination. Does Wilson present an historically invariant description of its character, or of its effects? When was it most important; who were its main propagators; and how was it institutionalized (if at all) in each historical period? Why does Wilson say that racial discrimination is hardly a problem any more? Does this mean it no longer exists?
- What is the role of political organization and governmental policy in Wilson's account? Again, they vary historically: but how? If state policy was racially discriminatory in earlier periods, why has it become anti-discriminatory in the present period? Recall that Marxists would analyze which group(s) controlled the state: Does Wilson indicate that various white groups changed their minds?

Recall Ayçoberry's descriptions of theories of asynchronism and also (to a lesser extent) theories of uneven development. Wilson does not discuss these concepts at length in the chapters we read here, but they provide one of the most interesting set of concepts with which to analyze historical changes.

- Note, for instance, his description of the variation of black class structure by age in the present historical period - and in principle, in other periods as well. If a certain amount of historical change is occurring by generational replacement, and older generations remain strongly affected by the experiences of their youth, what does this imply about the effect of historical factors (e.g., past discrimination, earlier occupational structure, etc.) on present conditions?

Class 13 - Explaining Racial and Ethnic Differences in America:
Stanley Lieberman

Like Wilson, Lieberman argues against inflating the causal significance of cultural attributes or discrimination in producing inequality between American racial and ethnic groups. However, his methodological approach seems less strongly opposed in principle, but rather attempts to explain as much as possible without reference to such factors and to argue that the unexplained residual contains cultural attributes and discrimination - and that their importance might be further reduced by adducing additional factors. And while Wilson is clearly interested in evaluating comprehensive social theories like those of Marx and Weber, Lieberman tends to cast his account in terms of more immediate "structural conditions" (see p. 381) of individuals and groups, drawn from a variety of theoretical sources - among them, demography, population ecology, economics, conflict theories, and others. In fact, he was criticized at the 1982 annual meetings of the American Sociological Association by Edna Bonacich and Stephan Steinberg for not relating his findings to "higher level" theories (see their own positions in the works on the reading list). Wilson, however, defended him, saying that if Lieberman had neglected macro-level theory, he had still advanced important structural explanations. How much, if at all, do you think Lieberman's account suffers because of this orientation?

Even if Lieberman does not mention Marx, Weber, or Parsons, he clearly intends his account to be comprehensive at its own level. Be sure to follow his arguments: note, for instance, the four approaches he lists on p. 14. How does he criticize the culturalist approach and that based on discrimination?

- What is his theory of "intrinsic differences?" How do the reasons for migration and starting position affect later inequality?
- What is the significance of "queuing" theory? The theory of occupational niches? The historical conditions of immigration, its duration, the timing of initiation and cessation, the rate of growth of the immigrant group? How do these factors interact, and what are their results?
- How do these factors affect intergroup contact, conflict, and prejudice? What are the relations among these latter three factors? Why are some immigrant groups less threatening to native groups than others? Again - what explains group cohesion?

Can Lieberman's account be subsumed under one or a combination of the macro theories we have considered, after all? Consider the latter again as "systems" theories, and Lieberman's possible place in them.